

**THE AMBIGUITIES OF SOVIET “PIEDMONTs”: SOVIET BORDERLAND
POLICIES IN THE UKRAINIAN SSR AND THE MOLDOVAN ASSR, 1922-1934**

Alexandr Voronovici

A DISSERTATION

in

History

**Presented to the Faculties of the Central European University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Budapest, Hungary

2016

Supervisor: Professor Alexei Miller

Copyright in the text of this dissertation rests with the author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained by the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copied made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees and no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless otherwise noted.

Abstract

The dissertation analyzes Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s. Adopting the situational approach, I explore the Soviet struggle for borderlands on the Western border and the role of the cross-border cultural ties in it. The dissertation argues that the negotiations, different interpretations and the interplay between actors on both sides of the Soviet Western border influenced and framed the evolution of borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in 1920s. Although, the Soviet Union was a centralized state with a disciplined party, there was still considerable space for conflicting interpretations of Moscow's directives and the promotion of personal agenda by Soviet leaders and activists.

The thesis focuses on different understandings of Soviet borderland policies and suggested alternatives, attempting to explain the choice in favor of one of them. The dissertation demonstrates, how in the process of the elaboration and implementation of Soviet borderland policies such categories as “Ukrainian,” “Russian,” “Moldovan,” and “Romanian” were defined and redefined by the Bolsheviks.

Acknowledgements

I was extremely fortunate to meet many wonderful people, who helped, taught, and inspired me along the way to this dissertation.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Alexei Miller. His ability to find a quick and practical solution to any problem was indispensable. During these years he became a true mentor to me, ready to provide advice and support in any matter, not only those, related strictly to the dissertation. His contribution to my academic and personal development is hard to overestimate.

It is impossible to name all the people, whom I encountered in Hungary, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Canada, and Great Britain and who shaped my academic development and the realization of this project. The research-oriented University “High Anthropological School” in my home country gave me first taste of academic work and inspired me to continue along this way. The CEU History Department with its open, diverse, and outstanding faculty was an amazing environment for the realization of my academic projects. I cannot thank all the CEU people enough. The Department of World History at “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University had kindly give me the possibility to share my academic knowledge in teaching with Moldovan students. Our Moldovan-Canadian clique was a perfect setting to look at the history of Moldvova from a comparative and entangled perspective. The faculty and staff of the University of Toronto, the University of Manchester, the German Historical Institute Moscow, and the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy made my visits there most pleasant and productive. Remarkable people

in all these places provided their kindest support in my endeavors. The librarians and archivists in all the places, which I visited, did their best to make my research process smooth and comfortable.

A number of organizations financed various stages of this research. I would like to express my gratitude to CEU, the Open Society Foundations, The German Historical Institute Moscow, the Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine, The Holodomor Research and Education Consortium, and the International Visegrad Fund for their generous support of my research.

I would like to thank all my friends. Their support and company gave me new energy to tackle all the difficult issues, encountered on my way to the completion of this thesis.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to my family, to my parents and grandparents. Their unwavering belief in me was a source of inspiration and motivation all these years.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Main Arguments.....	9
Historiography.....	19
Structure of the Thesis.....	38
Sources.....	42
Chapter 1. Defining the Principles of Soviet National Statehood: Soviet Ukraine from the Civil War to the Establishment of the Soviet Union.....	43
1. 1. Between Poles and Whites.....	49
1. 2. Soviet Ukrainian Diplomacy in the Early 1920s: Filling Form with Content. .	61
1. 3. The Relations between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR and the Creation of the Soviet Union.....	80
1. 4. Conclusions.....	104
Chapter 2. Choosing Allies in Soviet Ukraine: Bolshevik Relations with Ukrainian Socialist Parties.....	106
2.1. Changes in the Bolshevik Approach in Ukraine in 1919.....	108
2. 2. The Case of the “TsK UPSR”.....	116
2. 3. An Enforced Fusion: The Borotbists.....	123
2. 4. The UKP.....	138
2. 5. Conclusions.....	146
Chapter 3. The Establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and the Struggle for Power in the Moldovan “Piedmont”.....	148
3.1. The Bessarabian Question in the Soviet Union before 1924.....	149
3. 2. The Process of the Establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and the Ukrainian Factor.....	155
3. 3. The Forming of the Moldovan Regional Party Committee and the Choice of the Directions of Nationality Policies in the Moldovan ASSR.....	168
3. 4. Conclusions.....	191
Chapter 4. Testing the Limits of Korenizatsiia: The Shumsky-Kaganovich Struggle, 1925-1926.....	193
4. 1. Kaganovich's Arrival and the Intensification of the Ukrainianization Campaign.....	195
4. 2. Mykola Khvylovyi and the Literary Discussion in Soviet Ukraine.....	208
4. 3. Shumsky's Visit to Stalin and Its Outcomes.....	217
4. 4. Kaganovich's “Compromise”.....	228
2. 5. The June Plenum of TsK KP(b)U: “Malorossy” against Shumsky.....	238
2. 6. Conclusions.....	249
Chapter 5. The Warsaw-Western Ukraine-Kharkiv Triangle and Soviet Borderland Policies before and after the May Coup.....	253

5. 1. Polish Borderland Policies and the Promethean Movement.....	254
5. 2. Soviet Reactions to Pilsudski's Coup and Its Impact on Shumsky's Affair....	265
5. 3. From Subversion and Insurrection to the Party Politics: Soviet Policies in the Border Regions of Poland and Romania.....	275
5. 4. The “Communist Ukrainian International”.....	284
5. 5. The KPZU Split.....	296
5. 6. Conclusions.....	300
Chapter 6. Skrypnyk's Experiment: Soviet Borderland Policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the late 1920s.....	302
6. 1. Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Defining the Status of Russians in the Ukrainian SSR.....	303
6. 2. Searching for Balance between Ukrainianization and Moldovanization.....	321
6. 3. Systematization of the Orthography and the Linguistic Norms in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR.....	327
6. 4. The SVU Trial.....	338
6. 5. Conclusions.....	351
Chapter 7. Borderlands Transformed: Collectivization, Famine and the Reshaping of Soviet Borderland Policies in the first half of the 1930s.....	354
7. 1. The Collectivization Crisis in the Border Regions.....	355
7. 2. The Famine in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR.....	369
7. 3. Introduction of Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR.....	372
7. 4. “The Fortress Ukraine”.....	384
7. 5. Conclusions.....	399
Conclusion.....	401
Bibliography.....	417

List of Abbreviations

IKKI – Executive Committee of the Communist International
KP(b)U – Communist Party (bolshevik) of Ukraine
KPP – Communist Party of Poland
KPZU – Communist Party of Western Ukraine
Narkomiust – People's Commissariat of Justice
Narkompros – People's Commissariat of Enlightenment
NEP – New Economic Policy
NKID – People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
PCR – Communist Party of Romania
RKI – Workers' and Peasants' Inspection
RKP(b) – Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)
RSFSR – Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republican
Sovnarkom – Council of People's Commissars
SSR – Soviet Socialist Republic
SVU – Union for the Libeation of Ukraine
TsIK – Central Executive Committee
TsK (CC) – Central Committee
UKP – Ukrainian Communist Party
UPRS – Ukrainian People's Republic of Soviets
UPSR – Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries
USD RP – Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers' Party
VAPLITE – Free Academy of Proletarian Literature
VUTsIK – All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee

Introduction

The end of the First World War resulted in the collapse of three empires, which previously dominated Central and Eastern Europe. The outcome was the complete reconfiguration of the political and territorial landscape of the region. New states emerged in the former borderlands of three empires. While these states to a significant extent claimed legitimacy in the ideal of the nation-state, their population included sizable ethnic minorities. The new states and their borders were challenged both from the inside and the outside. In Poland, for instance, there was no consensus among the ruling elites on the most desirable territorial composition of the new state. Pilsudski and his circle envisaged a larger Poland, stretched significantly to the East, while his opponents, the National-Democrats, mostly preferred to limit Poland to the territories, inhabited by Poles. Romania, while not a new state de jure, was basically an entirely different polity de facto, managing to secure a dramatic increase of the territory and population. Yet, this expansion came at a price. Romanian government had to govern an even more diverse society, than before the First World War, with sizable minorities and regions with different historical background.¹ In addition, the new territorial acquisitions were challenged, most importantly by the Bolsheviks in the case of Bessarabia.² The Soviet government refused to recognize the Romanian sovereignty over Bessarabia.

The political changes were possibly even more dramatic to the East. There on the

1 Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000).

2 Romanian neighbors contested the annexation of other new Romanian provinces as well, as, for instance, the Hungarian claims on Transylvania demonstrate.

larger part of the former Romanov Empire, in numerous military conflicts the Bolsheviks gradually managed to establish their political predominance. While socialist and internationalist in rhetoric, with a strong tradition of the anti-imperialist discourse among the leadership, the Bolsheviks had the task of governing a huge and diverse multiethnic space, facing challenges to the legitimacy of the regime both from the internal and external forces. In addition, the space under the Bolshevik control had its own history and baggage of nationality policies. Eventually, the Bolsheviks introduced in their policies the territorialization of the ethnicity, and the promotion of the non-Russian cadres and culture in their respective territorial units.³ In many respects this was a novel approach to governing of the multiethnic space. In practice it also presupposed a large space for the experimentation, particularly in concrete local settings.

What the Bolsheviks shared with the leading circles of their Western neighbors was the conviction, that the borders of their state were not carved in stone. Indeed, the original attempt to “spread the Revolution” to Europe failed, with the defeat of the socialist revolutions in Hungary and Germany and the unsuccessful war with Poland. Yet, throughout the interwar period the Bolshevik leadership anticipated a possible conflict with the Western neighboring states, which could have led to the border changes. The benefit of the introduced Soviet nationality policies in the eyes of the Bolshevik leaders was not only in the promise of the “resolution of the national question” and the active participation of all Soviet nationalities in the socialist transformation. The Bolshevik

3 Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 414-452.

approach to non-Russian nationalities also opened the possibilities of the use of the national question in the projection of the Soviet influence abroad. Creating national republics and autonomies and promoting languages and cadres of Soviet non-Russian nationalities, the Bolsheviks hoped to attract the aspirations of the respective cultural kin-groups outside of the Soviet Union, particularly in the neighboring states. For the Bolsheviks this was also an attempt to demonstrate the superiority of their socialist project in comparison with other forms. Mykola Skrypnyk, one of the most influential Ukrainian Bolsheviks in the 1920s and the early 1930s, formulated this approach in his reference to the role of Piedmont in the unification of Italy:

And when we recall that in Bessarabia a monstrous, compulsive, fierce policy of romanianization of Ukrainians is carried out, when we see that in Transcarpathia, in Czechoslovak republic also a brutal policy of Czechization of Ukrainians is implemented, where even the word “Ukrainian” is outlawed, then we can undoubtedly say, even not entering into the sphere of diplomatic politics, that indeed our Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the only possible Ukrainian republic, built in the struggle by the proletariat, *is the real cultural Piedmont for the whole Ukrainian people.*⁴

Terry Martin, basing upon Skrypnyk's pronouncements called this approach the “Piedmont principle.”⁵ At the heart of this view was the belief that cross-border cultural ties could shape loyalties and even result in the redrawing of the existing borders. This view was shared by the Bolshevik opponents in the neighboring states. Particularly the Polish governments in Pilsudski's years took the cross-border cultural ties seriously and attempted to use them in their policies. Though, in the Polish case the attempts to make use of the cross-border cultural ties took somewhat different forms and had a different ideological context, in comparison with the Bolsheviks. Circles close to Pilsudski were

4 Mykola Skrypnyk, *Statti i Promovy z Natsional'nogo Pytannia* (Munchen: Suchasnist, 1974), 180.

5 Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 8-9.

particularly active and developed the so-called Promethean movement.⁶ Therefore, cross-border cultural ties were both the source of promise and of the concern for the governing elites. One could attempt to use cross-border cultural ties to shift the loyalties of the population on the other side of the border, but at the same time the opponents in the neighboring states could do the same. It was not a one-way street. A number of actors could compete for the loyalties of the population in the borderlands. The struggle for the sympathies of the borderland population on both sides of the Soviet Western border became an important part of the nationality and foreign policy of the Bolshevik authorities, and the focus of the ambitions and concerns in Soviet activities. The struggle for the borderlands in the interwar period was also facilitated by the fact that “the breakup of empires did not lead to redrawing their boundaries along national lines... the end of Eurasian Empires did not solve the problems of advancing, fixing and defending frontiers throughout the region.”⁷ Moreover, one should keep in mind, that national and political identities of the population in the region were frequently rather weak and flexible, even though the First World War contributed significantly to the consolidation of some of the identifications. It was in the interwar borderland and nationalities policies, among others, that some of these identities were defined or redefined, strengthened or weakened.⁸

In Soviet Ukraine, and in the Ukrainian-inhabited lands in general, most of the

6 Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission To Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

7 Alfred J. Rieber, “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers,” in Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber, ed., *Imperial Rule* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 177.

8 There is a new trend in historiography, coming mostly from the studies on (post-)Habsburg space, to challenge the predominance of the national categories in the historical analysis with the emphasis on the non-national, sub-national or above-national identities. The “national indifference” is usually the uniting theoretical concept in such studies. See, Tara Zahra, “Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69 (Spring 2010): 93–119; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

described processes were presented in the most vivid form. The Ukrainian SSR was a key republic for the Soviet Union in terms of size, number of population and the economic potential. It was also crucial as a field for the implementation of Soviet nationality policies due to a number of reasons, the size of the population being only one of them. There were also sizable Ukrainian minorities in the neighboring states. Therefore, the Soviet performance in the Ukrainian SSR could have had important foreign repercussions. At the same time Soviet Ukraine, as a borderland, was contested from abroad by foreign governments and the Ukrainian political immigration. No less importantly, before the Bolshevik Revolution the territories of Soviet Ukraine and its population were subject to the project of the triune Russian nation, which, according to its ideologues, consisted of the Great Russians, White Russians, and Little Russians.⁹ Thus, the issue of the relation of the new republic and its population to respectively the RSFSR, Moscow and Russians, as a nationality, stood more acutely than in any other Soviet republic. It was somewhat comparable to Belarus. Yet, the sheer size distinguished the Ukrainian SSR even in comparison with the Belarusian SSR. Finally, Soviet Ukraine had a number of national minorities. The case of the Moldovan ASSR is the most interesting for the purposes of the thesis, as a republic, which had the projection of the Soviet influence in Bessarabia via cross-border cultural ties, as one of its main goals.

The struggle for the borderlands in this region had a long history.¹⁰ The history of the territories under study can support this statement.¹¹ Yet, it gained particular impetus

9 Alexei Miller, "The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation," in Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller ed., *Nationalizing Empires* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2014), 309-368.

10 Alfred J. Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of the Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

11 A. I. Miller *The Ukrainian Question: the Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003).

after the partitions of Poland and with the gradual rise of nationalism, as a source of political mobilization, throughout the 19th century. The contiguous empires attempted to use the new force of nationalism in the struggle with their neighboring rivals. An important milestone, which also set the stage for the interwar period, in that regard was the First World War. During the war years the mobilization of ethnicity acquired unprecedented scales. It took place in the forms of the upsurge of patriotism, designation and repression of the “enemy nations,” the waves of refugees and population transfers, creation of the national army units etc.¹² It was suggested that during the war on the Eastern front three empires broke the previous unwritten conventions and started to exploit the national question to the full extent in an attempt to destroy their rivals.¹³ Thus, the struggle between the Soviet Union and the neighboring states for the borderlands based on the instrumentalization of the national question and the cross-border cultural ties was not an entirely novel phenomenon. The novelty was in the ideological outlook of some of the main players, particularly, but not exclusively, on the Soviet side. The other crucial change of the setting was the absence of the three contiguous empires and the appearance of a “ring of smaller and weaker successor states.”¹⁴ In the 1920s and the early

12 Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2000); Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918* (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, 2008); Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

13 Alexei Miller, “Pochemu Vse Kontinental'nye Imperii Raspalis' v Rezul'tate Pervoi Mirovoi Voiny” // <http://polit.ru/article/2006/04/11/miller2/> (last accessed on March 3, 2016)

14 Before the First World War the Bessarabian had a specificity. Bessarabia was contested not by another empire, but by the nation- or rather nationalizing state – Romania. For the reflection on the issue, see Andrei Cusco, Oleg Grom, and Flavius Solomon, “Discourses of Empire and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Bessarabia: Russian-Romanian Symbolic Competition and the 1912 Anniversary,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2015): 91-129.

1930s only the Soviet Union can be regarded an imperial project in the region, though as a quite specific case thereof.¹⁵ While Pilsudski's circles aspired for Poland as a major, potentially imperial power, this was hardly the case in reality. Later on Germany would become a major player and significantly shift the balance in the region.

This thesis traces the evolution of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s. By borderland policies in this dissertation I mean those elements of the nationality and foreign policy, which focused on and were influenced by the contested character of two borderland republics and the impact of the cross-border cultural ties. The main focus in the thesis will be on nationality policies and their development in the context of the struggle for the borderlands and their foreign and internal implications. It is one of the premises of this dissertation that nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR cannot be comprehensively interpreted outside of the framework of the continuing struggle for the borderlands in the interwar years. As Alfred J. Rieber convincingly argued, “the two aspects of statecraft” – domestic and foreign policy – in the case of the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire, “cannot be separated.”¹⁶ Borderland in this setting is a contested territory, which lies at the intersection of several national, (quasi-) imperial, and social projects on both sides of the actual existing border. In the case of a borderland two contexts are crucial. Borderland is defined by its relation to the neighboring states and population, particularly kin groups, across the border. Yet, the definition of the relations

15 For a reflection of the applicability of the concept of empire to the Soviet Union, see Terry Martin, “The Soviet Union as Empire: Salvaging a Dubious Analytical Category,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 91-105.

16 Alfred J. Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3.

of the borderland to the higher administrative center and the core nationality represent another crucial dimension. Therefore, the analysis of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s breaks down to two main directions. The first one deals with the examination of the entanglement of nationality and foreign policies and some of the other key relevant Soviet campaigns in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the context of the attempts to project Soviet influence over the border among the kin population and, in turn, the claims of the foreign actors on the contested borderland republics. The second direction is the overview of the relations of Kharkiv to Moscow and the treatment of Russians and Russian-speakers in the Ukrainian SSR and respectively the Soviet Moldova to Kharkiv and the problem of the parallel Moldovanization and Ukrainianization in the case of the Moldovan ASSR. The two outlined directions were also interconnected. The “affirmative action” in favor of Ukrainians at the expense of Russians was not only a matter of the internal policy, but was considered by the Bolsheviks to be a demonstration of the lack of continuity between the Romanov Empire and the Soviet Union both on the inside and outside arena.

The inclusion of the Moldovan ASSR in the analysis provides a fruitful foundation for the juxtaposition of borderland policies in Soviet Ukraine and Moldova. For instance, it gives the possibility to highlight the differences between the treatment of Ukrainians in the Moldovan ASSR and Russians in the Ukrainian SSR. The other interesting comparison deals with the linguistic reforms and their interdependence with the contested character of both republics. Finally, the case of the Moldovan ASSR serves as the demonstration of the implication of the Soviet Ukrainian activists in the Moldovan

borderland affairs. In certain respects, on the example of the Moldovan ASSR one can trace the interplay between different levels of the Soviet and party authorities and their struggle for the spheres of influence in the sensible borderland region.

Main Arguments

The main argument of the PhD thesis can be summarized in the following. The Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s were the result of a complex interaction between a number of actors on both sides of the Soviet Western border, set within the shifting hierarchies of power and changing historical conjunctures. That is there was no clear-cut planned trajectory, a grand design, for the development of the Soviet multiethnic state. It largely followed the outside and inside challenges, successes and failures of the implemented borderland policies and the shifting political priorities of the Bolshevik socialist construction. There were some general premises, shared by strong groups in the Bolshevik leadership, which guided and favored some of the decisions and reactions in the evolution of Soviet borderland policies. Yet, even the general principles were sometimes questioned. Thus, there was a number of leading Soviet officials, who considered that the national element should not have any significant influence on Bolshevik policies. For instance, while the leading party figures discussed the framework of the integration of the declaratively independent Soviet states into a federative multinational union, the Gosplan officials drew up plans of the economic regionalization, which disregarded the national element altogether and was based solely on the administrative and economic considerations. These plans, for instance, divided Soviet Ukraine into two administrative regions. This division

as well as the names of the suggested regions, the South-Western oblast and the Southern Mining oblast, highlight the neglect of the national question on behalf of the Gosplan officials.¹⁷

Terry Martin in his groundbreaking study suggests four main premises, which laid the foundation for the introduction of the *korenizatsiia* policies and the emergence of, what he calls, the Affirmative Action Empire: the Marxist premise, the modernization premise, the colonial premise and the greatest-danger principle, and the Piedmont principle.¹⁸ Yet, while possibly shared by Lenin and Stalin, they were not necessarily accepted, understood or interpreted similarly by all the leading central and republican leaders, to say nothing of the lower Soviet officials. As the numerous debates on the national question among party, Soviet, Comintern officials and Communists abroad suggest, there was much space for the interpretation and disagreements. What Soviet borderland and nationality policies meant in a concrete geographical and historical setting often remained up to debate, despite the existence of the general central directives.¹⁹ Various directions and interpretations of the borderland policies were passing the test in the debates and concrete historical settings and challenges. The Bolshevik state (or at first, states) was an empire as a work-in-progress, based on the blueprint, which had rather vague contours of the final outcome²⁰ and the ways to its realization.

17 For an overview of the Gosplan projects, see Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 70-79.

18 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 4-9.

19 Moreover, as Lynne Viola demonstrated in the case of the collectivization-era deportations, even the most meticulous central planning on paper could go hand in hand with astonishing chaos on the ground, Lynne Viola, "The Aesthetic of Stalinist Planning and the World of the Special Villages," *Kritika* 4 (2003): 101-28.

20 The final outcome in Lenin's words was the "inevitable fusion (*sliianie*) of nations" Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 27, 256. Yet, the same Lenin conceded that nationalities would persist for a long time even under socialism *Tainy natsional'noi politiki TsK RKP* (Moscow: INSAN, 1992): 31.

In the debate between two recent competing grand accounts in the historiography on the interwar Soviet nationality policies, that of Terry Martin²¹ and Francine Hirsch,²² the current interpretation is somewhat closer to the former.²³ Terry Martin's account is somewhat more sensitive to the impact of the changing circumstances and challenges. Hirsch, in turn, suggests the existence of the general design of state-sponsored evolutionism, developed in the collaboration between Bolsheviks and the “imperial specialists” in anthropology and ethnography. Martin's approach outlines the general principles of the Soviet nationality policy. Yet, it is more flexible and dynamic, though, it does not deal with the interactions between various actors in specific circumstances in much detail. The great achievement of Martin's book is in the outline of the general development of the Soviet nationality policies in the interwar period. It is crucial that he paid attention to the Russian question in the Soviet Union as well, which allowed him to formulate also his thesis on the Soviet Union as the Affirmative Action Empire. This is an issue, which is important for this PhD thesis as well, though I analyze it from the point of view of a concrete case of the Ukrainian SSR. As a grand account, built predominantly on the central Moscow archives, Martin's book sometimes suffers from the over-generalizations and impossibility to look in detail on the complexity of the interplay between various actors. Hirsch's interpretation gives more agency to the actors, who did not represent Moscow central governing institutions, that is to the “imperial specialists.” Yet, her argument on the decisive impact of these specialists on Soviet nationality policies

21 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*.

22 Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.

23 For my overview of the debate between Martin and Hirsch, see A. A. Voronovici, “Protivorechivye Istorii Sovetskogo Mnogonatsional'nogo Gosudarstva: Nekotorye Problemy Sovetskoi Natsional'noi Politiki v Sovremennoi Zarubezhnoi Istoriografii,” in A. I. Miller ed., *Proshlyi Vek: Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov* (Moscow: RAN INION, 2013), 367-387.

is not convincing.²⁴ This PhD thesis pays much attention to the impact of the non-Moscow actors, or rather on the interaction between various actors on different levels. Yet, my main interest is with the party and Communist activists.

The goal of the thesis is to attempt to analyze and demonstrate how the specific interactions and debates between relevant actors, the changing hierarchies of power, specific historical circumstances shaped Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s. It was suggested that the situational approach can be quite productive for the analysis of nationality policies in the Romanov Empire and the struggle for the borderlands between the contiguous empires in the 19th and early 20th century.²⁵ While, the historical context is different, this PhD dissertation aims to apply the situational approach to the analysis of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s. In the thesis the analyzed actors are not limited to the central authorities in Moscow and republican authorities of the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. Some chapters also discuss the activities of the Communist parties and pro-Soviet groups in Romania and Poland. The developments on the territories of the Western neighbors of the Soviet Union, the actions of Polish and Romanian governments and politicians and the changing international context were another crucial element of the puzzle, which shaped Soviet policies in two borderland republics.

The thesis pays a specific attention to the polyphony of voices, which participated in the debates on and the interpretations of Soviet borderland policies. Overall, the focus

24 M. Mogil'ner, "Recenziia na Hirsch F. Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union," *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2005): 538–554.

25 Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 10–20.

on the debates and particularly disagreements on the national question and its foreign implications is important for several reasons. It allows us to reconstruct the positions and views of the groups and individuals, involved in the elaboration and implementation of Soviet borderland policies. The debates (at Plenums, conferences etc) and discussions in bureaucratic and personal correspondence or publications was also one of the key channels of the interaction between the decision-making actors. The attention to the polyphony of voices gives the possibility to keep track of the alternatives and to try to suggest the factors and circumstances, which favored the chosen direction of Soviet borderland policies and disadvantaged the other or in some cases encouraged a certain mutual compromise. As some of the discussed cases suggest, the positions expressed in such debates and conflicts often forced the party leadership to intervene into the discussions or policies on the republican or lower levels. Thus, Soviet high-level decision-makers could correct the perceived mistakes in the interpretation or realization of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR, suggest the more appropriate direction or to set more clearly the boundaries of acceptable and non-acceptable.

It was also in these interactions and debates that various actors shaped and formulated their own understanding of Soviet borderland policies and attempted to outmaneuver their opponents in the struggle for power and spheres of influence and in the promotion of their own agency. The actors involved often tried to appeal to their (potential) supporters and/or to the central authorities in an effort to undermine the positions of their opponents with the stigma of the incorrect understanding or implementation of Bolshevik policies. In some cases the central authorities were caught

unprepared and off guard. For instance, in the case of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR in 1924 most likely few leading Bolsheviks anticipated to find themselves in the midst of the debates on the identity of the Moldovan population on the left bank of the Dniester and the relations of its culture to the Romanian one almost immediately after the decision was taken. Somewhat similarly, the central authorities in Moscow unexpectedly found themselves in the midst of the fierce territorial struggles between Central Asian party elites, when they had launched the national-territorial delimitation in the region.²⁶

The emphasis on the multitude of actors in the analysis does not necessarily challenge the predominant role of Moscow in the Soviet decision-making process. Ultimately Moscow and the gradually shrinking circle of the Bolshevik leaders had the final say in the evolution of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. Yet, the incentives, which prompted certain decisions in Moscow, not rarely came from the borderlands, from the debates and processes, which took place there.²⁷ There was also a possibility of manipulating Moscow's decisions by the selective presentation of certain phenomenon. For instance, this was the case of Kaganovich's letter to Stalin on the Soviet Ukrainian Marxist writer Mykola Khvyli'ovyi and his publications.

The analysis of the debates on Soviet nationality and borderland policies provides the possibility to track, how relevant actors (primarily, central republican party authorities, activists of the Communist parties in the neighboring states, leading Comintern officials etc) interpreted the central directives and decisions. It should be

26 Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 180-210.

27 The Latinization campaign can be a good example of an initiative, which started on the periphery, in the struggle for power among Soviet Muslims between Azeri and Tatar Bolsheviks, but eventually received Moscow's approval for further advancement. See Andreas Frings, "Playing Moscow off Against Kazan: Azerbaijan Maneuvering to Latinization in the Soviet Union," *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2009): 249-266.

mentioned that closer to the end of the 1920s the space for the debates and interpretations was increasingly shrinking. This was partly the consequence of the consolidation of the political monopoly of Stalin and his associates in the party. At the same time by the early 1930s the Bolshevik leaders had already singled out a number of the interpretations of Soviet borderland policies, which they considered incorrect or harmful. Finally, the difficulties of the First Five-Year plan and the growing concerns over the vulnerability of the Soviet borderlands raised the price of any pronouncements on the issue.

The studies of Soviet nationality policies suffer from the presence of the analytical schemes, which focus on only one or two groups of actors. This is particularly the case of the historiographies of the post-Soviet states, written in the national tradition. In Western academia one can also find such interpretations more often, than one would expect. In these schemes historians tend to project the present-day situation and concerns or their own political position on the studied historical cases. Usually the result of such exercises are rather rigid interpretations, which do not take into account the complexity of the studied phenomena. An often encountered framework consists of the struggle between the repressive center and the nation or people. Often Moscow emerges as an omnipotent and malevolent center, hostile to other non-Russian nationalities and exercising repressions voluntarily without any specific purpose. Any sign of the local discussion, pronouncement or actions, perceived by historians as unsanctioned by or challenging the center, may be interpreted as the demonstration of the national and democratic resistance and spirit, even if it came from within the Bolshevik ranks. The Bolshevik regime in this framework can be easily assessed as something foreign and imposed. One can encounter such interpretations in Russian publications as well. The emphasis on the multitude of

actors and the interaction between them in a specific historical setting aims to avoid such one-way interpretations.

The analysis of the interpretations and implementations of Soviet borderland policies often exposes significant heterogeneity of the republican and local (and sometimes also Moscow) actors. The motivations and rationales of the actors and key decision-makers were also not limited to national and centralizing categories. After all, most of the actors, discussed in the thesis, perceived themselves as Marxists and the social and class categories were at least as important for them. In addition, within the set boundaries of the central directives or their own interpretation thereof, many actors attempted to realize their ambitions and agenda and struggled for the spheres of influence and political power with others on the republican, international and other levels.

As already mentioned, the Bolsheviks also paid much attention to the international situation and particularly to the developments in Poland and Romania in the elaboration of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. The Soviet leaders were preoccupied with the actions of Polish and Romanian governments, major political leaders and the representatives of political immigrants, most importantly of the Ukrainian ones. While the Bolsheviks attempted to spread their influence into the neighboring states and made active use of the national issue to this end, the prospects of socialist revolutions there largely faded. At the same time, the concerns of the Bolshevik leadership over the possibility of the foreign intervention and possible penetration of foreign agents in the border republics was a crucial factor in the development of Soviet borderland policies. Historians made significant efforts to demonstrate that the Bolshevik fears of the foreign threat were greatly exaggerated and sometimes had few basis behind

them. Yet, as James Harris convincingly argued the perception of the foreign threat was more important for the evolution of Bolshevik policies than the actual danger.²⁸ Moreover, even though often exaggerated the Bolshevik concerns over the foreign penetration were not always totally ungrounded. For example, the OGPU undoubtedly overstated the scale of the Polish network of agents in the Ukrainian SSR in the early 1930s and fabricated at least a significant part of the cases. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to conclude that the Polish spy activities and covert operations in the Ukrainian SSR were non-existent.²⁹ In my discussion of Soviet borderland policies I pay much attention to the impact of the evolution of the international situation, particularly the developments in Poland and Romania, and the Soviet perception thereof on Bolshevik policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR.

Finally, the general Soviet context was important. Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR were also interconnected with other directions of Bolshevik policies and campaigns. Therefore, the zigzags of the Soviet policy in other dimensions had also impact on Soviet borderland policies. This is, for instance, was the case of the First Five-Year plan, the collectivization campaign, and the consequences of the ensuing crisis for Soviet borderland and nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR.

Thus, the combination and the interplay of the above described factors contributed to the development, changes and “corrections” of Soviet borderland policies in the

28 James Harris, “Intelligence and the Threat Perception: Defending the Revolution, 1917-1937,” in James Harris, ed., *The Anatomy of Terror: Political Violence under Stalin* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30.

29 See for some of the examples, Timothy Snyder, “Covert Polish Missions Across the Soviet Ukrainian border, 1928–1933,” in Silvia Salvatici, ed., *Confini: Costruzioni, attraversamenti, rappresentazioni* (Soveria Mannelli: Sissco, Società Italiana per lo Studio della Storia Contemporanea, Rubbettino, 2005), 55-78.

Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. While many, not all, in the Bolshevik leadership agreed that nationalism is almost an inevitable phase of the modernization process,³⁰ and as such needed to be addressed, they were quite instrumental and pragmatic in their dealings with nationality issues. The Bolsheviks attempted to tame nationalism, to prevent it from becoming the political tool in the hands of their opponents, and to use its mobilizing potential to achieve their internal and external goals. They were not taking nationality and national culture as something fixed and were open to a certain degree of experimentation in Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR, as long as it did not question the predominance of Moscow and the party leadership as the administrative and political center, threaten the unity of the Bolshevik state, make the Soviet Union more vulnerable to the foreign threat, or hinder other crucial Bolsheviks campaigns. When, though, the Bolshevik leaders interpreted certain actions or pronouncements on Soviet borderland policies as dangerous along one of these line, the reaction was often quite categorical. The assessment of borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR by the Bolshevik leadership was also embedded in specific historical conjunctures. Thus, the general premises and fears interplayed with specific circumstances to produce the decisions on the directions of Soviet borderland policies. It was to a significant extent an open-end game with a number of actors on both sides of the Soviet Western border.

30 Terry Martin called this principle the “modernization premise”, *Martin, Affirmative Action Empire*, 5-6.

Historiography

The interwar Soviet struggle for borderlands and borderland policies have been studied mostly on the level of the diplomatic history. This issue was usually covered either in general works on the Polish-Soviet or Romanian-Soviet diplomatic history or less frequently in the specific accounts of the contested borderlands issues in the diplomatic relations.³¹ Some additional dimensions of Soviet borderland policies were touched upon in the studies dealing with the issues of Comintern and Soviet relations with local communist parties. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned international dimensions were only one aspect of the Soviet borderland policies. The borderland perspective of Soviet nationality policies was only recently tackled in some detail in historiography.

Terry Martin's analysis of *korenizatsiia* became one of the key publications on interwar Soviet nationality policies.³² Martin published a quite comprehensive study of Soviet nationality policies mostly from the perspective of the central authorities, whose documents formed his crucial source base. For the purposes of my thesis it is important that Terry Martin pointed out and analyzed to some extent the Bolshevik preoccupation with Piedmont Principle, as he labeled, relying on the pronouncement of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders, the attempts to use the cross-border cultural ties to undermine the rule of the neighboring mostly anti-Soviet governments. At the same time Martin emphasized

31 Oleg Ken, *Collective Security or Isolation? Soviet Foreign Policy and Poland, 1930-1935* (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 1996); Marcel Mitrasca, *Moldova: A Romanian Province Under Russian Rule: Diplomatic History from the Archives of the Great Powers* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2002); Octavian Tacu, *Problema Bessarabiei si Relatiile Sovieto-Romane in Perioda Interbelica (1919-1939)* (Alba Julia: Prut International, 2004). For an early account of the Soviet exploitation of its federative structure for foreign purposes, see Vernon V. Aspaturian, *The Union Republics in Soviet Diplomacy: A Study of Soviet Federalism in the Service of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Genève: Droz, 1960).

32 Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*. Martin's analysis relied some earlier works, Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment"; Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1993).

the importance of the fear of foreign influences and intervention, which he called “Soviet Xenophobia.” In Martin's interpretation Soviet Xenophobia eventually got ethnicized and led to the abandonment of the Piedmont Principle in the early 1930s. The eventual outcome was the reliance on the Russian core. Martin's attention to the Russian question is a great advantage of his study, which allowed him to formulate his thesis on the Soviet Union as the Affirmative Action Empire.³³ Yet, Martin takes “Russians” as in many respects unified and stable category. Therefore, he does not analyze the redefinitions and renegotiations of this category, which took place under the Bolsheviks. The Ukrainian SSR was one of the key fields for the discussions on what “Russian” meant and what was its place in the Soviet context.

Martin's book is an important inspiration for my research. At the same time Martin's study did not tackle in depth the perspective, agenda and activities of local party officials on various levels, which were not though in the center of his attention. My PhD thesis focuses exactly on the interaction between different actors and discusses various interpretations of borderland and nationality policies on both sides of the Soviet Western border. This gives the possibility to revisit some of Martin's generalizations and premises, which he takes for granted, rather than subject of the negotiations and discussions. Thus, for instance, among Soviet activists and leaders existed different understandings of the Piedmont Principle, the policies it implied, and the place of borderland and nationality policies among Soviet priorities. Martin's discussion of the Piedmont Principle, in general, is somewhat limited. In fact, he eventually pays much more attention to the

33 Martin also presented his argument in a more concise form, Terry Martin, “An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism,” in. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, ed., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 67-90.

evolution of the Soviet Xenophobia, which is important for his argument on the reemergence of Russians from the mid-1930s. My research provides a more detailed and nuanced account of instrumentalization of the cross-border cultural ties and the agenda and interactions of the actors involved. It demonstrates how many actors on both sides of the border saw an opportunity in the cross-border cultural ties to promote their political visions and expand their spheres of influences. The outcomes of the intersecting and conflicting interpretations of Soviet borderland policies had a significant impact on the evolution of Soviet nationality policies in interwar period.

Timothy Snyder in his book analyzes the attempts to instrumentalize cross-border cultural ties, but on the other side of the Soviet border.³⁴ He is analyzing Pilsudski's attempts to undermine Soviet rule in Ukraine by various borderland policies, particularly the preferential treatment of Ukrainians in Poland. Though focusing on the Polish side, Timothy Snyder also provides certain insights into Soviet Ukrainian affairs. Snyder's analysis of Polish borderland policies creates an important international context for my analysis, underscoring the challenges, which Bolsheviks faced in the neighboring states. In his discussion on Polish borderland policies Snyder is more sensitive to the input of the multitude of actors. The Soviet side is more monolithic in his account and his analysis is mostly Moscow-centered. Nevertheless, Snyder's findings on Polish policies in the Ukrainian question and their intersection with the Soviet politics are of great value.³⁵ My research follows some of the motives, discussed by Snyder, and focuses more on the Soviet strategies in the struggle for the borderlands.

³⁴ Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War*.

³⁵ Regrettably, Snyder's earlier publications on the region are more interesting and nuanced, than the later ones, such as Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

The Polish factor in Ukrainian borderland affairs did, indeed, play an important role. A couple of publications had already suggested some of the possible influences the Polish factor had on Soviet Ukraine.³⁶ This is one of the motives in the thesis as well. Yet, the presented research suggests that the relation between the fear of the Polish influence and the development of Soviet borderland policies was not necessarily straightforward. It was the specific situations and circumstances in the international and domestic affairs, discussed in the dissertation, which reinforced the Soviet preoccupation with the Polish factor in certain cases and provoked reactions. In the PhD thesis I also juxtapose the impact of the Polish and Romanian factors in order to demonstrate that even in the early 1930s despite the general perception of the Western neighbors as hostile, Bolsheviks based their decisions on the understanding of the specificity of each state.

Another inspiration for this dissertation is Alfred J. Rieber's publications on the struggle for the borderlands. In his latest book, he analyzes Stalin's attempts to achieve supremacy in Eurasia in the first half of the 20th century.³⁷ According to Rieber, in the competition for the Eurasian borderlands, the Bolsheviks faced a set of “persistent factors,” which the polities on this territory encountered for several centuries.³⁸ This dissertation deals with some of the motives, discussed in Rieber's grand narrative. Yet, it tackles them from the perspective of specific cases of the Ukrainian SSR and the

36 Matthew Pauly, “Soviet Polonophobia and the Formulation of the Nationality Policy in the Ukrainian SSR, 1927-1934,” in David L. Ransel and Bozena Shallcross ed., *Polish Encounters, Russia Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 172-188; E. Iu. Borisovok, “Vliianie Pol'skogo Faktora na Politiku Bol'shevikov po Natsional'nomu Voprosu (Bol'sheviki i Ukraintskii Vopros v 1917-1923 godah),” in *Revoliutsionnaia Rossiia 1917 Goda i Pol'skii Vopros: Novye Istochniki, Novye Vzgliady* (Moscow: Institut Slavianovedeniia RAN, 2009), 179-194.

37 Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia*.

38 Alfred Rieber, “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretative Essay,” in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993), 315-359.

Moldovan ASSR. Alfred Rieber's account is also centered on Stalin. In my dissertation I rather focus on other actors, particularly on the republican level, and on their contribution to Soviet borderland policies.

There are several publications on Ukrainian interwar history, which by its subject presupposed cross-border character and are important for the PhD thesis. For instance, several studies on the history of Communist Party of Western Ukraine (KPZU) were published.³⁹ Yet, at the time of writing of these studies the access to the archives was quite limited. As the result, the authors were mostly deprived of the possibility to comprehensively demonstrate the interplay of processes on both sides of the border in relation to the history of the KPZU. At the same time the sole existence of KPZU was an important factor in both Soviet Ukrainian and Polish borderland policies. The issue of the Ukrainian communist parties and sections in the neighboring states had also attracted attention of Soviet historians, who published studies and document collections on the “struggle of Transcarpathia/Western Ukraine/Bukovina for the reunification with Soviet Ukraine.”⁴⁰ While Soviet historians exaggerated the importance of the Ukrainian Communist movement in neighboring states, post-Soviet Ukrainian historians largely marginalized it. For instance, a recent publication on the national question in Ukraine in the 20th century does not mention the participation of Ukrainian communist parties and sections in the neighboring states in the evolution of the national question in the interwar

39 Roman Solchanyk, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1938* (University of Michigan: PhD Thesis, History, 1973); Janusz Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1929* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1983); Iu. Iu. Slyvka, *Storinki Istorii KPZU* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1989).

40 For instance, *Shliakhom Jovtnia: Borot'ba Trudiashchih Zarapattia za Natsional'ne i Social'ne Vyzvollenia ta Vozz'ednannia z Radians'koju Ukrainoiu* (Uzhgorod: Zakarpats'ke Oblastne Vydavnytstvo, 1957).

years altogether, despite special sections, devoted to Ukrainian-inhabited regions.⁴¹ The situation is somewhat similar in the case of the Bessarabian obkom and communist underground. At the same time the Communist parties and sections of the national minorities were an important part of the Soviet struggle for the borderlands and together with Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy became a space for the realization of ambitions of some of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders.

Other topic, which has cross-border character, is the issue of the “Changing Signposts”⁴² movement among Ukrainian emigres.⁴³ Soviet nationality policies played a significant role in the creation of a positive image for the Soviet Union among the Ukrainian political immigration. Still, as Christopher Gilley argued, some of the big names among Ukrainian returnees were attracted not only by nationality policies, but by some shared belief in the politics of socialist transformation. The relations with the Ukrainian emigres had significant political implications. In the Ukrainian case many former emigres returned to Ukraine and participated in the cultural and academic processes, taking place in the context of Ukrainianization.⁴⁴ Their influence should not be exaggerated, though. The Bolsheviks chose the repatriated carefully and kept them under strict control. When they felt that the Soviet regime no longer needed the Ukrainian

41 V. A. Smolii ed., *Natsional'ne Pytannia v Ukraini XX – Pochatku XXI St.: Istorychni Narysy* (Kyiv: Nika-Centr, 2012).

42 “Changing Signposts” (sменovekhovstvo) is the movement among the emigres from the territories of the former Russian Empire, which presupposed the return to the Soviet Union for various motives and participation in the Soviet project, Hilde Hardeman, *Coming to Terms with the Soviet Regime: The "Changing Signposts" Movement Among Russian Émigrés in the Early 1920s* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994).

43 Christopher Gilley, *The "Change of Signposts" in the Ukrainian Emigration: A Contribution to the History of Sovietophilism in the 1920s* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2009); Similar issues from the perspective of Ukrainian national historiography, Oleg Boguslavs'kii, *Pressa Mijvoennoi Ukrain's'koi Emigracii i Borot'ba za Nezalejnist' Ukrainy* (Zaporijjia: Prosvita, 2008).

44 Oleksandr Rubl'ov, *Zahidnoukrains'ka Inteligentsia u Zagal'nonatsional'nyh Politychnyh ta Kul'turnyh Procesah (1914-1939)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2004).

returnees or the latter were getting out of control, the Bolsheviks quickly found ways to deal with them.

While the studies on borderland policies in the interwar Ukrainian SSR and Moldovan ASSR are still not so numerous, there are many studies dealing with nationality policies in republics under study. It is impossible to discuss all of them in detail in a short bibliographical sketch. Therefore, I will try here to summarize some of widespread common premises and approaches, which one can often encounter reading the literature on the topic. Yet, it should be kept in mind that these generalizations are not necessary applicable to each and every individual study.

The studies of the interwar period (and even the whole Soviet period) of Ukrainian and Moldovan history are influenced by a number of historiographical premises, which, unfortunately, are often taken for granted and escape critical evaluation of the historians. These premises are to a significant extent the product of the development of Ukrainian, Romanian and Moldovan historiographies, as well as of Western historiography on the respective regions. Yet, in my opinion these historiographical premises distort our analysis of the Soviet period in the history of the region under study.

The post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography developed under the strong influence of the national frameworks and the interpretations of Ukrainian diaspora. As some historians pointed out, for a long period of time Ukrainian studies were almost exclusively carried out by the specialists of Ukrainian decent.⁴⁵ The post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography frequently essentialized Ukrainian nation and state and incorporated much determinism

45 Mark Von Hagen, "Does Ukraine Have a History?," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 658-673.

and teleology in its framework.⁴⁶ The “nationalized” approach in historiography is also compatible with the totalitarian model, which was and in some respects still is highly influential in studies on Soviet nationality policies. In turn, the totalitarian approach to Soviet history became very popular in post-Soviet Ukraine and in other post-Soviet countries, where it served the needs of the independent nation-building and concomitant developments in historiography.

One of the common and widespread premises of the Ukrainian historiography, that is relevant for the interwar period, is the belief that the Ukrainian population possessed a well developed national identity at the moment of the establishment of the Bolshevik power in Ukraine. Another common belief presupposed that Communism was essentially alien to Ukrainians and Ukrainian culture. As the result the Bolshevik regime was a foreign imposition, which had not root whatsoever in the Ukrainian context. Similar premises can be discovered in other East European (particularly Romanian/Moldovan) national historiographies. Unfortunately, in some cases they can even develop in xenophobic, specifically anti-Russian and anti-Jewish, directions.⁴⁷ Lastly, I will point out the specific role assigned to the Ukrainian political leaders and intellectuals. According to his narrative, the Ukrainian elite was always the defender of the Ukrainian nation and its interests. By extension, the argument goes, that the Ukrainian elite were always in opposition to the foreign forces, which subjugated Ukrainians. The above-mentioned

46 Georgiy Kasianov, “The ‘Nationalization’ of History in Ukraine,” in Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman, ed., *The Convolutions of Historical Politics* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012), 141-174.

47 The book by Pavel Moraru demonstrates, how this assumption can degenerate into anti-Semitic claims. Starting with that premise the author ended up reproducing the discourse of interwar extreme right, Pavel Moraru, *La Hotarul Românesc al Europei: din Istoria Siguranței Generale în Basarabia, 1918-1940* (București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2008).

premises framed the analysis of Soviet Ukrainian experience in Ukrainian historiography. In turn, non-Ukrainian historians often relied on the publications of scholars of the Ukrainian descent and implicitly or explicitly incorporated these premises into their frameworks.

The above-described developments resulted in a certain general approach that is explicitly or implicitly represented in the majority of the studies of Soviet interwar nationality policies. Roughly this approach can be summarized as follows. The Ukrainization in the 1920s was a Bolshevik unwilling concession to and recognition of the strength of the Ukrainian national identity and nationalism.⁴⁸ The ensuing conclusion: “The policy of Ukrainianization, as an earlier transition from War Communism to the NEP, was objectively predefined by pressing needs of life, without which Bolshevik-Soviet system in Ukraine could not be sustained.”⁴⁹ Often the introduction of Ukrainianization is interpreted as an insincere and superficial policy, intended to create simply an outward appearance. Ironically, this view has much in common with the beliefs of the opponents of Ukrainianization in the 1920s, who were astonished by the scale of the campaign and the applied constraint. All the subsequent developments in this narrative come down to the struggle of two quite strictly defined groups: the unified democratic/independent/freedom-loving Ukrainian people/nation/elite against the totalitarian/Russian/imperialist Bolshevik centralizers. In this scheme the strong

48 George Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); V.A. Smolii ed., *'Ukrainizatsiia' 1920 – 30-h Rokiv: Peredumovy, Zdobutky, Uroky* (Kiev, 2003); Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*.

49 Rubliov, *Zahidnoukrains'ka Inteligentsia*, 90; for similar views, that any possible victor in the wars in 1917-1920 in Ukraine had no choice but to adopt this policy, see V. A. Smolii ed., *Natsional'ne Pytannia v Ukraini XX – Pochatku XXI St.*, 213.

advocates of Ukrainianization in the KP(b)U also end up being a part of Ukrainian national elite's common struggle, together with non-party Ukrainian intellectuals and politicians. Nationality and borderland policies in that scheme emerge either from the top-down imposition of Moscow authorities or as the gradual cut of the initially reluctantly accepted Ukrainian autonomy, in which local Ukrainian elite were fighting a losing battle. In this narrative the roles and the main directions of development are largely predefined and few space is left for the considerations on the alternatives.

Interestingly, despite the boom of publication on the socialist period of Ukraine after 1989 the amount of publications on Soviet nationality policies in Ukraine in the 1920s is incomparable with the ones on the next decade. The 1920s and early 1930s developments are overshadowed in historiography by the problems of the 1932-1933 famine (*Holodomor*) and the 1930s purges in the Ukrainian SSR. The 1920s is often seen as an act, leading to the events of the 1930s. The incorporation of Ukrainianization into the post-Soviet “nationalized” narrative was to some degree a challenge.⁵⁰ The interpretation of the Soviet Ukrainianization as a concession to Ukrainian nationalism offered a way-out. The Ukrainian people, elites or at least national-oriented Ukrainian Marxist parties enforced Ukrainianization on Bolsheviks, who halfheartedly and superficially accepted it. A version of this argument incorporates the Bolshevik goals of rapid economic modernization of the country. In this interpretation Bolsheviks had to adopt Ukrainianization in order to spread their ideas and policies of modernization in Ukraine.⁵¹ The idea of reaching out to the masses, particularly peasantry, in local

50 Some historians attributed the national developments in Soviet Ukraine to primarily the general Soviet modernization and not specifically designed policies, Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1987).

51 *Natsional'ne Pytannia v Ukraini XX – Pochatku XXI St.*, 211-213. The authors even go as far as to

languages indeed was an important motive of Ukrainianization. Whether it was inevitable and the only possible solution is questionable. The party debates suggest that not all Bolsheviks were convinced of this inevitability.

The argument of the Bolshevik forced concession to the strength of nationalism and especially of Ukrainian nationalism, as one of the most developed among Soviet nationalities, is widespread not only among Ukrainian historians. It is frequently encountered in Western historiography as well. Thus, Terry Martin also suggests that the *korenizatsiia* and Ukrainianization, as one of the most important manifestation thereof, were to a significant extent a reaction to the “alarming success of the nationalist movements during the civil war.” The Affirmative Action Empire, in his reading, was “a strategy aimed at disarming nationalism by granting what were called the 'forms' of nationhood.”⁵² More specifically, “this program’s [Ukrainianization] primary goal was domestic: to disarm Ukrainian nationalism by granting the forms of Ukrainian nationhood.”⁵³ Martin's argument, though, is sophisticated. He realizes that the *korenizatsiia* took place also among nationalities, which could hardly be suspected of any nationalism. Therefore, Martin argues that leading Bolsheviks came to a conclusion that nationalism was an inevitable companion of the modernization and it should have been at least preventively addressed. Yet, at the heart of Martin's argument there is still the idea of Bolshevik concession to the real or potential strength of nationalism.

Nevertheless, the goal of Ukrainianization and, for that matter Moldovanization,

suggest that since the ultimate goal was the “fusion of nations” then “the policy of Ukrainianization in the Ukrainian SSR had the goal to contribute to the spreading in Ukrainian of the idea of the necessity of the liquidation of national and linguistic peculiarities.”

52 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 3.

53 Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 842.

was not simply to disarm nationalism. Rather it was to load nationalism or national forms with the Bolshevik ammunition; to mobilize it, and to make it a tool in the realization of Bolshevik aims and an arm against their enemies. It is telling also, that allegedly one of the most pronounced nationalisms, the Russian one, did not receive the same treatment by the Bolsheviks. Its strength did not lead to a similar concession from the Bolsheviks. On the contrary, the Bolsheviks largely suppressed Russian nationalism and eliminated or at least marginalized some its most active representatives. In certain respects the Bolshevik support for non-Russian nationalities was also, among others, a tool in the Bolshevik struggle against Russian nationalism or, in the Bolshevik discourse, “Great-Russian chauvinism.” The creation and preservation of the Ukrainian SSR and the insistent Ukrainianization throughout 1920s and early 1930s basically deconstructed any remains of the pre-revolutionary project of the triune Russian nation.

Recently, Matthew Pauly in his study of the Ukrainianization policy in education on the local level basically dismissed the argument that Bolsheviks had to yield to the strength of the Ukrainian national movement.⁵⁴ He documented the permanent shortages of teachers with the sufficient knowledge of Ukrainian, the necessity of strong administrative pressure in the implementation of the Ukrainianization, as well as the resistance and protests of teachers and parents. The PhD thesis also claims that Ukrainianization in the form, which it took at least, was not enforced on the Bolsheviks only by the strength of Ukrainian nationalism. It was one of the options, which prevailed due to specific circumstances and considerations.

54 Matthew D. Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education, and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923-1934* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

Pauly also claims that Ukrainianization was a “highly decentralized process.”⁵⁵ Hence, he focuses on educators and teachers in his analysis. This gives him the opportunity to look at the practical implementation of Ukrainianization in the local contexts. Thus, Pauly convincingly argues that at least in some cases the Ukrainianization drive took the form of de-Russification.⁵⁶ Still, Pauly's local perspective has also its pitfalls. His interpretations of the views and debates on Ukrainianization among republican and central leaders are limited and do not always appreciate all their dimensions and importance for the evolution of nationality policies.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Pauly does not also analyze the impact of the cross-border cultural ties on nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR in much detail.

The PhD thesis shares Pauly's willingness to go beyond a simple centralized narrative in the study of nationality issues in the Ukrainian SSR. Yet, my focus is on the actors on the republican level and on the other side of the Soviet border. The decentralization of the narrative does not, though, necessarily implies the challenge to the decisive voice of Moscow leadership in many issues of borderland and nationality policies. Yet, the emphasis on the differences in views of republican leaders and Communist party leaders in neighboring states allows to analyze the possible alternatives and the outcomes, which favored one of them. In fact, local Ukrainian and Moldovan historians are often best placed to study these discussions, due to the character of the accessible archival sources. Yet, the overly centralized interpretation of Soviet nationality and borderland issues or the tendency to analyze them within the strict dichotomy of

⁵⁵ Ibid, 7.

⁵⁶ Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 200-234.

⁵⁷ Pauly's discussion of the Shumsky affair is incomplete, Ibid, 141-143. At the same time the argument on the coincidence of Stalin's and Skrypnyk's views on Ukrainianization seems overstretched, Ibid, 10.

center, its local representatives on one side and the national opposition on the other often precludes historians to make the most of the gathered materials.⁵⁸

The tendency of the Ukrainian historiography to view Ukrainians in the interwar period as more or less homogeneous national group with a developed national identity in many ways determines the argument on the Bolshevik forced concession to Ukrainian national movement. In the studies on the Moldovan ASSR similar premise exists among both historiographical traditions. The so-called Moldovenist approach takes the existence of Moldovan people, different from Romanians, for granted. For instance, the creation of the Moldovan ASSR then is interpreted as the realization of legitimate political and cultural demands of Moldovans for the statehood.⁵⁹ In turn, more numerous Romanianists take the Romanian identity of the population of the Moldovan ASSR for granted.⁶⁰ Therefore, Moldovanization is analyzed also as an arbitrary expansionist attempt of the totalitarian power to de-nationalize local Romanians, which adds to the analysis a particularly strong bias and emotional load.⁶¹ Like in Ukrainian case Communism is considered a foreign imposition, alien to local population. Charles King was one of the few scholars, who questioned the full-fledged character of the Romanian identity in the region and general opposition of local Romanian speakers to Moldovanization.⁶²

58 There are, of course, also studies with a more nuanced approach, Valeriy Vasil'ev, *Politychne Kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR: Dynamika Vidnosyn Tsentru-Subtsentru Vlady (1917-1938)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2014).

59 *Istoriia Moldovy s Drevneishih Vremion do Nashin Dnei* (Chisinau: Elan-Poligraf, 2002), 208.

60 After the collapse of the Soviet Union Moldovan historians substituted the Marxist schemes with the uncritical incorporation of the Romanian interwar nationalist historiography.

61 Elena Negru, *Politica Etnoculturala in R.A.S.S. Moldoveneasca* (Chisinau: Prut International, 2003); Gheorghe E. Cojocaru, ed., *Cominternul și Originele "Moldovenismului"* (Chisinau: Civitas, 2009).

62 Charles King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2000); Charles King, "The Ambivalence of Authenticity, or How the Moldovan Language Was Made," *Slavic Review* 58, no. 1 (1999): 117-142; see also Mariana Hausleitner, *Deutsche und Juden in Bessarabien, 1814-1941: Zur Minderheitenpolitik Russlands und Grossrumäniens* (München: IKGS Verlag, 2005).

Similarly to the Ukrainian case, local population is depicted in conflict with the totalitarian and centralizing Bolsheviks. In the strong emphasis on Moscow's meticulous control in the Moldovan ASSR important nuances of Soviet borderland and nationality policies are often lost. Only recently historians noticed that the Soviet Ukrainian authorities also played a role in the evolution of borderland and nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR.⁶³ The interpretations of the phenomenon, are either lacking or limited, not taking into consideration the balances of power and the processes, taking place in the Soviet Union. The cases of the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR are not juxtaposed in historiography. Moreover, the importance of the Ukrainian factor for Soviet nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR attracted little discussion. I pay particular attention in the PhD thesis to the involvement of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities in Moldovan-Bessarabian affairs.

Another characteristic feature of the historiography on the Ukrainian interwar period is the tendency to treat Western and Eastern (Soviet) Ukraine separately. Interwar political borders perform in that case both as institutions and factors of isolation. Few studies, combine the analyzes of the developments of both regions. Even general treatises on the history of Ukraine, which by default describe the historical experience of both regions, tend to separate the narratives in two parts and deal with both regions in separate chapters.⁶⁴ As the result, many important issues on the mutual influences, entanglements, and cross-border processes remain scarcely covered in historiography. The borderland

63 Cojocaru, *Cominternul și Originele "Moldovenismului"*; Igor Casu, "Was the Soviet Union an Empire? A View from Chisinau," *Dystopia: Journal of Totalitarian Ideologies and Regimes* 1 (2012): 277-290.

64 For instance, Paul R Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Serhii Iekelchuk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1994).

dimension of the Ukrainianization rarely gets much attentions, besides some of the previously mentioned publications. The inclination to view the evolution of nationality policies in a Moscow-centered framework and the emphasis on the national forces on the Ukrainian-inhabited territories contributes to this outcome.

Interestingly, the Moldovan ASSR is also often analyzed isolated from Romanian developments. Yet, this approach comes as a surprise, since another common assumption in historiography on the Moldovan ASSR is that the sole purpose of the republic was to promote Soviet expansionism and provoke the separation of Bessarabia from Greater Romania. Surprisingly despite this claim, historians almost totally neglect the influence of the developments in Romanian Bessarabia on borderland policies in the Moldovan ASSR or attempt to interpret the lack thereof.

The last important tendency, which is characteristic not to Western but primarily to the post-1989 Ukrainian and Romanian/Moldovan historiographies, is the strong positions of positivist approach to history writing.⁶⁵ Within this trend many studies prefer to focus on the factual data and not on the interpretations. Eventually historians tend to limit themselves to a broad retelling of the sources, many of which are often published as appendixes in the books. At the same time due to the politicized character of the period in historiography historians are tempted to make strong statements on the issue. As the result, many recent publications take the form of a body of sources or a close retelling of them, which are framed by author's introduction and conclusion with controversial arguments.⁶⁶ The latter can often be undermined by the sources cited or published by the

65 Iaroslav Hrytsak, "Ukrainsjaia Istoriografiia: 1991-2001. Desiatiletie Peremen," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2003): 444-446.

66 V.I. Sergiichuk, *'Ukrainizatsiia Rosii': Politichne Oshukanstvo Ukrainitsiv Rosiisikoiu Bil'shovitskoiu Vladoiu v 1923-1932 Rokah* (Kyiv: Ukrains'ka Vydavnycha Spilka, 2000); Cojocar, *Cominternul și*

author himself. In this respect also Soviet Ukrainian and Soviet Moldovan historiographies on the topic can be mentioned. In a way they possessed similar characteristics to post-Soviet historiographies. They were filled with strong ideological load, but at the same time there was a tendency to focus on factual data and publishing of sources. Despite weak interpretative or highly politicized character of some of such publications the factual data and especially published sources can be of great value for historians.

Some attention should be also devoted to recent Russian historiography. Few Russian studies deal specifically with Ukrainianization and basically none with Moldovanization. Even though most of the specialists on the interwar period engaged into fierce debate with their Ukrainian colleagues on the problem of the 1932-33 famine, there were two recent studies dealing with the nationality issues in the Ukrainian SSR in 1920s and early 1930s. Elena Borisionok's study of Ukrainianization in the Ukrainian SSR is a well-researched publication.⁶⁷ At the same time her analysis often does not go beyond a general summary of the primary sources. The advantage of Borisionok's book is the attention she pays to the influence of the international developments on Ukrainianization. She does not, though, discuss the activities of Soviet Ukrainian leaders in cross-border affairs. Still, her observations on the subject within the international context are of interest.

A.V. Marchukov analyzes in his book Ukrainian national movement in the interwar Ukrainian SSR.⁶⁸ Starting with some kind of constructivist approach to

Originele "Moldovenismului."

67 Elena Borisionok, *Fenomen Sovetskoi Ukrainizatsii, 1920-e – 1930-e Gody* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006).

68 A.V. Marchukov, *Ukrainskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie: USSR 1920 – 1930-e Gody* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006).

nationalism and nation-building, Marchukov claims that the population in Ukraine did not possess Ukrainian identity and culture by the moment of the establishment of the Ukrainian SSR. Therefore, Ukrainian national specificities should have been invented. At the same time the author decides not to apply the constructivist approach comprehensively and coherently, substituting his political agenda for the methodological accuracy of the analysis. Thus, he takes for granted that such entity as “Russian World” (uniting Russians, Little Russian and White Russians) existed and, moreover, considers the all-Russian identity a “natural course of life.” Even neglecting numerous factual and historical misrepresentations, the biases and resulting methodological inaccuracies are striking. As the result of the inaccurate application of the constructivist approach, Marchukov concludes that the all-Russian identity was the result of the natural course of events, while Ukrainian national movement was an artificial, some kind of sectarian process. It should be mentioned that such an uneven usage of the constructivist approach to the history of nation-building became quite widespread in the post-socialist Eastern Europe. It allows historians to elevate certain groups, while not applying the constructivist approach to them, at the same time applying it to other groups (usually neighbors).

A recurring tendency in the studies of Soviet borderland and nationality policies is to see nationalities, as more or less defined and sometimes strong entities by this time with unified national identity and common general goals of the elites. Therefore, such terms as “Ukrainian,” “Russian,” “Moldovan” are often taken for granted and not problematized or in some cases interpreted as blunt impositions. This precludes the possibility of the analysis and evaluation of the alternatives not taken. At the same time in

most cases national identities were not yet strictly defined. They overlapped and mixed up with non-national, class and social being particularly important for the Bolsheviks, forms of identification. The ambiguities of the national identities and of the borders and markers of nationalities paved the way for Bolshevik interventions in borderland and nationality issues and provided the grounds for different interpretations thereof among Soviet leaders. This was the period of definition and redefinition for Soviet nationalities and these included Russians as well.⁶⁹ Bolshevik policies in the period contributed and in many respects guided these processes. One of the sources, among others, of the unambiguous application of national categories is the tendency in historiography to simplify or disregard the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary heritage in nationality issues of the territories under study, which the Bolsheviks faced. In the preceding decades these territories were the ground of various, often conflicting, national, social and political projects, some of which took place in the wartime circumstances. The Bolsheviks encountered the consequences of these, mostly not fully realized projects and were trying to define their own approach in this context. Among others, this study documents the Bolshevik attempt to deconstruct the pre-revolutionary project of the triune Russian nation.

The tendency to view the Bolshevik borderland and nationality policies as an interaction of two major actors: Moscow, with its factions and deviations, and national/republican elites – also significantly simplifies the story. The story basically boils down to the struggle of Moscow and its representatives in the republic with local elites

69 Matthew Pauly's analysis of the category of "Russified Ukrainians" in Soviet Ukrainian educational policy is a good example of a study, which takes the ambiguities of nationalities into consideration, Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 154-160.

and their deviations. Yet, it may be more productive to look at the issue as the process of the negotiations, interactions and mutual influences between actors on both sides of the Soviet Western border, with (silent and sometimes enforced) compromises and struggles for the sphere of influence playing an important role. Within the issue of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR, this may allow to analyze a number of previously scarcely studies topics and to revisit some of the proposed interpretations.

Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis ensues from the chosen approach to the analysis of Soviet borderland policies. Since it relies on the analysis of the specific and changing circumstances and conjuncture, the structure largely follows the chronological principle. Thus, the chapters highlight the changes in Soviet borderland policies and suggest their possible interpretations. At the same time the chronological principle of the organization of the dissertation is partly supplemented with the problem-oriented logic. Each chapter also attempts to discuss a specific issue or a set of issues. In this respect the chronological borders of each chapter may transcend the declared ones in the title for the sake of a more comprehensive and dynamic discussion of the discussed problems. The Ukrainian and Moldovan cases are not evenly represented in this thesis. The Ukrainian question is a larger issue. Therefore, it received more attention in the structure of the thesis.

It should be also emphasized that in some cases the length constraints of the thesis do not allow an in-depth and at the same time comprehensive account of such a big topic on the scale of almost 15 years. Therefore, some tough choices were made, which left out

or limited significantly the discussion of a number of otherwise important issues and motives. The resulting text is a selection of cases and problems, which in my opinion, demonstrate the key directions of and changes in Soviet borderland policies most vividly.

The PhD thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapters focuses on the first years of the formation and consolidation of Soviet Ukraine and its integration into the Soviet Union. The first part discusses the lessons, which Bolsheviks drew from the civil war(s) and the Polish-Soviet war. This experience influenced significantly the decision to maintain a quasi-independent Soviet Ukraine, as a political entity, and to introduce nationality policies, which favored non-Russian nationalities often at the expense of Russians. The chapter suggests that the years of the civil war convinced some of the most influential Bolshevik leaders of the dangers of Russian nationalism, possibly even more than that of non-Russians. The second part of the chapter deals with the complexities of the integration of Soviet Ukraine into the emerging administrative structure of the Bolshevik state. Taking the example of the Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy and its head, Christian Rakovsky, who was also the chairman of the Soviet Ukrainian government, the chapter traces the conflict between the different understandings of the place of Soviet Ukraine in the all-Soviet context.

The second chapter is based upon the comparative discussion of the Bolshevik treatment of three Ukrainian socialist and Marxist nationally-oriented parties: the USRP, the Borotbists, and the Ukapiists. The chapter highlights different approaches, which Bolsheviks adopted in each case. The choice of the allies among these parties suggest the general contours of Soviet Ukraine, which the leading Bolsheviks envisaged. At the same time even in the case of the eventual merger of some of these Ukrainian Marxist groups

with the Bolsheviks, the latter apparently acted from the position of strength, imposing their own agenda and emphasizing the mistakes of the former.

The third chapter deals with the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR in 1924. The process of the creation of the Moldovan ASSR inspired hot debates on the most appropriate direction of nationality and borderland policies in the new autonomous republic and the most suitable group for its administration. The chapter argues that the Soviet Ukrainian authorities played a key role in this process, given almost a free hand in the issue by Moscow. This proved to have lasting consequences of the active involvement of the Soviet Ukrainian leadership in the Moldovan-Bessarabian affairs.

The fourth chapter provides an account of the so-called Shumsky affair, which proved to be one of the most important debates on Soviet nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR. The chapter follows the interplay and the struggle of different factions for power in the Ukrainian SSR and the possibility to introduce and convince Moscow of their understanding of Soviet nationality policies. The account suggests that the divisiveness of the Soviet Ukrainian leadership was in many respects the foundation of the affair. Kaganovich's skillful use of the factionalism in the KP(b)U leadership to a significant extent shaped the outcome of the Shumsky affair.

The fifth chapter starts with the discussion of the impact of Pilsudski's coup in Poland in 1926 on Soviet nationality and borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR. It follows the increasing Soviet preoccupation with the possibility of the use of the cross-border cultural ties by Polish government against the Soviet Union. It had the most immediate effect in Shumsky's affair and in Western Ukraine, where the Communist Party

of Western Ukraine passed through a phase of turmoil and splits. The second part of the chapter discusses the phenomenon of the Communist parties of national minorities in Poland and Romania, and their role in the Soviet borderland policies. The Communist parties of national minorities were at the intersection of the interests and agendas of the Soviet activists on both sides of the border.

The sixth chapter focuses on the end of the 1920s. It discusses the innovations introduced by the new Soviet Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment, Mykola Skrypnyk, in the field of nationality policies and Ukrainianization. The chapter pays particular attention to the issue of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in Soviet Ukraine and Skrypnyk's solution to the problem. The case is juxtaposed to the Moldovanization campaign and its interplay with Ukrainianization in the Moldovan ASSR. The second part of the chapter analyzes the elaboration of the literary idiom and orthography of the Ukrainian and Moldovan languages. The chapter concludes with the discussion of the SVU trial in the Ukrainian SSR and its consequences for Ukrainianization.

The last chapter focuses on the First Five-Year plan, the challenges it produced and the consequences for Soviet borderland and nationality policies. The first part deals with the growing Soviet concerns over the vulnerability of the Western border regions, *Pravoberezh'e*, and the borderland republics in general, in the context of the collectivization campaign and the resistance, that it kindled. This part is followed by the discussion of the famine in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. The last subchapters discuss the influence of the collectivization, grain requisitions, and famine crises on the changes in Soviet nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR and Moldovan ASSR in 1932-1933.

Sources

The chosen approach in the thesis largely determined the selection of the sources. In the research in a number of archives and libraries in several countries the main emphasis was on the debates, discussion, conflicting decision and interpretations, mostly on the level of the leading republican party and administrative officials, Comintern actors and the Communist parties in the neighboring states. These debates were then contextualized with the framework of the decisions, directives and reactions of the central authorities in Moscow. One of the key emphasis was on the interaction between the multitude of involved actors. To this end, the nucleus of the sources for the thesis consists of the central and republican directives and resolutions, correspondence between the key actors, the minutes and the verbatim transcripts of the Politburo meetings, TsK Plenums and party conferences of the KP(b)U and its Moldovan obkom. The reports of the diplomatic and secret services on the situation in the neighboring states and in the Soviet borderland republics is another important source. Finally, the thesis also makes use of some published pamphlets, books and periodicals of the time. Fortunately, a number of relevant sources are also already published in numerous document collections or made accessible online. The thesis relies heavily on the published sources, as well as the ones available only in archives and libraries.

Chapter 1. Defining the Principles of Soviet National Statehood: Soviet Ukraine from the Civil War to the Establishment of the Soviet Union

On 22 February, 1920, Christian Rakovsky signed an official document, for the first time adding the title “People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine” after his name. The document he signed was the project of memorandum of the government of the Ukrainian SSR to the government of Poland. The text of the diplomatic note itself is of little interest, mostly focusing on the peaceful nature of the Soviet Ukrainian government and the necessity to sign a peace treaty with Poland.¹ What mattered much more, though, was that the memorandum was sent by the Ukrainian government and not by Moscow, and even more importantly, that it was signed by the Ukrainian Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

One could hardly find a more suitable candidate for the position than Rakovsky.² A Bulgarian-born revolutionary, he traveled extensively, participating in and maintaining contacts with socialist groups all over Europe. For a number of years he lived in Romania; he was one of the leading figures in the Romanian Social-Democratic Party and the Secretary of the Federation of Socialist Parties in the Balkans. When, after the February Revolution, Rakovsky escaped from Romanian authorities to Russia, he was an experienced revolutionary, a polyglot, and had a large network of contacts in the socialist

1 DVP (Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR), vol. 2, p. 386-387.

2 On Rakovsky's life, see Francois Conte, *Christian Rakovsky, 1873-1941: A Political Biography* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1989); Gus Fagan, “Biographical Introduction to Christian Rakovsky,” in Gus Fagan ed., *Christian Rakovsky, Selected Writings on Opposition in the USSR 1923–30* (London: Allison & Busby, 1980); V. M. Volkovyns'kyi and E. V. Kul'chyts'kyi, *Khrystyian Rakovs'kyi: Politychnyi Portret* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Politychnoi Literatury Ukrainy, 1990).

wing of the political movements of Europe. Due to his influence and connections in Romania and the Balkans in general, it is not surprising that during the civil war Rakovsky's main theater of operation would become the south-western regions of the former Romanov Empire. As one of the leaders of Rumcherod (Central Committee of the Soviets of Romanian Front, Black Sea Fleet and Odesa), he would be particularly active on the Romanian front, aiming to install revolutionary governments in Romania, and eventually in the Balkans and through Hungary in Central Europe. The first step to this end was the “return,” as Bolsheviks perceived, of Bessarabia to Soviet control. Throughout the years 1917 and 1918 under the influence of the kaleidoscopically changing international situation the Moldovan People's Democratic Republic, proclaimed on the territory of the former Bessarabian gubernia, was gradually drifting towards Romania, resulting in a union with it on 27 March, 1918.³ The presence of the Romanian army on the territory of Bessarabia was an important factor in its annexation to Romania. In fact, in early March 1918 Rakovsky was the leading negotiator and signatory of the much discussed agreement with the Romanian Prime-Minister General Averescu, which envisaged the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Bessarabia in a two-month period.⁴ The Romanian government did not stick to the agreement. Shortly the changing fortune of the Soviets on the diplomatic and military fronts made the agreement irrelevant. While the terms of agreement were not realized, this document gave the Soviets legal grounds to

3 For a somewhat biased, but a very detailed study of the history of the Moldovan People's Democratic Republic, see I. E. Levit, *Moldavskaia Respublika (Noiabr' 1917 – Noiabr' 1918)* (Chisinau: Central'naia Poligrafia, 2000).

4 The document was published in *Bessarabiia na Perekrestke Evropeiskoi Diplomatii: Dokumenty i Materialy* (Moskva: Indrik, 1996), 216-217; in English, Andrei Popovici, *The Political Status of Bessarabia* (Washington: 1931), 245-250. For Rakovsky's own take on the issue, see C. G. Rakovsky, *Roumania and Bessarabia* (London: W. P. Coates, 1925), 34-47.

not recognize the union of Bessarabia with Romania and to consider the Romanian administration in Bessarabia an occupational force.

For the time, Rakovsky and the Bolsheviks had to give up their revolutionary aspirations in Romania. Rakovsky mostly focused on work within Ukraine, especially since the positions of Bolsheviks in the region were far from consolidated. In fact, in February 1920, when Rakovsky, by then one of the most influential Bolsheviks in Ukraine and the Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, signed the project of the diplomatic memorandum as Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Soviet power was on the edge of disaster.

Just several months before, the Bolshevik regime had barely survived the onslaught of the White forces under the leadership of General Anton Denikin. In Denikin's military advance Ukraine was a key prong of the attack. By the fall of 1919 Denikin's forces occupied Left Bank and a significant part of Right Bank Ukraine and were moving in the direction of Moscow. Only a desperate counteroffensive by the Red Army, coupled with the exhaustion of the White forces and the resistance to the Whites in the territories under their control, saved the Bolshevik regime in Russia. The Red Army would push Denikin back, recover Ukraine and reinstate Soviet power in the region. Nevertheless, despite the defeat of Denikin, the struggle with the White forces could not yet be considered settled in Ukraine in February 1920. With the material and technical support of foreign powers, General Wrangel secured a stronghold in Crimea and was threatening Bolsheviks with the possibility of a renewed White offensive.⁵

5 After the February revolution and till the end of civil war the future territory of the Ukrainian SSR was the scene of rapidly changing, sometimes coexisting, political regimes and various movements. On various regimes in Ukraine and chaotic circumstances of 1917-1921, see Georgiy Kasianov, "Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Domination," in Wolfram Dornik, Georgiy Kasianov,

Yet, another belligerent force was of greater danger for the Ukrainian SSR in the winter of 1920. Independent Poland emerged at the end of the First World War among the remains of three collapsing empires. Led by the ambitious and charismatic Józef Piłsudski, Poland aspired to become a major regional power in Eastern Europe. Piłsudski's own ambitions went well beyond the ethnolinguistic borders of Poland.⁶ He strove for the restoration of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in the format of a Polish-led federation or at least as head of a chain of what he hoped would be the quasi-independent vassal states of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. To this end, of course, Poland had to take control over vast Eastern territories and to push out the Bolsheviks and remaining White forces. At the same time Polish diplomats skillfully attracted allies to their cause. First of all, they targeted national governments and movements, most notably securing and forcing into the alliance Petliura, Chairman of the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic in April 1920.⁷ By the end of Winter 1920 Polish forces were well into Ukrainian territory and, having already established control over Minsk, prepared for an offensive on Kyiv. By the end of February the Soviet prospects in the war with Poland were so dim, that the RSFSR's Commissar of Foreign Affairs was forced to contemplate the proclamation of the full-fledged, not simply declarative, independence of the Ukrainian SSR:

Hannes Leidinger, Peter Lieb, Alexei Miller, Bogdan Musial, and Vasyl Rasevych, *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922* (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 76-132; Stephen Velychenko, *State Building in Revolutionary Ukraine: A Comparative Studies of Governments and Bureaucrats, 1917-1922* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); *Narysy Istorii Ukraïns'koi Revoliutsii 1917-1921 Rokiv: u 2 kn.* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 2011-2012).

6 Andrzej Nowak, *Polska i Trzy Rosje. Studium Polityki Wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do Kwietnia 1920 Roku)* (Cracow: Arcana, 2001).

7 On Piłsudski's alliance with some of the Ukrainian leaders, see Zbigniew Karpus, *Shidni Soiuznyky Pol'shi u Viiny 1920 Roku* (Torun': Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1999), 16-64.

Either we give up Ukraine or the Poles, following a war for Ukraine, will march on Moscow. Or we attempt to localize the war by means of an immediate separation of a Red independent Ukraine. To avoid a Polish attack, we should reintroduce the independence of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and postpone federation to a future date.⁸

This option would entail the transfer of part of the Red Army under the command of Soviet Ukraine and its transformation into a Ukrainian Red Army. The full-fledged independence of the Ukrainian SSR, as Chicherin saw it, would allow the RSFSR to dissociate itself diplomatically from the war, localizing it in Ukraine and transforming it into a Ukrainian-Polish war, rather than a Polish-Soviet one. Otherwise, Chicherin feared that the further advance of the Polish Army eastwards would endanger Soviet power not only in Ukraine, but even in Moscow. Basically, the Commissar of Foreign Affairs suggested sacrificing Ukraine in order to ensure the safety of the socialist revolution in the RSFSR. It was in these complicated circumstances, endangered in Ukraine by White forces in the South and the Polish army, aided by Petliura's forces, in the West, that the Bolsheviks decided to create the separate position of a Ukrainian Commissar for Foreign Affairs, which was filled by Christian Rakovsky.

In the literature on Soviet nationality policies towards Ukraine, when the origins of the Bolsheviks' nationality policies towards Ukraine are discussed (first of all, Ukrainianization), one frequently encounters the notion that the Bolshevik approach was a concession to the strong Ukrainian national movement. According to this interpretation the strength of the Ukrainian movement caught the Bolsheviks by surprise. Therefore, in

8 *Pol'sko-Sovetskaya Voina, 1919-1920 (Ranee ne Opublikovannye Dokumenty i Materialy)* (Moscow: Institut Slavianovedeniia i Balkanistiki RAN, 1994) vol. 1, 44.

order to gain stability and a foothold in the region, the Bolsheviks had to somehow accommodate the national feelings of the local population. This explanation in different forms migrates from one scholarly work to the other.⁹ Basically, according to this interpretation, the main lesson of the civil war for the Bolsheviks was an understanding of the strength of nationalist movements and sentiments in Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, Ukraine was one of the largest and richest Soviet republics was a key factor in Bolshevik decisions on nationality policies. Nevertheless, the delineation of Ukraine into a separate autonomous state-like Ukrainian Soviet Republic may seem predestined either through retrospective reading of history from a contemporary perspective, or by way of a national interpretation of history, which would count the Ukrainian national movement as the only force, with which the Bolsheviks had to reckon and compromise with. Yet, from the perspective of the late 1910s and early 1920s the Bolshevik choice in favor of a Ukrainian Soviet Republic subordinated to Moscow, but still with a relatively autonomous Ukrainian government with support for a separate Ukrainian culture and identity was not an obvious outcome. This chapter looks at the circumstances, which led to this outcome. In this chapter I will present a narrative, which takes into consideration the alternatives to the final outcome, which existed. This presupposes also a look at different actors, who voiced opinions on the administrative structure of the political space under Bolshevik rule. Finally, the chapter will outline some of the circumstances, which influenced the process the creation of the Ukrainian SSR and the delineation of its prerogatives and favored the choice of some of the suggested options.

9 Some of publications with such arguments were mentioned in the introduction.

1. 1. Between Poles and Whites

Indeed, after the October Revolution in December 1917 the Bolsheviks declared the Ukrainian People's Republic of Soviets (UPRS). The borders of the declared state were unclear. Moreover, the UPRS was not the only Soviet polity, declared in Ukraine. The Odesan Soviet Republic and, more importantly the Donetsk-Krivoi Rog Soviet Republic were the other. The leaders of the latter particularly insisted on the economic considerations in the elaboration of the administrative structure of the Soviet state and on the inclusion of the Donetsk-Krivoi Rog Soviet Republic into the RSFSR.¹⁰ It was under Moscow's pressure that the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, declared in March 1918, united all Soviets in Ukraine, including the Donetsk-Krivoi Rog basin, under one leadership in Kharkiv.¹¹ The Ukrainian Soviet Republic was a formally independent state. Yet, this did not necessarily presuppose the delegation of full sovereignty or even broad autonomy to the Republic, nor did it necessarily imply tolerant and affirmative policies towards Ukrainian culture. Even after the civil war there were strong and multiple voices in the party, both in Moscow and in Ukraine, which saw the Ukrainian SSR as a constitutive part of the RSFSR.

The Bolsheviks were not expecting to encounter a warm welcome among non-Russian masses; nor was their support among Russians too widespread. The strength of nationalism, in particular Ukrainian nationalism, in many respects exceeded their expectations. Nevertheless, the potential strength of nationalism was not the only lesson relevant for nationality policies, which the Bolsheviks drew out of their post-World War I

10 Vladimir Kornilov, *Donetsko-Krivorozhaskaia Respublika: Rastrel'iannaia Mechta* (Kharkiv: Folio, 2011).

11 Valerii Soldatenko, *Revoliutsiina Doba v Ukraini (1917-1920 Roki): Logika Piznannia, Istorychni Postati, Kliuchovi Epizody* (Kyiv: Parlamets'ke Vyd-vo, 2011), 182-183.

experience.

The Polish-Soviet war¹² was a crucial event for the Soviet western borderlands and by extension for Soviet nationality policies in general. It not only set the definitive Soviet-Polish border, which was in flux after World War I,¹³ for the whole interwar period; it also set the stage for interwar borderland policies and proved an education for the Bolsheviks. To begin with, the Polish-Soviet war demonstrated to the Bolsheviks that Poland would not be a necessarily peaceful neighbor. The plans of Pilsudski and his inner circle to create a modern version of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth forced the Bolsheviks to respond. Pilsudski promised Ukrainians and to much lesser extent Belarusians strong support for local cultures and a very broad governing autonomy, which, depending on interpretation, bordered on independence and confederation. Using conciliatory promises and, when needed, military force, the Poles managed to enlist influential Ukrainian leaders as their allies.

The Bolsheviks found themselves in a difficult position. As a Party, which aimed at combating oppression, including the national oppression, they had at least rhetorically to match the offer and ideally to exceed it. In addition, as newcomers, the Bolsheviks suffered from a lack of trust among the diplomatic and political elites of other states. As they found out, the local population in Ukraine was also not always convinced by Bolshevik policies and Marxist-inspired rhetoric. Therefore, the Bolsheviks paid a great deal of attention to the image of their policies. Within this context Chicherin insisted on

12 On the Polish-Soviet war, see Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919-1920* (London: Orbis, 1983); Adam Zamoyski, *Warsaw 1920: Lenin's Failed Conquest of Europe* (London: HarperPress, 2008).

13 In many respects Polish-Soviet war can be seen as another phase of the World War I. On the Eastern front World War I hardly ended with the signing of armistice in a railway coach on November 11, 1918, even if the belligerents changed.

creating the position of the Ukrainian Commissar of Foreign Affairs. He reasoned that Soviet Ukraine was not present on an international level. Western diplomats and politicians considered it merely a phantom, actually directly subordinated to Moscow. As a result, anti-Soviet Ukrainian politicians, most notably Petliura, with the support of Polish diplomats managed to monopolize the role of defenders of the Ukrainian cause on the international level, claiming themselves as the only legitimate Ukrainian government. Therefore, Chicherin concluded, Soviet Ukraine should make itself heard. At the same time, it was hard to claim that Soviet Ukraine was a real, independent state, since it had no Foreign Commissariat, which, according to Chicherin, was a necessary attribute of any state.¹⁴ Eventually, such an institution would be established on Moscow's insistence, despite, interestingly, strong opposition from Ukrainian Bolsheviks. Thus, the Polish military advance eastwards coupled with Pilsudski's political and diplomatic alliance with Petliura forced the Bolsheviks to create the position of Commissar of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine with Rakovsky at its head. At the same time initially it was mostly just a declarative, diplomatic game. This becomes clear if one takes into consideration that the post of Ukrainian Commissar of Foreign Affairs did not presuppose any subordinated staff.¹⁵

On a more general level, the Polish-Soviet war signaled to the Bolsheviks the emergence of an ambitious neighbor, which would keep Bolshevik policy in Ukraine in check throughout the interwar years, to a significant extent encouraging the Bolsheviks to permit a certain autonomy and state-like appearance in Soviet Ukraine. The existence of

14 *Sovetsko-Pol'skaia Voina*, part 1, 55.

15 *Sovetsko-Pol'skaia Voina*, vol. 1, 55.

neighboring Poland made any decision to renounce tactical concessions in Soviet Ukraine and Belarus more difficult, since any backtracking could be used by Polish politicians and diplomats against Soviet power. The Bolsheviks were well aware of this, since they have witnessed how the Poles did this during the Polish-Soviet war; in fact, they played the same game against Poland in its relations with its own minorities. Later on the Polish factor would be also a strong argument against the opposition to Ukrainianization among Soviet Ukrainian leaders.

The Polish-Soviet war played yet another important role. During the war, a variety of techniques and tricks of borderland policies were used and implemented. In this respect the Polish-Soviet war followed the course set by World War I on the Eastern front and probably to a lesser extent the prewar inter-imperial competition. Nevertheless, the Polish-Soviet war probably took it to another level, since this war took place on a much more chaotic field, which lost its main centers of gravity, that is the three continental empires and to a lesser extent the Ottoman one. In addition, this was the first major exercise in borderland policies, in which Bolsheviks took part as active participants. Previously, most of their experience was based upon observation. The Bolsheviks had their first taste of borderland politics mostly within the framework of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, in the struggle with the various independent, national and/or puppet governments of Ukraine, Belarus, Finland and the Baltic states. Yet, it was the Polish-Soviet war, which became a boot camp in borderland policies for the Bolsheviks. The Polish political elite had much more experience in borderland issues. After all, the competition over Polish-inhabited borderlands was one of the key frameworks for Polish-related politics after the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by the three empires in the 18th

century. The division of the territory of the Commonwealth between the contiguous empires created the framework for the inter-imperial competition and the struggles for power between local elites in the borderland regions. Basically, independent Poland emerged to some extent with the help of the skillful use of the borderland politics.

While the composition of the Bolsheviks leadership should not be reduced to that of Russian-Jewish intelligentsia and included a significant number of representatives of other national groups, still there were far less activists with the rich experience of borderland policies. This is not to say that Bolsheviks were absolute newcomers in the world of borderland issues, but they could often underestimate its potential. This was frequently the case even of the Bolshevik leaders, who originated from the borderland regions of the former Romanov empire. They mostly preferred a nationally-blind approach to politics, since, as Liliana Riga argued, it was exactly the class-universalist, *rossiiskii*-oriented character of Bolshevik radicalism, which attracted most non-Russians to the party.¹⁶ Initially, in their dealings with the borderland regions and in the attempts to revolutionize neighboring states the Bolsheviks preferred mostly to rely on the rhetoric, propaganda, and policies based upon the commonality of universal class interests. The use of the national question in borderland policies was often rather an afterthought and a response to the actions of other players. Yet, if there were any underestimation of the potential of the national question for the struggle for borderlands among the Bolshevik leadership, it was to a large extent shattered by the Polish-Soviet war.

Mostly the change was due to the actions of the Polish leadership during the war,

16 For the impact of different socioethnic settings on the choice of future leaders in favor of the Bolshevik party, see Liliana Riga, *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

which extensively and skillfully used the national question and nationality policies in order to spread its political influence and strengthen its expansionist ambitions. Poles made generous promises of national autonomy and independence to Ukrainians, forged anti-Bolshevik alliances with their leaders, and even managed to find time and resources in this wartime context to introduce tolerant policies towards its Belarusian minority in order to attract their brethren under Soviet rule to independent Poland. Despite seeming dogmatism the Bolsheviks were keen observers and, when needed, diligent pupils. The Polish successes in the war convinced (or in some cases reinforced the conviction of) some Bolsheviks leaders that the national question and its implications in the borderland context should not be neglected. In the course of the Polish-Soviet war, and even more so after the Soviet western border was settled, the Bolsheviks implemented some of the techniques and policies, which were on display in the years of the conflict with Poland. Yet their approach to borderland politics still had a specific Marxist-Leninist twist.

The Bolsheviks learned yet another lesson in the years of the Civil War and to some extent this lesson laid the basis for another rationale, which encouraged them to adopt a supportive stance in favor of Ukrainian culture and identity and opt for a broad autonomy for the Ukrainian SSR. As hinted above, Poland was not the only force, which put the Bolsheviks on the verge of disaster. Earlier it had been Denikin's army, which not only pushed the Red Army completely out of Ukraine, but also was on the march towards Moscow. While the White forces were quite diverse in their goals and ideology, there were several strands, that were common for almost all the leading Whites. First of all, unsurprisingly they all considered Bolshevism their main enemy. Second, almost all of them were Russian nationalists and devoted advocates for *edinaia i nedelimaia*. In

practice, this usually entailed strong opposition to autonomy for the non-Russians of the former Romanov Empire, to say nothing of their self-determination.¹⁷ This stance was even more uncompromising in the case of Ukraine and Belarus and respectively for Little Russians (Ukrainians) and White Russians (Belarusians), who were, according to the Whites part of the triune Russian nation, together with their big bother, Great Russians. Consequently, there could be no discussion of an autonomous, let alone independent, Ukraine or Belarus, nor could there be any recognition of the separate Ukrainian or Belarusian identities. Only in the last phase of the Civil War, when the defeat of the White forces was imminent, did Wrangel recognize the possibility of an autonomous Ukraine in a desperate effort to enlist Ukrainians in the struggle against Bolshevism.

The Bolsheviks leadership, particularly Lenin, was not keen on Russian nationalism and did not consider it to be a part of their politics or ideology long before the October Revolution. Lenin viewed Russian nationalism as a source of oppression in the Romanov Empire. It was during the civil war, that the Bolsheviks learned that Russian nationalism was a major threat, since their main enemy, the White forces, were predominantly Russian nationalists. In addition, as it became clear during the civil war, many Bolsheviks themselves were not innocent of what Lenin called “Great-Russian chauvinism,” which presupposed the neglectful and condescending attitude towards non-Russians, disregard for their rights of autonomy and self-determination, and excessive admiration for the Russian language and culture. The Ukrainian issue in this context was

17 This is the main reason, why the leaders of independent Poland considered the White forces their greatest enemy, since the White leaders did not want recognize Poland, holding it as a part of indivisible Russia. At a certain moment during the war Poland even ceased any military operations against the Red Army in order to let the latter focus on its struggles with the White army. Thus, due to their views on the possibility of secession or at least autonomy for non-Russians Bolsheviks emerged as a lesser threat to Poland, than the Whites.

a cornerstone. For the Whites it was a key ingredient in their concept of *edinaia i nedilimaia*, and even more importantly in the triune scheme of the Russian nation. For Bolsheviks, conscious of the danger of Russian nationalism, it turned into a touchstone, an acid test, to check one's own convictions and devotion to a Bolshevik, internationalist approach to the national question. As Lenin said at the Eighth Party Congress: "Scratch a communist and you will find a Great-Russian chauvinist."¹⁸

As a result, in the first years of Soviet power, the Bolsheviks took issue with Russian nationalism both from the point of view of tactics, ideology, and repressions.¹⁹ Tactically, an explicit stance against Russian nationalism could help the Bolsheviks to enlist additional allies from the non-Russians in their struggle with the White forces. Thus, the Bolsheviks hoped for support from the Ukrainian left-leaning elites and mobilizing and arming peasantry proclaiming the Ukrainian autonomy and the recognition of the Ukrainian identity. It is worth-mentioning, though, that, this was the necessary prerequisite for military success in Ukraine. For instance, Denikin's militant attitude towards Ukrainian movement did not hamper significantly his offensive, which he staged to a significant extent through the Ukrainian territory. Denikin's anti-Ukrainian stance did not spur enough resistance from local population to seriously impede the advance of the White forces. The Bolsheviks, though, were eager to emphasize their differences with Denikin in social and nationality policies when they staged their counter-offensive.

From an ideological point of view, for the Bolsheviks Russian nationalism was one

¹⁸ Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 38, p. 183.

¹⁹ During the civil war Bolsheviks captured and executed more than 70 members of the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists, Alexei Miller, "Russia's Ukrainian Policy before 1917," in *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922*, 320.

of the characteristic features of the Romanov Empire, “the prison of the peoples,” as Lenin following De Custine and Herzen called it. At the same time the Bolsheviks declared the intention to create a more just and equal society, free of any oppression, national included. In this framework the decision to create a quasi-independent Soviet Ukraine was an attempt to realize these principles. Moreover, opting for a Ukrainian culture and identity separate from the Russian and a Soviet Ukrainian Republic, the Bolsheviks were striking a blow at Russian nationalism. It was an indication that the Bolshevik party intended to build a state and a society different from the one the White leaders envisaged, and that included key differences in the social, economic and political approaches, as well as the national one. The creation and preservation of a separate Soviet Ukrainian republic²⁰ institutionalized the struggle against “Great-Russian chauvinism” also within the Bolshevik party itself, against numerous internationalists, who considered that the Marxist party should not pay attention to the national question. In practice this latter approach led to the dominance of the Russian language and disregard for the cultural and political rights of non-Russians. This was exactly the trend, which Lenin and some of his colleagues struggled against. Such an approach could create problems for the Bolsheviks in their relations with non-Russians and remove one of the key differences with the Whites. In addition, it created the threat that Russian nationalism in the party would derail the construction of a socialist society, replacing and distorting significant aspects of the socialist ideal. Already in 1914 Lenin wrote that the socialists of a ruling nation had a significant drawback – “incomprehension of their socialist responsibilities to

20 As well as of the other non-Russian Soviet autonomous polities. Yet, as mentioned above, Ukraine was crucial issue here due to its general political and economic importance, but even more in this context due to its centrality in the discourse of Russian nationalism.

the oppressed nations, sticking with prejudices, inherited from the Great-Power bourgeoisie.”²¹ While Lenin and some of his associates were aware of the dangers of Russian nationalism well before the October Revolution, it was during the Civil War that he became fully cognizant of its dangers. Given the strength of Russian nationalism among the White forces and the persistence of “Great-Power chauvinism” in the Bolshevik Party,²² some of the leading Bolsheviks came to the conclusion, that in regard to the national question, Russian nationalism was more dangerous than non-Russian nationalism. However, as we shall see, not all Bolsheviks came to the same conclusion.

The origins of the Bolshevik policies towards Ukrainians and their decision to create an autonomous Soviet Ukrainian Republic should be understood within this context rather than limiting it, only to the discussion of the Ukrainian national movement and the impression it made on the Soviet leaders. There were other rationales and motivations, which mostly emerged or were consolidated in the midst of the civil war experience and were no less important than Ukrainian nationalism. After all, it was not Ukrainian nationalism, which put in question the Bolshevik victory, but Denikin's and Poland's armies. In fact, if there was any nationalism, which the Bolshevik leaders truly disdained more than any other, it was rather Russian nationalism (either in its White versions or the “Great-Russian chauvinism” in the party itself). In February 1919, Christian Rakovsky, one of the leaders of Soviet Ukraine in the first years of its existence, proclaimed that there was a lack of Ukrainian national consciousness among the

21 Lenin, *PSS*, vol. 25, 300.

22 Later the Georgian affair in 1922 made a particularly strong impression on Lenin and reinforced his preoccupation with the persistence of the “Great-Russian chauvinism” among Bolsheviks, Jeremy Smith, *Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 65-67; Jeremy Smith, “The Georgian Affair of 1922. Policy Failure, Personality Clash or Power Struggle?” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50 (1998): 519–544.

population. He also added that demands to make Ukrainian the official language were injurious to the Ukrainian revolution.²³ Thus, one of the allegedly most informed Bolsheviks on the Ukrainian question at that time did not consider Ukrainian nationalism and national interests to be a significant political factor. The Bolsheviks also were not reluctant to hurt Ukrainian national feelings, if the situation necessitated. When the Red Army was closing on the Polish frontier in 1920, Moscow promised the Polish masses that the final border of revolutionary Poland would be well to the East of the Curzon Line, which was regarded as the Polish ethnographic border.²⁴ By this promise, Soviet leaders and diplomats attempted to counter the potential growth of Polish nationalism, which they expected to follow the arrival of the foreign (Red) army on the territory of Poland.²⁵ Yet, the promise of larger territories to the East of Poland inevitably entailed cutting into Ukrainian and Belarusian ethnographic territories. Apparently, Soviet leaders did not fear possible nationalist reactions from the Ukrainian and Belarusian sides.

To conclude, there were several rationales behind the creation of a Soviet Ukraine with limited state sovereignty and support for Ukrainian identity and culture. The (potential) strength of the Ukrainian national consciousness and nationalism was only one factor and probably not the most important. The emergence of the Polish factor along the Western border, the Russian nationalism of the White forces, the persistence of “Great-Russian chauvinism” in the party ranks and the assessment of the civil war experience²⁶ in

23 Quoted in Jerzy Borzecky, *The Soviet-Polish Peace of 1921 and the Creation of Interwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 18.

24 *Sovetsko-Pol'skaia Voina*, vol. 1, 142.

25 *Ibid*, 142-143.

26 Sheila Fitzpatrick in a classic article argued that the civil war was a key experience for the Bolsheviks, Sheila Fitzpatrick, “The Civil War as a Formative Experience,” in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites, ed., *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 57-76.

this light each contributed in one way or another to the granting and preservation of quasi-state sovereignty to Soviet Ukraine and the support for Ukrainianization later on. This, though, opened up a number of issues, which needed to be resolved, such as the relations between the Soviet Ukrainian and Moscow authorities, the prerogatives of the Ukrainian government, the structure of Ukrainian ruling bodies, the composition of the Ukrainian Party, and so on.. Some of these issues will be touched upon later in the thesis.

Moreover, some of the state-like features and prerogatives of the Ukrainian SSR, which emerged in the first years of Soviet power, were of tactical, even situational origin. The creation of the position of the Ukrainian Commissar of Foreign Affairs in response to the Polish military advance and diplomatic propaganda was one of the most interesting examples of this kind. Yet, what started as a tactical situational response, eventually gave birth to an interesting phenomenon – a peculiar Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy, which embodied some of the issues mentioned above, such as the limits and the extent of Ukrainian sovereignty, Kharkiv-Moscow relations, Ukrainian borderland policies and intercourse with Western neighbors. Finally, Ukrainian diplomacy was headed by the same Rakovsky, who in 1919 demonstrated an explicit neglect of Ukrainian national feelings, but in the early 1920s emerged as the champion of the Ukrainian cause on the domestic and international arenas. In the following sections I will analyze how certain features of the Ukrainian autonomy and prerogatives were at the center of the conflict between different Soviet institutions and groups. The story will demonstrate different understandings of the status of Soviet Ukraine and the relations between Soviet republics.

1. 2. Soviet Ukrainian Diplomacy in the Early 1920s: Filling Form with Content

Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy of the early 1920s was, indeed, an unusual phenomenon, still puzzling to historians. What started off as a mere decorative statement, used to raise the international status of Soviet Ukraine and to underpin its declarative independence, eventually evolved into a quite wide range of foreign activities. Although Rakovsky initially became Commissar of Foreign Affairs without an actual commissariat in February 1921, the Ukrainian TsIK decreed the creation of the subordinate institution, that is the Ukrainian Commissariat for Foreign Affairs one month later, on 21 March. The Commissariat, though, would have to wait to begin its work. Soon the Polish army occupied Kyiv, calling into question the future of the Bolshevik regime in Ukraine, and in Pilsudski's most ambitious dreams, even in Moscow. During these months the Ukrainian NKID mostly limited its activities to diplomatic declarations on the necessity of the liberation of Ukraine, peace negotiations and Polish repressive policies. Yet, after the Red Army pushed Pilsudski's army out of the greater part of Ukraine, more opportunities opened up for Soviet Ukrainian diplomats. During the years of the Ukrainian NKID's existence, from 1920 to 1923, Soviet Ukrainian diplomats developed relatively autonomous activities on several fronts: the creation of separate Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic missions²⁷ in Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and the Baltic States (basically, in Lithuania), the establishment of diplomatic relations with a number of other

27 This was basically the Soviet counterpart of Embassies. Yet just like in the case of the Council of Ministers and Sovnarkom, Bolsheviks decided not to use the same title for their embassies and ambassadors, as the capitalist states did. In turn, they opted for the such as titles *polnomochnoe predstavitel'stvo* (plenipotentiary representation) and *polnomochnyi predstavitel'* (plenipotentiary). This choice allowed Polish diplomats to mock their Soviet colleagues. When Polish Foreign Ministry compiled the list of foreign ambassadors to Poland for accreditation, they had put the Soviet plenipotentiaries in the very end of the list, arguing that they could not give the same full-fledged status as to other ambassadors, since the title of *polnomochnyi predstavitel'* was not internationally recognized.

states, the formation of a Soviet Ukrainian delegation to peace talks with Poland in Riga, the negotiation and implementation of repatriation agreements for Ukrainians, and the opening of foreign representations in Kharkiv.

The story of semi-autonomous Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy is little-known outside of a limited circle of specialists, the predominant majority of whom are historians from Ukraine proper. Nevertheless, it is a topic of great interest, since it does not only indicate the existence of a limited, yet not simply declarative sovereignty of Soviet Ukraine, but it demonstrates it in the foreign diplomacy, which is usually considered an almost exclusive prerogative of the Moscow center. In the narrative, where legal independence of Soviet Ukraine, was purely decorative, and degenerated into total official subordination of Soviet Ukraine to Moscow after the treaty of 28 December 1920, finally culminating in the abandonment of the at least sham Ukrainian independence after the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922, autonomous Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy, which kicked off in 1920, may appear as an anomaly.

In order to somehow explain this anomaly, Ukrainian historians usually turn to subjective factors, explaining the puzzling phenomenon by a strong personality of Rakovsky. The scale and success of Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy is attributed to the Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, who was moonlighting also as the Ukrainian Commissar of Foreign Affairs. Being a well-educated diplomat and politician of international scale, Rakovsky managed to use his skills to carve out space for the autonomous activities of Ukrainian diplomacy despite the resistance of control-obsessed Moscow.²⁸ Rakovsky was also among the strongest advocates for the preservation of

28 S. V. Kul'chitskyi et al, *Narysy z Istorii Dyplomatii Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 2001), 438-439; Ia. I.

Soviet Ukrainian general autonomy in the Soviet state structure. Yet, one should not interpret his actions as an evidence of Rakovsky's support for the Ukrainian cause.²⁹ The well-educated revolutionary failed to notice signs of Ukrainian national consciousness in 1919. He also sanctioned and likely approved the repressions, often executions, of thousands of 'counter-revolutionaries' in Ukraine (apparently, including Ukrainian nationalists among others) during his tenure as the Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom. Rakovsky's advocacy of the broadest autonomy of Soviet Ukraine, among others in diplomatic activities, was rather the case of an ambitious personality in high administrative position, attempting to extend his sphere of influence and to maximize the available the available resources.

Rakovsky's personality undoubtedly left an imprint on Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy. Yet, an explanation that centers mainly on the Ukrainian Commissar of Foreign Affairs seems to be a one-sided and simplistic one. Rakovsky was not the only personality who shaped Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy. In addition, the phenomenon should be analyzed in a larger context and outside of the framework of gradual curtailment of Soviet Ukrainian autonomy in relation to Moscow. Timing here is of importance. While the Ukrainian NKID existed since early 1920, it was only by the end of year and even more so beginning with 1921, when it engaged in active and multifarious diplomatic

Malik, ed., *Ukraina v Mizhnarodnyh Vidnosynah XX Stolittia*, vol. 2 (Lviv: Svit, 2004), 97; L. E. Deshyns'kyi, *Mizhnarodni Vidnosyny Ukrainy: Istorii i Suchasnist'* vol. 2 (Lviv: Beskyd Bit, 2004), 84. Few international scholars, who analyzed in some detail Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy, usually also focus their interpretation around Rakovsky's personality. In their case the explanation stems from the fact that these are biographical studies of Rakovsky.

29 It is interesting that in the end of 1910s, Rakovsky was one of the leaders of the centralist group in the KP(b)U. The so-called "federalist" group was largely marginalized during 1919-1920, see Hennadii Efimenko, *Vzaemovydnyshyny Kremlia ta Radians'koi Ukrainy: Ekonomichnyi Aspekt (1917-1919 rr.)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2008), 138-159; Idem, *Status USRR ta II Vzaemovydnyshyny z RSFRR: Dovgii 1920 Rik* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2012), 143-166.

work. This can be explained partly by the tough military situation of Soviet Ukraine in 1920. Yet, this might have been not the only reason. In my opinion, the treaty of to create a military and economic union between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR from 28 December 1920³⁰ had also played a major role and explains well the inauguration of Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy beginning at the end of 1920. In the historiography, the treaty is interpreted as a big step in the direction of the subordination of Soviet Ukraine to Moscow and the curtailment of its autonomy. Indeed, if we analyze the text of the document, it outlines the principles of administration, according to which Moscow had a decisive word on many key issues.³¹ In particular, the establishment of joint Commissariats – of war, foreign trade, national economy, finances, employment, transportation, and postal and telegraph services – was crucial for the well-defined control by the center, since basically they would be a part of the RSFSR's Sovnarkom. Although the treaty's preamble proclaimed the mutual recognition of the independence of the two Soviet republics, centralizing principles still figured prominently. At the same time, besides the clear-cut centralization of key political and economic spheres, the treaty and the ensuing more specific agreements had another effect. In general, the treaty much more clearly structured and defined the relations between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR, than had been the case earlier. While this entailed a more well-defined legal subordination of the Soviet Ukrainian government to Moscow's administration in some fields, it also made clearer the prerogatives of each partner, most importantly of the Ukrainian authorities. Before the treaty, Ukrainian governing bodies were also under tight Moscow's

30 For a detailed discussion of the treaty, see Efimenko, *Status USRR ta II Vzaemovydnyosyny z RSFRR*, 302-315.

31 For the English translation of the treaty, see Robert Magocsi, *History of Ukraine*, 527-528.

control. The existing historiography is correct that the declared independence of Soviet Ukraine should not fool anyone. Moscow exercised its control through party structures, the Red Army and Cheka networks. Yet, the principles of Moscow's control and the subordination of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities were ill-defined. It was not clear in which spheres "independent" Soviet Ukraine after all possessed a certain autonomy and in which it did not. To a certain extent, under these conditions of vaguely defined relations with Moscow, Soviet Ukrainian leaders could allow themselves some bold independent moves. Yet, if Moscow considered such actions of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders inappropriate or harmful, the latter risked reprimands for their unapproved decisions, and faced the accusation of undermining Party discipline. Thus, while before the treaty of 28 December 1920 the window of opportunities for autonomous activities was theoretically wider, in reality few Ukrainian leaders were willing to take the risk of falling into Moscow's disgrace due to unsanctioned actions. This still left many possibilities for conflict with Moscow over the subordination and limits of autonomy, but at least Soviet Ukrainian leaders could now feel more safe exercising autonomy in the directions indicated in official documents from Moscow. Thus, the treaty of the military and economic union between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR, indeed, curtailed the autonomy of Soviet Ukraine, while at the same time limiting the Soviet Ukrainian imaginary autonomy, but now with the possibility to exercise real autonomy in many areas.

Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy turned out to be one of the fields in which Soviet Ukrainian authorities had autonomy. We may say that from the end of 1920 the form began to fill with content. As suggested, the activation of the Ukrainian NKID can partly

be explained by the clearer structuring of Kharkiv-Moscow relations. The other important factor was the international situation, in particular the peace talks with Poland in Riga. Bolshevik diplomats considered it beneficial to include a Soviet Ukrainian delegation in the peace negotiations, making the diplomatic representatives of Ukraine and the Ukrainian SSR itself a party in the talks. This move allowed the Bolsheviks to exert additional pressure on Poland and to counter Polish attempts to smuggle some of their Ukrainian allies, mostly Peltiura's associates, to the negotiation table in order to represent the interests of the Ukrainian people. Again the energizing of Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy by RSFSR's NKID had a mostly ostensible character and tactical nature, since the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR possessed little freedom during these crucial negotiations. Nevertheless, the decision to invite a separate Soviet Ukrainian delegation had lasting effects. It inaugurated a period of Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic work. More importantly, due to its overall success, it demonstrated to Moscow the diplomatic benefits of the preservation of a separate Ukrainian NKID, which was also, as Chicherin suggested, the sign of an independent state. The agreement from 28 December 1920 reiterated the independent status of the Ukrainian SSR. After the official establishment of a military and economic union between RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR and a clearer separation of the prerogatives of the parties it was up to Soviet Ukrainian leaders, Rakovsky included, to make the most of it.

Probably the most important aspect of Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy was the establishment of separate plenipotentiary representations of the Ukrainian SSR in Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Baltic countries, Austria and Turkey. One would expect that a Soviet Ukrainian mission to Romania would also be a logical decision. Yet the RSFSR

had broken diplomatic relations with Romania due to the Bessarabian issue, and the Ukrainian SSR had to follow suit. The main principles of the network of Soviet Ukrainian representations were outlined in the document sent to Rakovsky, Chicherin, Molotov and Krestinskii on 14 January 1921. Interestingly enough, the author of the memorandum was not the usual suspect, Rakovsky, but Emmanuil Kviring, a Soviet Ukrainian revolutionary of Volga German origin, who is also well-known in historiography as a latent opponent of the future Ukrainianization and Ukrainian autonomy. Kviring prepared the manifesto while representing Soviet Ukraine at peace negotiations at Riga.³² Most likely the document incorporated also some of the input of Soviet Russian diplomats participating in the peace talks in the Latvian capital.

Kviring started the memorandum by stating that Soviet Ukraine was on the road to the establishment of diplomatic relations with some of its neighboring states. This formulation raised the question of the form of diplomatic representation, given that many believed that the RSFSR's own plenipotentiaries should represent Soviet Ukraine. Kviring, in turn, concluded that such a policy would contradict the declared independence and sovereignty of Soviet Ukraine, and would not correspond to the importance of the Ukrainian issue in international politics.³³ He then added:

I will not discuss now, whether our policy of the proclamation of Ukrainian SSR's

32 The choice of Kviring, as Soviet Ukrainian representative at Riga, was not an arbitrary one. Being known for his opposition to Ukrainian national demands and close allegiances to Moscow, the head of the Ukrainian delegation was a safe option, guaranteeing lack of unpleasant surprise, which could come from a more independent-minded Ukrainian representative. Kviring, though, even himself suggested that though he didn't have a soft corner in his heart for a former Borotbist Poloz, but still it would make sense to invite him too to the negotiations. Apparently, despite his personal assessment of Poloz, Kviring considered that it could be beneficial to have somebody well familiar with Ukrainian national aspirations and, after all a 'real' Ukrainian in the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR. N. S. Rubliova and O. S. Rubliov ed., *Ukraina i Pol'shcha. Dokumenty i Materialy 1920-1939 rr.* (Kyiv: Duh i Litera, 2012), 69-70.

33 *Ukraina i Pol'shcha*, 78.

independence on the international arena is correct. Yet since it is so ... we cannot renounce separate embassies of the Ukrainian SSR ... the delegation of the authority (*polnomochii*) of the Ukrainian SSR to Russian ambassadors would serve as a proof of the fictitiousness of all the talks about sovereign Ukraine and play into the hands of our enemies.³⁴

Kviring proceeded to advocate for the establishment of Ukrainian embassies. He outlined two groups of states, which required a Soviet Ukrainian embassy. The first group consisted of the “great powers, which defined world politics.” Eventually from this list only Germany would have a Ukrainian diplomatic representation. The states, in which the Ukrainian factor figured prominently – mostly due to large Ukrainian minority diaspora populations – formed the other group. In all the other states, Kviring suggested, Russian diplomats could represent the Ukrainian SSR, but it would make sense to add an adviser or a secretary, who knew the Ukrainian language and was familiar with the Ukrainiansituation.

Besides the fact that Kviring's memorandum launched the establishment of a network of Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiaries, the document is of interest for several other reasons. It demonstrated that there was a strong opposition to even superficial Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy coming from both Moscow and Ukraine. In fact, as Kviring own unwillingness to discuss the issue suggests, he himself had reservations about the necessity to proclaim the independence of Soviet Ukraine. Taking into consideration his mostly suspicious attitude towards Ukrainian separateness, this should not come as a surprise. Nevertheless, despite his own general doubts, he apparently also saw some tactical and diplomatic benefits in the decision and attempted to maximize them. Similar reasoning guided other Soviet leaders, who opted for the introduction of an active Soviet

34 *Ukraina i Pol'shcha*, 79.

Ukrainian diplomacy.

The memorandum also suggests that unlike historians, who write about the RSFSR-Ukrainian agreement from 28 December 1920, Bolsheviks themselves took the mutual recognition of independence by the two sides a bit more seriously. Of course, there were few doubts in the Party leadership that the independence of Soviet Ukraine was first of all part of the tactical and diplomatic game. Yet since they entered the game, it made sense to try to make the most of it. Therefore, Kviring's memorandum appeared just a couple of weeks after the signing of the union between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR. Eventually, some Soviet Ukrainian activists would forget themselves in playing and, being armed with better defined administrative prerogatives, claim more autonomy than was originally envisaged. Unsurprisingly, this would lead to a number of bureaucratic conflicts between the Ukrainian authorities and Moscow.

In addition to the outline of the main principles of and rationales behind the establishment of Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic representations, Kviring's memorandum covered a crucial dimension of Soviet Ukrainian borderland politics. The memorandum fell in line with several of Kviring's earlier and later letters sent from Riga, which touched upon the principles of a future Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy. Discussing Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic work in Poland, Kviring emphasized that the Ukrainian SSR could not remain indifferent about Galicia, and Volyn' and Kholm provinces, which had sizable Ukrainian populations under Polish rule. He added that, "the Ukrainian SSR becomes a natural political and cultural center for the peasant masses in these regions."³⁵ Therefore, the Ukrainian embassy in Poland was of particular importance, since "it will embody the

³⁵ *Ukraina i Pol'shcha*, 80.

Ukrainian SSR, on which the masses of Ukrainian peasantry would put their hopes and aspirations.”³⁶ For Kviring, Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic missions would be only one of the ways to use the “natural” attraction of the Ukrainian masses to the Ukrainian SSR.

In an earlier letter from 30 November 1920, Kviring outlined several other techniques. Concluding that a revolutionary movement of the Ukrainian masses in Poland was inevitable, he recommended to take leadership over it. At the same time, since the movement would be mostly peasant in character, targeting Polish landowners, *pans* and administration, it would also inevitably be of a nationalistic nature. Therefore, the Bolsheviks should adjust their slogans and not permit “Ukrainian chauvinistic groups” to play the leading roles.³⁷ To counter this danger, Kviring suggested the creation of a separate organization, which would proclaim slogans against Polish landowners for the distribution of land to the Ukrainian peasantry, for the establishment of Soviet power, for the state unification of all of the working masses of Ukraine, and for the creation of a Galician Soviet Socialist Republic.³⁸

Kviring also proposed gradually to attract to revolutionary work in Ukrainian-inhabited Polish regions those members of the Ukrainian elites, especially left-leaning ones, who were ready to switch to pro-Soviet positions.³⁹ Since Poland was a major center of Ukrainian political emigration, it was important to “demoralize (*razlozhit'*)” it. The presence of the “Petliurite counter-revolution” in Poland was also an additional argument in favor of a separate Soviet Ukrainian embassy:

If it is done by a Russian-Ukrainian embassy, then our revolutionary work among

³⁶ *Ukraina i Pol'shcha*, 80.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 73.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 74.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 75.

the peasantry of Galicia, Kholm and Volyn' regions, as well as activities for the decomposition of the Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia will face strong prejudice, since we will be portrayed as the agents of *edinaia i nedelimaia*.⁴⁰

In order to attract Ukrainians to the Ukrainian, Kviring suggested the creation of a “sort of 'Society for the Dissemination of Ukrainian Culture among the Ukrainian Population, Living outside of Ukraine’,” which would have a “semi-bourgeois *Kulturtrager* character.”⁴¹ Such a society could become a cultural center for all Ukrainians, living outside of Soviet Ukraine.

Basically, Kviring's letters and memorandums represented the first coherent, almost programmatic formulation of the Soviet approach to the use of Ukrainian cross-border cultural ties for political purposes, primarily to attempt to switch or to influence the loyalties of Ukrainians abroad. In other chapters I will demonstrate some other examples and somewhat different takes on this issue by other Bolsheviks leaders. Kviring's approach was in some respects a modest version. Nevertheless, he grasped the key idea, that Soviet Ukraine could be a cultural and political Piedmont for Ukrainians outside of the republic. Consequently, the Bolshevik regime could exploit Ukrainian cross-border cultural ties by stressing the statehood of the Ukrainian SSR and by the promotion of Ukrainian culture. Of course, Kviring's understanding of the promotion of Ukrainian culture dwarfs in comparison with later exercises in *korenizatsiia*, but the basic logic of their connection to the goals of foreign policy is there. The suggestions of the Soviet Ukrainian Bolshevik also highlight the important difference between the Soviet take on the use of the cross-border cultural ties and Pilsudski's approach.⁴² As Kviring

⁴⁰ *Ukraina i Pol'shcha*, 80-81.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 75.

⁴² In fact, at a certain moment in one of the letters Kviring directly refers to the Polish approach to borderland politics, more specifically the use the Ukrainian national leaders in petty warfare (*malaia*

emphasized, the main target of Soviet Ukrainian policies in Poland should be the Ukrainian masses, and the main goal should be to lead the revolutionary activities of these lower classes. The activities focusing on the Ukrainian elites were for him of secondary importance. Such an approach contrasted with the Polish methods, which, in turn, targeted first of all Ukrainian elites. Possibly, at the heart of these difference were opposite understandings of the driving forces in politics. While for the Bolsheviks, at least early on, the masses, even the peasantry, were the defining political force, for the Polish leadership the elites were of greater importance. In the end, both regimes worked with the elites and masses at the same time, but the accents and the balances were different.

It is interesting that it was not a Ukrainian national-communist or even Rakovsky, the advocate for larger Ukrainian autonomy, but Kviring, who first rather coherently formulated some of the key principles of Soviet Ukrainian autonomous diplomacy and the use of the cross-border cultural ties in the Ukrainian case. The same Kviring, who in historiographical interpretations usually ends up among the leaders of the anti-Ukrainian camp. Indeed, Kviring often made pronouncements and adopted political decisions, which suggested certain suspicion and uneasiness towards Ukrainian culture and language and demands for greater Ukrainian autonomy. This may appear as a contradiction or a discrepancy. Nevertheless, it remains a contradiction only if one interprets the Soviet policies towards Ukraine and in fact to other national republics and autonomies as a struggle between two extremes, two clearly-defined political camps: Moscow centralizers and their agents and local nationally-conscious activists.

Nevertheless, Kviring's contribution to Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy and foreign

voina) against Bolsheviks, as an example to follow, see Ibid, 74.

ambitions, is a good counterexamples. Clearly a more nuanced approach is required to interpret the activities of Soviet Ukrainian leaders. Kviring, for instance, could be against Ukrainian separateness and nationalism in its extreme form, but that did not necessarily imply that he could not live with some of their limited manifestations, when they promised certain diplomatic and political benefits. Similarly, one's positions did not have to be by all means coherent, for instance consistently pro- or anti- Ukrainian on all the questions. One could be a convinced centralizer in the economic sphere and negate any idea of economic autonomy of Soviet republics, yet the same person could support and see the advantages of cultural or diplomatic autonomy for the same republics. One's positions could also change over time, depending on many factors, such as the changing domestic and international contexts, institutional setting, varying balances of power. Oleg Khlevniuk, for instance, offers a good example of the influence of the institutional setting in his biography of Ordzhonikidze. The Georgian Bolshevik was among the strongest advocates for tight economic centralization, until he was appointed Commissar for Heavy Industry in 1932 and turned into a defender of autonomy for large industrial plants.⁴³ In fact, it is possible that Kviring's position in the Soviet Ukrainian delegation at Riga could have also somewhat influenced his statements in letters and memorandums. While his personal preferences were most likely in other basket, as a Soviet Ukrainian delegate at Riga and a disciplined party member he had the time and in fact the necessity to contemplate the issue and analyze it from different angles. Party activists, political statements and policies could be driven and motivated by various factors, such as the

43 Oleg S. Khlevniuk, *In Stalin's Shadow: The Career of Sergo Ordzhonikidze* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

changing political contexts and balances of power, institutional settings, national or internationalists convictions, considerations of Party discipline and subordination or proper administrative control, individual connections and relations, ideological preferences, and personal political ambitions among others. In order to understand better these political pronouncements and decisions one should pay close attention to these nuances. This would help to interpret more accurately the rationales behind Soviet policies and politics and their evolution.

The plenipotentiary representations, advocated by Kviring, became a key institute for Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy. They were expected to perform a number of tasks: to serve as a center for the local Ukrainian population, to undermine the influence of Ukrainian anti-Soviet (mostly with elements of national character) political groups, to provide consular services, to organize repatriation, and so on. Like any other embassy, Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiaries collected intelligence. In addition, the embassies of the Ukrainian SSR were involved with the coordination and organization of pro-Soviet groupings among local Ukrainians. In the case of the Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiary in Warsaw, Oleksandr Shumsky, it would have long-lasting consequences, since during his tenure he would manage to become a highly influential authority among the Ukrainian communist underground. As I will demonstrate later, Shumsky would try to use his connections in Poland in the political struggles in the KP(b)U. Soviet Ukrainian embassies were also crucial as a demonstration of the recognition of the Bolshevik regime in Ukraine on the international arena.⁴⁴ The RSFSR's embassies had the same role for Soviet Russia. In the beginning of the 1920s, when the Bolsheviks struggled for

⁴⁴ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 40.

international recognition and, in turn, Bolshevik opponents opened diplomatic missions in other countries, claiming to represent the true legal power, each newly-established embassy was considered a significant diplomatic success.

Ideally Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiaries should have been able to perform all the outlined tasks. Yet, that was hardly the case. Among the biggest problem was understaffing. The Bolsheviks could hardly find the necessary number of educated, experienced and at least relatively loyal specialists. This issue plagued Soviet Russian diplomacy as well. For Soviet Ukraine the situation was even more complicated, since in addition to all the usual criteria at least some of the members of the diplomatic mission had to speak Ukrainian.

The case of the Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiary representation to the Baltic states in Kaunas demonstrates some of the other important features of the diplomacy of the Ukrainian SSR. At first sight the creation of a separate Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic mission to the Baltic states might seem a redundancy. RSFSR's plenipotentiary in Lithuania did not hesitate to share this opinion with his Soviet Ukrainian colleagues.⁴⁵ Eventually in several letters in March 1922 the Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiary and his deputy also concluded that there was no necessity for the existence of the diplomatic mission.⁴⁶ The Baltic states were minor players on the international diplomatic arena.⁴⁷ According to Soviet Ukrainian diplomats, there were also hardly any Ukrainian groupings, Ukrainian interests or “Ukrainians as such” in this region.⁴⁸ Finally, by spring 1922 there was enough international recognition for the Soviets that the diplomatic

⁴⁵ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 39.

⁴⁶ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 37, 42.

⁴⁷ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 42.

⁴⁸ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 37.

missions to the Baltic states gave them more importance, than they gave the Ukrainian SSR.⁴⁹ In response to the letters of Soviet Ukrainian plenipotentiaries, in April 1922 the Politburo of the KP(b)U liquidated the missions to Latvia and Estonia, and transferred their duties to the RSFSR's diplomatic representatives, while keeping the embassy in Lithuania.⁵⁰ Several days earlier Rakovsky had explained the importance of the diplomatic mission in Kaunas with a reference to his own directive, which defined Ukrainian special interests in Lithuania as “the creation of a common front of all the peoples oppressed by Poland.”⁵¹ The head of Ukrainian Sovnarkom and NKID implied that just as Western Ukraine ended up under Polish rule, so did also part of Lithuanian territory, particularly the Wilno region, which the Polish army managed to secure after successful operations against Lithuanian forces. Thus, despite the opposing ideological positions of the Lithuanian and Soviet Ukrainian governments, they had a common enemy in Poland. Rakovsky intended to exploit common interests with Lithuania and therefore insisted on preserving the mission in Kaunas. Eventually, the mission would be withdrawn, but the intent to use Lithuania in the struggle against Poland would persist. At a certain moment the Soviet Union would even support Ukrainian nationalist organizations in Poland through its Lithuanian diplomatic connections.

All the factors against the separate mission to Lithuania, outlined by Soviet Ukrainian diplomats in their letters, contributed to the withdrawal of the embassy. Nevertheless, Soviet Ukrainian diplomats mentioned another issue, which most likely also had induced them to see the perspectives of their diplomatic work in Kaunas in a

49 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 42.

50 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 29, l. 66.

51 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 43.

grimmer light. From the beginning, “the relations with the RSFSR's mission are most abnormal.”⁵² The RSFSR's diplomatic mission in every way possible demonstrated a “condescending and scornful (*snishoditel'no-prenebrezhitel'noe*) attitude”⁵³ towards its Ukrainian colleagues and attempted to “secure formal and real subordination of the Ukrainian mission.”⁵⁴ According to the letters of Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic plenipotentiaries, the RSFSR's diplomats did not limit themselves to general condescension, but threw a number of real obstacles in the way of the Soviet Ukrainian mission. In the opinion of the deputy plenipotentiary of the Ukrainian SSR in Kaunas, Moscow's influence was behind the created situation.⁵⁵ The head of the diplomatic mission, Terletskii, was more specific. He reported to Rakovsky, that a member of the board of RSFSR's NKID, one Ganetskii, a Polish-Russian revolutionary and diplomat, sent a series of letters and telegrams to the Soviet Russian plenipotentiary in Lithuania. Ganetskii suggested that the Soviet Ukrainian mission should be ousted from Kaunas or at least placed under the total control of the RSFSR's diplomats. To this end he proposed practical means to achieve these goals: to not to provide the Soviet Ukrainian mission office space and money, to hinder access to the only ciphered wire for telegrams available in Kaunas, and not to render any free services.⁵⁶ Ganetskii, though, had some grounds for his behavior. As it turned out, Rakovsky and the Ukrainian NKID established Soviet Ukrainian missions to Baltic states without any consultation with the RSFSR's NKID or at least with the RKP(b).⁵⁷ The members of the Soviet Russian mission mostly followed

52 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 39.

53 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 40.

54 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 40.

55 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 40.

56 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 47.

57 *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros. Kniga 1. 1918-1933 gg* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), 64-

the instructions of their superior. Unsurprisingly, this created an unhealthy atmosphere in the work of the Soviet Ukrainian mission. While, according to Terletskii, they managed to gradually change the “condescending and scornful” attitude of their Soviet Russian colleagues to “condescending and patronizing” (*snishoditel'no-pokrovitel'stvennoe*), still the underlying tension did not go away.⁵⁸ The tense relations with the Soviet Russian mission made the everyday work of Soviet Ukrainian diplomats inefficient and complicated. Therefore, it was not surprising that they found few reasons to preserve the mission in Kaunas.

The case of the Soviet Ukrainian mission demonstrates that there was a strong opposition to and lack of understanding of autonomous Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy among some leading figures and mid- and low- level staff of RSFSR's NKID. While the example of the diplomatic mission in Lithuania may be an extreme case, still it highlights some of the general tendencies. Partly the condescending attitude towards separate Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy had its origins in what Lenin called Great-Russian chauvinism. Soviet Russian diplomats often did not understand why Soviet Ukraine needed an autonomous diplomacy in the first place, what specific international interests it had. They considered the proclaimed independence of Soviet Ukraine and the existence of the Ukrainian NKID as little more than decoration. Judging from some of the letters, Soviet Ukrainian diplomats did not always understand clearly their specific goals themselves, but, since the diplomatic institutions and missions were established, they felt obliged to perform their tasks. By virtue of heading the missions of the Ukrainian SSR they

65.

58 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 34, l. 47.

eventually engaged in activities, which they saw as specifically corresponding to the interests of Soviet Ukraine. In fact, the existence of Soviet Russian missions alongside pushed them in this narrowly oriented direction of diplomatic work, since they had RSFSR diplomats, who would care about Soviet Russian and overall Soviet interests. Therefore, for Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic missions the only niche, which remained, was the focus on specific Ukrainian issues and interests. This was exactly what annoyed many Soviet Russian diplomats, who saw in such behavior a disregard for all-Soviet diplomatic aims, as well as a lack of discipline and subordination and excessive ambitions.

In addition to the concerns over Ukrainian “*samostiinnost*” the Lithuanian case also highlights another motivation of the opponents of Soviet Ukrainian missions. Soviet Russian diplomats perceived their work very jealously. In the establishment of Soviet Ukrainian representations in the same countries and cities, where the RSFSR's mission already existed, they saw unnecessary parallelism and encroachment on their turf and prerogatives. They believed that they could easily defend all Soviet diplomatic interests, including those of the Ukrainian SSR, and that there was no need for parallel Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy, which would only create unnecessary bureaucratic chaos. In addition, the parallelism of diplomatic institutions was a luxury in the conditions of very scarce material and more importantly scarce human resources, which could have been used elsewhere.⁵⁹

The existence of Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy for three years despite the existence of tensions and multiple practical problems underscores the fact, that it also had strong supporters, not only in Soviet Ukraine proper, but among Soviet Russian diplomats and

59 TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros, 65

Party leaders. Chicherin, in particular, initially found Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy quite instrumental and beneficial.⁶⁰ The viewpoint of the RSFSR's Commissar for Foreign Affairs would change by 1922, when in his opinion few diplomatic and tactical benefits of a separate Ukrainian NKID would remain, while the parallelism and excessive Soviet Ukrainian ambitions would make his work much more complicated. In any case the petty squabbles, as the one in Kaunas undermined the efficiency and successes of Soviet Ukrainian (and Soviet in general) diplomacy.

Eventually, the Ukrainian NKID would be dissolved in 1923. Some of the rationale behind the decision would ensue from the problems outlined above. At the same time the liquidation of the Ukrainian NKID would be part of a larger process, which was the creation of the Soviet Union and the renegotiation of administrative relations between Moscow and the individual Soviet republics. It should be noted, though, that, while in institutional terms Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy basically ceased to exist, this did not entail the end of Soviet Ukrainian foreign policies, which, as I will show in later chapters, just took a different form and pursued somewhat adjusted goals.

1. 3. The Relations between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR and the Creation of the Soviet Union

These conflicts in diplomatic work were to a large extent indicative of the other spheres in the relations between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR, as well as with other, formally independent Soviet republics. While the agreement from 28 December 1920 brought more clarity in the relations between the two republics and the prerogatives of each, still too many specific practical issues of administration and subordination remained

60 Cited in Victor Swoboda, "Was the Soviet Union Really Necessary," *Soviet Studies* 44 (1992): 772.

unresolved. In addition, the agreement and the ensuing treaties quickly became obsolete. With the signing of the peace treaty with Poland at Riga, the definitive suppression of the White forces and a slowly spreading international recognition, the Bolsheviks could and had to partly divert their attention from the rescuing of Soviet power from military and diplomatic collapse and focus on saving it from an economic, social and demographic disaster. The transition from the policies of War Communism to the New Economic Policy was a response to the new conditions.

The rapidly changing situation brought to the table new problems and put in a new light some older issues, which Soviet central⁶¹ and republican authorities had to address. The agreements from the end of 1920 were far from perfect. Coupled with the rapid expansion of administrative duties, bureaucratic chaos and inter-institutional conflicts became practically inevitable. As in the case of relations between the Soviet Russian and Ukrainian NKIDs, this all was taking place with a severe shortage of material and human resources in the background. In these conditions and in the framework of such a complicated administrative system, as the one established at the end of 1920 and in the beginning of 1921, conflicts between Soviet Russian authorities and the governing bodies of other republics could have been avoided only in an environment of strict discipline and a trustful atmosphere among various Soviet institutions. Yet, these were nowhere to be found. As the Soviet Republic with the largest population and the richest economic potential apart from the RSFSR, the Ukrainian SSR suffered from the conflicts with the institutions in Moscow more than others. In addition and in indication of Ukraine's special

61 Technically speaking, RSFSR's governing bodies were also republican. Yet, with all the declarative recognition of the independence of other Soviet republics, nobody had doubts that Moscow played the role of the administrative and, even more importantly, Party center.

status, the Ukrainian SSR had theoretically more privileges and prerogatives than the other non-Russian Soviet republics. Armed with are instated independence and more clearly-defined prerogatives and faced with numerous problems, the Soviet Ukrainian authorities and party leaders actively exercised their powers. Yet, in the eyes of their Moscow superiors, Ukrainians often read too much into their independence and overstepped the boundaries of their autonomy. The party bosses in Moscow, who were more occupied with the big picture, could be more positively predisposed to and toyed eagerly with the autonomy of non-Russian republics for the sake of ideological, tactical, diplomatic and political considerations. Nevertheless, the Muscovite executive bodies, agencies and institutions, which dealt with the everyday issues of the rebuilding of the devastated economy and construction of the new socialist system, often considered their republican counterparts and their autonomy a bureaucratic nuisance, which could have been overlooked amidst the pressing matters of the day.

The first harbinger of future conflicts arrived as early as April 1921, that is just several months after the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR formed a military and economic union. TsK KP(b)U sent F. Kon to TsK RKP(b) to raise the issue of the recall to Moscow of officials from Soviet Ukrainian institutions.⁶² The struggle for specialists between central and republican authorities would be a recurrent issue in the next several years.⁶³ While TsK RKP(b) would usually support republican complaints in principal, that is that the republican institutions should not be deprived of important officials, in practice the recalls would happen from time to time, sometimes at the insistence of the Moscow's

⁶² TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 13, l. 60.

⁶³ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 16, l. 83.

Party leadership.

In November 1921 another larger issue was at stake. On 25 October 1921 TsIK RSFSR ordered the subordination of the RKI (Workers' and Peasants' Inspection) of Donbass and transportation system to the RKI RSFSR. A seemingly minor issue ended in prolonged controversy between Moscow and Kharkiv, lasting almost six months. In Ukraine the TsIK RSFSR decision provoked a blunt response. TsK KP(b)U asked its secretary, Dmitrii Lebed', who was apparently expected to be in Moscow, to "insist upon the observance of the established relations between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR."⁶⁴ The simple reminder did not do the trick. Therefore, at the next meeting of the Politburo TsK KP(b)U on 11 November 1921, the deputy commissar of the Ukrainian RKI, Shternberg, gave a report on this issue. As a result, Politburo TsK KP(b)U prepared a more considered and detailed response, though the essence hardly changed:

Taking into consideration the necessity of first-hand information and observation on the work of transport and the Donetsk basin for the central authorities of the Ukrainian SSR due to close connections of the issue of fuel and transport for the economic development of the Republic, the Politburo decree to not introduce the resolution of TsIK RSF ... to ask TsK RKP(b) to revoke the decision of TsIK.⁶⁵

The resolution of the Ukrainian Politburo also promised closer contact and informational exchange between the RKI of Donbass and the RKI of transportation with the RKI of RSFSR, but the overall message was clear. Ukrainian authorities did not want to obey the decision of TsIK RSFSR and tried to persuade the Moscow Politburo against it, considering that the resolution was not sanctioned by TsK RKP(b). The Ukrainian leadership failed in this endeavor. On 1 December 1921 the Politburo of TsK RKP(b)

⁶⁴ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 16, l. 87.

⁶⁵ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 16, l. 90.

reconfirmed the decision of the TsIK.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Ukrainian authorities did not submit to the decision of Moscow's Politburo, for which they would eventually get reprimanded, and did not transfer the control of the RKIs of Donbass and its transportation system to the RKI RSFSR. Moreover, the Plenum of TsK KP(b)U in January 1921 confirmed the authority of the Ukrainian RKI over the contested institutions. The Ukrainian side would later claim that they simply had not received the resolution of TsK RKP(b) from 1 December and waited up until February 1922 for it,⁶⁷ but it was unlikely. Finally, only in mid-February upon the unrelenting insistence of the Politburo TsK RKP(b) and several annoyed letters by its secretary Molotov did this already almost 4-month old decree of TsIK RSFSR come into force.

The controversy, which may seem like a petty bureaucratic squabble, was in fact about some crucial issues, which is also demonstrated in the persistence of all sides. The RKI was an important control institution in the Soviet system at this time, and roughly corresponded to a contemporary Accounts Chamber. Its main purpose was to observe and to document any irregularities in the usage of resources and finances and any bureaucratic malfeasance. At the same time, as one of the replies of the Politburo TsK KP(b)U highlighted, Donbass and its transport sector were crucial for the economic development of Soviet Ukraine. Yet it was no less crucial for the economic (re)construction of the RSFSR and the union of Soviet Republics under its leadership. Therefore, subordinating the RKIs of Donbass and its transportation system to the Soviet Russian RKI, TsIK RSFSR attempted to tighten its control over the production and movement of vital

⁶⁶ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 32, l. 140.

⁶⁷ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 32, l. 140-141.

mineral resources (most importantly coal and iron ore) and the proper usage of finances. The Ukrainian authorities understood the stakes and therefore objected the decision. They even most likely pretended not to receive the RKP(b) confirmation of the decree of TsIK RSFSR. The decision to solidify the Ukrainian authority over the contested RKIs via a Plenum decision suggests this interpretation. It was administratively inappropriate to put the supposedly unresolved contested issue on the Plenum's agenda. Yet, it could make sense to publicize the Ukrainian authority over RKIs via the Plenum, hoping that it could somehow force the cancellation of the undesired and supposedly unknown final decision.

Why, though, would TsIK RSFSR come up with the resolution on re-subordination of the RKIs of Donbass and its transportation system in the first place? Of course, this could be just another case of crude obsession with control, especially in a crucial region like the Donbass. Yet some later pronouncements of several Ukrainian leaders may suggest an additional stimulus for closer attention to Donbass and Ukrainian transportation from the RSFSR authorities and Soviet Russian RKI, in particular. At an August meeting of the Ukrainian Politburo, one of its member, Ivanov, lamented that Moscow considered him, “a *katsap*,”⁶⁸ and Petrovskii, the Chairman of Ukrainian TsIK,⁶⁹ “seperatists.”⁷⁰ From Moscow's point of view, Ivanov's and Petrovskii's guilt, as the former understood it, was in advocating a local, Ukrainian-based processing of pig iron. At the same time he believed that:

If one proceeds from the point of view of the all-federal (*obshchefederativnoi*) economy and of Ukraine, not as independent (*samostiinuiu*), and of us *katsaps* not as *samostiiniki*, then one should carry out the processing procedure there, where it is

68 Somewhat derogatory name for a Russian.

69 “Who is all the time denying being born in Ukraine, while he was”, according to the same Ivanov, TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 30, l. 43.

70 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 30, l. 43.

closer to the metal. We always understood so, and had no intention to attribute ourselves to *samostoiatel'nost'* ... Practically we put the question in the following way, should we take out the pig iron, can the metallurgical plants of the Ukrainian Republic perform the same processing (*taking into consideration the poor state of railways* – A. V.) ... the question of concentration emerges in conditions, when it is necessary to revive Ukrainian industry.⁷¹

Moscow authorities were well familiar with and treated with suspicion the “*samostiinye*” economic ambitions of Soviet Ukrainian leaders, even *katsaps* among them. Emphasizing his status as a *katsap*, that is an ethnic Russian, Ivanov suggested that he could be impartial in this matter and his advocacy of the processing of the pig iron on Ukrainian metallurgical plants was not driven by any Ukrainian national considerations, only by economic expediency. Nevertheless, viewed against the background of permanent underproduction and non-fulfillment of the plan, a suspicious administrator in Moscow could have doubts as to whether everything was being done correctly and whether there were no irregularities in Donbass industry.⁷² After all, under the pretext of poor conditions and transportation, some part of the produced resources of Donbass could have been reoriented to local and republican needs without the sanction of and in defiance of Moscow's directives. Therefore, not only the RKI of Donbass, but also the RKI of transportation (basically, railway) switched its subordination to RSFSR's RKI. This would intensify the supervision over any unsanctioned movements of goods and resources. Interestingly enough, RSFSR's Narkom of RKI at this moment was Joseph Stalin.

This story has also two other important dimensions. It demonstrates that often the mutual emotional accusations of “Great-Russian chauvinism,” “separatism,”

⁷¹ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 30, l. 43-45.

⁷² The neglect, whether deliberate or not, of Politburo decision from 1 December in any case could have helped Donbass administrators to cover any issues in their books and reports, which were usually due the end of the year.

“samostiinnost’,” and “nationalism” could have had at their core conflicts over very concrete issues, such as access to power, resources and finances. For some this access was necessary to realize their ambitions, for others, and this was often the case with republican and local authorities, this was a mean to perform their duties properly. Often republican authorities found themselves in a situation, in which they had too many obligations, few rights and even fewer resources to fulfill their duties. Also the controversy over the RKI of Donbass suggests that the central authorities were usually much less interested in having long discussions about the republican autonomy when issues of economic development were at stake. This is not to say, that they would necessarily by default establish strict control over any economic decision-making and development. There were enough reasonable and flexible administrators in Moscow, who could understand and support the case for limited economic autonomy in certain fields. Yet, when any perceived or real irregularities emerged or conflicts appeared, local economic autonomy was usually among the first to suffer.

The conflict of the RKIs of Donbass and the transportation system was among the most long-lasting in RSFSR-Ukrainian relations in this period, but hardly the only one. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, independent decisions on the creation of a separate Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic mission had annoyed RSFSR's NKID. Chicherin claimed that he and his Commissariat did not even get any notification of the decisions of the Ukrainian NKID. In response Rakovsky portrayed the whole opposition to the Ukrainian mission in Kaunas as a “systematic crushing of Ukrainian independence (*samostoiatel'nost'*) and the violation of the TsK Plenum's theses.”⁷³ Chicherin, who was

73 TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros, 65

originally among the chief initiators of Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy and for a significant period of time its strong advocate, could not accept that the Ukrainian colleagues completely ignored his own Commissariat.⁷⁴ He emphasized that excessive parallelism impeded efficient diplomatic work. At the same time, the capitalist states attempted to use the separate diplomatic institutions of the Soviet Republic in order to deepen the former's influence and support separatist tendencies.⁷⁵ Chicherin, like many other original supporters of the Soviet Ukrainian NKID, saw in it a useful tool and a sidekick for all-Soviet diplomacy and not as an end in itself. When the ambitions and decisions of his Ukrainian colleagues started to undermine the work of his Commissariat, rather than help it, RSFSR's Commissar for Foreign Affairs quickly turned his support into opposition. In April 1923 at the Party conference Rakovsky would even claim that the first outlines of the "autonomization" plan were proposed in the depths of RSFSR's NKID in early 1922.⁷⁶ It is not clear, whether RSFSR's NKID, indeed, elaborated any coherent "autonomization" plan. It is clear, though, that Rakovsky exaggerated, when he presented Soviet Russian diplomats as the pioneers of strict subordination of the Soviet Republics to Moscow and the cause for the abolition of their "independence." Such plans and moods existed well before early 1922, both in Moscow as well as among republican Party leaders and authorities.

Another controversy arose roughly at the same time around the relations between Tsentrosoiuz, the Central Union of Consumer's Cooperation, and its Ukrainian

74 Chicherin had the right to demand at least a notification from Ukrainian side, since this was the procedure, established, as the result of the agreement from 28 December 1920. See, TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 36, l. 129.

75 *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros*, 65-66.

76 "Stenogramma XII S'ezda RKP(b)," *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 3 (1991): 171.

counterpart VUKS or Vukospilka. On 30 January 1922, the Politburo TsK KP(b)U protested to the TsK RKP(b) against the opening of a trade office of Tsentrosoiuz in Ukraine. The Politburo resolution claimed that “besides the harm of parallelism and artificial competition at the local level, such a mission will strengthen the tendencies of opposition and *samostiinosti*.”⁷⁷ It is telling that some of the same people, who lamented parallelism in this case, did not hesitate to create parallel diplomatic institutions, when they saw it as opportune. Cases like these put the question of the relations between Soviet Russian and Ukrainian institutions with a new force. The situation erupted again in mid-February and early March 1922. The stage was set by the decision of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom to prohibit to all the bodies of joint commissariats the execution of RSFSR's decisions without clearance from the Ukrainian authorities. According to the agreement from 28 December 1920 there were three types of commissariats: directive, joint, and separate. Directive commissariats were located primarily in Moscow and had affiliates in the Soviet republics, which simply executed the center's decisions. The separate commissariats had full-fledged institutions and administrative structures both in Moscow and in the republican capitals and, theoretically, could perform their duties independently, only notifying their colleagues about the decisions. The joint commissariats caused the strongest headache for the Soviet administrators. Again both in Moscow and in republican capitals commissariats of this kind had fully-staffed bodies, yet in this case the superiority of the central authorities was more clearly pronounced. The decisions of a republican joint commissariat had to be confirmed by their counterparts in Moscow. At the same time the RSFSR's resolutions also had to get a republican stamp and the authority of the local

⁷⁷ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 29, l. 22.

Sovnarkom behind them, but RSFSR's resolutions were basically obligatory for the introduction in the Soviet republics. Apparently, many officials in Moscow considered the clearance of their decisions by republican authorities a nuisance and a source of recurring delays or merely saw their issues as a case of "extraordinary circumstances," which meant that they legally were not bound by republican approval. As a result, Moscow officials often simply neglected and repeatedly went over the heads of the republican authorities, demanding the immediate execution of their orders. This situation provoked a decision on the part of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom to attempt to bring itself back into the picture as a key decision-making body in the Ukrainian SSR.

RSFSR's Narkomiust reviewed the case and came up with a conclusion, which hardly satisfied the Ukrainian Sovnarkom and especially Myhailo Poloz, its representative at the Soviet Russian executive bodies. The position of the representative of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom in Moscow was a nod to the declared independence of Soviet Ukraine, and roughly corresponded to the position of the ambassador in the case of two separate states. Nevertheless, Poloz also had certain practical responsibilities. He was supposed to perform the role of the messenger, informing Moscow of any decisions of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, as well as to communicate to Kharkiv any relevant decrees from the RSFSR's decrees. In this context, unsurprisingly, he often dealt with issues related to the activities of joint commissariats. Consequently the Narkomiust RSFSR resolution was a matter of keen concern. It appears that Poloz was partially to blame for the magnitude, which the issue eventually acquired. Yet the issue, as well as Poloz' reaction, first of all be viewed within the general context of the tense and distrustful relations between the Ukrainian and RSFSR executive branches. Narkomiust concluded that the decisions of

TsIK RSFSR, related to the spheres of responsibilities of joint commissariats, should be automatically implemented in the Ukrainian SSR, with the notification by Moscow's bodies.⁷⁸ This conclusion had certain major implications, since it suggested that the Ukrainian authorities could not attempt to veto or even to question Moscow's decisions related to the activities of joint commissariats. Consequently, Poloz sent an emotional telegram to Kharkiv, asking if he should take the issue to TsIK RSFSR or even to TsK RKP(b). Apparently, the Ukrainian representative in Moscow slightly overreacted. It was after all only a conclusion of the Narkomiust, which Sovnarkom RSFSR did not transform into a decree, while Poloz and the Ukrainian authorities understood it otherwise.⁷⁹ Moreover, Poloz was asked to prepare a counter-project.⁸⁰ His overreaction can be explained partly by his personal ideological convictions. As a former Borotbist,⁸¹ Poloz was especially sensitive to any decisions, infringing the autonomy of Soviet Ukraine. In addition, the Narkomiust conclusion, if implemented, endangered his own prerogatives, among which the resolution of contested issues and communication between the joint commissariats was a key one. At the same time, it was not just Poloz who felt that his or her authority was put into question. Ukrainian officials, many of whom had no Borotbist past or any particular emotional affiliation to Ukrainian autonomy, felt similarly. Molotov's reassuring message, claiming that “there are absolutely no grounds for the talks about the liquidation of the Ukrainian SSR and its transformation into a province,”⁸² did not manage to improve the situation. Faced with frequent conflicts with

78 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 32, l. 174.

79 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 29, l. 37.

80 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 32, l. 173.

81 A member of the nationally-conscious Ukrainian Marxist party. The Borotbists are discussed in the next chapter.

82 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 32, l. 173.

Moscow authorities, the Ukrainian leadership had no intention to sweep the issue under the carpet.

On March 11, 1922 the Politburo of TsK KP(b)U decreed that it was “timely to concretize relationships between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR, in the sense of a more precise definition of rights and obligations of the Ukrainian SSR, and to this end it considers it necessary to establish a special commission of the members of TsK RKP(b) and TsK KP(b)U.”⁸³ Eventually in retrospect this decision by the Ukrainian leadership would become one of the pretexts to the creation of the Soviet Union in the end of 1922 and the abolition of Soviet Ukrainian independence. Yet this course of events was hardly predestined in spring 1922. On May 11, in response to materials indicating the neglect of the central institutions of the Ukrainian SSR by that of the RSFSR, presented to TsK RKP(b) by Frunze, the Moscow Politburo decreed the creation of special commission in the composition of Stalin, Kamenev, Frunze (chairman), Skrypnik, and Manuil'skii. The Politburo decision also stated, that “no change of RSFSR attitude to the Ukrainian SSR in the sense of liquidation or derogation of the Ukrainian Republic ... took place.”⁸⁴ The first session of the commission, which convened the next day, reconfirmed the decision and demanded that all the resulting projects should follow the Politburo decree in its respect for the Ukrainian SSR and the rights of its governing bodies.⁸⁵

For the next couple of months the Frunze commission proceeded with its activities, carefully drawing up projects concerning the relations between various administrative bodies of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR. In principle, the activities of

83 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 29, l. 49.

84 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 292, l. 1-2.

85 TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros, 68

the commission were not much different from the situation in late 1920 and early 1921. Then too the main goal was to find, systematize and define clearer the prerogatives of each of the Republics and their institutions. Frunze's commission was just taking this process onto a more profound and thorough level, hoping that the attention to details would help prevent inter-institutional conflicts in the future. In these circumstances the aims of the Ukrainian members of the commission were far from only asserting larger Ukrainian autonomy. To some extent and on some questions, the motives were similar to December 1920, that is to establish clearly-defined rules and spheres of autonomy and subordination, which would clear the way for a more efficient administration and more precise understanding of one's available resources and powers.

By July 1922, the committee's recommendations and projects were ready, endorsed by TsK KP(b)U,⁸⁶ and awaiting the approval of TsK RKP(b). It is still not really clear what happened next and why the recommendations of the commission, which received mostly positive reception, never came into force. Unfortunately, the transcript of the meeting of the Politburo of TSK RKP(b), which on 10 August resolved to create a new commission under Stalin's chairmanship, are not available, non-existent or inaccessible at the archives. Stalin's famous "autonomization" plan, which suggested the inclusion of the "independent" republics into the RSFSR as autonomous republics, followed shortly after the meeting, abandoning the months-long work of Frunze's commission. The story of Lenin's opposition to the plan is well-documented, though historians still propose completely opposite interpretations.⁸⁷ Therefore, I will not go into too detailed a

86 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 30, l. 13.

87 Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968); Swoboda, "Was the Soviet Union Necessary?"; Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23*, 172-212.

reconstruction of the controversy and mostly focus on some of its key elements.

One of the motivations behind the decision to introduce the “autonomization plan” was an attempt by some Bolshevik leaders, including Stalin, to take the issues raised by the commission beyond simply RSFSR-Ukrainian relations, looking at the problem from the perspective of all Soviet republics. The solutions, proposed by Frunze and his colleagues, did not fully satisfy many leading figures in the party and administration either in the center or in the republics, who saw it as a necessary evil, rather than a long-term solution. Many, and this was not just the perspective from Moscow, believed that the future of the socialist system lay with strict economic and political centralization, which would create the stable foundation for planned socio-economic development. Others, fewer in numbers, considered that the preservation or even expansion of republican autonomy could be beneficial, at least in the short-term. The principles, suggested by Frunze's commission, were somewhere in between the two poles and could possibly have become a short-term solution for the RSFSR-Ukrainian relations. Yet, if one takes into consideration that the RSFSR had similar administrative problems in its relations with other Soviet republics and each republic was different,⁸⁸ then the adoption of the recommendations of Frunze's commission could aggravate rather than simplify the running of the union of “independent” Soviet republics from Moscow. The general problem in the governing of such a union from Moscow's perspective was that, while there were certain common models and principles involved, the relations with each of the republics were still defined on an individual basis, that is the administration of each

88 For the Georgian case, where it was additionally complicated by the creation of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, see Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-1923*, 189-200.

republic was carried out according to a unique set of rules. Taking into consideration that besides the Soviet Republics, the RSFSR was administrating numerous autonomous republics within its republic and other regions with unresolved status, such as Khorezm and Bukhara, an individual legal approach to each of the political units created a multilevel bureaucratic chaos. The choice in favor of Frunze's recommendations would continue the practice of an individual approach to the governing of the individual Soviet political units. Moreover, such a decision would most likely have led to other republics desirous of renegotiating the terms, which would complicate the situation even further. Ultimately, Stalin's "autonomization" plan could have leveled to some extent all the Soviet republics, put them on the same rails, and define clearly the chain of command, thus significantly simplifying the administration. On 22 September, 1922, in a letter to Lenin Stalin explained his proposal of the "autonomisation" along these lines:

We have come to such a position, where the existing order of relations between the center and the borderlands (okrainy), that is, the absence of any order and complete chaos, has become intolerable, it turns into a fiction the so-called united federative people's economy, and hampers and paralyzes all economic affairs on a Russia-wide scale. There are two options: either real independence, and, in that case, non-interference of the center ... general questions are decided in the course of negotiations between equals; or else, the real unification of the Soviet republics into one economic whole with the formal extension of the powers of the SNK, STO, and VTsIK of the RSFSR over the SNK, VtsIK and economic soviets of the independent republics, that is a change from fictitious independence to real internal autonomy of the republics in the areas of language, culture, justice, internal affairs, agriculture, etc.⁸⁹

The other benefit of "autonomization," in Stalin's opinion, was the liquidation of the formal independence of Soviet republics. As a number of influential Bolsheviks saw it, the proclaimed "sham" independence did little to convince Moscow authorities to

89 "Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR," *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* no. 9 (1989): 197.

respect the prerogatives and rights of republican authorities. At the same the latter often took the declaration at face value, engaging in various unsanctioned and even potentially dangerous activities:

We are going through such a period of development when the form, the law, the constitution cannot be ignored, when the younger generation of communists in the borderlands refuse to understand that playing at independence is merely a game, stubbornly taking the talk of independence at its face value and just as stubbornly demanding that we should observe to the letter the constitutions of the independent republics.⁹⁰

The result was almost always the same – institutional conflicts and red tape, More importantly, Stalin feared that “in a year's time it would be incomparably harder to maintain the actual unity of the Soviet republics.”⁹¹ Thus, Stalin attempted to achieve too goals: to strengthen the unity and centralization of the Soviet republics and to delineate the prerogatives of Moscow and the republican centres more clearly.

Approved in September, Stalin's plan encountered the opposition of a number of Soviet leaders. He won few sympathies in Georgia and Ukraine. The Georgian Politburo considered it premature, while their Ukrainian counterparts asked to return to the recommendations of the Frunze commission. This did not, though, presuppose that the Georgian or Ukrainian Politburo was united on the issue, and the minutes of the meetings prove otherwise. Rather it demonstrates that some of their ambitious leaders temporarily managed to push through the disapproval of Moscow's decision. The most cunning response arrived from Belarus, and did not explicitly pronounce for or against the plan, opting for some sort of tacit approval of it. At the same time apparently in exchange for their non-opposition they asked to consider the annexation to Soviet Belarus of parts of

90 *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros*, 76-77; “Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR,” 198-199.

91 “Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR,” 199.

Vitebsk and Gomel' regions, while in terms of prerogatives they requested equivalence to Soviet Ukraine, clearly understanding, that whatever the outcome, Ukraine would have the greatest autonomy among all the republics.⁹²

The most influential and vocal critique of Stalin's plan came from Lenin. Lenin opposed “autonomization” and proposed a model of voluntary unions of the republics. The struggle between Lenin and Stalin on the issue of the administrative structure of the Soviet Union became one of the core elements of Moshe Lewin’s famous thesis of *Lenin’s last struggle* against Stalin’s centralizing aspirations and “great power chauvinism.”⁹³ Revisiting the issue, recent studies argued that Lenin's and Stalin's views on the degree of centralization and the preservation of the cultural and political rights of non-Russians did not differ much.⁹⁴ Terry Martin, for instance, correctly pointed out that the main difference between the two Bolshevik leaders was in their views on the status of the Soviet Russian governing institutes and the Russian Republic.⁹⁵ For Lenin, probably the most vocal opponent of “Great-Russian chauvinism” in the party, Stalin's “autonomization” was as an attempt to subordinate the Soviet republics to the RSFSR, which would create the danger of the abuse of the rights of other Soviet republics. After “autonomization,” the RSFSR could revive some of the features the old Russian empire, which would breed local nationalist feelings and undermine trust towards Bolsheviks. The issue of the external image was also quite important for Lenin. Therefore, he suggested

92 “Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR,” 197.

93 Lewin, *Lenin’s Last Struggle*.

94 Jeremy Smith, *Bolsheviks and the National Question*, 180-189. Erik van Ree even goes as far, as to suggest that Lenin had in fact much stronger centralizing aspirations, than Stalin, Erik van Ree, “‘Lenin’s Last Struggle’ Revisited,” *Revolutionary Russia* 14 (2001): 100-113.

95 Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 394-397; Idem, “The Russification of the RSFSR,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 39 (1998): 99-102.

the creation of another level in the union of Soviet republics, which the RSFSR would enter on equal terms with other republics. That would de-Russify the image of the Bolshevik center of the future union.

For Stalin it was clear that the infringement upon republican autonomy existed in abundance even in the relations with formally independent Soviet republics, while many republican leaders took the declared independence too seriously. Since real independence was not an option, then in Stalin's opinion the liquidation of the independence could serve the republican and national, and most importantly all-Soviet, interests much better. Instead of "sham independence," which only created conflict, grievances and red tape, the Soviet republics would enjoy "real autonomy."⁹⁶ Yet more importantly, Stalin categorically disagreed with Lenin on the necessity to introduce an additional higher level in the union:

I think that Comrade Lenin's corrections will lead unavoidably to the creation of a Russian (*ruskii*) TsIK with the eight autonomous republics currently part of the RSFSR excluded from it (Tatarstan, Turkestan, and so on). It will unavoidably lead to these republics being declared independent along with Ukraine and the other independent republics, to the creation of two chambers in Moscow (Russian and Federal), and in general to deep restructurings that are not called for by either internal or external necessities.⁹⁷

From this remark it becomes clear that Stalin specifically objected the existence of two TsIKs— a narrowly-defined Russian one and an all-Soviet one. Stalin deliberately used *ruskii* and not *rossiiskii* in this document and the word was even underlined in the letter. Apparently Stalin feared that the Lenin's plan would inevitably lead to the independence of the RSFSR's autonomous republics. This would leave the remaining

⁹⁶ "Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR," 199.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 208.

RSFSR almost exclusively Russian (*ruskii*). The administrative bodies of such RSFSR were potentially a strong political center, which could promote narrow *russkie* interests and possibly challenge the all-Soviet institutions. This suggests that Stalin saw the benefit in the RSFSR's autonomous republics, since by their sheer existence they already were an antidote against the pursuit of narrow Russian interests in Moscow.⁹⁸ Although Lenin and Stalin were both preoccupied with the dangers of the Russian question, they saw this danger quite differently. For Lenin, the danger was “Great-Russian chauvinism” with its strong imperialist elements. Stalin appeared to be much more concerned with the institutional framework and administrative structures in which, narrow Russian (*russkie*) national interests could become a resource for political power, which then could be used against the center.

The chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, Rakovsky, was among the most vocal opponents of Stalin. On 28 September, 1922, he prepared his remarks to the proposed resolution, based on the “autonomization” plan. Rakovsky agreed that there was much bureaucratic chaos and the urgent necessity to clarify the administrative relations between the RSFSR and the independent republics. He was unsurprisingly slightly more preoccupied with the rights of the republican authorities: “The practice has demonstrated, that the central administration in some of the independent republics live in total ignorance, on what they are allowed to do and what is prohibited, and often risk to criticized for the lack of initiative or actions, having separatist character.”⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Rakovsky maintained that the internal and international situation more than ever required

98 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 397-399; see also a debate on the dangers of the secession of the national autonomous republics from the RSFSR at the meeting of the party activists from the national republics of the RSFSR, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 85, d. 108, l. 35, 53.

99 “Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR,” 211.

the unity of leadership. The key question in his understanding was the “elaboration of a strictly centralized, but federative form of government, in which the interests of the republics would be protected and the latter possessed certain autonomy.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, Rakovsky presented himself as an advocate of the centralization, but with clearly defined rights of the republics. Still, in his opinion, the proposed project would fail to resolve all these issues and, on the contrary, would prove to be harmful. He expressed strong reservations about the envisaged abolition of the independence of the Soviet republics:

This project ignores that the Soviet federation is not a homogeneous nation-state. In that sense the project of the resolutions is a turning point in the nationality policy of our party. Its realization, that is the formal abolition of the independent republics will be the source of difficulties both abroad and inside the federation. It belittles the revolutionary-emancipatory role of proletarian Russia.¹⁰¹

Rakovsky was particularly troubled with the foreign implications of the “autonomization”:

Abroad the realization of the resolution would empower the positions of our opponents among bourgeois and conciliatory (*soglashatel'skii*) camps. The form of the independent republics gave us the possibility to exert maximum revolutionary effect in all borderlands, and also abroad. By means of independent Azerbaijan, Bukhara, Khiva, etc. the Soviet federation had the possibility to organize the maximal peaceful revolutionary penetration in the East. By means of Soviet Ukraine the Soviet federation had the possibility to carry out the same revolutionary penetration in Galicia, Bukovina, Bessarabia. Without any serious need whatsoever we depriving ourselves of this weapon, and on the contrary give Polish and Romanian bourgeoisie a new arm in a struggle with us and the strengthening of their nationality policies. In the case of Ukraine, Poland will come out as an advocate of its (Ukrainian) independence, recognized by the Riga agreement.¹⁰²

Rakovsky considered that “autonomization” would only breed local nationalism. More importantly, he lamented that the loss of Soviet Ukraine’s formal independence would undermine all their achievements in appealing to Ukrainians living in the

¹⁰⁰ “Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR,” 212.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 211-212.

¹⁰² Ibid, 212.

neighboring states. The Soviet Ukrainian leader also feared the use of cross-border cultural ties by Poland and Romania against the Bolsheviks. Rakovsky reiterated his concerns for “about ten million Ukrainians Galicia, Transcarpathian Rus', Bukovina, and Bessarabia” in a letter to the First Secretary of the KP(b)U, Dmytro Manuilsky, the next day. In his opinion, Ukraine “was suffering because of the imprudence and deviations of other independent republics.”¹⁰³ Rakovsky, of course, was crafty in these letters. He was well aware that the Ukrainian republic authorities had numerous conflicts with the central authorities and carried out actions, which could be understood as “having separatist character.” In fact, Rakovsky himself was one of the central figures of many administrative conflicts with Moscow. In Rakovsky's case, behind all these declarations was also hidden a concern for the possible loss of power and resources, which the Soviet Ukrainian leader managed to accumulate during his several years in the Republic. Rakovsky managed to make the most of the formal independence of his Republic, extending his sphere of political influence even beyond the borders of the Ukrainian SSR. Therefore, the issue of the Soviet Ukrainian “revolutionary penetration” abroad preoccupied him in particular. The ambitious Soviet Ukrainian leader invested much in this direction.

It would be incorrect, however, to see in Rakovsky's declarations the common unified position of all the Soviet Ukrainian leadership. Already in early September, Dmytro Manuilsky, whom Rakovsky appealed to, sent a letter, which in many respects echoed Stalin's motivations for the “autonomization.” Manuil'sky lamented the never-ending conflicts between governmental agencies, as a result of which “officials have to

103 “Iz Istorii Obrazovani SSSR,” 213.

spend three fourths of their time on the settlements of these conflicts.”¹⁰⁴ The head of the Ukrainian Party organization was apparently tired of such conflicts and therefore proposed the liquidation of republican independence and the introduction of broad autonomy.¹⁰⁵ It is hard, if not impossible, to know, whether Manuil'sky wrote this letter on his own initiative or whether he was influenced by Stalin. Most likely, the First Secretary of the KP(b)U would not have written it, if it had entirely contradicted his own positions. In any case letters like these made Stalin's push for “autonomization” easier. They could be used to demonstrate support even from the republican authorities, who had allegedly the most to lose. Stalin did exactly that, attaching Manuil'sky's letter to one of his explanatory notes to Lenin. The authorship of the letter was of particular importance, since with Rakovsky's vocal opposition it was crucial to demonstrate that the Ukrainian leadership was in reality divided. Many Soviet Ukrainian leaders were, in fact, tired of the ambitious Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, who constantly dragged them into conflict with Moscow. Therefore, Rakovsky transferred from Ukraine, when the opportunity emerged.

The treaty on the establishment of the Soviet Union was signed on 30 December 1922. Formally, the Soviet Union was established on 6 July, 1923, with the adoption of the constitution of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ The final result was a compromise between the positions of Lenin and Stalin. Upon Lenin's insistence, Stalin agreed to take a neutral name “the USSR” instead of extending “the RSFSR” to the whole union. The concession

104 *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros*, 77.

105 *Ibid*, 77

106 Hennadii Efimenko, “6 Lipnia iak “Chervonyi Den' Kalendaria”: Prychyny Poiavu Stalins'kogo Mifu pro Datu Stvorennia SRSR ta Potreba Iogo Dekonstrukcii,” *Problemy Istorii Ukrainy: Fakty, Sudzhennia, Poshuky* 16 (2007): 134-153.

on the name reflected also the status of the non-RSFSR republics, which entered the Soviet Union. They joined not as autonomous republics within the RSFSR, but as Soviet republics, with the right of self-determination. Yet, Stalin managed to stand his ground on the main issue of disagreement. He managed to maintain the RSFSR with all the autonomous republics and prevent the organization of the *russskii* administrative structures.

Soon, in April 1923 the XII party congress introduced another crucial change. The congress declared the introduction of the policy of the *korenizatsiia* (indigenization, nationalization). To a significant extent this was the elaboration of some of the key principles of the Bolshevik nationality policy already in place in different corners of the Soviet Union, particularly in the Ukrainian SSR, but in a more comprehensive and coherent manner, targeting all non-Russian nationalities. The *korenizatsiia* presupposed the creation of national territorial units, the promotion of the local non-Russian cadres, support for the development and promotion of local national cultures and languages, economic equalization etc. Often such active promotion of non-Russians discriminated Russians and Russian speakers. What *korenizatsiia* meant in concrete national and republican settings was up to debate. In any case Soviet nationality policies forced Soviet people to choose their nationality and not too rarely made the choice for them.

While the decision on the creation of the Soviet Union was made in the center, some opposition persisted at the republican level. For instance, Rakovsky decided to use legal casuistics in order to ignore or postpone the execution of some of Moscow's directives. He reasoned that the treaty on the creation of the Soviet Union would come into full effect only after the adoption of the Soviet Constitution. Of course, such a

situation could not be maintained for long. Therefore, in July 1923, Rakovsky's opponents in Ukraine, with Moscow's backing, convinced TsK KP(b)U that it was opportune to honorably transfer him to diplomatic work to Britain. With the implementation of *korenizatsiia* on the horizon it was risky to leave such an ambitious and resourceful leader in the Ukrainian SSR.

1. 4. Conclusions

Soviet Ukraine could have taken different forms in terms of its territory, international status, and administrative position within the Bolshevik-controlled space. There were also scenarios, according to which Soviet Ukraine, as a separate administrative unit, would not have existed at all. The Ukrainian SSR was gradually taking shape in the course of the civil war, and the Polish-Soviet war. The chaotic post-revolutionary circumstances had a significant impact on the evolution of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet nationality policies.

The decision to recognize the Ukrainian nationality and support its Soviet statehood was key. It represented a radical break with the Romanov policies previously on these territories. It was also a blow at Russian nationalism, which considered Little Russians (Ukrainians) a part of the Russian nation. The civil war reinforced the animosity of the key Bolshevik leaders towards Russian nationalism, which proved to be one of the main unifying rallying call for many Bolshevik enemies. Endorsing Ukrainian statehood and eventually supporting Ukrainian language and culture, the Bolsheviks were not only disarming Ukrainian nationalism, but were taming it in order to use, among others, in their struggle against Russian nationalism.

The new Polish state had also demonstrated Bolsheviks that they were going to have an ambitious neighbor on the Soviet Western border. Pilsudski's circles were not shy of using Ukrainian national forces in their struggle against the Bolsheviks and would continue to do so in the future.

The Bolshevik republics, which emerged out of the military conflicts of the late 1910s were a collection of diverse polities, connected to Moscow the party structures and bilateral treaties. The early 1920s passed in the conflicts over the prerogatives of the republican authorities and Moscow, spheres of influence and autonomy, which took place in the context of a complex international situation for the Bolsheviks. These chaotic circumstances paved the way for the emergence of such phenomena as, for instance, Soviet Ukrainian diplomacy. Some Soviet Ukrainian leaders attempted to exploit this opportunity in order to expand their spheres of influence and promote their own agenda.

Nevertheless, the permanent conflicts between various levels of the Soviet government, the necessity to find a comprehensive framework for relations between Moscow and the republics, and the centralizing tendencies among the Bolsheviks eventually led to the establishment of the Soviet Union. The party discussion exposed the divisions in the Soviet Ukrainian leadership on the issue of the most appropriate administrative structure of the Union. As a result of the creation of the Soviet Union, Soviet Ukraine had lost formal independence. Still, there was a considerable space for the autonomy of the republican leaders left, particularly with the introduction of *korenizatsiia* at the XII Party Congress.

Chapter 2. Choosing Allies in Soviet Ukraine: Bolshevik Relations with Ukrainian Socialist Parties

The elaboration and establishment of the framework of the relations between the authorities in Moscow and Kharkiv was only one of the major issues of the building-up of the Soviet power in the Ukrainian SSR. The other key process was the forming of the ruling Soviet elite in the Ukrainian SSR, which eventually was embodied by the Communist Party (bolshevik) of Ukraine. The problem, which the Bolsheviks faced, was their weak representation on Ukrainian territories. Some historians even argue that the Bolsheviks were originally almost completely absent in Ukraine, and therefore the Bolshevik regime there was an example of the foreign occupation. This is definitely an exaggeration and misinterpretation. Indeed, Bolshevik membership in Ukraine was rather limited. Orest Subtelny gives a figure of 4,000-5,000 party members in 1918.¹ Yet, the party membership does not necessarily reflect the sympathies for the regime or some of its policies. More importantly, in Russia too the Bolsheviks were in the beginning neither the most numerous, nor the ideologically mainstream political party. This, though, did not prevent them from the eventual success and consolidation of power in their hands. The other implication of the boiling down of the Bolshevik regime in Ukraine to the formula of the “foreign occupation” is the under-representation of ethnic Ukrainians in the KP(b)U. Indeed, the majority of the KP(b)U during the years of the civil war consisted of non-Ukrainians, especially Russians and Jews. In fact, one of the goals of *korenizatsiia* in

¹ Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 348-349.

Ukraine was to shift this balance more in favor of Ukrainians.² Nevertheless, most of non-Ukrainians still came from the Ukrainian territories. It would be inappropriate to claim that they were not part of the Ukrainian political space. Much also depends on the definition of the categories of “Ukrainians” and “non-Ukrainians.” In addition, even though ethnic Ukrainians among Bolsheviks were under-represented, they still existed and many of them occupied major political positions in Soviet Ukraine.³ At the same time some of Russians in the KP(b)U were the representatives of the Russified proletariat, whose origins in some cases were in Ukrainian villages. One of the trajectories for these Russified personalities was to assume also Russian identity.

Even though the characterization of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine as a foreign political force is misplaced, still the Bolshevik organization in Ukraine during the civil war was not strong and faced numerous challenges. The weakness to a significant extent stemmed from the low numbers of the proletariat in Ukraine.⁴ The proletarian masses were considered and formed one of the key social basis of the Bolshevik power. To aggravate the issue, most of workers in Ukraine were Russian or Russified in predominantly Russian-speaking industrial centers of South-Eastern Ukraine. As the consequence, the KP(b)U on its early stages was almost exclusively a Russian-speaking party organization. The Bolsheviks also struggled to mobilize enough support in Ukraine from the other crucial resource for party ranks and supporters, the army. In Russia the

2 This endeavor was at least partially successful. In 1924 Ukrainians comprised 33% of the membership of the KP(b)U, by 1932 it was more than 59%, see G. G. Efimenko, “Natsional'ni Aspekty u Formuvanni Kompartiino-Radians'kogo Aparatu v URSR (1932-1938),” *Ukrains'kyi Istorychnyi Jurnal*, no. 5 (2000): 5.

3 Liliana Riga traces the trajectories of some of the leading Ukrainian Bolsheviks in the pre-revolutionary period, emphasizing also the impact of the local context on their Bolshevik allegiances, Riga, *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire*, 123-154.

4 In 1917 the working class constituted only about 14% of the population Bohdan Krawchenko, “The Social Structure of the Ukraine in 1917,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 (1990): 110.

Bolsheviks had to struggle for the attracting of the soldiers with various White forces, often led by former imperial military elites. In Ukraine there was another force, or rather a group of forces, which competed for the allegiances of the former imperial army – various Ukrainian national governments and political forces. It was the regiments of the former imperial army, which formed the nucleus of the army of the Ukrainian People's Republic and Hetmanate. The imperial army divisions, originally from Ukrainian territories, were Ukrainianized under Skoropadsky's leadership after Kornilov's order, interestingly despite the objections of the former.⁵

The limited political outreach of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine put forth the question of the search and choice of allies. This chapter analyzes the relations between the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian nationally-conscious socialist parties in the first half of the 1920s. It demonstrates that the Bolshevik choice of allies among these groups was a complex process and that the Bolsheviks were quite picky in their selection.

2.1. Changes in the Bolshevik Approach in Ukraine in 1919

At first Bolsheviks attempted to carry out the struggle for political power in Ukraine with their own forces, relying only on situational, short-term alliances with various peasant atamans⁶ or some of the Ukrainian socialist parties, which from time to time joined Bolsheviks in the same Ukrainian revkoms. Yet, the experience of the endeavors was mostly negative. First, the Bolshevik regimes in Ukraine failed to consolidate power in their hands and encountered resistance from almost all other major

5 P. Skoropads'kii, *Spogadi. Kinets' 1917 – Gruden' 1918* (Kyiv: 1995), 64.

6 For instance, the Bolsheviks forged short-term alliances with Makhno's forces, see V. Danilov and T. Shanin, ed., *Nestor Makhno. Krestianskoe Dvizhenie na Ukraine. 1918-1921: Dokumenty i Materialy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006), 485.

political forces, Ukrainian, peasant or White ones. The success of Denikin's offensive in 1919 made a particularly strong impression on the Bolsheviks. They realized that to prevent further collapses of the Bolshevik governments and to widen their outreach they required to forge profound, not just situational, alliances with other political and social forces in Ukraine. By December 1919 Bolsheviks made a choice.

Two famous documents signaled the change in Bolshevik attitudes. On 2 December 1919 the TsK RKP(b) adopted the decree "On the Soviet Power in Ukraine"⁷ and on 28 December 1919 Lenin wrote an open "Letter to Workers and Peasants of Ukraine on the Occasion of Victories over Denikin."⁸ Both documents stressed the necessity to establish a strong union between Russian and Ukrainian working masses. To this end, both TsK RKP(b) and personally Lenin advocated the strong support of Ukrainian culture and language:

The RKP(b) makes it incumbent upon all Party members to use every means to help remove all barriers in the way of the free development of the Ukrainian language and culture. Since the many centuries of oppression have given rise to nationalist tendencies among the backward sections of the population, RKP(b) members must exercise the greatest caution in respect of those tendencies and must oppose them with words of comradely explanation concerning the identity of interests of the working people of Ukraine and Russia. RKP(b) members on Ukrainian territory must put into practice the right of the working people to study in the Ukrainian language and to speak their native language in all Soviet institutions; they must in every way counteract attempts at Russification that push the Ukrainian language into the background and must convert that language into an instrument for the communist education of the working people. Steps must be taken immediately to ensure that in all Soviet institutions there are sufficient Ukrainian-speaking employees and that in future all employees are able to speak Ukrainian.⁹

In the end of 1919, with the ongoing military activities in Ukraine, one could hardly expect the realization of these principles. It was rather a declaration of intentions

7 Lenin, *PSS*, tom 39, 334-337.

8 Lenin, *PSS*, tom 40, 41-47.

9 Lenin, *PSS*, tom 39, 334.

and a message to Ukrainian working masses and potential allies among Ukrainian leftist parties. The decree of TsK RKP(b) particularly emphasized the need to reach out to the peasantry in Ukraine and its specific conditions and interests. and recognition of the right of the Ukrainian toilers for autonomy:

It is essential to ensure the closest contact between Soviet institutions and the native peasant population of the country, for which purpose it must be made the rule, even at the earliest stages, that when revolutionary committees and Soviets are being established the laboring peasants must have a majority in them with the poor peasants exercising a decisive influence.¹⁰

The documents also tackled the difficult issue of the independence of Soviet Ukraine:

The independence of Ukraine has been recognized both by the all-Russia TsIK RSFSR and by the RKP(b). It is therefore self-evident and generally recognized that only the Ukrainian workers and peasants themselves can and will decide at their All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets whether Ukraine shall amalgamate with Russia, or whether she shall remain a separate and independent republic, and, in the latter case, what federal ties shall be established between that republic and Russia.¹¹

This was, of course, a largely propagandist declaration, since Lenin and the leadership in Moscow had no intention to risk losing control over Soviet Ukraine. Moreover, in other resolutions in April and November 1919, Lenin and TsK RKP(b) suggested the gradual amalgamation (*slivanie*) of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR.¹² It is likely that the party leadership in Moscow contemplated different options. In any case they planned to maintain control over Ukrainian governing bodies, whatever form the administrative relations between Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Russia would take.

These two documents can be interpreted as a concession to Ukrainian national

¹⁰ Lenin, PSS, tom 39, 335.

¹¹ Lenin, PSS, tom 40, 42-43.

¹² Iu. A. Amiantov et al, ed., *V. I. Lenin. Neizvestnye Dokumenty. 1891-1922 gg.* (Moscow, 1997), 306; Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, *Komunizm v Ukraini: Pershe Desitirychchia (1919-1928)* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1996), 86.

movement,¹³ which forced the Bolsheviks to adopt tolerant policies towards Ukrainian culture. Some even go as far claiming that the introduction and implementation of the Soviet Ukrainianization took place due to the inclusion of the members of the Ukrainian national-communists in the Soviet governing bodies.¹⁴ Undoubtedly, the former members of the Ukrainian national-communist parties did influence to some extent the process of Ukrainianization, particularly its implementation. After all, the Bolsheviks were particularly interested in them as experts in local Ukrainian specificities. Nevertheless, their role in the choice of the direction of Soviet nationality policies should not be exaggerated.

Ukrainianization and Bolshevik desire to include more Ukrainian “national elements” in their ranks were a more complex and profound process. To begin with, one should not forget that Ukrainianization was a part of larger tendency of the supporting of non-Russian cultures, cadres, and autonomy, which was going beyond the local Ukrainian context. It was a part of an all-Union phenomenon. To some extent it kicked off with the October Revolution. It acquired larger significance closer to the end of the civil war, culminating in 1923 with the official adoption of the policy of *korenizatsiia*. In the discussion the individual cases of the Bolshevik support of non-Russian nationalities, in particular, such major cases as the Ukrainian one, it is always crucial to keep in mind that basically all non-Russians, including the least numerous, experienced some form of the

13 Stephen Velychenko, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red: The Ukrainian Marxist Critique of Russian Communist Rule in Ukraine, 1918-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 28.

14 Mace, Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation; Myroslav Shkandrij and Olga Berthelsen, “The Soviet Regime's National Operations in Ukraine, 1929-1934,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* vol. 55, no. 3-4 (2013): 422; Marchukov, who is much less sympathetic to the Ukrainian cause, also makes an argument along these lines, though in a more moderate version, Marchukov, *Ukrainskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie*, 372.

preferential treatment. Many of these nationalities had very weak national movements or even no hints of these whatsoever. Therefore, it would be incorrect to consider Bolshevik policy towards non-Russians, as a simple concession to the strength of non-Russian nationalism.

In the Ukrainian case, it is illustrative, how the Bolsheviks were choosing long-term allies in Ukraine after the victory over Denikin's army. The Bolsheviks were not looking for just any Ukrainian national political force. They had no ambiguities in their assessment of the leaders of the Directory, which was arguably the strongest embodiment of Ukrainian nationalism at that moment. In the worst case at some point only a short-term, situational alliance against a common enemy (Poles or Whites) could be discussed. Yet, in general Bolsheviks considered almost all the leaders of the UNR or Petliurists as their enemies. A Petliurist, who ended up in Bolshevik hands, would have an unenviable fate. Bolsheviks were looking for the Ukrainian political forces, which were close to them ideologically and from the point of view of their social basis, as the Soviet leaders perceived them. Therefore, only Ukrainian socialist or Marxist political parties could achieve a long-term inclusion in the Soviet governing institutions. Moreover, as I will show in this chapter, their accession was possible only on Bolshevik terms. Thus, even in these cases there was hardly much of concession on the Bolshevik side. Even a compromise would be a strong word to describe the alliance between the Bolsheviks and Ukrainian Marxist national parties, since compromise usually presupposes evident concessions on both sides, which was hardly the case. The Bolshevik policies towards non-Russian nationalities in the 1920s was neither simply a concession to nationalism or a quest to suppress it altogether. Rather it was an attempt to tame nationalism, to create an

acceptable and politically convenient form of it, which could be useful for the purposes of the grand socio-economic transformations, which Bolshevik leaders envisaged for the ruled society.¹⁵

In the Ukrainian case this meant a form of Ukrainian national culture and maybe even nationalism, which was based upon the social and political interests of workers and to some extent peasants, as the Bolsheviks understood them, and which, unlike usual Ukrainian nationalism, did not entail the opposition to Russia. It should be emphasized, though, that within this logic for the Bolsheviks Russia did not mean the Imperial Russia, governed by the autocracy, “counter-revolutionary” elites, imperial bureaucracy, orthodox priesthood, capitalists and landowners, all of which “exploited” much more numerous masses. For the Bolsheviks this Russia was an enemy as well. Therefore, there was no problem, if Ukrainians struggled with it. In fact, on the contrary this is where Lenin, for instance, saw the grounds for the alliance between Ukrainian masses and some political forces and the Bolsheviks.¹⁶ Yet, if Ukrainian identity, as many Ukrainian nationalists and national leaders saw it, presupposed also the opposition to Soviet Russia, “Russia of workers and peasants.” then Ukrainian national consciousness was becoming a problem for the Bolsheviks. Therefore, they attempted to foster and support the form of Soviet Ukrainian identity, which did not see itself in opposition to Soviet Russia and Moscow, as the capital of socialist revolution and the center of Soviet decision-making.

It should be also kept in mind, that the search for allies among Ukrainian Marxist

15 An important element of Bolshevik reasoning here was what Terry Martin called the 'Modernization premise', that is the belief that national consciousness was an unavoidable phase. Therefore, even nationalities with weak or no national movements received similar treatment, which in some cases even led to the creation of local national cultures and languages from scratch by Soviet power. Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 5-6.

16 Lenin, *PSS*, tom 40, 46-47.

national parties was not the only option for the Bolsheviks. They could choose also allies among other political and social groups. Alternatives existed. The Bolsheviks, as a whole, were not fully comfortable with any of them. Many Bolsheviks, especially in Ukraine, opposed the agreements with Ukrainian national-communists for that matter. But there were also other options. The Bolsheviks could have tried to make the former imperial bureaucrats and/or urban Russian-speaking intelligentsia the basis of their power. These groups were often sympathizing with White forces. Yet, when it was becoming clear that the Red Army was winning in the civil war, the Bolsheviks could have tried to attract the allegiances of these groups, adopting or at least proclaiming the policies corresponding with their interests. This would most likely presuppose much more moderate socio-economic and nationality policies, the latter relying on quite limited recognition of and support for the Ukrainian interests and more Russifying tendencies. Yet, Bolsheviks did not choose this option, since in many respects such approach required them to switch to the turf of their main enemies – “counter-revolutionary” forces and the Romanov Empire. In fact, most likely attracting Russian-speaking elites in Ukrainian cities would have solved many problems, which Bolsheviks encountered in Ukraine, such as understaffed bureaucracy, lack of trained specialists in many areas etc. Nevertheless, such policies would contradict Bolshevik own views on the tactics and strategies of the social and economic development of the country. It would require the alliance with the social groups, which Bolsheviks considered among their strongest opponents and enemies. Therefore, even when these groups participated in the Soviet administration, their loyalty was constantly in check, since they faced the necessity to implement policies, which contradicted to their previous practice. The alliance with Ukrainian Marxist and socialist

groups also required certain adjustments in Bolshevik policies. But these hardly significantly contradicted the designs of some of the leading Bolsheviks. In some respects it helped Lenin and his associates to push stronger for their approach to nationality policies, which entailed strong support for non-Russian cultural and political rights, against their opponents in the leadership of the Party.

The two documents from December 1919, mentioned earlier, also demonstrated explicitly, who the main enemy of the Bolshevik power in Ukraine was, according to Lenin and at least some of the members in the TsK RKP(b), and why the alliance with “Ukrainian workers and peasants” was a necessity:

Denikin must be vanquished and destroyed, and such incursions as his not allowed to recur. That is to the fundamental interest of both the Great-Russian and the Ukrainian workers and peasants... In this long and hard fight we Great-Russian and Ukrainian workers must maintain the closest alliance, for separately we shall most definitely be unable to cope with the task.¹⁷

Lenin also urged “Great Russian Communists” to “struggle with any manifestation of Great Russian nationalism, since such manifestations, being in general a betrayal of Communism, bring much harm, dividing us with Ukrainian comrades, and playing into the hands of Denikin and Denikinshchina.”¹⁸ Undoubtedly, as Lenin's letter made it clear, Denikin in this representation was not only a specific person, but a shortcut for a larger anti-Soviet force, which included capitalists, kulaks, landowners, and the support of foreign powers. One can argue, whether and to what extent this letter reflected Lenin's own views on the matter or whether it was just a calculated attempt to recruit support for Bolsheviks in Ukraine. Most likely, it was some of both. Though, again there were also

¹⁷ Lenin, *PSS*, tom 40, 46-47

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 46

other ways to raise support for Bolsheviks, but among other groups. But in any case, this letter and TsK resolution mapped, whom Bolsheviks considered (or chose as) their allies and enemies¹⁹ in Ukraine. Yet, while the general contours of Bolshevik allies became clearer, the actual choices still had to be made.

In the remainder of the chapter I will outline Bolshevik relations with three different Ukrainian socialist and communist groups. It will demonstrate several dimensions of the process of the choice of allies in Ukraine and the forming of leading groups in the KP(b)U in the first half of the 1920s.

2. 2. The Case of the “TsK UPSR”

The Bolsheviks have used different methods in dealing with Ukrainian left parties in the early 1920s. These ranged from repressions to the legalization of the Ukrainian parties or the inclusion of some of their members within the ranks of the KP(b)U. The so-called Case of the TsK UPSR (Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries)” in 1920-1921 was an example of mostly repressive approach. The KP(b)U and local sections of the Cheka investigated and organized a show trial of eight members of the UPSR. The former Prime-Minister of the UNR, Vsevolod Golubovich, headed the list of convicted to prison sentences.

The UPSR was one of the strongest parties in Ukraine. In the Ukrainian Rada the UPSR had the largest faction. Similarly to the Russian SRs, their Ukrainian counterparts had an agrarian-socialist orientation. Yet, the UPSR had also focused on the specific Ukrainian conditions and the interest of local peasantry. During the years of the civil war

19 Bolsheviks, though, had nothing good to say about the Ukrainian urban petty bourgeoisie (*meshchanstvo*), in which they saw a social opponent and one of the sources of the dangerous version of Ukrainian nationalism. Lenin, *PSS*, tom 39, 336.

the members of the UPSR had also advocated for the Ukrainian autonomy, up to independence, in its relations with Russia. The degree and the understanding of the Ukrainian autonomy, though, differed significantly among the various factions of the Ukrainian SRs. Moreover, almost all the major leaders of the UPSR changed their views (and often not once) on the issue of the Ukrainian autonomy/independence as the civil war progressed and the circumstances changed. Similarly to other Ukrainian political forces during these turbulent years, the UPSR had major internal struggles and disagreements on various political issues, most important of which being the agrarian policies, land redistribution, national question, relations to the Bolshevik power etc. Again like other Ukrainian parties, the Ukrainian SRs went through a number of splits, giving birth to smaller political organizations.²⁰ In the historiography on the Soviet nationality policies in late 1910s and the early 1920s the hardy view that the Bolsheviks used some kind of “divide and rule” tactics in order to establish their rule in non-Russian borderlands still survives.²¹ What this interpretation misses out, is the fact that the Bolsheviks had no need to actively engage in the “divide” part of the tactics, since local political forces were already split and engaged in bitter internal struggles, which made the Bolshevik quest for the monopoly of power much easier. The Ukrainian case is also illustrative in this sense.

The UPSR group, which ended up on the felon's dock in 1921, was the product of the internal struggles and political splits, which the socialist-revolutionary party experienced throughout the years of the civil war. In 1920-1921, when the investigation

20 O. M. Liubovets', *Ukrains'ki Partii i Politychni Al'ternatyvy 1917–1920 Rokiv* (Kyiv: Osnova, 2005).

21 It is particularly popular in the studies of the Soviet policies in Central Asia and in the historiography of the civil war years, which sometimes presents all the “national” and anti-Bolshevik forces, as a united front.

took place, the group represented the members of the UPSR, who did not emigrate and at this moment stood on the positions of cooperation with the Soviet authorities. This did not arise from their rediscovered sympathies for the Bolsheviks. It was rather the result of the recognition of the gradual consolidation of the Soviet power and some of their proclamations on the peasant and national questions. The group unsuccessfully attempted to legalize the UPSR within the Soviet regime. Therefore, they chose to continue their political activities through Soviet Ukrainian institutions.

The KP(b)U and local Cheka fabricated the case against the UPSR group, headed by Golubovich. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks needed the process first of all to send a message, to make a political statement and not to accuse specific individuals. Therefore, the wording of the accusation was important. The editor of the document collection dedicated to the case of the “TsK UPSR”, claims that the goal was to delegitimize the party and the “national liberation movement” and the whole UNR as such.²² Yet, this interpretation seems misleading. Using the case against a group of the UPSR, a socialist party, members, who stayed in the Ukrainian SSR and, in general, were predisposed to cooperate with the Soviet power, the Bolsheviks were producing a statement for both internal and external consumption. They were demonstrating, which groups they were not ready to accept into the active political life in Soviet Ukraine or what would be the conditions of such admittance.

Preparing the process, the Politburo of TsK KP(b)U outlined the main line of the accusation. The minutes of the Politburo meeting from 17 May 1921 contain the directive

22 Tet'ana Ostashko and Serhiy Kokin, ed., *Vyrok Ukrainskii Revol'utsii: “Sprava TsK UPSR”* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2013).

for Manuilsky, Zatonsky and Shumsky to prepare the verdict beforehand. More importantly, the Politburo instructed the same party activists to “use the process in order to characterize ~~meshchanstvo~~²³ the behavior of the Ukrainian intelligentsia.”²⁴ Giving a negative assessment to Ukrainian intelligentsia,²⁵ Ukrainian Bolsheviks demonstrated that the former would not occupy such an elevated status in Soviet Ukraine as Ukrainian workers and peasants. Using the process against Golubovich's group, the Bolsheviks presented and maybe considered their disagreements with the Ukrainian socialist parties on socio-economic and national issues as the outcome of the latter's social origins (petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia).

This did not mean that the members of former anti-Bolshevik Ukrainian socialist parties and anti-Soviet Ukrainian intelligentsia had no future in Ukraine. In fact, less than a month after the process, which took place in May 1921, on 6 June, 1921, the Ukrainian Politburo rejected the request of emigrated members of the UPSR for the legalization of their party. But it allowed the return to Ukraine for soviet and academic work of those individual members, who would declare resignation from the UPSR and condemn it.²⁶ In addition, the Politburo instructed Zatonsky to organize an appeal to Ukrainian intelligentsia, proposing them to “honestly serve Soviet power” and take active part in the “division (*raskol*) of the Ukrainian intelligentsia.”²⁷ The Politburo proposed Zatonsky to use the Golubovich process to this end.²⁸

23 The word was crossed out in the original document.

24 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 13, l. 102.

25 The members of the intelligentsia in Ukraine ended up among the accused in several political trials during the 1920s, see Georgiy Kasianov, *Stalinizm I Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia (20-30-i Roki)* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1991), 31-58.

26 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 13, l. 112.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

Thus, the “TsK UPSR” process did not condemn Ukrainian intelligentsia, including “national” one. It rather outlined the terms and conditions of the inclusion of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and members of Ukrainian political parties in the active political life in the Ukrainian SSR. The interested persons needed to give up their party affiliation, confess and condemn the committed mistakes and declare loyalty to the Soviet power. Of course, not everyone had the chance for the redemption. The Bolsheviks with the support of security services chose carefully. Yet, many found the possibility, wanted to reenter the political life and, in the case of emigres, to return to Ukraine. As Christopher Gilley convincingly demonstrated, the desire of Ukrainian emigres to return was not just determined by the Soviet nationality policies, but by the Bolshevik socio-economic projects as well.²⁹

The indictment also outlined the past activities, which Bolshevik considered criminal and which any Ukrainian politician or intellectual needed to condemn and avoid in the future, if he or she hoped to be accepted by the Soviet Ukrainian authorities. Among such actions the indictment cited: organization of armed, bandit and insurgent struggle against the Soviet power, close contacts and collaboration with “imperialist Antanta,” “Russian-monarhist Denikinite counter-revolution” and “Polish shliachta,” planning of the resurrection of the UNR and “bourgeois Ukrainian statehood,” alliance with capitalists, bourgeoisie and kulaks etc.³⁰ Thus, any willing to be admitted to Soviet or academic activity in the Ukrainian SSR had to condemn and avoid all the outlined activities. Interestingly, the members of the Golubovich group, which was found guilty

²⁹ Gilley, *Change of Signposts Movement*.

³⁰ *Sprava TsK UPSR*, 412-419.

and received prison sentences in May 1921, were released already in October 1921 after they gave a written obligation not to leave the place of residence.³¹ The Soviet Ukrainian authorities apparently considered that they had served their purposes and therefore could be released.

The trial of “TsK UPSR” highlights another important feature of the Soviet policies in non-Russian republics. The Politburo consistently and consciously chose ethnic Ukrainians from the ranks of KP(b)U to serve as prosecutors and members of the revolutionary tribunal in the trial, such as Shumsky, Skrypnyk, Manuisky, Zatonsky, Lebedinets' etc. Even though in the course of the preparation the participants of the trial from the side of the authorities had changed several times, the Politburo insistently made it up of Ukrainians.³² This was definitely not the case of the “unhidden cynicism of the leadership of the KP(b)U,” which was forcing the future leaders of Ukrainianization to head the trial of the “Ukrainian *samostiinaia* intelligentsia.”³³ This decision was a part of a larger strategy of appointing ethnic Ukrainians to the leading positions in the justice system of the Ukrainian SSR. As the result, the posts of the Narkom of Justice, Narkom of Internal Affairs, Chairman of the Supreme Court in Soviet Ukraine were usually occupied by Ukrainians in 1920s. Since the Ukrainian justice system by its purpose and design participated in various repressive activities and policies, it was imperative for the Bolsheviks to put it in the hands of ethnic Ukrainians. Thus, the Soviet authorities were trying to avoid the accusations of non-Ukrainians (foremost, Russians and Jews) carrying out repressions against local Ukrainian population and the representations of the Soviet

31 *Sprava TsK UPSR*, 431-433.

32 For the Politburo decisions on the composition of the revolutionary tribunal, see TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 13, l. 7, 63.

33 For such interpretation, see *Sprava TsK UPSR*, 55-56.

power in Ukraine as the restoration of the Russian repressive rule. Therefore, for instance, on 7 February, 1921, the Ukrainian Politburo discussed the necessity to substitute “Mantsev, who has a Russian surname, for a Ukrainian activist,” in the composition of the revolutionary tribunal.³⁴ Ukrainians, heading the tribunal and in general the Soviet Ukrainian judiciary system, allowed the Bolsheviks to claim that it was the progressive groups and social forces of the Ukrainian society putting the representatives of its reactionary, counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet part on trial.

It is also questionable, whether Ukrainian party activists, who participated in the trial, were against it and had any sympathies for the accused. The fact, that the composition of the tribunal and prosecutors changed a couple of times should not necessarily be interpreted, as an attempt by some of the nominated to avoid the participation in it. The proposed members of the tribunal were political opponents of the defendants. They had conflicting political views on social and national issues, while claiming to be on the same, left, spectrum of politics, which usually makes the animosities between politicians even stronger. These were, after all, the reasons, why they ended up on different sides of the barricades during the civil war years. There were hardly many reasons for the mutual sympathies with the exception of the vague “national unity” and common struggle for Ukrainian autonomy, which in reality accusers and defendants understood very differently.

³⁴ *Sprava TsK UPSR*, 56.

2. 3. An Enforced Fusion: The Borotbists

Some of the actual and discussed participants of the trial from the Soviet side were former Borotbists.³⁵ The nomination of some of the Borotbists, as prosecutors or members of the tribunal at the trial of the “TsK UPSR,” demonstrate that they had a different fate in Soviet Ukraine from the one of the Golubovich group, even they had also originated in the ranks of the UPSR. The Borotbists were another product of internal struggles and splits in the UPSR. Originally, they represented the left faction of the Ukrainian SRs. Later they founded a separate party, which first bore the name of Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (borotbist), from the title of their main publication *Borotba*. Later in August 1919, after the unification with the left faction of the Ukrainian Social-Democrat Worker's Party (*nezalezhniki* – independist) the party changed the name to the Ukrainian Communist Party (borotbist). In December 1920, the Borotbists dissolved their party and united with the KP(b)U. Thus, the Borotbists became one of the strongest non-Bolshevik Ukrainian political groups, which joined the KP(b)U and whose members would play an important role in the political life of Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s. As later chapters demonstrate, their role was particularly important for Soviet nationality and borderland policies. Yet, the argument that it was the inclusion of the Borotbists and some other Ukrainian political groups and intellectuals in the KP(b)U ranks and Soviet institutions, which resulted in a more flexible Bolshevik approach to Ukraine and eventually Ukrainianization, is at best overextended.

35 For a classic account of the history of the Borotbists, see Iwan Majstrenko, *Borotbism: A Chapter in the History of Ukrainian Communism* (New York: Research Program on the U.S.S.R., 1954).

Undoubtedly, their role, as specialists in national question in Ukraine, was significant. After all, this was one of the reasons they got admitted to positions of responsibility in Soviet Ukraine. But, if we keep in mind that Bolsheviks had other alternatives and ways to consolidate their power in Ukraine, then it becomes clear that it was rather the existence of and choice for the flexible and in certain respects tolerant approach to the Ukrainian question (even if in an early, rudimentary state), which led to the admission of the Borotbists, rather than the other way round. It is also crucial to emphasize that individual Borotbists changed their views in the 1920s. Some ex-Borotbists would push for the accelerated Ukrainianization in mid-1920s, while their former party colleagues would write pamphlets about the “national deviations” of the former. The Borotbist credentials did not make one a fighter for the Ukrainian cause for life. Just the same is true of the Bolsheviks and their pro- or anti- Ukrainian views.

Since there were many Ukrainian political groups, then the reasonable question is, why namely the Borotbists got the nod from the Bolsheviks and became one of the strongest groups, which joined the Soviet government in the Ukrainian SSR. Why, for instance, did the Borotbists have a different fate from the Golubovich group? There were both ideological and political grounds for the Bolshevik rapprochement with the Borotbists. As the left faction of the UPSR, the Borotbists rather early proclaimed their opposition to the UNR, and later the Hetmanate and the Directory. They also advocated for the Soviet form of the government, though initially this did presuppose support for the Bolsheviks. Rather they sought to establish a Soviet government in Ukraine, which would become allied with Soviet Russia, if the latter recognized Ukrainian autonomy or even independence.

Just like any political force in Ukraine during these years, the Borotbists changed or adjusted their views on social and national issues frequently. On the agrarian issue, while initially sticking to the UPSR approach of the division and distribution of larger lots into individual ones among peasantry, they gradually moved to the advocacy of the some sort of collective farms in the form of peasant communes.³⁶ At the same time they gradually started to move from the position of the party, representing peasantry, to the one, which was also based upon the interests of Ukrainian workers and shifted firmly to Marxism. The change of the name of the party to “Communist” and the unification with the part of the USDRP (*nezalezhniki*) had also signaled this change. This was probably one of the main reasons, why the Borotbists were predisposed to come to an agreement with the Bolsheviks. They came to a conclusion that the interests of Ukrainian peasants and workers, which they claimed to represent, could only be solved with the Soviet system of government and with the victory of socialist revolution in Ukraine. While desirable, they did not see the political independence of Ukraine as an end in itself, as, in their opinion did, other Ukrainian parties, including their former colleagues in the UPSR. While the Borotbists had reservations to the Bolshevik approach to the national question during the civil war, they were convinced that the alliance with the Bolsheviks was a necessity in the face of numerous anti-Soviet forces, which endangered the prospects of socialist revolution in Ukraine.

The Borotbists believed that the Bolsheviks and the KP(b)U erroneously neglect the cultural and national interests of the Ukrainian toilers, thus jeopardizing the

36 For the outline of the evolution of Borotbist views on the agrarian issue, see Serhii Hirik, “Selianstvo ta Ahrarne Pytann'a v Ideologii Ukrains'koi Komunistychnoi Partii (Borot'bistov),” *Naukovi Zapysky. Zbirnyk Prats' Molodyh Vchenyh ta Aspirantiv* (Kyiv: IUAD im. M. S. Hrushevs'kogo NANU, 2012), 478-491.

achievements of the Soviet power in Ukraine. Instead, the Borotbists considered that the Soviet power should struggle with any manifestations of the arrogant attitude towards all Ukrainian and consistently support Ukrainian culture and broad autonomy. The Borotbists advocated the creation of Soviet Ukraine with the broad autonomy, up to independence, which would be united with Soviet Russia in a form of loose federation. The Borotbists had even designed their own project of the Constitution of the Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics, which they had presented to the Comintern in June-July 1919.³⁷ As the scholar of Borobist ideology, Serhii Hirik correctly concluded, while the project proposed more decentralization than the eventual USSR provided, it was the product of its time and did not deviate significantly from the Soviet documents, which framed the relations between Soviet republics.³⁸ In many respects the Borotbist views on the national question did not contradict significantly the proclamations of some of the leading Bolsheviks. They were to a significant extent in line with those Bolshevik leaders, who advocated strong support for non-Russians and their broad autonomy. At the same time they often came in conflict with the realities of Bolshevik regimes in Ukraine during the civil war and the views of those Bolsheviks, who were against the preoccupation with non-Russian cultures and autonomy. Therefore, when it was becoming increasingly clear, especially in 1920, that the position, favorable to non-Russian, was prevailing in the Bolshevik leadership, the Borotbists had less reservations against the close cooperation with the Bolsheviks.

Thus, Borotbists throughout the years of the civil war aspired to participate in the Ukrainian Soviet government, which would also stand for Ukrainian autonomy. Since

37 The text of the project published in *Kyivs'ka Starovyna*, no.4 (2012): 144-146.

38 Serhii Hirik, "Tsentralizatsi'a bez Tsentru? Borot'bysts'kii Proekt 'Federacii Radians'kih Respublik'," *Kyivs'ka Starovyna*, no.4 (2012): 141; Though, while for some Bolshevik leaders the federate decentralization was temporary or virtual, for the Borotbists it was a real political aim.

they had failed to establish their own Soviet regime, they were ready and seeking to join forces with the Bolsheviks, though hoping to do so on their own or on equal terms. The Bolshevik regimes did not always correspond to their expectations. But their insistence on the cooperation with the Bolsheviks hints that they were ready for a compromise in the sphere of the national question, while the interests of the socialist revolution were being realized. In a way their social agenda took precedence over the national one.

In fact, it looks that the Bolsheviks had more problems with the idea of the alliance with the Borotbists, than the latter did. The KP(b)U rejected by narrow margin the unification plea of the Borobists (and the Bund) and only being pressed by the circumstances and Lenin's insistence were allowed to participate in the Soviet government.³⁹ The Bolshevik approach to the Borotbists oscillated between repressive measures up to the liquidation of the party and the inclusion of the Borotbists in Soviet governing bodies and eventually in the KP(b)U.

As the KP(b)U's rejection of the Borotbist unification plea demonstrated, the latter had many opponents among the Ukrainian Bolsheviks. This was not surprising. Since a significant part of the KP(b)U consisted of the party members, who had neglectful, if not militant, attitude towards Ukrainian national aspirations, the Borotbists for those were a nationalist, even a "Petliurist" party, representing the interests of the anti-Soviet social groups. Yet, the open letter from 27 December, 1919, of the moderately pro-Ukrainian Bolshevik, Zatonsky, highlighted that other groups of the KP(b)U had also many objections to the Borotbist program and policies. Zatonsky took issue with the ambitions of the Borotbists, who wanted to lead the socialist revolution in Ukraine and considered

39 Majstrenko, *Borotbism*, 124-127; Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*, 54.

that their party should be the nucleus, attracting all the communist forces.⁴⁰ The Ukrainian Bolshevik afterward argued, that, despite the self-proclaimed communism, the Borotbists were still a predominantly “petty bourgeois” party, which explained their political mistakes and vacillations.⁴¹ Still some of these were inexcusable for a “Communist” party, according to Zatonsky. Thus, he criticized the Borotbists newspapers for the name-calling of Bolsheviks as “actors on tour” (*gastrol'ory*).⁴² The allusion to the foreign character of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine was a dangerous formula and something, which the KP(b)U struggled with.

Yet, it was the Borotbist slogan of the separate Ukrainian Red Army, which filled Zatonsky, and one can imagine other Bolsheviks, with particular indignation. Zatonsky argued that this was unacceptable, since there was a great danger, that this army would attract anti-Bolshevik forces and sooner or later could go against the Bolsheviks. He suspected that the Borotbists themselves were interested in the Ukrainian Red Army, as a force in the struggle with Bolsheviks.⁴³ Bolshevik suspicions of Borotbist intentions were not totally ungrounded. In 1919 the army of ataman Zelenyi, closely associated with the Borotbists and as such a temporary ally of the Bolshevik Red Army, turned against the latter. In December 1919, the Borotbists, as the Bolsheviks were well aware, attempted to organized their own forces.⁴⁴ Therefore, for Zatonsky, and other Bolsheviks, such proclamations casted doubt on Borotbist sincerity and willingness to cooperate with the Bolsheviks, which by extension put in question the overall Borotbist devotedness to the

40 Vl. Zatonsky, *Otkrytoe Pis'mo Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Ukrainskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii Borot'bistov* (1919), 2.

41 Ibid, 3.

42 Ibid, 5-9.

43 Ibid 9, 16.

44 Velychenko, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red*, 154.

ideals of socialist revolution in Ukraine.

The critical character of Zatonskyi's letter was the outcome of the failed negotiations between the Borotbists and the KP(b)U on the possible merger of the parties, which took place in November and December 1919. The decision to make the letter to the Borotbist TsK open was likely taken in an attempt to reinforce the pro-Bolshevik faction within Borortbist ranks, which would lobby the merger on Bolshevik terms. Failing to come to an agreement and likely running out of patience, the Bolsheviks also switched to a more repressive approach of dealing with Borotbists. On 6 February, 1920, the Moscow Politburo prepared a draft decree on the Borotbists, which proclaimed them “a party which violates the principles of communism,” and urged to “systematically and steadily” follow the policy of the liquidation of the Borotbist party.⁴⁵ The Ukrainian TsK soon followed with a real decree, which, though, envisaged an “ultimatum of the Borotbist liquidation” and their “exclusion from the government and local Revkoms.”⁴⁶ The decision of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks in that respect was milder than that of their Moscow counterparts. Instead of unambiguous liquidation, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks decided to use the threat of disbandment in order to exert pressure on the Borotbists. Moreover, the decree was followed by the resolution of the Ukrainian TsK, which considered the participation of the Borotbists in the government possible.⁴⁷ Thus, the Soviet Ukrainian TsK presented the Borotbists with clear options: either to play according to the Bolshevik terms or the forced liquidation of their party. Apparently, the Borotbists resisted. Therefore, on 24 February the Ukrainian TsK decided to fulfill the threat and to liquidate

45 Lenin, *PSS*, tom 40, 122.

46 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 57, l. 7.

47 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 57, l. 12.

the Borotbist party. The members of the Borotbist party would have the possibility of admittance in the KP(b)U ranks but only the best of them without any probationary period.⁴⁸ This time Borotbist leaders succumbed to pressure, accepting the Bolshevik conditions. The party was soon disbanded and merged with the KP(b)U. Moreover, Borotbist leaders got high positions within the KP(b)U, some of them being included in the TsK, or in the Soviet Ukrainian governing bodies. Nevertheless, the terms of the merger did not correspond to the initial expectations of the Borotbists. In addition to playing the role of the lesser partner, the Borotbists had to admit and repent of their mistakes and erroneous views, as the Bolsheviks understood them.

The leadership of the KP(b)U had no intention to accept the Borotbist option, especially any recognition of the leading role of the Borotbist in Soviet Ukraine. They also needed the Borotbist admittance of former mistakes. The Borotbist repentance and at least partial renunciation of their most provoking proclamations, such as, for instance, a separate Ukrainian Red Army, could somewhat silence the numerous opponents of the merger within the KP(b)U ranks. They objected the admittance of the Borotbists as such, with or without repentance, but the latter could at least slightly smooth their indignation down. The Borotbist repentance was also of use in the eyes of those, who supported the merger, since despite their overall more favorable view of the Borotbists they still treated them with much suspicion. The Borotbist party, according to the KP(b)U leadership, consisted of many members with anti-Bolshevik views or at least the rudiments of those. The KP(b)U had to “digest”⁴⁹ them. The acknowledgment of Borotbist “mistakes” in the

48 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 57, l. 16.

49 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 87.

course of the merger could serve as a filter, which would cut off some of those Borotbists, who were not ready to recognize Borobist previous policies erroneous. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks attempted to split the Borotbist party into those, who could be gradually molded into useful and disciplined KP(b)U members, and the others, who had an uncompromising position and therefore posed a danger in case of their admission to the leading roles in the Ukrainian SSR. Thus, even though the merger with the Borotbists took place, the Bolsheviks were quite picky and demanding and seriously considered the option of avoiding it, some being strongly against any dealings with the former.

The Borotbist leaders, who just joined the KP(b)U, immediately found themselves in the midst of the internal struggles between the factions in their new party. The Fourth KP(b)U congress, which took place in Kharkiv on 19-23 March, 1920, and among others was intended to officially give the Borotbist leaders some of the top position in the party, turned out to be a scandal. The Borotbist issue was not at the heart of the dispute. The congress took place in the harsh circumstances for the Ukrainian Bolsheviks. Polish forces, aided by Petliura, were steadily pushing the Red Army to the East, throwing most of the Bolshevik organizations in the right-bank Ukraine into disarray. The Democratic Centralists or Decisty, a group formed of the former “left communists,” decided to use the circumstances and another looming collapse of the Bolshevik government in Ukraine in order to depose the existing leadership group in the KP(b)U. Their cause was aided, by the transfer of one of the leaders of the group in the all-Union scale, T. Saprionov, to Kharkiv, where he headed the local Revkom. Saprionov and his associates carried out a massive organizational work in preparation for the congress, mobilizing the workers in Eastern Ukraine and the Red Army soldiers, who ended up on the Ukrainian part of the

front not necessarily coming from Ukraine themselves. As the result, Decists managed to delegate to the Fourth Congress a numerous and closely knit group.

At the Congress Democratic Centralists accused the existing KP(b)U leadership of the inability to create a stable and consolidated Soviet regime in Ukraine, which they attributed to its over-centralizing tendencies and lack of the communication with workers.⁵⁰ More importantly, Decists proposed an alternative composition of TsK KP(b)U, which surprisingly managed to gather the majority of votes, sidelining the one, backed by RKP(b) and which included the existing leadership of the KP(b)U. The most notable absences in the newly elected TsK were Rakovsky, Stanislav Kosior and Felix Kon. In fact, some of the supporters of these Ukrainian leaders left the Congress in protest and did not participate in the final elections of the TsK. Others attempted to withdraw their candidacy from the TsK composition, proposed by Decists.⁵¹ The RKP(b) responded promptly. On 24 March, the Politburo in Moscow disbanded the elected TsK and approved a provisional one, which excluded the Decist leaders and reintroduced the former leadership of the KP(b)U. The most prominent Democratic Centralists were also soon transferred from Ukraine.

The behavior of newly accepted Borotbists on this party Congress is of interest. Likely they did not expect that their new party would be so divided in factional struggles. More problematically, they had to make a choice in favor of one of the factions at the Congress, while having no time to learn the intricacies of the KP(b)U internal politics. One could expect them to join forces with the prevailing Decist group. After all, just like

50 *Chetverta Konferentsi'a Komunistychnoy Partii (Bil'shovykiv) Ukrainy, 17-23 Bereznia 1920 r. Stenograma* (Kyiv: Vydavnychii Dom "Al'ternativy", 2003).

51 *Ibid*, 438-439.

the Borotbists they had criticized Moscow for over-centralization and advocated broader local autonomy. Yet, the Borotbists chose other tactics. They did not leave the Congress in protest, like many opponents of Decists did. In turn, they tried to abstain from any provocative decisions, in some cases seeming more sympathetic to the criticized leadership of the KP(b)U. Shumkyi, for instance, following the example of Petrovsky, Chubar and some others, attempted even to withdraw his candidacy from the new composition of the TsK, proposed by the Decist group. He failed, only since the Congress voted to prohibit the self-withdrawal of nominated candidates.⁵²

The Borotbist mild opposition to the Decist challenge was not a surprise, even taking into consideration their seeming common interests in decentralizing policies. The Borotbists negotiated their admission to the KP(b)U with the previous leadership, headed by Rakovsky. The victory of Decists at the Congress put the terms of the merger in question and left the Borotbists in limbo. In addition, the Borotbists understood well that by joining forces with the Decists they would go against Moscow's wishes, which proposed the TsK, led by Rakovsky and others. Taking into consideration, the Borotbist history of opposition to Moscow's decisions and anti-Bolshevik proclamations and actions, the Borotbists could fear severe repercussions of their possible alliance with the Decists. Such decision would reinforce the image of the Borotbists among the Bolsheviks, as an unreliable, undisciplined group. Finally, even though both the Borotbists and the Decists advocated decentralization, they understood it differently. The Borotbists wanted more autonomy for the Soviet national republics, primarily Soviet Ukraine. The Decists were mostly neutral, if not hostile, to the idea of larger autonomy for Ukraine. In their

52 *Chetverta Konferentsi'a Komunistychnoy Partii*, 439.

plea for decentralization they were going on a lower level and advocated broader rights in participation in government for workers, in the form of worker's councils, trade unions etc. This was their recipe for all Bolshevik-controlled territories, not specifically Ukrainian ones. In their emphasis on the interests of the workers, the Decists viewed national demands with suspicion. The Congress resolutions, proposed by the Decists and adopted by the majority, did not even mention “Great-Russian Chauvinism,” in contrast to the declarations of the RKP(b) and the KP(b)U leadership on the national question at this time. At the same time the Decist resolutions covered in length the dangers and harm of proclamations in favor of independent or *samostiina'a* Ukraine.⁵³ While the Borotbists did their best to distance themselves from the “bourgeois” and “petliurist” interpretations of Ukrainian independence, the unhidden Decist disregard for cultural and political rights of Ukrainian “workers and peasants” and broad autonomy of the Ukrainian republican institutions and their leniency with Russian nationalism could hardly attract the Borotbists. In addition, like many worker-oriented Bolsheviks, the Decists had an arrogant, if not militant, perception of the peasantry and its role in the Soviet government. The Borotbists, of course, took pains in order to dissociate themselves from their SR and consequently peasant-oriented roots and portrayed themselves as “true Marxists” and representatives of Ukrainian proletariat. But outside of this image issue, the Borotbists still understood that at least temporarily their main power base and source of support remains in villages.

The next, Fifth, Party Congress of the KP(b)U demonstrated that the Borotbists were mostly right in their decision to implicitly oppose the Decist takeover of the

53 *Chetverta Konferentsi'a Komunistychnoy Partii*, 444-449

KP(b)U, rather sticking with the previous leadership. Moscow's reversal of the decisions, adopted on the Fourth Party Congress, and, consequently, the temporary character of the imposed TsK necessitated the organization of the new Congress rather urgently. Therefore, it took place in November 1920. While key Decist leaders got transferred, still many Bolsheviks in Ukraine retained sympathies for the interests of workers and their self-government, either in form of the remnants of Decism or Worker's Opposition. There was another, even more numerous, group in opposition to the course, set by Rakovsky under Moscow's guidance. This group did not have a separate name or a clear-cut political program. The delegates, which formed or were sympathetic to this group, predominantly came from the most industrial parts of Ukraine, such as Donbass, Poltava, Kharkiv, or represented the Army. Thus, this group represented some of the most radicalized groups. Eventually, three different resolutions of the Congress were put to vote. The one, proposed by the Rakovsky-led group, attracted more votes, but it was far from a unanimous vote, 189 to 104 and 23.⁵⁴

Similarly to the previous Congress, the leadership of the KP(b)U, backed by Moscow, faced fierce criticism this time by two opposing groups. Some of the accusation went along the lines of the Fourth Congress. But there were also some new motives. The opponents of the current leadership explicitly attacked the TsK for the lack of the clear-cut "political line." One of the main embodiments of this tendency the critics saw in the zigzagging relations of the KP(b)U with other parties, first of all the Ukapists, Poalei Zion, Bund, and others.⁵⁵ The two opposing groups turned the story of Vynnychenko's

⁵⁴ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 123.

⁵⁵ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 57-58, 184.

short-term arrival and quick departure from Soviet Ukraine in summer 1920 into the most vivid instance in order to underscore the weather-vane character of the existing TsK.⁵⁶ The admittance of the Borotbists into Bolshevik ranks demonstrated the other side of the TsK's lack of sturdy political line, according to its critics. These “right SRs narodniks,”⁵⁷ which brought into the party “vacillating element, which did not extirpate the petty bourgeois ideology” and “included petliurist and anacho-mahnovist element,”⁵⁸ in addition facilitated the preoccupation of the TsK with peasantry and *komnezamozhni*.⁵⁹ The two opposition groups insisted that, while a campaign in the village was necessary, still the “TsK should directly say that we are a proletarian organization, and not a narodnik party.”⁶⁰

The opposition conjured the motive of the Borotbist harmful influence so frequently and insistently, that Shumsky, evidently overreacting, concluded that “those, who had voted for the inclusion of Shumsky and Blakytny into the TsK,⁶¹ now put in the center of the accusation of the TsK the fact, that it is Borotbist.”⁶² Shumsky exaggerated. The opposition's critique of the TsK was not only and not primarily about the Borotbists. They used the Borotbist case in order to make a larger claim. Yet, despite the overall victory of the TsK, which was more favorable to the Borotbists, the Congress witnessed the existence in the KP(b)U of a strong and numerous group, which treated the Borotbists and the former members of other non-Bolshevik parties with animosity. Moreover,

56 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 56.

57 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 61.

58 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 174.

59 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 61. “Komitety nezamozhnykh selyan” or *komnezamy* were the Ukrainian version of *kombedy*, with many differences. In Ukraine *komnezamy* existed till 1933, see James E. Mace, “The Komitety Nezamozhnykh Selyan and the Structure of Soviet Rule in the Ukrainian Countryside, 1920-1933,” *Soviet Studies* 35 (October 1983): 487-503.

60 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 68.

61 Shumsky referred to Fourth Party Congress, and the TsK composition, proposed by the Decists then. It included himself and the other leading Borotbist, Blakytny.

62 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 42, l. 89.

notwithstanding the constant appeals of avoiding references to someone's past party memberships and pre-Bolshevik proclamations, the members of the KP(b)U did exactly that in their debates and political struggles.

The opponents of the TsK, led by Rakosvky and Kosior, though, were wrongly accusing⁶³ it of the lack of the clear-cut political line in the KP(b)U's relations with other parties. Indeed, the KP(b)U and Moscow had often inconsistent policies of choosing the allies throughout the years of the civil war, which often depended on the specific circumstances on its fronts. Nevertheless, by the end of 1920 and with the admittance of the Borotbists, the “political line” had more or less crystallized. The KP(b)U leaders had often described their approach with the verb *razlozhit'*. A direct translation would be “to decompose” or “to break down.” But this Bolshevik approach did not mean simply the separation of other political forces into smaller groups. It had a stage of filtering of those, who, according to Bolshevik leaders, could eventually “under Party's guidance” fully endorse Bolshevik policies and become a valuable and disciplined member of the KP(b)U and others, who were deemed hopeless or dangerous in case of their accession to responsible positions in Soviet Ukraine. Such approach was also based upon the premise, that within some of other political forces in Ukraine or among their followers, there were people, who were not inherently anti-Bolshevik and who could have had similar social and economic interests with the Soviet power, but who ended up in other parties, due to different circumstance⁶⁴s and some of the Bolshevik mistakes, like the manifestations of

63 Though, this accusation could mean both the lack of understanding of the TsK political line as well as the understanding of the approach, but strong disagreement with it.

64 The filtering and self-filtering of the Borotbists continued also after their admittance into the KP(b)U. By 1923 out of about 4 thousands Borotbists, who received membership in the KP(b)U, only 118 left, O. B. Bryndak, *Likvidatsiia Bil'shovykamy Politychnoi Opozitsii ta Vstanovlennia Odnopartiinoi Systemy v Ukraini v 20-ti Roky XX Stolittia* (Odesa: Astroprint, 1998), 113. Those, who remained,

“Great-Russian chauvinism.” The Borotbist admittance to the KP(b)U was in a way the result of such process of the filtering of the former Ukrainian SRs. Though, in the Borotbist case this was not always the result of the Bolshevik conscious and consistent effort, but also of the impact of the chaotic situation of the civil war in Ukraine with unceasing internal splits in Ukrainian parties.

2. 4. The UKP

The approach was more explicitly on display in KP(b)U's policies towards the Ukrainian Communist Party (UKP), known also as the Ukapists, which existed up until 1925. The roots of the UKP lay in the splits of the USDRP. The Ukapists initially were *nezalezhnik* (independist) faction of the party, which adopted a pro-Soviet, though not pro-Bolshevik, stance. The USDRP beginnings made it easier for the UKP to claim “Marxist” status in comparison with the former SRs – Borotbists. Still, this did not anyhow made them much more acceptable to the Bolsheviks, since such personalities as Petliura had also USDRP affiliations. While historians tend to put the Ukapists in the same camp with the Borotbists under the umbrella term of Ukrainian national-communism,⁶⁵ these two groups had both similarities and differences in their views. In reality they had also often struggled with each other, mostly since they attempted to conduct their political work on the similar turf and often juxtaposed themselves one to another in order to claim more legitimacy and political support.

The Ukapists had similar views with the Borotbists before their merger with the KP(b)U on the national question, but took it further and were more insistent. Similarly to

though, became quite influential.

65 Olena Palko, “Ukrainian National Communism: Challenging History,” *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 22 (2014): 33.

the Borotbists, the Ukapists treated Ukraine as a separate national and economic unit. This did not necessarily entail a full-blown independence of Soviet Ukraine, but a union of equals in a loose Soviet (con)federation. While the Borotbists had gradually given up, at least in public pronouncements, their idea of a separate Ukrainian army, the UKP consistently stuck to it.⁶⁶ The main differences between the Borotbists and the Ukapists manifested themselves in their socio-economic views. The Ukapists tried to present themselves as a firm and consistent party and the sole representative of the Ukrainian proletariat. The Borotbists also aspired to and often claimed this role. But they had also close connections to the village. Therefore, at least in early 1920s the Borotbists had a much more favorable view, though also not without reservations, of the village and peasantry, than the UKP did. As the result, the two parties assessed the NEP differently. A significant part of the Ukapists, similarly to left groups among the Bolsheviks, saw the NEP as a “concession to petty bourgeoisie.” The Borotbists, in turn, viewed the NEP mostly in a positive light, among others since they could claim more power within the KP(b)U as specialists in the Ukrainian village.

The story of the UKP did not attract much of scholarly attention, with the exception of several academic works.⁶⁷ Historians mostly focus on the Bolshevik pressure on and persecution of Ukapists, which eventually led to the dissolution of the party in 1925. An interesting and important question, which is left out in these account is, why Bolsheviks allowed the party, which was for some time considered to be “the longest

66 For the UKP's programmatic statement and their critique of the KP(b)U in 1924, see RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 3, ll. 4-5.

67 Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*, 74-84; Christopher Ford, “Outline History of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Independentists): An Emancipatory Communism 1918–1925,” *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 17 (2009): 193-246; Velychenko, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red*.

surviving”⁶⁸ one, to be legal for so long? Moreover, the KP(b)U even allotted limited funds for the functioning of the UKP. After all, they could have easily outlawed it much earlier.

Several motivations guided the KP(b)U moderate leniency towards the legal existence of the UKP. While the Ukapists promoted some of the harmful by Bolshevik standards ideas and slogans, still the UKP claimed to be a communist, Marxist party, embodying workers' interests. Interestingly, in the turn to the NEP many Ukapists saw the betrayal of Marxism and workers' interests by Bolsheviks. Criticizing the NEP, these Ukapists fashioned themselves as more devoted and consistent Marxists, than Bolsheviks were. Of course, the Bolsheviks had a different assessment of their differences with the UKP, associating the Ukapist “mistakes” to the “contamination” by the non-proletarian “elements” and ideologies.⁶⁹ Yet, the Bolsheviks conceded that among the UKP and its sympathizers there were people, who could eventually override their differences with the KP(b)U policies and endorse fully the Bolshevik project. This made the UKP a perfect target for the tactics of the *razlozhenie* and filtering out of those who could switch to Bolsheviks and strengthen the KP(b)U's regime from those who could not. Simple outlawing could push away these potential allies and useful activists. The Ukapists could also claim the martyr status. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks witnessed also a good example of a successful splitting up of the UKP ranks, when in December 1921 6 (headed by Iuri Mazurenko) out of 14 members of the Ukapist TsK left the party and proclaimed their support for the Bolsheviks. In addition, the UKP's membership was quite limited and

68 Eventually the Jewish Communist Worker's Party, a part of Poalei Zion claimed the title, see Baruch Gurevits, *National Communism in the Soviet Union, 1918-1928* (Pittsburgh, PA: University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1980).

69 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 2, l. 11.

“insignificant” (*nichtozhnyi*). As the KP(b)U leaders estimated, by 1924 there were only about 150 active members in Ukraine, while the KP(b)U itself claimed approximately 100 000 members and candidates.⁷⁰ Therefore the potential harm, that the UKP could inflict, was limited, and the benefits of the preservation of the UKP up to 1925 outweighed its disadvantages.

It is also plausible to suggest that the legal status of the UKP was useful for the purposes of the collecting of the intelligence and political order. This was one of the motives, which the Ukrainian GPU and its head Balitskyi advanced, arguing against the banning of or at least a crackdown at the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church. This would drive the whole organization and its adherents into underground activities, which would be much harder to monitor and control.

Finally, for some time the existence of the opposition in the form of a legal and pro-Soviet UKP proved to be handy in attracting the members of the socialist and communist Ukrainian emigration to Soviet Ukraine. The Bolsheviks got an early indication of the benefits of the legal UKP in the Ukrainian SSR in the arrival of Volodymyr Vynnychenko, a famous writer and the former chairman of the Directory. After disagreements with Petliura he had left for Vienna, where he eventually established the Foreign Group of the UKP and proclaimed his support for Soviet Ukraine, not for Bolshevik one, though. Still, the proclaimed loyalty to the Soviet regime allowed for the negotiations with the Bolsheviks on the inclusion of Vynnychenko in Soviet Ukrainian governing bodies. Vynnychenko arrived to Kharkiv via Moscow in spring-summer 1920 and got offered high positions both in the Soviet Ukrainian government and the KP(b)U.

⁷⁰ RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 2, l. 11.

In the end Vynnychenko's trip to Soviet Ukraine turned out to be a failure and he left for emigration again, not coming to terms with the Ukrainian Bolsheviks.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Vynnychenko's trip demonstrated to the Bolsheviks the benefits of the existence of the UKP for attracting of those Ukrainian national-minded leftist emigres, who were not yet ready to fully endorse the Bolshevik regime, but were moving towards pro-Bolshevik positions.

The Bolsheviks more or less tolerated and used the existence of the UKP up to 1924. In 1924 the Soviet institutions started to exert more pressure on the UKP, which culminated in the liquidation of the party and the admittance of some of its members, including some of the leaders, to the KP(b)U. The Bolshevik loss of patience was not totally unprovoked. In 1923 the official launch of the *korenizatsiia*, and Ukrainianization, signaled an even more profound recognition of the support for the Ukrainian culture and autonomy. Those, who were still unconvinced of the Bolshevik stance on the nationality policies, like the Ukapists, appeared in the eyes of the Soviet Ukrainian and Moscow leaders as the politicians, led by “counter-revolutionary” ideology, unwilling to recognize the Bolshevik version of Soviet Ukraine. Therefore, on 11 November, 1923, the Ukrainian Politburo adopted the resolution that presupposed “either the self-liquidation of the UKP with the inclusion into the KP(b)U or the split in order to separate the Communist elements from the nationalist.”⁷²

The decisions of the XII Party Congress put the UKP in a tight spot. They had to

71 Christopher Gilley convincingly argued that Vynnychenko judged the Bolshevik support for the Ukrainian cause by the positions, that he was offered, see Christopher Gilley, “Volodymyr Vynnychenko’s Mission to Moscow and Kharkov,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 84 (2006): 508-537.

72 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 16, d. 1, op. 8.

reassert their differences, especially on the national question, with the Bolsheviks to their (potential) sympathizers. As the result, throughout the years 1923 and 1924 the Bolsheviks noticed the intensification of the Ukapist activities and propaganda.⁷³ The UKP activists engaged into even more frequent hints and sometimes even blunt statements on the colonial status of the Ukrainian SSR in relation to Moscow,⁷⁴ concluding that the decisions of the XII Party Congress were “only on paper.”⁷⁵ In addition, since it was becoming harder to explain to larger audience the divergence of opinion with the Bolsheviks on the national question, the UKP had also started to emphasize their critique of the NEP, which they proclaimed the “politics of bourgeoisie” and not “the politics of the workers' party.”⁷⁶

The enlivening of Ukapist activities gave the Bolsheviks the pretext for the liquidation as a party. The Bolsheviks responded to the intensification of the Ukapist political work with repressive measures, particularly in the Ekaterinoslav region. They arrested approximately thirty Ukapist activists in the region. Reacting, the UKP leadership sent a protest,⁷⁷ which was shortly followed by the Memorandum to the Comintern.

The Memorandum, though less ambitiously, reiterated some of the UKP's earlier positions, concerning the broadest economic autonomy of Soviet Ukraine, separate Comintern representation, Ukrainian independent center for trade unions and the key role of the UKP. Crucially, the Memorandum proclaimed the situation, when there were two

73 The UKP activities gained particular verve in the Ekaterinoslav region, see TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1921, l.5-9.

74 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1921, l.10.

75 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1921, l.9.

76 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1921, l.10.

77 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 3, l. 2.

Communist parties in Ukraine, “abnormal.” Among these two parties the UKP “is organized as the party of this country (Ukraine),... while the other is just a branch (*filial*) of the party of the other country (Russia).”⁷⁸ Thus, the UKP attempted to portray themselves as the representatives of the interest of the Ukrainian working masses, while the KP(b)U was basically a foreign imposition. Some of the other Ukapist documents add to this argument a historical explanation.

The Ukapists claimed that there were two revolutionary movements in pre-1917 Ukraine. One, the Ukrainian social-democracy, was of the Ukrainian proletariat and half-proletariat. The other, Russian social-democracy, was the revolutionary movement of the “Russian and Russified proletariat, not connected with the Ukrainian masses,... and created by the imperialist and colonial policies of Russian and European capital in Ukraine, which Russified the town.”⁷⁹ The Ukrainian social-democracy evolved into the UKP, while the Russian one into the KP(b)U. Within this scheme the KP(b)U was not only a foreign agent, but also the consequence of Russian imperialism and colonialism. Such Ukapist statements shifted the balance more in favor of common national interests, rather than class interests. The UKP did not go as far as suggesting the alliance with other Ukrainian national forces, though, the Bolsheviks suspected them of this. But they explicitly demonstrated that the Ukapists considered that there were significant differences between the interests of the Ukrainian and Russian or Russian-speaking workers. Bolsheviks also partially based their policies on the recognition of the specific local interests. But usually the common class interests took precedence. The “common

78 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 3, l. 43.

79 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 3, l. 8.

class interests” in this case meant the recognition of the dominant role of the Bolshevik party, as the exponent of workers, and the decisive voice of the Moscow authorities in case of conflicts and misunderstanding between different Soviet departments and agencies. As long as these conditions were in place, the Soviet national republican or regional authorities could have significant autonomy and space for action for meeting also local “national interests.” The Ukapists questioned precisely this framework, challenging the Bolshevik political monopoly in Ukraine and advocating the downgrading to a rather weak political center with mostly regulatory responsibilities. These ideas made the Ukapists a potentially difficult ally for the KP(b)U and the RKP(b), despite the UKP's claims on the representation of workers' interests. The UKP's preoccupation with the separate interests of the Ukrainian workers was an even weaker, if not harmful, argument for the Comintern, an organization, built on the believe in common political and class interests of the workers of all the nationalities. And it was the Comintern, who was expected to decide the fate of the UKP.

The UKP's memorandum ended with the plea to the Comintern to resolve once and for all the “abnormal” situation of the existence of two Communist parties in Ukraine. This was, indeed, an abnormal situation. The Comintern rules demanded the existence of only one Communist party in each country. Even if there were regional organizations, representing national minorities, they still were subordinated to the Communist party of the country. Importantly, though, the Ukapist memorandum proclaimed the readiness to disband the party, if the Comintern decided so. The meetings of the Ukrainian commission of the IKKI (Executive Committee of the Comintern) took place in December 1924. The minutes of the meeting demonstrate that at least some of the

Comintern leaders expected a harsher treatment of the UKP. Thus, Clara Zetkin concluded that the voted resolution was “too mild” in its assessment of the UKP.⁸⁰

In any case the Commission ordered the dissolution of the UKP, but with possibility of admittance to the KP(b)U. To this end, the KP(b)U and the UKP established a joint commission for the selection of Ukapists into KP(b)U ranks. The process was similar to Borotbist one. The Ukapist leaders had also received positions in the Soviet Ukrainian governing and party bodies, though, not as high, as the Borotbists did. The admitted Ukapist leaders also had to pass through the repentance of their previous views and actions.⁸¹ The self-criticism had several aims. Among others it reinforced the perceived accuracy of the KP(b)U position. It also made difficult for the Ukapists to advocate the same positions within the KP(b)U, which they had already revoked and criticized. Thus, it was harder for them to form a faction around common positions in the KP(b)U ranks.

2. 5. Conclusions

The story of different treatment of three Ukrainian political parties demonstrate several crucial elements of Soviet borderland policies and the Bolshevik approach to Soviet Ukraine and the forging of the Soviet Ukrainian culture and identity. The role of the Ukrainian workers and peasants was crucial, since they should have become the backbone of the Soviet Ukrainian project, as the Bolshevik foothold in Ukraine and the counterweight to the forces, militant towards Bolsheviks in Ukraine. Therefore, despite

80 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 54, d. 4, l. 235.

81 The repentance was public in the form of an article by the Ukapist leader Richitskyi in the official journal of TsK KP(b)U, And. Rechits'kyi, “Do Edinoi Partii,” *Bil'shovyk: Organ Tsentral'nogo Komitetu Komunistychnoi Partii (b) Ukrainiy*, no. 2-3 (1925) 42-54.

all the disagreements Bolsheviks took pains in order to *razlozhit'* and filter out the reliable Borotbists and Ukapists, who partially represented these two social groups. The Ukrainian intelligentsia faced much less patience from the Bolshevik side. The attitude towards the Borotbists and the Ukapists had also exposed the contested character of the emerging Bolshevik approach to the national question. The positions, neglectful and even hostile towards Soviet Ukrainian national interests, like that of the Decists and even more importantly of the representatives of the Ukrainian industrial regions, would resurface on numerous occasions. At the same time some of the newly admitted Borotbists and Ukapists would advocate their own vision of the Soviet nationality policies in Ukraine, even if different to various degrees from their previous positions. The influence of the Borotbists and the Ukapists in the Soviet Ukrainian government and the KP(b)U was facilitated by their appointment to important positions in the cultural sphere.⁸² Moscow and the ruling groups in Kharkiv had to navigate between these disagreements, promoting their own agenda, but trying also to not alienate influential party officials.

82 This was a general tendency to use the Borotbists' and Ukapists' competence in the Ukrainian cultural affairs. However, this point should not be exaggerated. Former Borotbists and Ukapists occupied positions in other administrative spheres. For instance, one of Borotbist leaders, Hrynko, after several years as the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment, was the head of the Ukrainian Gosplan, and in the 1930s the Commissar of Finances of the Soviet Union.

Chapter 3. The Establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and the Struggle for Power in the Moldovan “Piedmont”

The Bolsheviks had not recognized the inclusion of Bessarabia in Greater Romania. They considered Bessarabia a Soviet territory and demanded its “return.” Interwar Soviet maps drew the state border on the river Prut not Dniester. Strategically, Bessarabia was also a major element in the expansion of the Soviet influence in the South-Eastern and East-Central Europe. Throughout the interwar years Bessarabia was a key issue in the tense Soviet-Romanian relations. Only in the 1930s, with the Bolshevik push for the non-aggression agreements with their Western neighbors, the Bessarabian question to some extent lost its centrality in the diplomatic relations between two states.

The Soviet struggle for contested Bessarabia took different forms, not only on the diplomatic level. A key element in the Soviet pressure on Romania in the Bessarabian question was the Moldovan ASSR, established in 1924. The creation of the autonomous republic was a contested process. Different groups within the Soviet institutions had their own understanding of the role of the Moldovan ASSR and of the most appropriate borderland policies in the small autonomous republic. This chapter will trace the process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR. It will focus on the interaction of different actors and agendas in this endeavor. The chapter will demonstrate the key role of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities in the choice of the direction of nationality policies and the leadership in the Moldovan ASSR.

3.1. The Bessarabian Question in the Soviet Union before 1924

The establishment of the Moldovan ASSR on the left-bank of the Dniester was not the first attempt to create a Soviet republic in the region with the prospects on Bessarabia. In 1919-1921 the left bank of the Dniester was the battlefield of the Russian Civil War. Red and White Armies, interventionist forces, Petliura's army, different bands most notably Mahno's Revolutionary Insurrection Army of Ukraine were all active during the period in the region. In mid-April 1919 the divisions of Red Army forcing out Petliura and interventionist armies reached the left bank of the Dniester. The successful advancement of the Red Army paved the way for the considerations of possible occupation Bessarabia, where at this moment Romanian and French armies were stationed. Therefore, the local Bolshevik leadership started up the active work in that direction. In late April – early May 1919, two decisions were adopted. First of all, according to the directions of Christian Rakovsky the Bessarabian Sovnarkom chaired by I. N. Krivorukov, one of the leading Bessarabian revolutionaries, was organized. The Sovnarkom should have formed the government of the “liberated” Bessarabia. According to the telephoned telegram sent to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, the Bessarabian Sovnarkom should have proclaimed the Soviet power and issued a manifest, when the first settlement on the right bank of the Dniester would be occupied.¹ As it eventually turned out, the manifest was made public before the occupation of any Bessarabian settlement by the Red Army.

In the beginning of May 1919, the temporary Bessarabian Sovnarkom by means of a manifest proclaimed the creation of the Bessarabian Soviet Socialist Republic as a part

1 *Kommunisticheskoe Podpol'e Bessarabii. Sbornik Dokumentov i Materialov v 2-h Tomah, 1918-1940* (Chişinău: 1987-88), vol. 1, 71-72.

of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.² In the manifest and in multiple other decrees the Bessarabian Sovnarkom was framing the future legislation of the Bessarabian SSR, which was not significantly different from other early Bolshevik lawmaking: the requisition of the land and its redistribution among the peasants, nationalization of any industrial and financial units, the emancipation of workers and peasants, and the autonomy of nationalities in Bessarabia in their national and cultural administration. In reality the Bessarabian Sovnarkom never really controlled any sizable land (the only exception can be the short-term occupation of Bendery after a military incursion on May 27, 1919) either on the left or the right bank of the Dniester. The Sovnarkom itself initially being created in Odesa stationed in Tiraspol in a railway car in order to be quickly evacuated in case of the advancement of the enemy armies. This proved to be handy in August 1919, when the Red Army was pushed out of the region. The change of the military fortune also led to the dissolution of the Bessarabian Sovnarkom. In general, two other political institutions possessed much more real power in the Bessarabian affairs. The Bessarabian obkom of the RKP(b) mostly united the underground revolutionary groups of Bessarabia. The Bessarabian Red Army was established on April 28, 1919,³ and consisted of the Bessarabian emigres as well as the local population of the left bank of the Dniester.⁴ The short analysis of the activity of the latter one demonstrates some significant directions of Bolshevik policies in the region.

The activity of the Bessarabian divisions of the Red Army were carefully

2 *Kommunisticheskoe Podpol'e*, 82.

3 *Ibid*, 73.

4 On the participation of the local population on the left bank of Dniester, see *Ibid*, 88.

orchestrated by Christian Rakovsky.⁵ In fact that was already the second offensive of the revolutionary forces on Bessarabia inspired by the head of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom.⁶ The first occurred during his leadership in the Rumcherod in the beginning of 1918. Rakovsky by means of the Red army supported by the local Bolsheviks sought to “revolutionize” Bessarabia and consequently provoke the social upheaval in other parts of Romania. These developments in his opinion could pave the way to the realization of Rakovsky’s long-cherished dream of the Communist Balkan Federation.⁷ In spring 1919, one more consideration came into play. Bela Kun’s revolution in Hungary and its subsequent war with Romania necessitated the involvement of the Red army in order to keep the prospects of the “World Revolution” alive. Exactly at the moment of the establishment of the Bessarabian Red Army, the Romanian troops passed to the offensive on the Romanian-Hungarian front.⁸ While Bolshevik military operations were rather unsuccessful, they still led to the withdrawal of some of the Romanian divisions from the Hungarian front and their redeployment to Bessarabia. In any case that did not save Bela Kun’s regime. Organizing the Soviet attack on Romania, Rakovsky fell under Lenin’s criticism for the prematurity of such move. Lenin believed that it was much more important to secure the industrially rich Donbass area forcing out the counterrevolutionary forces there. Nevertheless, these practical considerations did not

5 On the role of C. Rakovsky in the military and diplomatic attack on Romania in 1919, see Stelian Tănase (ed) *Racovski: Dosar Secret* (Iași: Polirom, 2008), 113-117.

6 On the activity of Rakovsky in the region before his transfer to diplomatic work in 1923, see Fagan, *Christian Racovsky*, 22-34; Stelian Tănase, *Clienții lui Tanti Varvara: Istorie Clandestine* (București: Humanitas, 2008), 22-29; Pavel Moraru, *Serviciile Secrete și Basarabia: Dicționar, 1918-1991* (București: Editura Militară, 2008), 221-225.

7 C. Rakovsky was one of the founding members and the First Secretary of the Central Bureau of the Revolutionary Balkan Social Democratic Labor Federation, established in 1915.

8 On Racovsky’s understanding of the Hungarian implications in the Soviet offensive in Bessarabia see *Bessarabiia na Perekreстке Evropeiskoi Diplomatii*, 267-268.

prevent Lenin from sending a telegram to Bela Kun on the beginning of the Red Army's military campaign in Bessarabia.⁹

How can we assess the experience of the Bessarabian SSR? Even though the case of the Bessarabian SSR fell to a significant extent into oblivion in the historiography, nevertheless, different interpretations exist. Some historians tended to portray the Bessarabian SSR as the first example of the Moldovan Soviet statehood,¹⁰ though there still existed certain ambiguities due to the provisional character of the temporary Bessarabian Sovnarkom. Other historians rejected this conclusion emphasizing that the Bessarabian SSR was just a cover for the Bolshevik expansionist plans.¹¹ At the same time rejecting idea of the continuity of the state-building these historians implicitly still draw their own continuity in terms of the expansionist character of both the Bessarabian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. Thus, the difference was in lifespan not in essence. Yet, that conclusion oversimplifies the issue, neglecting the differences of the contexts, in which both republics emerged. The Bessarabian SSR was part of the campaign, initiated first of all by Rakovsky, of the export of Revolution through Romania to Central and South-Eastern Europe. While similar considerations were important in the process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR in 1924, the context and the dynamics of the interactions between the actors was quite different.

At the same time, the events of the 1919 were a certain formative experience for

9 *Kommunisticheskoe Podpol'e*, 89

10 A.M. Lazarev, *Moldavskaia Sovetskaia Gosudarstvennost' i Bessarabskii Vopros* (Kishinev: Cartea Moldovenească, 1974), 558-559; S. Afteniuk, *Leninskaia Natsional'naia Politika Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Obrazovanie Sovetskoi Gosudarstvennosti Moldavskogo Naroda* (Chisinau: Cartea Moldoveneasca, 1971), 200-201.

11 Ludmila Rotari, *Mișcarea Subversivă din Basarabia în Anii 1918-1924* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004), 124-126; Mihail Bruhis, *Rusia, România și Basarabia. 1812, 1918, 1924, 1940* (Chișinău: Editura Universitas, 1992), 211.

Bessarabian Bolsheviks (many of whom later occupied major posts in the government of the MASSR) as well as local population of the left bank of the Dniester. Probably for the first time in history the population of the future Moldovan ASSR encountered more or less massive propaganda campaign stressing their cultural proximity to the Bessarabian population as well as the necessity of the “liberation of Bessarabia from Romanian capitalists and landlords.” In addition, the Bessarabian Sovnarkom established the first local newspaper, targeting the Bessarabian issue, under the name “*Krasnaia Bessarabiia*” (Red Bessarabia). Later the Society of Bessarabians in the Soviet Union would use this name for their own newspaper. While in 1919 the attempt to annex Bessarabia failed, the problem of the contested borderland still was at the center of attention of a number of Communist activists in the Soviet Union.

In the first half of the 1920s there were two major groups that were debating and advocating the Moldovan-Bessarabian issue in the Soviet Union. One consisted mostly of Bessarabian emigres to the Soviet Union, another – of the Romanian emigres.¹² These groups often conflicted; sometimes more rarely found common grounds. One common point was the assertion that Bessarabia should have been become Soviet. At the same time the opinions on the purpose of that process differed. While for Bessarabians this was already an end in itself and potential subsequent revolution in Romania in general was desirable but not essential, for Romanians the sole goal was the all-Romanian socialist revolution and Bessarabia was just a trigger.¹³ The views also differed on the future of

12 It should be noted that here Romanian is not an ethnic description, but a geographical one, emphasizing that these Communist emigres came from the Romanian territories besides Bessarabia.

13 It is important to note that the above-mentioned division demonstrates more tendencies than clear-cut categories. Among Romanian emigres were communists with more small-scale goals, as well as some Bessarabians had more large-scale ambitions.

Bessarabia. The majority of Bessarabians anticipated the separation of the region from Romania and the creation of autonomous political unit within the Soviet Union. Romanian communists envisaged the future of Bessarabia as a part of the Socialist Romania.

In July 1921, the First All-Russian Organizational Meeting of the Communists, Romanians and Bessarabians took place in Moscow. It coincided with the Third Congress of the Comintern. The main goal of the meeting was to unite Bessarabian and Romanian emigres in their common party work on the Bessarabian direction. The Meeting itself was mostly the initiative of the Moscow-based Romanian communists led by Ion Dicescu-Dik.¹⁴ Eventually the meeting turned out to be an attempt of the Romanian communists to assert their predominance in the Bessarabian affairs and in the Romanian-Bessarabian Bureau of the Moscow Committee of RKP(b). They succeeded in that attempt, forming the Central Bureau almost exclusively of non-Bessarabians. The minutes of the meeting also suggest that there were a number of conflicts at the proceedings.¹⁵ At the same time such approach alienated Bessarabians, and later in the process of the creation of the Moldovan ASSR the personal grievances reinforced the differences in the political and national outlooks. Thus, in a way ostracized from the high politics in Moscow, the majority of Bessarabians returned either to the South-Eastern regions of the Ukrainian SSR to continue their work in the local party committees or to the Bessarabian underground. As a result, a certain division of labor emerged: Romanians communists, stationed in Moscow, engaged in large-scale Comintern issues, while Bessarabians mostly

14 Ion Dicescu-Dik (1893-1938) – Romanian communist emigre. REDik was one of the most active figures in the Moldovan-Bessarabian affairs. In the Soviet Union he worked as a Lecturer at the KUNMZ and KUTV.

15 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 60, d. 981, l. 7-11.

concentrated on local problems on the both banks of the Dniester.¹⁶ Later this division would play in the hands of Bessarabians, when Ukrainian authorities would prefer to entrust them the political organization of the Moldovan ASSR.

3. 2. The Process of the Establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and the Ukrainian Factor

The “Memorandum on the Necessity of the Creation of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic,” sent to TsK RKP(b) and TsK KP(b)U on 5 February, 1924, was largely the product of the Romanian emigre communists,¹⁷ though the idea was in the air. In the recollections the Marshal of the Soviet Union Semion Budennyi mentioned that already in 1923 Grigorii Kotovsky and Mihail Frunze discussed with him in his apartment the establishment of the republic on the left bank of the Dniester.¹⁸ After the opening of the archives historians have reconstructed more or less carefully the events that followed from the appearance of the Memorandum to the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and have drawn some important connections.¹⁹ In the existing historiography the discussion of the Memorandum usually confines itself to the statement of its expansionist character, embodied in the idea of the expansion of the socialist revolution to Europe.²⁰ At

16 Oleg Galushchenko, *Bor'ba meĭdu Rumynizatorami i Samobytnikami v Moldavskoi ASSR (20-e gody)* // <http://www.iatp.md/articles/borba.htm> (accessed on June 6, 2014).

17 The text of the Memorandum can be found in Argentina Gribincea, Mihai Gribincea and Ion ŢiŢcanu (ed), *Politica de Moldovenizare in R.A.S.S. Moldoveneasca: Culegere de Documente si Materiale* (ChiŢinău: Civitas, 2004), 28-32.

18 *Obrazovanie Moldavskoi SSR i Sozdanie Kommunisticheskoi Partii Moldavii: Sbornik Dokumentov i Materialov* (ChiŢinău: 1984), 44-45. This recollection is, though, questionable, since it conveniently was first published in 1964 on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR.

19 Oleg GaluŢcenko, “Crearea Republicii Sovietice Socialiste MoldoveneŢti (R.A.S.S.M.)” *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, no. 3-4 (1997); Gheorghe E. Cojocaru, “Studiul,” in Gheorghe E. Cojocaru (ed), *Cominternul Ţi Originele “Moldovenismului”* (ChiŢinău: Civitas, 2009); *O Istorie a Regiunii Transnistrene: Din Cele mai Vechi Timpuri până în Prezent* (ChiŢinău: Civitas, 2007), 265-266.

20 For example, Anton Moraru, “Destinul unui Document,” *Cugetul*, no 5-6 (1992): 53-54; Ioan Popa, Luiza Popa, *România, Basarabia Ţi Transnistria* (BucureŢti: Editura FundaŢia Europeană Titulescu, 2009), 53.

the same time a more careful look on the members of the initiative group²¹ provides some hints on the possible explanation of the expansionist character of the document.

The list consisted almost exclusively of the Moscow-based Romanian emigres and Romanian Communists actively involved in the Comintern affairs. It is revealing, indeed, that no major Bessarabian leader, such as Staryi, Badeev, Grinshtein, who were later on the leading position in MASSR, signed the document. The Memorandum envisaged that the Moldovan SSR would have two crucial goals. The Moldovan republic was expected to serve cultural and economic needs of the local population:

1. The organization of the Moldovan population in a political and administrative unit would contribute to the raise of economic and cultural levels of the population. The consolidation of the latter for the Soviet Union is the more necessary, the more likely, sooner or later, the occurrence of military conflicts, during which one requires a secured, satisfied border rear (*pogranichnyi tyl*).²²

As the cited passage demonstrates, the cultural development of the local population was not an ultimate aim. It was also important for military and defense purposes in the border region. The other purpose of the proposed Moldovan republic was central in the Memorandum:

2. The Moldovan republic can play the same role of the political and propagandist factor, that of Belarusian Republic in relation to Poland, Karelian – to Finland. It would serve to attract attention and sympathies of the Bessarabian population and would reinforce our claims on the reunification of *Zadnestrov'e* with it.

From this point of view it is imperative to create namely a socialist republic, not an autonomous region within the Ukrainian SSR. United *Pridnestrov'e* and *Zadnestrov'e* would serve as a strategic wedge of the USSR to the Balkans (through Dobrudja) and to Central Europe (through Bukovian and Galicia), which the Soviet Union could use as a springboard for military and political purposes.²³

21 The name “Initiative Group” is sometimes used to designate the group of Romanian Communist emigres, who on February 4, 1924 issued the first Memorandum, that launched the process of the creation of the Moldovan ASSR.

22 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 30.

Thus, the Moldovan republic was expected to play a key role in the expansion of the Soviet influence to Bessarabia, the Balkans and Central Europe. The authors of the Memorandum apparently hoped that the establishment of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic would bring the prospects of the socialist revolution in these regions closer. The Memorandum even suggested the possibility of border revisions and the unification of *Zadnestrov'e* and *Pridnestrov'e*.

The choice of the term *Zadnestrov'e* instead of Bessarabia is interesting. Bessarabia by this time²⁴ was a much more clearly defined region in the symbolic geography with settled geographical borders. *Zadnestrov'e* was a vague and ambiguous concept with unclear boundaries. Some could read it as a synonym of Bessarabia. The Memorandum suggests in most cases this interpretation to its readers. Yet, one could also understand *Zadnestrov'e* as the territory stretching beyond Bessarabia. Possibly this ambiguity was not accidental. As it became clearer from later discussions, the Romanian Communist emigres, foremost I. Dik, considered the socialist revolution in Romania, not just Bessarabia, to be the main purpose of the Moldovan SSR. That goal also determined the envisaged strategy of the nationality policies in the republic. Dik believed that an almost total Romanianization should have been carried out on the left bank of the Dniester. In that case the future republic could perform two functions: training of the skilled revolutionaries for the subversive activities all over Romania and propaganda once again targeting Romania in general. Taking into consideration this intent and agenda, one could ask the question: why did then Romanian emigres propose to create a Moldovan

23 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 30.

24 The situation was different a century before. On the evolution of the symbolic perception of Bessarabia in the Romanov Empire, see Andrei Cusco and Victor Taki (with the participation of Oleg Grom), *Bessarabia v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii (1812-1917)* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012).

and not a Romanian SSR?

One possible answer to that question points to the necessity to gain the support of Grigorii Kotovsky and Mihail Frunze, two influential army leaders in the civil war. The support of the latter was crucial due to his influence both in Kharkiv, as vice-chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, and Moscow, as the member of TsK RKP(b) and one of the key figures in army administration. At the same time Kotovsky played more the role of the big shot in the Memorandum, using his name to add more weight. Since both Kotovsky and Frunze had Bessarabian and Moldovan connections²⁵ and in addition had unpleasant memories of the encounters with the Romanian authorities during and after the civil war, they could have felt certain uneasiness with the Romanianizing project of Dik and his associates. The problem, though, was even more complex than just the personal opinion of two influential Bolsheviks. Most likely, the Romanian emigres were taking into the consideration that the project of the “Romanian SSR” could have been rejected by the local population of Transnistria, thus undermining the entire endeavor. The mostly illiterate rural Romanian-speaking population had no or quite weak sense of national identity. As contemporary foreign travelers emphasized, even in Romanian Bessarabia the local population identified itself either by reference to their locality or as Moldovans, which was more a traditional regional designation, usually without strong national and political implications.²⁶ Significantly Slavicized Romanian-speaking population of Transnistria was largely unfamiliar with Dik’s²⁷ ideas of their ethnic and linguistic

25 Kotovsky was born in Bessarabia in a Polish-Russian family. Frunze was born in Pishpek (Bishkek). Frunze's father was a Moldovan (Romanian) from Kherson region. His mother was Russian.

26 Charles Upson Clark, *Bessarabia: Russia and Romania on the Black Sea* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1927) // http://depts.washington.edu/cartah/text_archive/clark/meta_pag.shtml (Retrieved on June 6, 2014).

27 I use the reference to I. Dik, as the most active and important member of the radical Romanizers. At the

proximity and even identity to Romanians. While the name “Moldovans” was generally known and acceptable for the majority of the population, the usage of the term “Romanians,” accompanied by the radical rapid Romanianization, most likely could have been perceived as an imposition and even lead to the grievances of the local population. That would have buried the entire revolutionary endeavor, therefore the “initiative group” chose less provocative designation “Moldovan”.

Both possible outlined considerations behind the choice in favor of “Moldovan” underscore a degree of ambiguity of the views on the identity of the Transnistrian population even among the most radical Romanianizers, such as Dik. Later this choice would prove costly for Dik in his struggle with the Moldovanizers. Dik’s equation of Moldovans and Romanians was not that evident to the Moscow and Kharkiv authorities, especially when strong opposing voices also existed in the party.

The Memorandum and the subsequent establishment pose several additional questions, which should be addressed. Why the initial intent of the “initiative group” to create a full-fledged republic was substituted in constitutional arrangement by the autonomous republic within the Ukrainian SSR? Why Romanian “initiative group” was almost totally deprived of the right to participate in the life of the republic starting already with the preparatory phase for its establishment? At the same time I. Dik was already drawing the composition of the Moldovan Sovnarkom assigning himself the position of the First Secretary of the Moldovan party regional committee. Why was the choice in favor of the Moldovanization policies and not the Romanianization, as key members of

same time other Romanian emigres shared similar views, so the references to Dik in the text should not be taken exclusively as his personal ideas.

the “initiative group” intended, made?

Historians have explicitly or implicitly addressed some of these questions. Yet, few explanations exist. The classical interpretation of the Romanian historiography suggests that from the beginning the main intent of Moscow was to deromanianize and assimilate the Romanian-speaking population of Transnistria.²⁸ Therefore, the Moldovan project was an arbitrary decision of the central authorities. Other historians emphasize or add to this explanation the role of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities.²⁹ They portray the Ukrainian authorities as the vigorous opponents of the Moldovan ASSR and unitarian nationalists.³⁰ In my opinion, the emphasis on the significant role of the Ukrainian authorities in the Moldovan affairs in 1924 is correct. Yet, as I will demonstrate, the attitude of the Ukrainian authorities was more complex, than simple opposition. Moreover, some of the decisions, which historians present as the examples of Ukrainian nationalism, should be explained from a different point of view. But first, I will briefly outline an explanation, why the Soviet Ukrainian authorities acquired such a decisive role in the Moldovan affairs. This endeavor is important also, since historians, who pointed to the role of the Ukrainian factor, at the same time consider that Moscow in a totalitarian manner controlled all the policies in the Soviet Union. How then was it possible that Kharkiv possessed such a decisive voice in the Moldovan endeavor? There could have been hardly any talk about the total control in the case under study. Rather the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR was a complex process of interaction between a number of actors and

28 For example, Cojocaru, *Studiul* (I use the reference to differentiate between the quite lengthy Cojocaru's study and the documents published in his book); Negru, *Politica Etnoculturală în R.A.S.S. Moldovenească*.

29 Galușcenko, *Crearea Republicii Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenești*; Cojocaru, *Studiul*, 18-19; O Istorie a Regiunii Transnistrene, 266.

30 Cojocaru, *Studiul*, 18-19; O Istorie a Regiunii Transnistrene, 266.

different levels of Soviet and party authorities. This is even more surprising, since the creation of the Moldovan ASSR was closely interconnected with the foreign policy goals. At the same time the Soviet foreign policy is usually considered to be the exclusive prerogative of Moscow. Therefore, the decisive role of the Ukrainian authorities in the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR shed some new light on the process and dynamics of the decision-making related to the foreign policy.

The Ukrainian SSR occupied a specific position in the Soviet Union. It was a rich by Soviet standards and big republic with a numerous and influential party. As previous chapters demonstrated, its leaders, while disciplined party officials, had also their own ambitions and aspirations. Therefore, in the mid-1920s, the Moscow officials preferred to not antagonize the Soviet Ukrainian leadership too much and on every occasion. They were trying to balance and take into consideration the interests of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities.

The campaign for the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR coincided with specific period in the Moscow-Kharkiv relations. Exactly at that period Ukrainian SSR and RSFSR articulated mutual border claims. The disputes emerged in the course of the process of *raionirovannie*, the revision of the administrative and territorial divisions, which took place in these years. From the early 1920s the territory around Taganrog and Shakhty on the South-Eastern border of the Ukrainian SSR was at the center of mutual claims between Kharkiv and local RSFSR authorities. In February 1924, the positions of the latter was reinforced by the creation of a larger and more resourceful South-Eastern *oblast* of the RSFSR. The leaders of the new *oblast'* used the opportunity to reiterate their claims on the Shakhty and Taganrog districts, based upon the economic considerations.

Starting with April 1924 a special commission was investigating the issue. Kharkiv conceded the possibility of the transfer of the contested districts. Yet, in the same decree Kharkiv requested the annexation of much larger territories of the RSFSR on the Ukrainian North-Eastern border on ethnolinguistic grounds. The issue of the transfer of Shakhty and Taganrog to the South-Eastern *oblast* was generally settled in October 1924.³¹ It took still some time to get the official endorsement of TsIK, despite the protests of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities, particularly in Donbass, and to clarify all the details of the new border. After long-lasting discussions and jockeying for almost a year, the RSFSR also ceded half of the claimed by Kharkiv territory on the North-Eastern border of the Ukrainian SSR. The process of the negotiation was long and still left Kharkiv unsatisfied, since they received only a part of the claimed territories.³²

Exactly in these circumstances of the strong claims on then Ukrainian territories around Taganrog and Shakhty, the “initiative group” was claiming another part of the Soviet Ukrainian territory for its propaganda and revolutionary project. Not surprisingly it encountered little sympathy in Kharkiv. The perspective of losing one more region even less economically developed could have hardly given rise to enthusiasm. At the same time it would be a simplification to consider certain opposition to the Moldovan project in the Ukrainian party only nationalist aspirations. Neither in the Kharkiv nor in Moscow sections of party there was a uniform perception of the project. For example, the Narkomindel at this moment Grigorii Chicherin considered the project inopportune, since

31 For the documents on the dispute over Shakhty and Taganrog districts, see Iu. Galkin, *Sbornik Dokumentov o Pogranichnom Spore mezhdu Rossiei i Ukrainoi v 1920-1925 gg. za Taganrogsko-Shakhtinskuiu Territoriiu Donskoi Oblasti* (Moscow: Shcherbinskaia Tipografiia, 2007).

32 On the Ukrainian-RSFSR border disputes see Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 274-282; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 155-160.

it could strengthen Romanian nationalism and irredentism.³³ Voroshilov was another influential figure in Moscow, who opposed the idea of the Moldovan Soviet Republic due to the defense considerations.³⁴ For the Ukrainian opponents several considerations determined and reinforced their stance. First, indeed can be labeled “nationalist”, but it should be emphasized that it was hardly a cultural nationalism. In the 1920s, in the Soviet Union the right of any nationality for the development of its national culture could hardly be questioned. Yet, what characterized the Ukrainian opponents was the unwillingness to delegate significant authority to the new republican authorities in such a sensitive region (especially due to the Bessarabian issue), as the Ukrainian-Romanian border. As the result, even a Soviet historian had to recognize that there was much more centralization in the relations between Ukrainian SSR and Moldovan ASSR than between RSFSR and its respective autonomous republics.³⁵ The border position of the future Republic was another issue of concern. There was a strong fear – Chicherin to some extent also shared it – that in the Moldovan ASSR the Romanian nationalism would prevail and eventually there would be a possibility for the secession of the republic from the Soviet Union.³⁶ Even in less radical scenarios small and weak Moldovan republic could have been a convenient gate for the foreign influences and infiltrations into the Ukrainian SSR and the

33 Cited in Galuscenko, *Crearea Republicii Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenesti*, 67.

34 Oleg Galushchenko, “Obrazovanie Moldavskoi ASSR: Sovremennyyi Vzgliad Istorika,” *Problemy Natsional'noi Strategii*, no. 5 (2014): 210.

35 A.V. Surilov, ed., *Gosudarstvenno-Pravovye Akty Moldavskoi SSR (1924-1941 gg.)* (Kishinev: Cartea Moldovenească, 1963), 9.

36 On October 11, 1924, a day before the MASSR was officially established the Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom V. Ya. Chubar’ was giving the speech in which he was explaining the reasons for the establishment of the republic. In the speech he clearly made a reference to the discontent on the issue among the Ukrainian authorities asserting that MASSR was not a secessionist project. Thus he was trying to weaken the position of the anti-Moldovan groups, *Alcatuirea Republicii Autonome Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenesti: Darea de Seama Stenografica a Sessiei a 3-a a VUTIK-ului, 8-12 Octombrie 1924* (Harkiv: 1924), 9-12.

Soviet Union. In addition, it was evident from the beginning that the population of the Moldovan ASSR would be ethnically mixed. Therefore, for some of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders the future fate of the Ukrainian population in the new republic was an issue of concern.

Due to all the above-mentioned considerations among the Ukrainian leadership there was a quite strong group that opposed to the establishment of the Moldovan republic, especially in a full-fledged form. At the same time Moscow was reluctant to press the issue passing the Ukrainian authorities. Already claiming part of the territory of the Ukrainian SSR for the South-Eastern *oblast'*, they were afraid that another loss of territory would alienate the Soviet Ukrainian leaders, whose loyalty was a priority. That excluded the option of the full-fledged Moldovan republic. Mihail Frunze, who took part in the government both in Moscow and Kharkiv, understood the existing balances of power quite well. Therefore, possibly upon Stalin's request³⁷ and being the first to react to the initiative, he sent to TsK RKP(b) and TsK KP(b)U his verdict: "I am personally – for [the initiative], so that Moldovan republic be included in the Ukrainian SSR."³⁸ The choice in favor of the autonomous republic within the Ukrainian SSR, not a full-fledged one, reinforced Kharkiv's key role in the process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR. It was almost a *carte blanche* for the Ukrainian authorities on behalf of Moscow.

After the initial phase of internal party discussions in Kharkiv and Moscow, in which Mihail Frunze played major role, the Ukrainian authorities took first steps in the creation of the Moldovan ASSR. On March 6, 1924, the Odesa section of the KP(b)U

37 A. Repida, *Obrazovanie Moldavskoi ASSR* (Chisinau: Stiinta, 1974), 91.

38 *Obrazovanie Moldavskoi SSR*, 45. Frunze was opting that option maybe even despite his own will to see a separate Moldovan SSR.

resolved the creation of the Moldovan section of KP(b)U.³⁹ Just on the next day already the Politburo of KP(b)U issued a decree that “considered reasonable from the political point of view to delimitate an Autonomous Moldovan region as part of the Ukrainian SSR.”⁴⁰ These two decisions officially launched the organizational process of the Moldovan autonomy. In addition, on May 1, 1924 the first issue of the newspaper *Plugarul Roșu* (Red Ploughman), Moldovan party section’s official gazette, appeared. Yet, many issues remained unclear and, first of all, the number of the Moldovan population in the region and, consequently, the borders of the future autonomy.

Already on 18 April, 1924, the Ukrainian Politburo considered the decision to establish Moldovan SSR inexpedient due to the lack of ethnographic and territorial data. The Politburo still requested further collection of data for the purpose of the possible creation of the autonomous unit, with the Moldovan population.⁴¹ This decision was likely the result of an at least temporary predominance of the opponents of the Moldovan ASSR in Kharkiv. The regional leaders of the KP(b)U were also not delighted at the idea of the Moldovan republic. The leaders of the Odesan section of the KP(b)U were particularly reluctant, since the envisaged republic requested a part of the territory under their administration. At the same time, the subsequent Ukrainian decisions demonstrate that this decree did not presuppose the rejection of the idea of the Moldovan autonomy altogether. They still contemplated this possibility but required more data, looking for the most suitable form for the Moldovan autonomy. On 29 April, 1924, the Ukrainian

39 *Nachalo Bol'shogo Puti. Sbornik Dokumentov i Materialov k 40-letiiu Obrazovaniia Moldavskoi SSR i Sozdaniia Kompartii Moldavii* (Kishinev: 1964), 33.

40 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 50, l. 59.

41 Cited in Oleg Galushchenko, *Naselenie Moldavskoi ASSR (1924-1940 gg.)* (Kishinev: Tipografiia Akademii Nauk, 2001), 7-8.

authorities in Odesa ordered the enhancement of the “national-cultural work” among the Moldovan population.⁴² At the same time the central Ukrainian authorities organized special commission for the collection of ethno-territorial data, which underscored the fact that they considered the question of the Moldovan autonomy opened. At the same time Grigorii Kotovsky, who with his cavalry corps stationed at that moment in Transnistria, voluntarily started his own inquiry and calculations. In July 1924 the report of the territorial commission reached VUTsVK. The results differed dramatically. While Kotovsky’s commission counted 283 398 Moldovans, the Ukrainian commission reported only the number of 170 451.⁴³ Even Kotovsky’s figures were far from 500.000-800.000 mentioned in the Memorandum from October 12, 1924. These discrepancies and ambiguities reinforced the convictions of the Ukrainian authorities to postpone the creation of the Moldovan territorial unit.

At this moment the Moscow authorities intervened. On 25 July, 1924, Mihail Frunze sent to I. Stalin a note, in which he criticized the decision of the Ukrainian authorities:

I consider the last decision of TsK KP(b)U erroneous. I have been to Thansnistria personally numerous times and I can ascertain that to the North of Tiraspol there is a continuous stripe with the predominantly Moldovan population... Finally, one should take into account the international dimension. The establishment of even a small Moldovan republic or region will become a weapon of influence in our hands on the peasant and working masses of Bessarabia in the sense of the strengthening of hopes for the deliverance from the Romanian yoke. I recommend to put the question again.⁴⁴

Four days later the Politburo of RKP(b) decided that it was necessary to create a

42 *Obrazovanie Moldavskoi SSR*, 51-52.

43 *Kul'tura Moldavii za Gody Sovetskoi Vlasti. Sbornik Dokumentov v 4-h Tomah. Tom 2* (Chisinau: 1975-1976), 71-75.

44 Cited in *Istoria Partidului Comunist al Moldovei: Studii* (Chişinău: Cartea Moldovenească, 1982), 144-146.

Moldovan Autonomous republic and suggested TsK of KP(b)U to issue the necessary directives.⁴⁵ There can be several considerations that would explain the insistence of the Moscow authorities. The Ukrainian authorities were discussing the Moldovan issue in several opposing voices. The Moldovan ASSR was crucial for the pressure on Romania, especially after the recently failed negotiations in Vienna. Due to the borderland position of the future Republic and significant international attention the Soviet authorities could not simply give up the intent to create a Moldovan republic, when it was already officially voiced and a number of meetings occurred in support of the endeavor. The abandonment of the Moldovan project would make a laughingstock out of the Soviet government in the eyes of the foreign government and play into the hands of Romanian diplomats. The decision from July 29, 1924, was likely the last time, when the Moscow authorities decisively intervened in the process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR. Basically, they insisted on the creation of the republic, but let Kharkiv decide, how to do it.

Nevertheless, the problem of the borders and the ethnic composition of the future Moldovan ASSR still remained one of the crucial issues before and after the establishment of the republic. Only in 1926, the all-Soviet census took place and provided the authorities with more or less precise data on the population of the Republic. In later chapters I will touch upon the issue of the ethnic composition of the Moldovan ASSR and the challenges it created.

45 *Nachalo Bol'shogo Puti*, 33.

3. 3. The Forming of the Moldovan Regional Party Committee and the Choice of the Directions of Nationality Policies in the Moldovan ASSR

Along with the creation of the Moldovan ASSR another important process took place – the establishment and the building of the Moldovan section (*obkom*) of the KP(b)U. The issue became particularly pressing, when Moscow insisted that the Moldovan ASSR should be established. Yet, the documents suggest, that the decision was left largely in the hands of Kharkiv. The Soviet Ukrainian leadership had two options: either to rely on the “initiative group” of the Romanian Communists, who by their memorandum triggered the whole affair, or to choose the Bessarabian emigres and Moldovan party members, who were already for quite long period of time working in Ukraine in the local party committees. The choice of the Ukrainian authorities fell on the Bessarabians and Moldovans in the KP(b)U ranks. This was the choice, which also eventually favored the Moldovanization policies to the Romanianizing ones.

The Ukrainian authorities played major role in the choice of the leading group for the Moldovan section of the party. They rejected and even isolated the Romanian “initiative” group for several reasons, even though it could have possibly had more potential and influence to carry out a successful state-building project.⁴⁶ Yet, its plan for the total Romanianization of the region was an unattractive perspective for Kharkiv, since it was already in spring 1924 clear that future republic would contain sizable Ukrainian population. More importantly, Soviet Ukrainian leaders were afraid to lose control over the politics in the region. The Ukrainian authorities did not have leverage over the Romanian Communists. The latter worked mostly through the channels of the Comintern

⁴⁶ In addition, it could have solved the constant interwar problem of the lack of Moldovan-speaking specialists, turning to a richer Romanian resource base.

and appealed directly to Moscow. Moreover, their ambitions and projects to create in the region kind of semi-military training camp demonstrated that Romanian Communists would hardly accept the strict control of the Ukrainian authorities. From Ukrainian viewpoint the influence of the Romanian emigres in Moscow also played not in their favor. The Kharkiv Bolsheviks were reluctant to give part of their territory under the control of the Romanian Communists, who could frequently address to the Moscow authorities neglecting Kharkiv. Finally, the Romanian communists made a tactical mistake, not understanding the above-described Moscow-Kharkiv balance of power in relation to the Moldovan issue. Dissatisfied with the course of events and preference for the Bessarabian emigres in 1924, the Romanian Communists, particularly Dik, sent their critical notes foremost to Moscow. At the same time the Moscow authorities preferred not to intervene in Kharkiv's work on the Moldovan ASSR, unless some vital issues were touched upon. Therefore, the Moscow authorities tended to wait and rely on Kharkiv's replies on Dik's notes and memorandums. Not surprisingly, Ukrainian authorities rejected Dik's criticism, since one of two objects of critique were Ukrainian authorities themselves.⁴⁷

In light of these considerations local Bessarabian and Moldovan party activists seemed to suit much more. They were themselves quite suspicious of the Romanian influence. Therefore, the Ukrainian authorities felt more secure for their border areas than in the case of the Romanian emigres. Bessarabians already worked for some time in the local committees of the KP(b)U. Hence, they were more familiar to the Soviet Ukrainian authorities, since they made part of the Ukrainian party system. In turn, knowing the

⁴⁷ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 128-137.

Ukrainian party balances from the inside the Bessarabian emigres knew whom and how to address, when the issue of the Moldovan ASSR emerged. At the same time the Bessarabian-Moldovan group had few connections in the Soviet top party management. Hence they could hardly make use of these connections in order to press some issue directly in Moscow without Kharkiv's consent. On the contrary, the Bessarabian emigres had to rely on the Kharkiv in their debate with the Romanian communists, since the Ukrainian authorities had enough political weight, which Bessarabians lacked, to repulse Dik's attacks.

Thus, the choice in favor of the Bessarabian emigres was likely some kind of the deal between them and the Ukrainian authorities. Bessarabians and local Moldovans assumed the republican party leadership and got the support of the Ukrainian authorities in their struggle with the Romanian group. Kharkiv, in turn, got the guarantees that the future developments in the Moldovan ASSR would be under their control. This control acquired legal status in the Moldovan Constitution, where even such usually autonomous local Commissariats as the Commissariat of Enlightenment was subject to strict control by the Ukrainian authorities.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, even the choice in favor of Bessarabians did not resolve all the issues concerned with the directions of the borderland and nationalities policies in the Moldovan ASSR, since among the most influential Bessarabians there was no consensus on the issue. The participants of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and the elaboration of the nationality policies differed on the issue of the identity of the identity of titular group of the republic, the most appropriate linguistic norms and the priorities of the policies abroad.

48 "Konstituciia AMSSR," in *Gosudarstvenno-pravovye Akty Moldavskoi SSR*, 38.

On 8 August 1924, after the discussion of Moscow's directive on the Moldovan republic, the Politburo of the KP(b)U resolved that Abram Grinshtein would carry out the practical implementation of the establishment of the republic.⁴⁹ Several days later TsK KP(b)U clarified several central issues, formulated by Grinshtein: “To approve Grinshtein's proposals... To consider it necessary to form the party and Soviet leadership of the MSSR out of reliable Comrades-Moldovans... To recognize that the MSSR should be incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR and should have the federative connection with Ukraine, similar to the relations between autonomous republics with the RSFSR.”⁵⁰

This was a key decision. Grinshtein was one of the leaders of the Bessarabian Communist underground after 1917. From the early 1920s he was responsible in the KP(b)U for the Bessarabian and Bukovinian affairs. Grinshtein formed the organizational group from Bessarabian Communists, who were well familiar to him. Grinshtein formed the organizational committee within the Odesan Party Gubkom. The committee was established in order to carry out the preparatory works for the creation of the Moldovan ASSR. The committee consisted of three party officials, Grigorii Staryi, Iosif Badeev and Grinshtein himself. None of them were members of the “initiative group” and signed the Memorandum on 4 February, 1924. All three came out of the Bessarabian Communist underground and would play major roles in the political and cultural life of the Moldovan ASSR in the period of Moldovanization. Yet, as it turned out, they had conflicting views on the directions of Soviet nationality policies in the region. On 22 August, 1924, at the second meeting of the committee the views of Staryi concerning language issues clashed

49 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 16, d. 2, l. 75.

50 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 16, d. 2, l. 77.

with the respective views of Badeev and Grinshtein. The conflict was not solved during the meeting and the participants decided to submit the description of both views in written form to TsK KP(b)U.⁵¹ These reports contain the views and argumentation of both sides.

Saryi, who would later be considered one of the leading figures of the “Romanizers” (*rumynizatory*), stated from the beginning that the scientific linguistic connection between Romanian and Moldovan was not his concern and he was much more interested in practical issues. From the practical point of view he believed that a peasant from Transnistria or Bessarabia understood quite well his counterpart from Iasi, historical capital of the Moldavian Principality. At the same time a peasant from Transnistria or Bessarabia would not understand 75-90% of literary Romanian. At the same time in his opinion the “language of the Bessarabian and Transnistrian Moldovans” was “so poor that in pure Moldovan, without the borrowing from other languages, one can hardly give even the most primitive political speech.”⁵² Therefore, unwilling to spend excessive resources on the creation of almost completely new language, he proposed basing language policies on the Romanian canon and Latin script, which were the closest to and most suitable for the Transnistrian peasants. The “Russian” script, in Saryi's, opinion “could not convey many expressions from the Moldovan language... Russian letters, which we use instead of the Romanian ones, are pronounced incorrectly, since they cannot reproduce Moldovan sounds.”⁵³ To his argument, Saryi added that the establishment of the Moldovan republic made sense only in light of the “extension of the republic beyond the Dniester.” From this point of view of the future unification of Transnistria and Bessarabia, in which the latter

51 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 2.

52 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 6.

53 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 6.

was already being Romanianized by Bucharest, and the problem of the re-education of one of the regions could emerge in the nearby future.⁵⁴

In turn, Iosif Badeev used the same 75-90% of the literary Romanian, not understood by the “Moldovans from Bessarabia and Transnistria,” to underscore the distinction between Romanian and Moldovan. He summarized the debate the following way:

Why is the Romanian literary language not understood by Moldovans? Is it only because it is literary and differs from the spoken popular language? Or the Moldovan and Romanian languages are two separate languages, which have common Romance roots, but differ from one another like Russian from Ukrainian and Belarusian.⁵⁵

Badeev made clear that Saryi and Romanianizers advocated the first option, while he himself stood for the latter one. The parallel with the Russian-Ukrainian-Belarusian case was a strong argument for the Bolsheviks in Kharkiv and Moscow, who made the choice in favor of the separate Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian language and nationalities despite their similarities. Introducing this parallel in the Moldovan-Romanian case, Badeev suggested a similar resolution of the issue. The language policy should have been based upon the local dialect, which due to its poor vocabulary had also incorporated many Slavic words. Badeev argued that there was no need to artificially impose Romanian, in turn filled with borrowings from French. Badeev had also tied the question of language to the question of the existence of the Moldovan nationality: “we can only choose Romanianization of Moldovan, if we adopt the point of view, according to which Moldovans do not exist as a separate nationality, but exist only a single

54 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 6-7.

55 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 5.

Romanian people, which is passing through the stage of national unification.”⁵⁶ Badeev repudiate this assertion, arguing that “Moldovans, with the exception of a small group of politicians, bought by Romanians, do not consider themselves Romanians and do not manifest any love towards Romanian homeland. A Moldovan considers himself a Moldovan and no more.”⁵⁷ The emphasis on the suspicious or even militant attitude of the Bessarabian and Transnistrian population to everything Romanian would be a recurring argument in favor of the existence of the separate Moldovan nationality and culture. Whatever the scholarly arguments, the advocates of Moldovanization would insist that the resistance to Romanian rule in Bessarabia and to Romanian culture on both sides of the Dniester was a fact and that borderland and nationality policies should rely on and exploit this situation.

On August 27, 1924, Grinshtein, the third member of the Committee and also the advocate of Moldovanization, made his point of view public in a local party newspaper. He did not engage in a detailed argumentation, as his two colleagues did, but he publicly stated that Moldovan and Romanian were separate languages, as were the two nationalities.⁵⁸ Interestingly, in this internal debate the argument from the point of view of the Bessarabian recession was not at the center of attention. Only Staryi put the Bessarabian issue and the foreign goals of the future Moldovan republic to the fore. The advocates of Moldovanization, Badeev and Grinshtein, made the perception and understanding of the local linguistic and national realities on both banks of the Dniester central in their argumentation.

56 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 5.

57 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 5, d. 5, f. 5.

58 Cojocaru, *Cominternul și Originele “Moldovenismului,”* 155.

Besides the disagreements within the organizational committee, another actor attempted to intervene and influence the process of the establishment of the republic. The Romanian Communist emigres had no intention to give up the initiative in the organization of the Moldovan republic to the KP(b)U and Grinshtein. In a letter to Petrovskii from 22 August, 1924, Fiodor Korniushev, the head of the Odesan Gubkom in 1924, described the arrival Ion Dik with a group of 28 people, primarily students of the KUNMZ, to the region. They started to collect signatures against Grinshtein's leading role in the organization of the republic and for his substitution with a Romanian or Moldovan. Under Dik's supervision one of the students wrote a letter to TsK RKP(b), TsK KP(b)U, the Comintern, and a number of influential party leaders. The letter requested the recall of Grinshtein. Korniushev complained that the activities of the organizational committee was supposed to have an "internal character. Therefore, Dik's letter "equaled to the divulgence of party secrets."⁵⁹ Dik's actions did not bring the results, that he expected. The organizational committee preserved the same composition.

On 19 September, the Ukrainian Politburo discussed the materials presented by the organizational committee. In the resolution the Politburo endorsed the views of Grinshtein and Badeev on nationality policies in the Moldovan republic. The decision stated that the linguistic work should aim at the development of the "Moldovan popular (*narodnyi*) language," "making an effort to bring [the language in the republic] as close as possible to the language of the Moldovan population of Bessarabia." The resolution also indicated the necessity of the introduction of "Russian (Cyrillic) script."⁶⁰ The Ukrainian

⁵⁹ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 3.

⁶⁰ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 16, d. 2, l. 103-104.

Politburo also requested Moscow to cover the budget deficits of the new republic. This was likely an indication that a part of the Soviet Ukrainian leadership still considered the organization of an autonomous republic with a full-fledged administrative apparatus was a redundancy.⁶¹

Kharkiv's decisions outlined the main contours of the new republic. Moscow's final approval was pending. Dik and his associates attempted to use this break between two decisions in order to influence Moscow's positions. On 22 September, 1924, they issued another memorandum. The Romanian Communists reminded that the initiative for the establishment of the republic came from them and restated the goals thereof from their point of view. They found the course taken by the KP(b)U erroneous, "harmful for the national organism in the process of formation." The source of the error Dik and his associates saw in the lack of knowledge among the KP(b)U leaders on the situation in Bessarabia and Romania and the influence of the "incompetent Comrades," who prepared the ground for the declaration of the republic.⁶² Apparently, the Romanian Communist emigres referred here to Grinshtein. More importantly, they highlighted the differences, which they had with the KP(b)U leadership on the role of the Moldovan republic:

The Moldovan Republic, in our opinion, should not only have the goal of discrediting of the dominance of the Romanian bourgeoisie in Bessarabia, but to follow this goal also in the rest of Romania... We propose and agree that the Moldovan Republic, as a federative state, should in this case be part of the Ukrainian SSR. Nevertheless, if the international situation of the Soviet Union does not allow this, that is the inclusion of Bessarabia in the Moldovan SSR, we consider it necessary that the Moldovan Republic joins the Soviet Union directly with equal rights, in order to acquire a more considerable international situation. This motivation is also underscored by the necessity of considerable financial support for future republic, which the Ukrainian SSR cannot grant by itself... The mistake of

61 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 16, d. 2, l. 104.

62 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 7.

the Ukrainian Comrades is that establishing the Moldovan SSR, they attempt to resolve only the Bessarabian question, leaving aside the possibility of the Sovietization of the entire Romania... Our key idea is the agitation among the working-peasant masses of entire contemporary Romania.⁶³

Thus, for the Romanian Communists the aim was the socialist revolution in entire Romania, not just in Bessarabia. In that respect their position differed from Saryi, who also supported the introduction of the Romanian literary norms, but only, since they were also introduced by the Romanian authorities in Bessarabia. Saryi focused on Bessarabia, not on Romania, as a whole. The memorandum of the Romanian Communist emigres was ambiguous on the administrative status of Soviet Moldovan. They apparently did not want to annoy Kharkiv. Therefore, they declaratively agreed with the inclusion of the Soviet Moldovan republic into Ukraine. Nevertheless, the discussion of the benefits of the full-fledged republic, included directly into the Soviet Union, demonstrates that the Romanian Communists preferred a different administrative solution to Soviet Moldova. This intention of the Dik's group could not but annoy many in Kharkiv. Even within the confines of a Moldovan autonomous republic in the Ukrainian SSR, the Soviet Ukrainian leaders could hardly see many benefits in the predominance of Dik's group in Soviet Moldova, since it constantly demonstrated the neglect of Kharkiv's interests.

The views on the nationality issues, outlined in the memorandum of the Romanian Communists intertwined with the proclaimed goals of the future republic. The document stated that the attempts of the Ukrainian Communists to create a barrier against the influence of the "Romanian bourgeoisie" via the creation of a new language were misdirected. "In our opinion, the struggle will be not between two languages, but between

63 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 7.

two political systems: Soviet and bourgeois-oligarchic. From the dialectic point of view, the best system will be victorious, that is the Soviet system.”⁶⁴ The memorandum stated that there was no difference between the languages. According to the authors, the Romanian language was more developed. At the same time “Moldovans from Ukraine were strongly denationalized by the Russian autocracy, and now in the interests of the revolution, it is necessary to give the Romanian language the possibility to develop, that is to renationalize it.”⁶⁵ Similar logic justified the introduction of the Latin script instead of the Cyrillic one. Basically, in this memorandum the Romanian Communist emigres advocated radical and total Romanianization and Latinization of the future republic in order to promote the Soviet system in the whole of Romania.

The memorandum is of interest, since it demonstrated explicitly different understandings of the goals of Soviet borderland policies among the Soviet activists. Was the cross-border cultural ties for the Bolsheviks a tool to instigate the unification of the contested borderlands and their population in the neighboring states with their kin Soviet republics? Or was it a window to advance the socialist revolution countrywide? In theory this did not necessarily and always contradict each other. Some Soviet leaders believed that the secession of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus would destabilize the Polish political regime as a whole and open the opportunity for the success of the revolutionary forces in Warsaw. In practice, though, this dilemma necessitated many tough choices. The slogan of the self-determination of national minorities was not popular in the neighboring states and, when proclaimed, undermined the support for the Communist parties in

64 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 8.

65 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 8.

Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. In the Bessarabian-Moldovan-Romanian issue, where the borders between nationalities were more vague and ambiguous than in the Ukrainian-Polish or Ukrainian-Belarusian questions, different interpretations of Soviet borderland policies gave birth, among others, to the conflict between the Romanian Communists and Bessarabian-Moldovan party activists, backed by the KP(b)U. Besides the conflicting understandings of the goals of the Moldovan republic and the struggle for key administrative positions, there was a divergence of opinions on the most suitable nationality policies.

Eventually the Ukrainian authorities made the choice in favor of the Moldovanizers' point of view. There were several considerations behind this. In the eyes of Kharkiv, Staryi's point of view was compromised by the position of the Romanian Communist emigres. The Ukrainian authorities were quite suspicious of the radical projects of the Romanian Communist emigres. Therefore, they put significant effort to marginalize Dik's ambitious "initiative" group. In this case we can argue that the radical emigres' Romanianizing project created a negative attitude among Ukrainian authorities towards Staryi's more balanced and moderate views. It can also be argued that the radical and uncompromising stance of the Romanian "initiative group" had, in turn, radicalized the view of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities and local Moldovan party officials in favor of the comprehensive Moldovanizing project.

In addition, the choice in favor of Moldovanization can be explained in the all-Union context, specifically in the context of *korenizatsiia*. The project of Moldovanization fit the logic of *korenizatsiia* much better, while the Romanianizing arguments were mostly less convincing in the context of Soviet nationality policies. The

orientation towards the needs and culture of local Transnistrian population was much more in line with the purposes of *korenizatsiia*. Second, the argument from the point of view of the underdevelopment and poverty of the Moldovan language and culture was inappropriate and unconvincing in the context of *korenizatsiia*. At this time the Soviet authorities were creating and developing the languages and cultures of the peoples of the Russian Far North.⁶⁶ From the Marxist-Bolshevik point of view these peoples stood at much lower level of social development than the “most backward nationality” – Moldovans. Some of them did not have any written culture at all. Therefore, the argument of the backwardness of the Moldovan culture could hardly scare away the Soviet officials and convince them of the need of the Romanian borrowings. The idea of the forceful imposition of Romanian culture was alien to the rhetoric of *korenizatsiia*. Even the most Romanian-oriented participant of the discussion, Ion Dicescu-Dik, believed that the Romanian-speaking population of Transnistria should have been Romanianized, since it was significantly Slavicized and was basically not Romanian enough. In the circumstances, when the identity of the Transnistrian population was not clear and strong claims in favor of Moldovanization were voiced, the Soviet authorities preferred not to impose the Romanian culture. In this respect it should be mentioned that Soviet authorities and the Comintern perceived Greater Romania as a “multinational imperialist state.”⁶⁷ Therefore, the idea of the imposition of “imperial” and, moreover, “feudal-

66 On Soviet policies in the Far North, see Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirror: Russian and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 131-302.

67 Already in 1921 the Balkan Communist Conference defined Romania as a multinational, oppressive state, *Natsional'nyi Vopros na Balkanah cherez Prizmu Mirovoi Revoliucii, chast' 1* (Moscow: URSS, 2000), 15. In 1923 the Romanian Communists themselves accepted the Comintern's “multinational, imperialist” definition of the country. Nevertheless, this definition remained a recurring issue in the party debates. Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons: a Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003), 53.

bourgeois” culture could have hardly been convincing for the Soviet, especially Ukrainian authorities. For the Bolshevik leaders the discourse of the Romanian Communist emigres could be reminiscent of the “Great-state chauvinist” rhetoric, which neglected the interests of small backward nationalities, up to denial of their existence. In 1924 such logic was not convincing for the Soviet leaders.

Finally, it looks that some of the Ukrainian leaders saw in the Moldovanizing project the possibility to realize their own geopolitical ambitions. As I will discuss later in the thesis, Bessarabia, was one of the regions, along with Western Ukraine, Transcarpathia, Bukovina and to some extent Ukrainian-inhabited regions of the Soviet Union, which Soviet Ukrainian leaders considered to be within the sphere of their geopolitical interests. While the majority population in Bessarabia was Romanian-speaking, there was a large Ukrainian minority. In the Moldovanizing project, targeted only on Bessarabia and closely controlled by Ukrainian activists, some of them saw the potential to claim additional influence in the territory between the Dniester and the Prut. All the above-mentioned considerations contributed to the eventual choice in favor of the Moldovanization project.

On 25 September, 1924, the Moscow Politburo in the presence of Zatonsky, Staryi, Grinshtein, and Dik discussed the issue of the Moldovan Soviet republic. The Politburo endorsed Kharkiv's decisions. Still, the opponents to the establishment of the republic in Moscow attempted to postpone the final decision till the next Plenum of TsK RKP(b).⁶⁸ There are no records on the outcome of this attempt. Apparently, it failed. As it became to a significant extent a Soviet Ukrainian issue, it was up to Kharkiv's governing bodies to

68 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 465, l. 1.

inaugurate the new administrative unit. On 12 October, 1924, the Third Session of VUTsVK officially established the Moldovan ASSR, as an autonomy within the Ukrainian SSR. The leadership of the new republic consisted primarily of the Bessarabian and Transnistrian party activists. The members of the organizational committee occupied key positions. Badeev became the head of the Moldovan obkom of the KP(b)U, Saryi – the head of the Revkom, the Chairman of the TsIK and later Sovnarkom of the Moldovan ASSR. Grinshtein received the position of the representative of the Moldovan ASSR in Kharkiv, supervising the Moldovan affairs from there.

Several days before the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR, on September 27, 1924, on the Fourth Session of the Odesan Gubkom, as the representative of TsK KP(b)U and the Government of the Ukrainian SSR, Zatonsky voiced the official position of the Ukrainian authorities in the debate on the nationality of the Moldovan population in Transnistria. In his speech he named the process of the establishment of the republic as the “movement for the revival of the Moldovan nation,” which, among other nations, lived under the “oppression of Royal Romania.”⁶⁹ In this talk Zatonsky clearly sided with the Moldovanizers, rejecting almost any possible equation of “Moldovan” and “Romanian.”

Despite the decisions on the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR and the endorsement of Moldovanization, as the nationality policy, the Moldovan ASSR and its leaders still encountered many challenges. There was still no consensus on Moldovanization among the leaders of the republic. Saryi eventually complied with the decision to develop the Moldovan language on the Cyrillic script. Nevertheless, the issue

⁶⁹ *Nachalo Bol'shogo Puti*, 44-45.

resurfaced on a number of occasions, particularly in the first months after the establishment of the republic.

More importantly, the opponents of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR still attempted to reverse or to alter the decision. In Moscow there were still internal discussions taking place.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the decision to postpone the decision till the Plenum of TsK RKP(b) was given up. The letter of Korniushev from 21 October, 1924, highlight the dissatisfaction with the Moldovan ASSR within the KP(b)U ranks. He advocated the subordination of the Moldovan ASSR to the Odesan Gubkom, which he was heading. Korniushev envisaged the Moldovan ASSR as an okrug with certain “external autonomy,” which would allow the “elder” (*starosta*) to travel around the republic and agitate among the Moldovan peasantry.⁷¹ Korniushev was displeased with the “Republican scale (*razmah*)” of the leaders of the Moldovan ASSR and considered the administrative apparatus too cumbersome for such a small republic. Korniushev's criticism, though, should be interpreted from the point of view of his administrative position. As the head of the Odesan gubkom, he was among those party activists, who had most to lose with the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR. A significant part of the new republic was carved out of his Odesan gubernia. The organizational commission prepared the groundwork for the new autonomous republic under his supervision. Likely, Korniushev hoped that, despite the loss of the territory to the Moldovan ASSR, he would still preserve some influence on the Moldovan republican leaders. He was quick to notice that this was not the case, even though the Odesan gubkom maintained initially some involvement in the

⁷⁰ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 15.

⁷¹ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 11-12.

Moldovan ASSR.

The Romanian Communists refused to give up. On 28 October, 1924, they sent to TsK RKP(b) and TsK KP(b)U a proposal on a new composition of the governing bodies of the Moldovan ASSR.⁷² They even incorporated the current Soviet Moldovan leaders into the suggested list. Badeev was offered the position of the head of the RKI and the Control Commission. Still, the attempt to overtake the leadership was evident. The list suggested Ion Dik, as the secretary of the Moldovan obkom. The list eventually reached the leadership of the Moldovan ASSR. Badeev replied to the list in a letter to TsK KP(b)U. He reiterated that Moldovans were a separate nationality, which developed in close contact with the Slavic culture, while the Romanian one evolved under the French influence. Badeev also added that the Bessarabian economy was linked with Ukraine. In contrast – Badeed claimed – the Romanian Communists considered that Moldovans were a part of the Romanian people and the Bessarabian economy was closely connected to Romania.⁷³ TsK KP(b)U recognized the existence of two groups and supported the Bessarabian-Moldovan one.⁷⁴

The Romanian Communists continued their offensive on other fronts. Already in the above-mentioned memorandum of the Romanian Communists from September 22, 1924 it was mentioned that the main purpose of the future Moldovan ASSR should be the external propaganda, more specifically the “agitation in the proletarian-peasant masses from the whole Romania.”⁷⁵ Later, on December 6, 1924, the article of a student of the Romanian section of KUNMZ G.Al. Florian, which was most likely written under Dik’s

⁷² TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 1821, l. 17-19.

⁷³ RGASPI, f. 495, op. 289, d. 1, l. 20-21.

⁷⁴ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 2.

⁷⁵ *Cominternul și Originele “Moldovenismului,”* 163.

supervision, who was a Professor at the University, appeared in the newspaper of the Romanian section of the KUNMZ. The article claimed that with the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR “we must understand the organization of an outpost for the offensive against Romania. One should restore the more or less Romanian character of the Moldovan republic, so that we can this way juxtapose two regimes of the same people. The peasantry of Bessarabia and Romania will have the opportunity to judge, how their brothers on the other bank of the Dniester live.”⁷⁶ Thus, in both documents the authors (possibly the same one) emphasized that the main purpose of the Moldovan ASSR should be the export of the Revolution and from this point of view the orientation towards Romania, as a whole, was needed. Florian's article laid the blame for the distortion of this intent and undermining the revolutionary potential of the Moldovan ASSR. It also stated that initially the Bessarabian Communists considered the Moldovan ASSR a joke in the imagination of the Romanian emigres.

At the same time the local Moldovan and Ukrainian Communists led a quite different discourse. In the process of the creation of the Moldovan ASSR one of the founding myths and constant references was the subjugated position of Bessarabia within the Greater Romania. This was common discourse for various local demonstrations⁷⁷ and the Third session (October 8-12, 1924) of the VUTsVK, where the Moldovan ASSR was officially established.⁷⁸ The references to the revolutionary situation in the all-Romanian context were lacking and that represented striking contrast to the projects of the Romanian Communist emigres.

⁷⁶ AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 1, d. 177, f. 2.

⁷⁷ *Obrazovanie Moldavskoi SSR*, 58-64.

⁷⁸ *Alcătuirea Republicii Autonome Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenești: Darea de Seamă Stenografică a Sessiei a 3-a a VUȚIK-ului, 8-12 Octombrie 1924* (Harkiv: 1924).

On January 8, 1925 I. Dicescu-Dik launched his last attack, sending a memorandum (in 40 copies) to all major Soviet political figures entitled, “On Culture-Building in Soviet Moldova. Against Russifying Deviation under the Soviet Flag.” This was also Dik’s most comprehensive document in the “Moldovanization vs. Romanianization debate.” It could hardly change the formed balance. Its main argument centered on the foreign dimension of the Moldovan ASSR. He stated that the Moldovan ASSR had “huge international importance or, to be modest, more international than internal.”⁷⁹ He proceeded to the argument that Moldovans and Romanians were the same people. Based on these two points Dik criticized the Moldovan authorities of the newly established Republic for focusing too much on the internal issues and limiting themselves only to Bessarabia on the international level, neglecting the considerations of worldwide revolutionary movement. Therefore, he proposed abandoning the separation of Moldovans from Romanians and Bessarabia from the rest of Romania. “We want to continue our struggle with Romania not along the lines of the struggle of two nationalities, but along the lines of the struggle of two political systems.”⁸⁰ From this stance and Dik’s view on the subordinated position of nationality policies emerged his directions for Soviet nationality policies: “We have to take the Romanian culture and Sovietize it.”⁸¹ In many respects the new memorandum was the reiteration of the previous statements of the Romanian “initiative” group in a more detailed form. The innovation was the emphasis on the “Russifying” character of the chosen nationality policies. Thus, Dik evaluated the decision to refute the Romanian language and focus on the local

79 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 129.

80 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 132-133.

81 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 137.

dialects with Slavic influences as the “Russifying” strategy. He summarized the main problem and dilemma:

Almost every Moldovan village has its own “language,” that is their own slang. In fact, only several hundreds of pure Moldovan words remained in use, others are Russian, Ukrainian, or even Jewish.

It is evident, that such language is not appropriate for the development and dissemination of the Moldovan culture. In this situation, we have a single dilemma: further impoverishment of the language, that is its complete Russification or Romanianization of the Moldovan language; its further impoverishment with barbarisms or the elimination of these barbarisms.⁸²

Dik likely attempted to make his arguments stronger, stigmatizing his opponents as “Russifiers.” In the 1920s in the Soviet Union this was a powerful accusation. Nevertheless, Dik's opponents presented his views as the case of the “Romanian imperialism.” The main representative of the “Russifying deviation,” in Dik's view was Mykola Skrypnyk. The basis for this assessment was the discussion, which Dik and Skrypnyk had at one of the meetings of the Ukrainian Politburo. According to Dik, Skrypnyk claimed that those who advocate the identity of Romanians and Moldovans were “basically the agents of the Romanian bourgeois ideology... the Romanian Communists are specific imperialists, which aim to exploit the Moldovan people and even anticipate the possibility of the annexation of Soviet Moldova to future Soviet Romania.”⁸³ Dik's presentation of Skrypnyk as the main “Russifier” is somewhat ironic. As the following chapters will demonstrate, Skrypnyk was one of leaders of Ukrainianization and one of the strongest advocates and the compensation for the consequences of the Tsarist Russification. It is possible that Skrypnyk found the parallels

82 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 135-136.

83 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2144, l. 132.

between Dik's pronouncements on Moldovans and "Great-Russian chauvinists" attitudes towards Ukrainians, which prompted the Soviet Ukrainian activist to adopt such a critical stance on the views of the Romanian Communist.

Moldovan Communists had to respond to Dik's accusations. In his response I. Badeev, at this time the secretary of the Moldovan obkom of the KP(b)U, reiterated his views on the distinctions between the Moldovans and Romanians. He argued:

Since a national movement among Bessarabian and Ukrainian Moldovans exists, then the discussion on whether Moldovans of Bessarabia and Ukraine are the same nation or tribe with the Romanian people is scholasticism, needed and appropriate only to a Romanian professor and not a revolutionary politician, who aspires to get control over the national movement of the nationalities for the organization of the struggle against imperialism.⁸⁴

Badeev found in Dik's views the attitude, "impregnated by Great-Russian chauvinism and smacking of sick vestiges of the Romanian social-democracy."⁸⁵ Evidently, the attempt to find in each other the manifestation of the "Great-Russian chauvinism" demonstrated the power of this accusation in the mid-1920s. Badeev alluded several times during the letter to the similarities between Dik's views and the visions of Romanian "imperialism." At the end of the response Badeev asked TsK KP(b)U to pronounce decisively in favor of one of the points of view, in order to stop the constant debates that undermined the government of the Republic. The KP(b)U reaffirmed its support for the ruling group and the policies of Moldovanization.⁸⁶ This decision was more important from another point of view: it clearly targeted the external dimension of the *korenizatsiia* in the Moldovan ASSR exclusively toward Bessarabia and not

⁸⁴ TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros, 264.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 262.

⁸⁶ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 58, l. 16-17.

Romania.⁸⁷ TsK KP(b)U also asked Moscow to intervene and to put an end to the campaign against the leadership of the Moldovan ASSR, carried out in the Romanian section of the KUNMZ. Even after this decision I. Dicescu-Dik continued to press his views in the party circles, but officially the party orientation towards distinct Moldovan language and culture was not questioned until 1931-1932, when the Latinization campaign was launched. Still, even in the period of Latinization the idea of a separate Moldovan nationality persisted. Dik himself suffered a severe blow, when the decision to divide the Romanian section of the KUNMZ into the Romanian one and the Moldovan one was taken in March 1925.

The vision of the Romanian Communists of the Moldovan Republic presupposed the explicit predominance of the external over the internal dimension in nationality policies. Claiming that the population of the republic was nationally the same as the majority population in the neighboring state Dik's group advocated the necessity of the primarily political and ideological struggle but not the national one.⁸⁸ At the same time within the Moldovanization project of Badeev and Grinstein Moldovans were a separate nationality, different from the Romanian one, and, thus, became a minority within Greater Romania. In certain respects one may notice similarities with the Ukrainian question. It is possible that the Soviet Moldovan leaders modeled their borderland and nationality policies on the Soviet Ukrainian case. The Bolsheviks expected the Ukrainian SSR to be

87 Roughly at the same time major figure in the Romanian and Ukrainian affairs Christian Rakovsky, at this moment the Deputy of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, reinforced this position: "The new Moldovan Republic should serve exclusively as the springboard for the work in Bessarabia." *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros*, 267.

88 In this project the position of the Moldovan ASSR in the relation to Romania should have been the same as the position of later established Polish regions in the Ukrainian SSR and the Belarusian SSR in their relation to Poland.

the point of attraction and reference for the Ukrainian minorities in the neighboring states, first of all in Poland. The Moldovan ASSR was also expected to play similar role for the Moldovan minority in Romania, though the distinction between Moldovans and Romanians was not so evident. Moreover, in the Moldovan case, unlike in the Ukrainian one, the majority of the nationality lived outside the territory of the republic in the neighboring state. This was an additional motivation to highlight the external dimension of nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR. The Bessarabian question played a key role in the decision to establish an autonomous Moldovan republic. At first the Soviet Moldovan leaders were frequently inclined to emphasize the importance of the Bessarabian dimension. Nevertheless, after a short period of high enthusiasm and ambitions the attitude had changed. At the second Conference of the Moldovan section of the party in November 1925 Badeev stated:

There was a certain misunderstanding ... that the Moldovan Republic was created only for the annexation of Bessarabia. The slogan "Return Bessarabia" should be widespread on our territory, but we cannot carry out our work under this slogan now. This defect, this mistake, we have quickly noticed and ... assigned primary importance to the practical questions of the economic and cultural development of the Moldovan Republic.⁸⁹

In this statement an explicit turn towards the internal issues is visible. The Bolshevik policies in the Moldovan ASSR were not expected to be guided exclusively by the borderland dimension of the Bessarabian question. That is not to say, though, that the Bessarabian question disappeared completely from the life of the Moldovan ASSR. The issue was frequently discussed by the party and governmental officials, it was part of the official and unofficial discourse in the documents and newspapers, numerous pamphlets

⁸⁹ *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 41.

were published about the Bessarabian question,⁹⁰ etc. Yet, this discourse was not predominant and the Bessarabian references were not decisive for the directions of the local policies, specifically in the national sphere.

3. 4. Conclusions

The establishment and delineation of the Soviet national territorial units was a complex process. There were usually many intersecting and conflicting interests involved. In the case of the Moldovan ASSR the issue was complicated by the border position of the republic, the highly contested character of Bessarabia and the lack of clarity on the identity of the titular nationality of the republic.

From the early 1920s two main groups in the Bessarabian-Romanian-Moldovan affairs formed in the Soviet Union: the Romanian Communist emigres and the Bessarabians and left-bank Moldovans. The Memorandum, which launched the process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR in February 1924, was primarily the product of the Moscow-based Romanian Communists. Nevertheless, the authors of the memorandum did not get leading positions in the Moldovan republic, which they aspired to. As I have demonstrated, this was largely due to the key role of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities in the process of the creation of the Moldovan ASSR and the selection of its leadership. The specific circumstances of 1924 and the mutual border claims between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR favored Moscow's certain self-withdrawal from the

90 To mention several pamphlets, with which I have worked with, A. Badulescu, *Vosstanie v Tatar-bunare* (Moscow: 1925); V. Dembo and S. Timov, *Vosstanie Bessarabskikh Krest'ian protiv Rumynskikh Pomeshchikov* (Moscow: 1925); *10 Let Krovavoi Okkupacii* (Obshchestvo Bessarabcev, 1928); often in the pamphlets the solution of the national question in Bessarabia was contrasted to the Moldovan ASSR, V. Holostenco, *3 Goda Natsional'nogo Stroitel'stva v AMSSR i 10 Let Natsional'nogo Ugnetenii v Bessarabii* (Balta, 1928); L. Pecionaia, *Doua Lagere – Doua Politici. Dispri Zidirea Nationalo-Culturnici în RASSM și Starea în Basarabia Ocupati* (Tiraspol, 1931).

process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR. Moscow insisted on the necessity of its creation, but left some of the key decisions on the directions of nationality policies and the composition of the republican leadership in Kharkiv's hands.

The Soviet Ukrainian authorities were quite suspicious of the ambitious Romanian Communists, who operated through Moscow channels and had an ambitious perspectives on the role of the Moldovan republic in the socialist revolution in Romania. Much more familiar Bessarabian and left-bank Moldovans suited Kharkiv better. In cooperation between Kharkiv and local Bessarabians and Moldovans some of the key decisions for the Moldovan ASSR were taken. Contrary to the claims of Romanian Communists, Kharkiv and Bessarabians insisted on the existence of a separate Moldovan nationality with its language and culture. This provided the contours of the Moldovanization campaign, as the main direction of nationality policies in the republic, and the orientation on Bessarabia, not on the entire Romania, in the foreign activities.

During the year 1924 the Moldovan republic could have taken different forms, could have possibly never been established, or could have had a different ruling elites, with the opposite views on borderland and nationality policies. Nevertheless, the interaction between the actors involved and the specific circumstances of this year favored some of the key made choices. In 1925 the course for Moldovanization was confirmed. Yet, encountered many obstacles and new decisions, some of which are discussed in later chapters. One of these obstacles was the necessity to simultaneously carry out Ukrainianization in the Moldovan ASSR, since it turned out that Ukrainian were the largest national group in the new republic. However, what Ukrainianization actually meant, was an issue of the hot debates in Kharkiv in the mid-1920s.

Chapter 4. Testing the Limits of Korenizatsiia: The Shumsky-Kaganovich Struggle, 1925-1926.

In 1925 an important change for Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR took place in the sphere of nationality policies. While officially adopted at the XII Party Congress of the RKP(b) in 1923, *korenizatsiia* did not attract much attention from the local authorities in the following two years. More pressing social and economic matters occupied the local authorities. Moreover, some major Soviet republics and autonomous regions were only now beginning the process of setting up the institutions of their governments. In 1925 in the Ukrainian SSR, Ukrainianization became a key issue and a bone of contention in party life and debates. It corresponded to the change of the leadership in the Ukrainian party. Kviring, who in 1925 in several cases supported Kamenev and Zinoviev against Stalin, was relieved of his post as the first secretary of the KP(b)U.¹ In March 1925 Stalin managed to convince the all-Union Politburo to appoint his close associate Lazar Kaganovich, as the next first secretary of the KP(b)U.² Kaganovich's main goal was to consolidate the factionally-divided Ukrainian party and to build support for Stalin. The General secretary of the VKP(b) had no illusions about the unity of the Ukrainian party organization. Before Kaganovich's departure to Ukraine, he joked:

1 The initiative, though, apparently came from Kharkiv and was part of the internal party struggles in the KP(b)U. The Moscow Politburo simply confirmed the Kharkiv decision: "Do not oppose the removal of Comrade Kviring from Ukraine," RGASPI f. 17, op. 3, d. 494, l. 1. "Tell TsK KPU that they should have consulted with TsK RKP before they took the decision on the removal of Kviring," RGASPI f. 17, op. 3, d. 497, l. 6.

2 RGASPI f. 17, op. 3, d. 494, l. 1.

Stalin: In the Politburo of TsK KP(b)U there are 14 different opinions.

Kaganovich: But there are only 7 members in the Politburo, how can there be 14 different opinions?

Stalin: First one Politburo member disagrees with the other – and you have 7 different opinions, and then each member of the Politburo disagrees with himself – and you have 7 more opinions, that is 14 altogether.³

Kaganovich also came to Ukraine in order to lead a much more active Ukrainianization campaign. A Jew from Ukraine, Kaganovich spoke Ukrainian well enough to give public speeches. In one of his first speeches as first secretary of the KP(b)U, Kaganovich claimed that the USSR would serve a model for the proletariat of the West and the oppressed nationalities of the East. The Ukrainian SSR, of course, should play the key role in that sense. While Kaganovich made a more or less good impression on Ukrainian party leaders, his active support of Ukrainianization backed by Stalin, exposed the existing cleavages in the Ukrainian party. Eventually, in the course of the debate Kaganovich attracted criticism for his views and supported nationality policies from both sides, that is those, who supported an even more pro-Ukrainian policy and those, who considered his Ukrainianization policies too radical.

The existing political cleavages and conflicting views on the national question within the KP(b)U were on display during the so-called Shumsky affair. In the following pages I will look closer into the affair and attempt to unravel some of the internal party discussions and dynamics involved. In the next chapter I will also analyze the final outcome and consequences of the affair.

3 Lazar Kaganovich, *Pamiatnye Zapiski* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2003), 361.

4. 1. Kaganovich's Arrival and the Intensification of the Ukrainianization Campaign

The main actor of the affair was the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment, Oleksandr Shumsky. A former Borot'bist Shumsky had significant weight in Ukraine, particularly among those who strongly supported Ukrainianization. The debate instigated by Shumsky centered around the problem of Ukrainianization, its directions, main goals and tempo. The participants of the debate can be very roughly divided into three camps.⁴ The first, to which Shumsky belonged, believed that Ukrainianization was the key issue for the socialist construction of the Ukrainian SSR. Their goal was to Ukrainize the whole population of the Ukrainian SSR, which, in turn, should be led almost exclusively by Ukrainians. According to this group, the socialist Ukrainian culture should be built by Ukrainians and separated as much as possible from the Russian culture. This attitude was not necessarily guided by any particular anti-Russian feeling, but by the understanding that without strong support for Ukrainian culture the Russian language and culture would dominate in Soviet Ukraine. The opponents of Shumsky's group consisted mostly of the Russian-speaking party members, who viewed with many reservations the Ukrainianization attempts of Soviet power. For them the proletarian and socialist culture should be international; therefore, there was no need to make it more national, beyond some cosmetic strokes. Shumsky's opponents liked to put the national question "in class terms."⁵ Since the proletariat was the basis of the power and it was also predominantly

4 In this chapter referring to the participants of the debates and struggles as "camps" or "groups" I do not necessarily imply that they existed in reality as stable, clearly defined political associations within the KP(b)U. The members of the same "group" could have disagreements, in particular on other topics, unrelated to the national question. Yet, what I mean, is that the members of each of these "groups" usually had some common agenda and expressed similar positions and attitudes. It should be also mentioned that from time to time I will use only the name of the most visible representatives of the "groups" (like "Shumsky", "Kaganovich" etc), but use it as a shortcut reference also for their associates.

5 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 18.

Russian-speaking, for them the class-based take on the national question in Ukraine implied that the Russian-speaking proletarian culture should be dominant, or at least protected from the excessive claims of the Ukrainianizers. These Bolsheviks were highly preoccupied with the manifestations of any Ukrainian nationalism and anti-Russian sentiments. For them the main pillar of socialist construction in Soviet Ukraine was the Russified or Russian proletariat. At the same time most of Shumsky's opponents were not themselves Russians by nationality. In fact, many of the opponents of Ukrainianization came from Ukraine proper, though mostly from its Eastern, industrial part. One can hardly find many traces of explicit Russian nationalism in their pronouncements. Their skeptical attitude towards Ukrainianization had its roots in their Marxist-shaped political views, the interests of the represented groups (mostly workers, trade unions etc), as they understood them, and the existing political struggles within the KP(b)U, rather than in any strictly defined Russian national sentiments. At the same time they were not immune to the attitude, which Bolsheviks liked to label as “Great Russian chauvinism,” which generally presupposed somewhat dismissive and arrogant treatment and perception of non-Russian cultures and their needs. While nobody could openly challenge the necessity of Ukrainianization as such, since it was the party line adopted officially at the Party Congress, Shumsky's opponents usually preferred to question its tempo, directions and ambitions. Kaganovich, Zatonsky, Chubar and, to some extent, Skrypnyk stood somewhere in between these two positions in mid-1920s, forming a group of supporters of a moderate Ukrainianization,⁶ though they understood differently.⁷ They did consider

6 Their understanding of Ukrainianization was moderate in comparison with Shumsky's group. In fact, their plans for Ukrainianization were quite ambitious.

7 As the next chapters demonstrate, this was particularly the case of Skrypnyk, who had his own agenda and ambitions in Ukrainianization. During the Shumsky affair, though, Skrypnyk mostly supported

Ukrainianization a crucial goal of the KP(b)U. Yet, they were aware that it could also stir up nationalist feelings and provide some openings for the “counter-revolutionary” forces. In addition, they paid more attention to the cultural rights of national minorities, including Russians. In the following pages more details on the position of each group and their dynamics will be discussed.

It should be noted that in the existing historiography the so-called Shumsky affair is frequently limited to the discussion of the struggle between Shumsky and Kaganovich, who was backed by Stalin. In this scheme Kaganovich and by extension Stalin emerge in many respects as opponents of Ukrainianization, supporting it half-heartedly, mostly only for the sake of appearances.⁸ Yet, this interpretation both somewhat distorts the views of the participants of the discussion and underestimates the complexity of the dynamics of the affair. In order to provide a broader and more complex description of the discussions on the national question, which took place in the Ukrainian SSR in 1925-1926, I will try also to pay more attention to the opponents of Ukrainianization, who usually receive only a short mention at best. They were a highly influential group in the leadership of the Ukrainian SSR. In addition, I will try to demonstrate how outside processes and events influenced the dynamics of the party debates and decisions.

While existing accounts of the Shumsky affair usually start with his visit to Stalin in late 1925, it makes more sense to begin the story approximately half a year earlier with TsK KP(b)U plenum, which took place on April 5-7, 1925. Importantly, it was the first TsK plenum after Kaganovich's appointment to Ukraine. Among other questions the

Kaganovich in his struggle with Shumsky.

8 Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*, 95-103; “Ukrainizatsiia” 1920-h i 30-h Rokiv, 52-53; Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 212-222.

plenum focused on the national question. As Commissar for Enlightenment, Shumsky presented the report in the section devoted to the national problem. In his speech he emphasized that little was done in Ukraine after the XII Party Congress in 1923 on the matter of nationality policies.⁹ In the meantime, in Shumsky's opinion, even without full commitment from the party's side, the Ukraininization succeeded in mobilizing the Ukrainian population and stimulating the cultural upheaval in the society. The main problem was that with the party's estrangement from cultural processes in Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainian society remained without proper guidance during this crucial stage of its development. For Shumsky the main danger here was that instead of the party the leadership in the Ukrainian cultural process was being gradually taken over by the non-Communist Ukrainian intelligentsia: "Hrushevskiy,... all sorts of Tiutiunniks, that sort of fraternity (*takogo roda bratia*)."¹⁰ Here Shumsky was apparently referring to the Ukrainian "change of signposts" movement, which in most cases became attracted to the Soviet project in Ukraine because of the Bolsheviks' commitment to Ukrainianization and social transformation, but still often preserved anti-Bolshevik attitudes. For Shumsky that was exactly the problem. Due to the party's reluctance to intervene actively and lead the Ukrainian cultural process, Soviet periodicals were flooded with the publications of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. In turn, these authors "smuggled" into the publications their own "petty bourgeois" ideas, which apparently did not necessarily correspond to the expectations of the party.

Shumsky's critical attitude towards the non-Communist Ukrainian intelligentsia is,

9 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 154.

10 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 148.

in fact, quite interesting. Of course, it could have been also a rhetorical device, which he used in order to make his case for the KP(b)U's more active intervention in the cultural construction of Soviet Ukraine. Yet, he demonstrated his uneasiness with the activities of the Ukrainian intelligentsia on several occasions and in different contexts. It appears that Shumsky's animosity towards them was quite sincere and he, indeed, considered that their activities could be harmful for Soviet construction in the Ukrainian SSR. This observation is important also because in the historiography, based on his struggles with Kaganovich, Shumsky often emerges as some sort of fighter for the national cause, who was struggling for it from within the Bolshevik party.¹¹ While one can see Shumsky in this light, it is important to emphasize that Soviet nationality policies and discourses on the national question in many respects nurtured Shumsky's own views. At the same time Shumsky's skepticism about the non-Communist Ukrainian intelligentsia underscores the fact, that the former understood the national question differently from the latter. Thus, for Shumsky the main focus of the national question was the issue of the proletariat and its culture. In his view it was the proletariat under the Party's guidance, which should be and partly was the main bearer and source of Soviet Ukrainian culture. In this respect Shumsky and his close associates differed significantly from the Ukrainian historic socialist and revolutionary traditions and the leftist non-Communist intelligentsia in Soviet Ukraine. Historically, being influenced by the *narodnik* tradition in the Romanov Empire, the Ukrainian socialists and leftists usually oriented themselves towards the Ukrainian-speaking peasantry¹² as the main pillar of the revolutionary culture. For Shumsky peasant

11 For instance, Iu. I. Shapoval, "Alexander Shumsky: Sud'ba Narkoma v Imperii 'Pozitivnogo Deistviia,'" in *Sovetskie Natsii i Natsional'naia Politika v 1920 – 1950-e Gody: Materialy VI Mezhdunarodnoi Nauchnoi Konferencii* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2014), 54-64.

12 In fact, initially the Borotbists themselves were mostly peasant-oriented.

origins and peasant culture were, on the contrary, a source of concern. Despite the fact that the Ukrainian language was primarily spoken in the villages, in Shumsky's opinion, the peasant culture had strong "petty bourgeois" inclinations. Without the engagement of the proletariat with the Ukrainian culture and the former's contribution to the latter, the Ukrainian culture would remain ideologically alien to the proletariat.¹³ Thus, even if one considers Shumsky to be in opposition to Soviet power, there can hardly be any talk about a united group of Ukrainian intellectuals struggling for the common national cause against and from within the Soviet system. They had quite different, often conflicting views and agendas on the development of the national question and Ukrainian culture. In fact, Shumsky's views were decisively shaped by the Soviet context. In many respects Shumsky might have even considered the opponents of Ukrainianization in TsK KP(b)U to be closer to himself, than the representatives of the non-Communist Ukrainian intelligentsia in Soviet Ukraine. As the Commissar of Enlightenment, Shumsky, of course, encountered and had to deal with the latter extensively. Yet, he did not consider the Ukrainian intelligentsia to be his ally in the national question in Soviet Ukraine. Rather, Shumsky merely looked at them as useful tool, a necessary evil at this early stage, for the development of Soviet Ukrainian culture.

Taking into consideration Shumsky's disagreements with the Ukrainian intelligentsia, even for him and his associates (to say nothing of other party leaders, who were less supportive of and sometimes even militant towards Ukrainian cultural processes) it was unacceptable, that the Ukrainian intelligentsia was starting to lead the way in the evolution of Soviet Ukrainian culture. Therefore, in his report Shumsky

¹³ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 152.

devoted much attention to the necessity to counter such harmful developments in the Ukrainian cultural process, which was threatening to stray from the goals, envisaged by the party. His main suggestion was that the KP(b)U should not stand aside and must actively and full-heartedly assume the leadership of the development of Soviet Ukrainian culture. Yet, in order to do so, the party, first, should Ukrainianize itself. Ukrainian should become the main language of administration. Ukrainian culture should be supported by the party and any anti-Ukrainian sentiments and manifestations should be eradicated. Yet another crucial element, as hinted above, was the involvement of the proletariat in the Ukrainian cultural process. From Shumsky's report it becomes clear that this presupposed the Ukrainianization of the largely Russian-speaking proletariat in the Ukrainian SSR, and by Ukrainianization he largely meant the mastering of the Ukrainian language. This should have been the first step for the subsequent contributions of the Ukrainian proletariat to the Soviet Ukrainian culture, for which together with the KP(b)U the former should have become the central pillar. For Shumsky and his fellows it was the process of the re-Ukrainianization of the proletariat, though he did not use this word preferring the less provoking Ukrainianization. Nevertheless, he mentioned a couple of times that the proletariat in Ukraine had Ukrainian origins, but became Russified in the Russian imperial period and, in fact, was still being Russified under Soviet power, due to the reluctance of the latter to Ukrainianize itself and lead Ukrainian culture.¹⁴

Shumsky speech and recommendations caused an uproar in TsK KP(b)U, part of which was less than enthusiastic about Ukrainianization. Basically, the transcript of the section of the plenum on the national question represents a sequence of critiques of

¹⁴ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 140-156.

Shumsky's report including personal attacks against him. Of course, nobody really challenged Shumsky's critical assessment of the non-Communist Ukrainian intelligentsia; basically everyone shared his concern in that regard. To be sure, the opponents of Ukrainianization despised the Ukrainian intelligentsia just as and, probably, even more than Shumsky did. Yet, for at least some of them Shumsky was not that much different from the representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and 'change of signposts' movement. For the opponents of rapid and comprehensive Ukrainianization, both Shumsky with his associates and the Ukrainian intelligentsia represented the same Ukrainian nationalist tendencies, which were dangerous and harmful for Soviet power. To some extent Shumsky and his adherents in the party were even more dangerous, since they could influence the politics of the KP(b)U from within.

Almost all of Shumsky's critics were enraged by his dismissive assessment of Ukrainianization prior to the plenum. While Shumsky emphasized that basically little had occurred in this realm after the XII Party Plenum, for his opponents what was done already required significant effort on their part, and likely also in some cases was against their own understanding of nationality policies. Therefore, numerous speakers after Shumsky demanded that the achieved results also be recognized and appreciated.¹⁵ Thus, we can see that the two groups had very different understandings of what the Ukrainianization meant. While for Shumsky and his associates Ukrainianization basically had not yet begun, for their opponents Ukrainianization was well under way and probably had even gone too far.

The differences in the understandings of Ukrainianization and the national

¹⁵ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 162.

question in the Soviet Ukraine were reflected also in the other criticism targeted against Shumsky's speech – particularly his suggestions for further developments in this field. Thus, Shumsky was criticized for his call to increase the speed of Ukrainianization of the Party, which should have been finished by the beginning of 1926. While “agreeing in principle”, several speakers urged the party to keep in mind tempo and to match the plans with existing realities. Otherwise, there was a danger that the Party would “detach itself from the masses.”¹⁶ Here, one can detect an apparent difference in the analysis of the situation in Soviet Ukraine by the two conflicting groups, in addition to their overall disagreements. In many respects, this difference was shaped by their different focuses in the analysis, which, in turn, was largely determined by their professional preoccupations in the Soviet government. Shumsky by virtue of his position as the Commissar of Enlightenment dealt extensively with the Ukrainian intelligentsia, whom he considered a dangerous opponent that could take over Ukrainianization. For Shumsky's opponents, most of whom worked in various industry-related agencies in the East of Soviet Ukraine, the main concern was the proletariat. Therefore, they mentioned several times that the interests of the Russian and Russified working class should be taken into consideration, when decisions on Ukrainianization were made.¹⁷ According to some of them, the working class in the Ukrainian SSR had severed all ties with Ukrainian culture in the villages.¹⁸ Therefore, to come up with the plans for a quick and radical Ukrainianization was to endanger the connection of Soviet power with the Russian and Russified working class in Ukraine. For Shumsky, in turn, Ukrainianization was necessary in order, among

16 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 165.

17 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 167.

18 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 167.

others things, to salvage the remains of Ukrainian culture amongst the proletariat.

The most outspoken of Shumsky's critics, Gulyi, one of the leaders of the trade-union movement in Ukraine, did not mince words, unlike some of the other critical speakers. Himself a self-designated Ukrainian,¹⁹ Gulyi started off his remarks with a straightforward and blunt statement: "We should not allow nationalists to run our nationality policies."²⁰ It was not clear whether Gulyi in this case referred to the danger of the takeover in the cultural sphere by "all sorts of Tiutiunniks," about which Shumsky talked in his speech, or whether Gulyi here meant Shumsky and his like-minded colleagues, considering them as nationalists. It is likely that the ambiguity was deliberate. It hinted that for many opponents of rapid and full-scale Ukrainianization, the non-Communist nationally-oriented Ukrainian intelligentsia and the pro-Ukrainianization party members were in many respects cut from the same cloth. At the same time this was a rhetorical tool, which was used to breed suspicion towards radical Ukrainianizers in the minds of, first of all, Kaganovich and his inner circle of moderate Ukrainianizers. Later in the speech Gulyi likened Shumsky's proposal to switch the army to the Ukrainian language as an attempt not of the "Ukrainianization but of the Ukapization (*ukapizatsiia*) of the party."²¹ Gulyi apparently intended to draw similarities between Shumsky's position and the outlook of the Ukapist party, which I have discussed in more detail in previous chapters. He tried to play on the fears of excessive nationalist, secessionist, and anti-Moscovite attitudes in the Ukrainian communist movement, which the Ukapists often embodied for the members of the KP(b)U. A technique of making the views of one's

19 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 215.

20 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 182.

21 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 182.

opponent a part of a larger and dangerous phenomenon was widespread in party debates. Such transference made one's opponent responsible not only for his own views, but also for other positions, which could be more radical or not even shared at all by the criticized. As we will see later, Kaganovich and Shumsky himself employed similar approaches. In fact, the NKVD also used this technique regularly in its accusations. Gulyi even tried to put at this moment a more moderate supporter of Ukrainianization, like Skrypnyk, in the same basket with Shumsky accusing him of hiding behind and misinterpreting Lenin's citations.²² Yet, even more provocative was Gulyi's following statement: "After reading this theses, one can have no other conclusions. I give you my word, that in the village, in the labor unions and in the toiling masses, a whole revolt would occur."²³ As with other statements by Gulyi, this one was filled with ambiguity. It was not clear whether this was an informed opinion of a person, who knows well the situation in the masses, or the threat of someone who has significant influence over the Ukrainian workers. Shumsky considered it a threat and an unacceptable one, at that.²⁴

Overall, the atmosphere at the plenum was quite tense. Therefore, the chair of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, V. Chubar, and Kaganovich had to introduce some clarifications. Chubar emphasized that the suggestions expressed by Shumsky, were mistakenly attributed only to him personally, while, in fact, these were the result of the decision of the Ukrainian Politburo. He added that it was very dangerous, that Russian was becoming the official language of the party, which was demonstrated also by the Plenum itself, where the Russian language dominated.²⁵ Taking the floor next, Kaganovich backed

22 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 182.

23 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 184.

24 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 223.

25 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 207.

Chubar. He also to some extent reiterated some of Shumsky comments on the enlivening of cultural and social life, as the result of the nationality policies carried out. Yet, Kaganovich put a different stress in his assessment. While the harmful actions of the Ukrainian intelligentsia for him were of certain concern, still this group could be more easily dealt with. The situation was much more complicated in the case of villages and the cultural upheaval from below. For Kaganovich the mass mobilization in the villages necessitated from the party an active role and guidance, which could only be possible with the Ukrainianization of the party.²⁶ Otherwise, there existed the danger of a break between the party and Ukrainian society.

Thus, to a large extent the two Ukrainian leaders, Chubar and Kaganovich, backed Shumsky in the controversy, and assumed the responsibility for both Shumsky's speech and the proposed theses. The necessity to do so, in fact, demonstrated that the leadership of the KP(b)U sided with Shumsky on the national question, and surprised the opponents of rapid Ukrainianization. Apparently, there was also a statement from Kaganovich's side that with his arrival to Ukraine Ukrainianization would be treated seriously. Unlike the previous couple of years, when Ukrainianization remained mostly on the level of decrees and was hampered by fierce debates between different camps, Kaganovich intended to put Ukrainianization in practice. Very likely, this was also one of the tasks, which Stalin gave Kaganovich before his departure for Ukraine.²⁷ Shumsky, as the Commissar for Enlightenment devoted to the cause of Ukrainianization, was a natural and in many respects necessary ally for Kaganovich in this context. Discourses, like Gulyi's one at the

²⁶ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 213-215.

²⁷ E. A. Rees, *Iron Lazar: A Political Biography of Lazar Kaganovich* (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2013), 60.

Plenum, could only strengthen Kaganovich's willingness to pursue the energetic Ukrainianization of the KP(b)U.²⁸ At the same time the discussions on the Plenum allowed Kaganovich, who only recently arrived in the Ukrainian SSR, to find out more about existing positions, disagreements and groupings within TsK KP(b)U on the national question. Kaganovich learned, for example, that if any tensions arose between Shumsky and him or with somebody from Shumsky's inner circle, he had a quite numerous, influential, and mobilized group, which would gladly back him up in the struggle against the ambitious Commissar for Enlightenment and his associates. This would prove useful quite soon. Nevertheless, the same influential group could also play against Kaganovich. The idea of revolt, with which Gulyi threatened the TsK, was probably an exaggeration from his side. Yet, it was made clear to Kaganovich that certain breakdowns in the productive process may occur, if the interests of the Russian-speaking proletariat and their leaders were infringed. As the General secretary of the KP(b)U, Kaganovich had always to keep in mind and take into account this lobby in his decisions.

Kaganovich's support of Shumsky at the April Plenum demonstrates that Kaganovich was not opposed to Ukrainianization, even in quite radical form, and in many respects agreed with Shumsky. It looks like he was also initially on quite good terms with the Commissar for Enlightenment. With Kaganovich's arrival Shumsky saw an opening for his ambitious plans of cultural construction in the Ukrainian SSR. As straightforward Gulyi accentuated, just half a year before the April Plenum Shumsky was less sharp and

28 Gulyi deserved Kaganovich's special mention in the latter's intervention in the section of the Plenum devoted to the national question. Kaganovich urged Gulyi to stop thinking about the issue only from his local (Khrarkiv) perspective and start looking at it from the statewide (*obshchegosudastvennyi*) point of view, TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 182.

more moderate in his speeches and theses.²⁹ Thus, there was some mutual interest between Kaganovich and Shumsky in their collaboration in the sphere of nationality policies. Nevertheless, in approximately a year, Kaganovich and Shumsky and their respective supporters would be engaged in a conflict, at the heart of which would be disagreements on the national question and political discord. In order to understand, how this change of mutual relations came about, we should explore several other events, which happened during this year. First of all, we should start with a short overview of the Literary Discussion, which took place in the Soviet Ukraine in 1925-1926.

4. 2. Mykola Khvyli'ovyi and the Literary Discussion in Soviet Ukraine

To a significant extent, the “Literary Discussion” centered on some of the same issues, which had emerged at the April Plenum. Specifically, the present conditions and especially the future of Soviet Ukrainian culture and, more narrowly, literature became the subject of a detailed and multifarious discussion. The Literary Discussion has already attracted the close attention of scholars. In fact, it acquired an almost mythical image in the eyes of Ukrainian national historiography. The debate is often presented as an instance of the struggle of the Ukrainian national intelligentsia/culture/spirit against Russian/Soviet/Moscovite imperialism/nationalism.³⁰ The existence of well-written accounts of the Literary Discussion spares me the necessity to get into a detailed overview of the development and dimensions of the debate. Therefore, in this subchapter,

²⁹ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 158, l. 182.

³⁰ For the instances of such perspectives, see Myroslav Shkandrij, *Modernists, Marxists, and the Nation: the Ukrainian Literary Discussion of the 1920s* (Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), 53-108; George S.N. Luckyj, *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 59-111. Yet, it should be mentioned that both studies also contain a very careful description of the Literary Discussion and numerous interesting observations.

I will focus mainly on one key participant of the Literary Discussion, Mykola Khvylovyyi, and the impact of his pamphlets on the evolution of the relations in the leadership of the KP(b)U.

In the discussion, the talented Soviet Ukrainian writer and witty polemicist focused on the future and directions of Ukrainian Soviet literature. Within this discussion he advocated the necessity for the independent development of Soviet Ukrainian culture, a cultural orientation towards Europe at the expense of Moscow, and the crucial role of individuals and not masses for cultural development. Khvylovyyi's highly controversial ideas and slogans would eventually attract severe criticism by a number of party leaders, including Stalin, Kaganovich, Zatonsky, and Skrypnyk. It should be noted that Khvylovyyi's pamphlets are often confusing, incoherent, and filled with rather obscure references and complex metaphors. Therefore, they are at times difficult to decipher. In that respect, as the further discussion of his writings by some of the party leaders would demonstrate, they were also perfect targets for selective quoting and manipulation of meanings.

In order to understand the origins of Khvylovyyi's arguments one should look closer at the context of the literary discussion, which took place in Soviet Ukraine in 1925-26. Basically in the center of the attention was the question of the directions of the development of Soviet Ukrainian literature. *Pluh* (Union of Peasant Writers headed by Serhii Pylypenko) promoted “massism”, the belief that the art can and should be created by and for the masses – primarily peasants in the case of *Pluh* ---but also workers. *Hart* (Union of Ukrainian Proletarian Writers led by the Vasyl Ellan-Blakytnyi, 1894-1925) being somewhat close in its general ideological positions to *Pluh*, was more preoccupied

with the workers and their input in the cultural process. In fact, the two organizations were also in conflict with each other, since Hart leaders were displeased by the Pluh's attempts to carry out its activities also workers, Hart's proclaimed sphere. One of the key questions of the Literary Discussion that was posed by Vasyl Blakytnyi, the leader of Hart, was whether art in socialist society should be open to everyone or remain an elitist preoccupation as earlier. In many respects these groups followed the examples of similar literary movements in the RSFSR and on the union level. In fact, Halyna Hryn recently arguing against the tradition of analysing Khvyl'ovyi's writings only within the Ukrainian context, has placed them within the Union context. She argued that Khvyl'ovyi's pamphlets should be seen, first of all, as a reaction to the literary debates, which took place on the all-Union level, particularly to the danger of the militant, anti-pluralist and mass-oriented "Onguardist" and "Octobrists" movements.³¹ While Hryn's attempt is commendable and provides valuable insights into the debate, it should be noted that Khvyl'ovyi ideas can best be understood within the interplay of the Union and local Ukrainian contexts.

Gradually the proponents of "massism" were taking over. Reacting to the advent of "massism," a group led by Mykola Khvyl'ovyi (1893-1933), self-proclaimed *Olympians*, rebelled against that trend and created VAPLITE (Free Academy of Proletarian Literature). In fact, the group including Khvyl'ovyi himself, separated from *Hart*, of which they were previously members, after *Hart's* leader Blakytnyi insisted that art should be oriented towards and performed by the working masses. Mykola Khvyl'ovyi

31 Halyna Hryn, *Literaturnyi Iarmarok: Ukrainian Modernism's Defining Moment* (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2005), 77-79.

was the leading figure of the debate against Hart and Pluh. Tracing the intellectual trajectories it should be noted that in the early 1920s, like Futurists and revolutionary avant-garde, Khvylovyyi himself was negating the old literary forms, criticizing Modernists, Neoclassicists, and Symbolists. By the 1925-1926 his position changed. He resisted massism believing that it leads to the deterioration of art,³² and took up Lenin's slogan "Better Fewer, but Better."³³ He believed that the masses should develop and reach the level necessary to understand "real" highbrow art. This art was created by the individuals:

Lenin, Marx, Newton. Surely they are more than ordinary people? ... History, of course, is made not by them but by the masses, not by heroes but by the classes. But we would be timid materialists if we took fright at your illiterate accusations of idealism... There are no supermen, but there are brilliant individuals.³⁴

Yet, Khvylovyyi's arguments with *Pluh* and *Hart* on the role of individuals in history, and art in particular was only one of the starting points of the Literary Discussion. In fact, there were three series of Khvylovyyi's pamphlets. The first of them appeared just after the April Plenum in May 1926. One can, in fact, notice, how the Plenum theses or, alternatively, his personal discussions with some of the participants of the Plenum, influenced his own rhetoric. His overview of the effects of Ukrainianization on Ukrainian culture in terms of the mobilization of various dangerous social forces in the village was almost a verbatim report of Shumsky's, Chubar's and Kaganovich's speeches at the Plenum. This demonstrates how strongly embedded were Khvylovyyi's ideas in the Soviet Ukrainian context, especially in the rhetoric of Ukrainianization.

32 Mykola Khvylovyyi, *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine: Polemical Pamphlets, 1925-1926* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1986), 76.

33 Ibid, 71.

34 Ibid, 61.

In the first collection of essays, *Quo Vadis?*, Khvył'ovyi articulated almost all his major ideas in the debate on the present and future of Soviet Ukrainian literature. Several key concepts crystallized: Europe, *prosvita*, Asiatic Renaissance. The key question, which Khvył'ovyi would repeat in his pamphlets, was: “Europe or *prosvita*?”. The meaning of these two concepts is not entirely clear. Khvył'ovyi explained them numerous times in his writings, causing sometimes even more confusion than clarity. The word *prosvita* (enlightenment) had an important reference in Ukrainian context. It was the name of the cultural and educational society, which was established in Habsburg Galicia in 1868. The society had as its goal the spread of education among the masses, first of all, among the peasantry. It appears that in Khvył'ovyi's writings *prosvita* stood for a certain provincialism, a too strong attachment to the peasant masses, which according to him was widespread in Soviet Ukrainian literary organizations. The use of the word *prosvita* suggests the very limited, and possibly even non-Marxist, scope of the activity of these artistic organizations. For Khvył'ovyi this was not the way to go. His answer to the key question was: Europe. Yet, it was not contemporary and not really geographical Europe, which interested Khvył'ovyi. It was “European civilization” with its great works of art and socio-political thinking. This “psychological Europe,” as Khvył'ovyi called it, was to become the key reference for Soviet Ukrainian literature and culture in general. Ukrainian art should use these great examples in order to create an even greater Ukrainian proletarian art. In order to support the turn to European heritage, Khvył'ovyi mentioned that Marxism was also based on European heritage.³⁵

Ironically enough, for Khvył'ovyi, celebrating the past achievements of

35 Khvył'ovyi, *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine*, 64.

“psychological Europe,” the future was not associated with contemporary “Spenglerian-declining Europe.” On the contrary, the Ukrainian writer preferred to look East for the new center of a cultural Renaissance. This is where the idea of an Asiatic Renaissance comes into picture. Khvyl'ovyi particularly singled out China and India, as the main suspects for this phenomenon. He emphasized that the gradual liberation of these countries from foreign cultural and political domination would bring about an unprecedented cultural upsurge, eventually an Asiatic Renaissance, which would create new standards for culture. In order to reconcile the underdeveloped from the Marxist point of view of the character of the Asiatic countries with his claims that they would become the epicenter of new cultural production, Khvyl'ovyi had to refer to Marx's writings. Marx offered Khvyl'ovyi a way out mentioning in one of his writings that artistic development did not always correspond with the socio-economic one. Yet, how did Ukraine and Khvyl'ovyi's *Olympians* fit into this picture of a historically progressive but declining Europe and an emerging Asiatic Renaissance?

Apparently, Khvyl'ovyi found a historical precedent for his own group. He mentioned with much sympathy, how a small group of artists on the Southern periphery of Europe, in Italy, launched the key artistic moment in European cultural history of the Renaissance. Hence, the ambitious Ukrainian writer envisaged for himself and his colleagues a somewhat similar role. Ukrainian literature relying upon the experience of the European civilization and its most outstanding cultural products should have created new landmarks for cultural development, deemed worthy of the proletariat. Thus, Ukrainian artists should provide the spark, similarly to the Italian Renaissance figures, which would be a guiding light for the “liberating” Asian peoples. It is not clear what

Ukraine's position was in Khvyli'ovyi's symbolic geography. By analogy with Khvyli'ovyi's description of the peripheral position of the Italian Renaissance artists within Europe, one might suggest that he viewed Soviet Ukraine as being on the periphery of Asia, which would then be sparked by the artistic production in Ukraine. Yet, it looks like he also situated Ukraine on the periphery of Europe, serving as a sort of bridge between Europa and Asia. That put Ukrainian artists in an ideal position to learn from the European example, but also to guide the Asian peoples.

Khvyli'ovyi did not discuss in much detail the relations of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Ukrainian culture with Moscow in his first set of essays. Yet, in his discussion of the importance of the liberation of the Asiatic countries from foreign domination he, in fact, alluded to the necessity of Ukraine's emancipation from Moscow's cultural domination, if it were to become the source of an Asiatic Renaissance. Yet, in the course of the debate, in his latter series of pamphlets, which appeared at the end of 1925 and in March 1926, Khvyli'ovyi was indignant at his opponents and criticized them for blindly following the example and developments of Moscow. He reinforced his desire to orient Ukrainian culture towards “psychological Europe” with the call to struggle against Moscow cultural influence. Without cultural liberation from Moscow the cherished cultural upsurge in the Soviet Ukraine was unthinkable to Khvyli'ovyi. Therefore, he suggested that Soviet Ukraine should not be Moscow's *zadrypanky* and that the Soviet Ukrainian culture should get “away from Moscow” (*Get' vid Moskvu*). For Khvyli'ovyi Moscow was not only a source of foreign cultural domination but also of the inspiration for the harmful cultural and literary movements, such as massism, “Onguardism” and “Octobrists”, and *prosvita*-like attitudes, which the Ukrainian artists blindly mimicked.

Khvyl'ovyi's desire to get away from the Russian "imperial" influence was to some extent the product of the context of *korenizatsiia*, which often stimulated a creative and ambitious approach to local national cultures. In fact, as we have seen earlier, Khvyl'ovyi incorporated many of the *korenizatsiia* slogans and attitudes in his thinking and writing. Nevertheless, he often took them at face value or developed them to an extreme. Eventually, Khvyl'ovyi was accused of "bourgeois nationalism," but it would be incorrect to treat that accusation as the result of Moscow's oppression of the Ukrainian nationally-oriented artists.³⁶ Khvyl'ovyi was accused not because of his Ukrainianism and desire to promote Ukrainian culture independently from Russian influence. This was, in general, similar to the purposes of *korenizatsiia*, which presupposed also the struggle with the remnants of "Great-Russian chauvinism". Additional evidence for this argument was Stalin's directive shortly after the Debate to increase the speed of *korenizatsiia* and the development of the Ukrainian culture. Khvyl'ovyi was attacked by Moscow's party leadership for his desire to get away from Moscow and orient towards Europe. While for Khvyl'ovyi this was a question of cultural orientation and did not presuppose (at least explicitly) any political consequences, Moscow and Ukrainian party officials saw in his pronouncements claims to the political independence of Soviet Ukraine. Khvyl'ovyi's vague "psychological Europe" in the eyes of Soviet officials acquired quite concrete form of the counter-revolutionary, hostile and bourgeois Europe. Similarly, in the reading of the Soviet leaders the cultural component of his call for the liberation from Moscow faded and paved the way for the appeal for political independence. Within the context of *korenizatsiia* the non-Russian nationalities could claim almost total cultural independence

36 For example, Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*, 149-150.

(though, not so strongly and explicitly as Khvył'ovyi did), but in the political sphere *korenizatsiia* aimed to strengthen state cohesion and not to weaken it. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that, while Khvył'ovyi and his associates came under attack from the Ukrainian party leaders, they still had the possibility to publish their own journal *VAPLITE* up to 1928.

Thus, for the Soviet leaders Khvył'ovyi's ideas were dangerous, first of all, not as a manifestation of Ukrainian nationalism, but because of their hints of the possible secession of Ukraine and the disregard for the revolutionary character of Bolshevik Moscow. For them it was the Soviet Union, Moscow, Soviet Ukraine, which should have attracted the interest of the West and not vice-versa. In addition, the Soviet leaders saw alarming signals, when Khvył'ovyi's ideas were welcomed outside of the Soviet Union, in particular among the Ukrainian diaspora. On the June Plenum of the KP(b)U in 1926, Volodimir Zatonsky, the secretary of TsK KP(b)U, warned that such writers as Dmitro Dontsov (an anti-Soviet and anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalist writer and a strong advocate of Ukrainian independence) praised Khvył'ovyi's publications and used him in his anti-Soviet rhetoric.³⁷ For the Soviet leaders this was the best indicator that Khvył'ovyi's ideas were unacceptable. Yet, several important changes in the international situation were required for Khvył'ovyi's mistakes to become irredeemable in the eyes of Ukrainian party leaders.

Khvył'ovyi's writings played a significant role in the struggle between Shumsky and Kaganovich. After initial supporting Khvył'ovyi's writings, Kaganovich would see

37 Volodimir Zatonsk'ii, *Natsional'na Problema na Ukraini* (Kharkiv: Derjavne Vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1927), 91.

that Ukrainianization, as Shumsky saw it, might not correspond to his own understanding of the policy. Since, literary development was to a large extent within the jurisdiction of the Commissariat of Enlightenment, Shumsky was in many respects personally responsible for debates in the field. Since he did not come up with any rebuttal of Khvylovyyi's harmful ideas, it raised the question as to whether Shumsky himself in any respect shared or supported such pronouncements. One may also guess that the opponents of Ukrainianization did not miss any chance to attract Kaganovich's attention to Khvylovyyi's activities and Shumsky's relation to them in their personal discussions with the General secretary of the KP(b)U. Nevertheless, while Kaganovich's attitude towards Shumsky could have become more suspicious as a result of the Literary Discussion, it appears that it was the Commissar of Enlightenment who provoked the open conflict with the General Secretary of the KP(b)U.

4. 3. Shumsky's Visit to Stalin and Its Outcomes

The controversy started with Shumsky's visit to Stalin. Some reports indicate that there were not one, but at least two visits. According to these, the first visit took place in late 1925 after the KPZU conference, at which Shumsky participated.³⁸ In any case, this meeting, even if took place, did not have the same consequences as the second meeting. But, if it happened, it could have given Stalin more time to reflect on the existing discord in views on the national problems in Soviet Ukraine. Shumsky's second visit on April 20, 1926 and his insistence impelled Stalin to intervene more actively in the Ukrainian

³⁸ Previously this fact was based upon the interview with M. Tsesliuk, who claimed to be present at the meeting, Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1929*, 118, 126. The recently published sign-on books of Stalin's visitors seem to confirm Shumsky's visit on October 12, 1925, see A. A. Chernobaev, ed., *Na Priiome u Stalina: Tetradi (Jurnaly) Zapisei Lic, Priniatyh I. V. Stalinyim (1929-1953 gg.)* (Moscow: Novyi Hronograf, 2010), 750. Though, ironically, they do not confirm Tsesliuk's participation in the meeting.

disagreements. As a reaction, he wrote the famous letter to Kaganovich and the members of TsK KP(b)U, in which he summarized his understanding of Shumsky's views and provided his analysis and conclusions on the matter.

Yet, why did Shumsky go against Kaganovich, who supported the Commissar of Enlightenment in the Ukrainianization drive and defended him against the opponents of Ukrainianization at the April Plenum? It is hard, if not impossible, to reconstruct all the facets and evolution of the relations between the two. Nevertheless, based upon some of the attitudes expressed at the Plenum and later in the developments of the conflict it is possible to suggest some of the reasons behind Shumsky's decision to engage in a conflict with Kaganovich, demanding the latter's removal from the position of General secretary. To begin with it looks like success went to Shumsky's head. Not by chance Gulyi mentioned at the April Plenum that Shumsky was making much stronger statements, than he did half a year ago. Apparently, with the arrival of Kaganovich, Shumsky saw an opening and a possibility to realize some of his ambitions and to engage in a much more radical Ukrainianization campaign. Yet, somewhat similar, though in a less radical manner to Khvyli'ovyi, the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment took some of his expectations to the extreme. Eventually, Shumsky envisaged a radical Ukrainianization drive, which Kaganovich was neither ready, nor willing to endorse.

One of the first steps in Ukrainianization, as Shumsky likely saw it, should have been the marginalization or eradication of the opposition to Ukrainianization in the party and especially in the KP(b)U leadership. Shumsky could see the opposition expressed at the April Plenum as alien to his goals from several points of view. The opposing members of TsK KP(b)U precluded and sometimes sabotaged the Ukrainianization of the KP(b)U,

which was the first priority. In addition, the majority of them were from various industrial agencies and regions and their influence on the proletariat was very strong. As the result, they were a major obstacle in Shumsky's quest to "Re-Ukrainianize" the proletariat of the Ukrainian SSR. Finally, the personal animosities between Shumsky's group and their opponents were more than evident in the transcripts of the TsK meetings from 1925-1926. These were based both on ideological differences and political struggles for leading positions within the KP(b)U.

After the April Plenum Shumsky could feel himself a victor. He arrived at an agreement with the new General Secretary and announced the turn to a much more active Ukrainianization campaign, than in the previous years, something which he was longing for. Moreover, with his strong rhetoric and some witty provocations, Shumsky managed to wring from his opponents some straightforward answers and could expect that he managed to demonstrate to the newly-arrived Kaganovich the true face of "Great-Russian Chauvinism" in Soviet Ukraine and in TsK KP(b)U in particular. With Kaganovich's strong support for Ukrainianization at the April Plenum and Shumsky's own overrated expectations, the latter expected that the new leader of the KP(b)U would start to deal with the opponents of the announced Ukrainianization course immediately. Yet, Kaganovich did not proceed with an open attack against them. This is not surprising. Kaganovich noticed very well the opposition to Ukrainianization which existed in TsK KP(b)U, and, in fact, made a diagnosis, not that much different from Shumsky's. Kaganovich's main task in the Ukrainian SSR was not to choose one existing camp in the KP(b)U and destroy the others. His goal was to consolidate, as much as possible, the whole Ukrainian organization and, especially, its leadership, behind himself, and by

extension, behind Stalin. To be sure, Kaganovich was quite skillful in sidelining, marginalizing, or getting rid of his personal adversaries or the opponents of the party line, and, Shumsky would experience Kaganovich's "skills" to the full. Nevertheless, Kaganovich preferred to carefully play out his opponents after deliberate considerations and not to strike blows in the heat of the moment, as Shumsky expected. In the case of the opposition to Ukrainianization in TsK KP(b)U, despite certain disagreements on the national question, Kaganovich had no intent to antagonize them, especially taking into consideration their influential positions in Ukrainian industry. Moscow and Stalin personally would forgive Kaganovich certain setbacks in nationality policies but would be much less tolerant towards breakdowns in the industrial output of the Ukrainian SSR. Ukrainian industry was too crucial for the still weak Soviet economy.

Inspired by his own ambitions, armed with elevated expectations and going against Kaganovich, Shumsky made a costly political mistake. First of all, he apparently overestimated his own political weight and importance. This was not a rarity among the Bolshevik leadership in mid-1920s. Yet, in this case it had significant consequences for Shumsky. At the same time more importantly it looks like Shumsky misinterpreted Kaganovich's position, particularly in relation to the opponents of Ukrainianization. The Narkompros had mistaken the unwillingness of the General secretary to deal with the opposition radically and quickly for Kaganovich's reluctance to stick to the announced Ukrainianization campaign and to follow through with the implementation of the April Plenum's thesis.³⁹ Possibly, the best solution for Shumsky would have been to continue

39 Of course, the emerging conflict was not only about different interpretations of Ukrainianization, but also in many respects a struggle for the political influence and domination in the KP(b)U.

his cooperation with Kaganovich in the Ukrainianization campaign, which emerged at the April Plenum. Even if it presupposed slower tempos and less radical policies than Shumsky expected, with the support of the General secretary in this endeavor Shumsky's Commissariat of Enlightenment could achieve significant results and gradually even sideline the opponents of the Ukrainianization campaign. Yet, by turning him into his opponent Shumsky pushed Kaganovich to listen to his opponents much more closely and, in the end, partially compromised the Ukrainianization campaign.

Shumsky, of course, did himself no good by bringing the matter to Stalin. The General Secretary of the VKP(b) was, most likely, not happy to read the harsh criticism of his protege in Ukraine. Yet, Stalin usually preferred to look into the matter, when such conflicting situations emerged.⁴⁰ But before intervening he wanted also to hear the opinion of Kaganovich on the matter. Therefore, probably on Stalin's request Kaganovich wrote a letter, in which he described his disagreements with Shumsky. In fact, as Terry Martin emphasized, Kaganovich downplayed the differences in opinions on the national question, turning the issue rather into a political conflict, provoked by Shumsky.⁴¹ In Kaganovich's opinion, the conflict had the roots in Shumsky's non-election to the Ukrainian Politburo. He also added that Shumsky had a meeting with other former Borotbists, discussing the possibility of the opposition to Kaganovich. More importantly, Kaganovich annexed 5 pages of excerpts of Khvyli'ovyi's writings to his short letter. Khvyli'ovyi's writings infuriated Stalin.⁴² To some extent, Kaganovich manipulated Stalin by the selective choice of excerpts and by making Shumsky responsible for the

40 Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 168-169.

41 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 214-215.

42 RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 738, ll. 18-22.

publications of the talented Ukrainian writer.

Based on his discussions with Shumsky and Kaganovich's letter, Stalin wrote a letter to TsK KP(b)U. In the letter, Stalin summarized Shumsky's criticism. First, according to Stalin, Shumsky believed that Ukrainianization was moving very slow, partly due to the reluctance or even open opposition of many party and labor union leaders. If Ukrainian culture and the intelligentsia were developing quickly and without proper management and devotion to the cause of Ukrainianization, the party risked losing control over the process. One may notice that this argument comes very close to Shumsky's pronouncements at the April Plenum. Secondly, according to Stalin, Shumsky requested changes in the Ukrainian party leadership. Within the context of Ukrainianization, Shumsky believed, it was imperative to put in the leading positions of the KP(b)U ethnic Ukrainians, who understood and believed in Ukrainian culture. He specifically criticized the newly appointed Kaganovich, who "exercized too much organizational pressure" in his administration of the KP(b)U. Instead, Shumsky proposed to appoint Ukrainians to the two leading positions in the Ukrainian SSR: Hrynko as the Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom and Chubar as the secretary of the party. Later Shumsky would point out that Stalin not by chance mentioned only Hrynko as Shumsky's candidate for the Sovnarkom position, while he himself had proposed, in fact three different people for this position.⁴³ Hrynko, a former Borotbist, like Shumsky was in many of his pronouncements as radical as the Commissar of Enlightenment and had a quite short record of Party service. Therefore, he could hardly attract much sympathy within TsK KP(b)U. In any case if personnel changes were not introduced, Shumsky had

⁴³ TsDAGO f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 129-130.

threatened to request a transfer to another position outside of Ukraine. As Robert Service pointed out, Stalin frequently used the threat of resignation in order to push through some of his policies.⁴⁴ Yet, Shumsky did not have the same political weight and importance to the Party, even though he may have thought otherwise. At the same time Shumsky's insistence on the changes in the leadership underscores that besides the real or perceived differences in views on Ukrainianization, the conflict was also about the political leadership and spheres of influence.

In his comments Stalin both criticized and agreed with some of Shumsky's views. He agreed with Shumsky that many party activists did not take the Ukrainianization campaign seriously and had a derisive and arrogant view of Ukrainian culture. Stalin emphasized that Ukrainianization was crucial, and it required both changes in attitude towards it and sometimes also of the cadres involved. At the same time Stalin attacked Shumsky's desire to quickly and forcefully (*nasil'no*) Ukrainianize the mostly Russian-speaking proletariat of Soviet Ukraine. According to Stalin, the Ukrainianization of the proletariat should not have been imposed from above. It should have been a gradual, lasting and more natural process. Otherwise, it would become an exercise in national oppression rather than national freedom. The question of force in the Ukrainianization of the proletariat would become a key element in the critical discussions on Shumsky's views in Kharkiv. On the second point, related to the personnel changes, Stalin mentioned Shumsky had a correct perspective, but was wrong about the tempo.⁴⁵

Stalin also sharply reacted to Khvyli'iovyi's excerpts, cunningly introduced by

44 Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 174.

45 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 4.

Kaganovich:

Shumsky does not see that given the weakness of native Communist cadres in Ukraine, the movement, led entirely by non-Communist intelligentsia, may in places take on the character of a battle for the alienation of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian society from all-Union culture and society, the character of the battle against Moscow in general, against Russians in general, against Russian culture and its highest achievement – against Leninism... At the moment when the West European proletariat is filled with sympathy towards Moscow as a citadel of the international proletarian movement and Leninism... The Ukrainian Communist Khvyli'iovyi has nothing to say in favor of Moscow, except urging Ukrainian figures to get away from Moscow, “as quickly as possible.” Comrade Shumsky does not understand that one can master the new movement in Ukraine for Ukrainian culture only by fighting extremes, such as Khvyli'iovyi, within the Communist ranks. Comrade Shumsky does not understand that only in the struggle with such extremes one can turn rising Ukrainian culture and public (*obshchestvennost'*) into Soviet culture and public.⁴⁶

This is a crucial statement. Stalin distinguished between two types of Russians and Russian culture, embodied in the excerpt in “Moscow.” This was apparently a reaction to Khvyli'iovyi's claim that the “today the center of all-Union *meshchianstvo* is Moscow, in which the proletarian factories, the Comintern and the all-Union Communist Party figure as an oasis on the world scale.”⁴⁷ In the response Stalin was emphasizing that the Moscow and Russian culture was not only about *meshchianstvo* or other remnants of traditional Russia. These were the phenomena, which Moscow Bolsheviks themselves were struggling against. Moscow, in Stalin's understanding, was the center of the international proletariat and Leninism, which was also the product of Russian culture. Therefore, Soviet Ukrainian culture could not oppose this new Bolshevik Moscow and the proletarian Russian culture. Basically, Stalin also distinguished two types of Ukrainian culture and identity. He stressed that the emerging Soviet Ukrainian culture, in contrast to

⁴⁶ RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 3.

⁴⁷ Khvyli'iovyi, *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine*, 228-229.

the Ukrainian culture favored by non-Communists, should not be built on the alienation from all-Union Soviet proletarian culture and proletarian Moscow.

The historiography on Soviet nationality policies in Ukraine tends to view Stalin's letter on Shumsky's mistakes as a final sentence, which eventually determined Shumsky's later demise and removal from all of his key positions in Soviet Ukraine.⁴⁸ This view to a significant extent is retrospective, in that it explains and analyzes some of the earlier history of the affair by its final outcome. I believe that Shumsky's fate was not sealed by the letter. It was the reaction and developments within the KP(b)U and Kaganovich's skillful political play-making, which gradually led to the marginalization of Shumsky and, by extension, of his inner circle. As we will see in the next chapter Shumsky's final downfall, which resulted in his departure from Ukraine, happened under the strong influence of changes in the international context.

Returning to Stalin's letter it should be emphasized that its message was not clearly one-sided. While undoubtedly criticizing Shumsky, Stalin embraced some of the latter's important positions. Moreover, the original of the letter contains several passages, which were not published in the collection of Stalin's work in Soviet times.⁴⁹ Some historians did not have access to these passages; others did not take them into account. Yet, in my opinion, they demonstrate that Shumsky's fate was not decided from the very beginning by Stalin's letter. Thus, Stalin, while defending nationality policies in Soviet Ukraine against Shumsky's challenge, criticized mildly Kaganovich:⁵⁰

It is possible that Kaganovich has some flaws in the sense of over-administration. It

48 For instance, Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*, 100; Borisionok, *Fenomen Sovetskoï Ukrainizatsii*, 172.

49 Iosif Stalin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: 1948), 14.

50 Martin also highlights this point, Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 216-217.

is possible that one can observe organizational pressure (*nazhim*) in Comrade Kaganovich's administration. But who proved, or can prove, besides Kaganovich's own work further, that Kaganovich is not capable of mastering a more flexible policy?⁵¹

This remark was crucial, since it led the Ukrainian party to understand that Stalin himself did not support exclusively one side – that is, Kaganovich's side.⁵² Rather, he suggested that some compromise should be reached. The mentioning of “a more flexible policy” was likely a suggestion to Kaganovich to adjust his administrative style. Even more importantly, on Shumsky's future he added:

We should not persecute former Borotbists due to their past. We should forget that they had committed certain sins in the past – we do not have innocent people. We should attract them to party work... We should attract Shumsky to leading (high-level) party work. We should forge new cadres out of Ukrainians.... We should seriously get down to the business of capturing the new movement in Ukraine, fighting the extremes of such comrades, as comrade Khvyl'ovyi. Without these and similar measures our work will suffer.⁵³

Stalin's reference to the Borotbist past of Shumsky and some of his associates had a double goal. The evident aim was to request the cessation of the factional struggles and persecussions based on one's political past, which undermined the efficiency of the KP(b)U. He recommended engagement as much as possible with those people, who were initially against the Bolsheviks (including Shumsky's Borotbists), but due to various reasons were attracted to the Soviet project and were willing to participate in it. In the light of the Ukrainianization drive, Stalin understood that the competence of former Borotbists would be of use. He did not want to lose that resource. Nevertheless, mentioning the “sins in the past” had also another important goal. Stalin reminded Shumsky about his “sins” and suggested that the latter should not get too ambitious and

51 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 4-5.

52 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 4.

53 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, 4-5.

should not about his mistakes in the past. Thus, Stalin suggested that Shumsky's active involvement in Ukrainianization would be appreciated but the latter should not attempt to assert his own agenda in the KP(b)U or to instigate the changes in the party leadership. In this case Stalin proposed an even more active involvement of Shumsky in the administrative work and decision-making process in Soviet Ukraine. Therefore, one can hardly consider Stalin's letter some kind of final sentence upon Shumsky. Stalin made it clear, that the transfer of Shumsky from Ukraine was highly unwelcome. Stalin's letter, taken as a whole, suggests that in April 1926 despite certain disagreements, the General secretary expected some sort of compromise between Kaganovich and Shumsky, more in favor of the former, of course. While overall Stalin's sympathies were undoubtedly on Kaganovich's side and played into the latter's hands, still the General secretary left the door open (particularly, with the critical remarks towards Kaganovich and the mentioning of a more flexible approach) for the KP(b)U to settle the matter.

In May 1926 in reaction to Stalin's letter, TsK KP(b)U drafted a response, in which they claimed that there were many problems in Ukraine, with which it was hard to deal without the unity of the party. By his actions and speeches, Shumsky had purportedly undermined such unity. In the letter the members of TsK reinforced some of Stalin's criticism of Shumsky's positions on the nationality question.⁵⁴ At the same time they expressed astonishment at Stalin's agreement with Shumsky on some of his assessments of Kaganovich and his leadership style. "Such a friendly and comradely atmosphere, as under Kaganovich, never existed."⁵⁵ Shumsky's opponents used every opportunity

54 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 9.

55 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 11.

provided by the situation. They used Stalin's critical remarks to come up with even harsher criticism towards Shumsky. In addition, they demonstrated loyalty to Kaganovich, trying to get him closer to their side in the debate on the national question. Kaganovich had the chance to familiarize himself with the contents of the letter before it was sent to Stalin. He tactfully refused to sign it, since it contained remarks on himself and his administrative skills. The existing documents do not make it clear, whether the letter of TsK KP(b)U was written under Kaganovich's insistence or whether it was a genuine personal initiative of the members of TsK.⁵⁶ If it was Kaganovich's attempt to demonstrate the support of TsK, he would likely abstain from remarks on the letter and pretend that he has not seen it. Yet, it is hard to claim this conclusively. Shumsky had many opponents in TsK and his rumored plans to overhaul the composition of Soviet Ukrainian leadership attracted little sympathies among those, who were already occupied key positions. Even if Kaganovich oversaw the elaboration of the letter, at least in some cases he had no need to persuade the members of TsK KP(b)U to sign a document, critical on Shumsky.

In any case, with the appearance of this letter Kaganovich already knew that he would be backed by TsK, in case he chose to persecute Shumsky. Kaganovich, though, chose a more subtle way to deal with Shumsky. In a way, Kaganovich was inclined to follow Stalin's suggestion for reconciliation and some sort of compromise, even if uneven, with Shumsky. Yet, for Kaganovich this reconciliation would not come at all costs, but rather only on his own terms.

4. 4. Kaganovich's "Compromise"

In May 1926 a series of meetings of the Ukrainian Politburo on the problems of

⁵⁶ RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 14.

Ukrainianization took place. During one of them Shumsky listed numerous examples of infringements of the Ukrainian language and culture, as well as the persecution of former members of the Ukrainian nationally-oriented leftist parties, in various parts of the Ukrainian SSR. He also added that Khvyl'ovyi's publications should not be presented and viewed as some kind of an “Austrian intrigue.” For Shumsky, the talented writer was rather an impulsive personality, who lacked proper and clear party guidance in his artistic development.⁵⁷

One of the key meetings, though, took place on May 12, and was officially devoted to the “preliminary results of Ukrainianization”; in reality, it focused on Shumsky's and Khvyl'ovyi's cases. The transcript of the meeting allows us to reconstruct the balance of power in the Politburo, and especially, Kaganovich's approach in dealing with Shumsky's challenge. From the beginning of the meeting, Kaganovich chose himself a comfortable, and, as it became clear later, winning role. He mentioned that Shumsky was not just an outsider or ordinary member of the party, but a “member of the board (*kollegiia*), of our collective” and, as a “collective” the Politburo should discuss attentively any considerations or disagreements, which a member (in this case – Shumsky) may have.⁵⁸ This was a subtle move by Kaganovich. By not attacking Shumsky directly from the beginning and downplaying their personal disagreements, the General secretary of the KP(b)U did everything to avoid creating the impression that this was in any sense a personal matter or revenge against the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment. Moreover, by pointing out that Shumsky was a member of the collective,

57 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 32.

58 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 5.

he sent a message to the latter that the doors for reconciliation were open. Nevertheless, at the same time Kaganovich opened the floor for the discussion of Shumsky's actions and let other members of the Politburo do the damage. Thus, Kaganovich carved out himself an almost perfect position. Shumsky would receive his portion of criticism, not from Kaganovich, but from other members of the Politburo. At the same time Kaganovich himself would emerge in the eyes of his Politburo colleagues as a flexible, open to discussion, even forgiving administrator, who was guided not by personal grudges, but by the interests of the party collective and by concerns over the unity and good atmosphere in its leadership. That would put him in stark contrast to Shumsky, who, with his visits to Stalin, demonstrated a preoccupation with his personal ambitions and an unwillingness to have an honest, open discussion within the KP(b)U.

Kaganovich's introductory remarks were followed by a keynote speech by Zatonsky, who at this moment emerged as the spokesman on the national question for the moderate Ukrainizers, led by Kaganovich. In his speech Zatonsky focused mostly on the successes of the Ukrainianization campaign, mentioning also its limitations, and urging for further intensification of the campaign. He emphasized the rise of Ukrainian “bourgeois” and chauvinist moods, which were threatening socialist construction in the Ukrainian SSR. Specifically referring to Hrushevskiy, he spoke about “all this public around the Academy of Science in Kyiv,” and “slightly cracked Khvyl'ovyi.”⁵⁹ Overall, this was a careful speech, similar to the pronouncements of the moderate Ukrainianizers at the April Plenum, though spiced up with concerns over “Ukrainian chauvinism.” Zatonsky did not criticize Shumsky directly. Nevertheless, criticism of Khvyl'ovyi was

59 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 31-33.

gradually becoming a shortcut for attacks on Shumsky.

The critical comments of the other Politburo members after the keynote speech were much more direct and unforgiving towards Shumsky. The Commissar of Enlightenment was criticized for his passivity in the case with Khvyl'ovyi,⁶⁰ even for solidarity with the latter,⁶¹ and for disregard of the interests on national minorities, especially Russian-speaking proletariat.⁶² The Chairman of VUTsVK Petrovsky accused Shumsky of manipulating discussions on the national question, while in reality he was talking about political power.⁶³ The head of the Ukrainian Military Region, Iona Iakir assumed the role of Gulyi with the straightforward and uncompromising pronouncement:

We should make it hot for Comrade Shumsky (*zadat' po pervoe chislo*), even though he is a Ukrainian. We should strike his seat of honor (*miagkoe mesto*), so that he understands, that one should not pull about (*trepat'*) the Ukrainian organization, when it is starting to recover, this is harmful. For this we should hit, and do so seriously. I would have said even more, if we were talking not about Shumsky and not about a Ukrainian.⁶⁴

Overall, the criticism of Shumsky at the meeting could have been much harsher and the atmosphere even more emotional. Yet, many of Shumsky traditional opponents were not part of the Politburo, but only of the larger TsK body.

In any case, Kaganovich was satisfied. Shumsky received all the necessary criticism and Kaganovich himself did not have to soil his hands. More importantly, Shumsky could see with his own eyes that his attack on Kaganovich did not win him any new friends or additional support. Even his close associate, Hrynko, preferred not to

60 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 63, 66.

61 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 135.

62 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 157.

63 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 144. Kaganovich avoided such claims in his own interventions, but should have been satisfied that the point was voiced at the meeting.

64 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 169.

intervene actively in Shumsky's defense, limiting himself mostly to a general discourse about the tasks of Ukrainianization.⁶⁵ On the contrary, Shumsky could not help but notice that even in the more moderate (in comparison with the TsK) Politburo his position was very shaky and, in fact, left to the discretion of Kaganovich. Kaganovich also understood the situation very well. In fact, this was the balance of power he was most likely hoping to achieve – assuming the position of a detached and non-imposing role at the beginning of the Politburo meeting. Now he could show mercy, but from a position of strength, knowing that his opponent was also aware of his weak stance in the Politburo. Kaganovich showed mercy at the end of the Politburo meeting, continuing to play the role of the leader, who was guided by the interests of the organization and not personal motives:

One should be able to feel (*nashchupat'*) different issues, and Shumsky is absolutely right, demanding this skill from the First secretary. In Shumsky's opinion I do not possess this ability. He may stick to his opinion, but does this mean that Shumsky needs to leave for China?... But I can work with Shumsky in the same TsK, even if he repeats every day that Kaganovich is not suited for the position of the First Secretary.⁶⁶

This was an invitation for a dialogue, but one, which Shumsky had no choice but to accept if he wanted to retain the possibility to influence nationality policies in Soviet Ukraine.

There would be several more Politburo meetings devoted to Ukrainianization; unfortunately, we still do not have access to the transcripts of these meetings. Yet, from some of the available excerpts, it looks like the scenario was quite similar to the one on May 12. Shumsky would frequently encounter critical remarks from other members of the

⁶⁵ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 79-84.

⁶⁶ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 102, l. 200-201.

Politburo. He would respond to them by trying to stick to his previously expressed positions, but attempting also, if possible, to evade some of the particularly hot topics.⁶⁷ From time to time, though, he would get emotional and allow himself to be strong and provocative. As I will show further, some of these outbursts would cost him dearly later. Kaganovich, in turn, continued masterfully to guide these sessions, reinforcing the balance of power to his favor. Eventually, Shumsky had to give in and agree to Kaganovich's invitation for reconciliation. After one such session, Kaganovich and Shumsky had a late-night talk, during which they sought to overcome their disagreements.

After the talk Kaganovich sent out a letter, in which he summarized the content and results of the meeting. During the meeting, according to Kaganovich, Shumsky apologized for personal attacks against him. He thought that Kaganovich was under the strong influence of those “Russian comrades,” who opposed Ukrainianization. Yet, after the sessions on Ukrainianization and Kaganovich speeches there, Shumsky realized that he was wrong.⁶⁸ Indeed, Kaganovich was quite committed to the Ukrainianization cause. Now Shumsky believed that he and Kaganovich could get along together well and was willing to continue his party work in Ukraine. Kaganovich welcomed Shumsky's attitude. Yet, in order to “temper the consequences of the incident,” Kaganovich asked Shumsky to make statements on several key issues. First of all, Kaganovich asked Shumsky to point out that the party policy of Ukrainianization was correct, even though not without its flaws. For Kaganovich it was crucial that the party line remain unchallenged. Even if

⁶⁷ RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 25-32.

⁶⁸ RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 43.

discussions and debates were tolerated, the authority of party decisions were unquestionable, as was discipline in the realization of party decisions. Since Shumsky was one of the leading figures of the Ukrainization, there was a danger that the Commissar of Enlightenment would attempt to push through his own understanding of the nationality policies within the KP(b)U as recent events in Moscow may have suggested. Kaganovich had no intention to tolerate Shumsky's attempts to build separate policies without his own blessing, and even more so, going over his head to Moscow. Kaganovich's second demand was that Shumsky denounce (*osudit'*) Khvyl'ovyi. By this time in TsK KP(b)U, Khvyl'ovyi had become the embodiment of everything that was wrong with Shumsky's Ukrainianization. And Shumsky himself poured oil on the flames, when, while recognizing some of Khvyl'ovyi's mistakes, still exercised some patronage over the talented Ukrainian writer and was protective of him at party discussions. Shumsky's denunciation of Khvyl'ovyi would have been a clear signal that he was willing to give up his excessive ambitions in the sphere of nationality policies and endorse the party line, that is Ukrainianization as it was seen by Kaganovich and his close associates. But there may be even more to that. Forcing Shumsky to denounce Khvyl'ovyi Kaganovich could have also been trying to send a message to Shumsky's other associates and protégés, that even such an influential party leader as the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment, would be in no position to protect them if they decided to go against the party line. Kaganovich's next request to Shumsky was to pronounce against (*vyskazat'sa protiv*) the forceful Ukrainianization of the proletariat. This was one of the attitudes, which went beyond the limits of Ukrainianization, as Kaganovich and Stalin understood it. In addition, Shumsky's ambitions in relation to the proletariat in Soviet Ukraine

provoked strong grievances on the side of the opponents of the radical Ukrainianization in Soviet Ukrainian industry. If Shumsky were to retain his position as one of the leaders of Ukrainianization with Kaganovich's consent, the latter, while sustaining his support for Ukrainianization, had no intent to overly antagonize already dissatisfied administrators of Soviet Ukrainian industry. Finally, Kaganovich asked for the exclusion (*nedopuscenie*) of any factionalism and persecution (*travl'a*) of any members of TsK. Kaganovich's goal was to consolidate the TsK under his own leadership. Therefore, any attempts to create uncontrollable groupings, which would divide and undermine unity and by extension, question Kaganovich's leadership, were highly unwelcome.

According to Kaganovich, Shumsky accepted these conditions with some reservations. Kaganovich, in turn, told the members of TsK KP(b)U: “we on our side should do everything for the smooth liquidation of the whole story and under the condition of the fulfillment by Shumsky of the four conditions, on which Shumsky basically agreed with me, - to create for him a proper environment for successful work in Ukraine in the future.”⁶⁹ In effect, if we sum up all of Kaganovich's conditions to Shumsky, then we may conclude that Kaganovich required almost total capitulation from Shumsky on almost all the points of tension.

Yet, what was even more important was Kaganovich's decision to make all his agreements with Shumsky public, sending out a letter to all members of TsK KP(b)U. By this Kaganovich managed to achieve a number of important political goals. To begin with, Kaganovich made sure that it would be quite difficult for Shumsky to back down from the agreements with Kaganovich. Moreover, Kaganovich made sure that it was his

69 RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 47.

understanding of the agreements with Shumsky that became accepted knowledge in the TsK. Even if Shumsky understood any of the conditions differently, he could not openly question them, unless he was ready to challenge Kaganovich, something at which he already once failed. In addition, making condition public, Kaganovich introduced the basic criteria, benchmarks, according to which Shumsky's sincerity and readiness to stick to the party discipline would be measured. In fact, since these criteria were made public, there was no need for Kaganovich to himself keep Shumsky in check. There were enough members within TsK, who would gladly observe and verify Shumsky's progress along Kaganovich's four conditions.

The publicizing of Shumsky's capitulation also send different messages to the conflicting groups within TsK KP(b)U. To the opponents of Shumsky, this letter suggested that if in the near future Shumsky and Kaganovich had a common front on the national question, this would happen not because Kaganovich moved closer to Shumsky or because of the Shumsky's increasing influence, but because Kaganovich forced or convinced the Commissar of Enlightenment to give up his overly ambitious plans and settle for the more moderate Ukrainianization. Thus, any convergence between the two would not cause the same dissatisfaction among the opponents of Shumsky within TsK. This was important for Kaganovich, since at the upcoming Plenum of TsK KP(b)U he was planning to reiterate the importance of the Ukrainianization, and the Commissar of Enlightenment was instrumental to this end. Yet, more importantly Kaganovich's letter had a crucial message for Shumsky's supporters within TsK. The letter made clear that their leader agreed to renounce his plans both in terms of nationality policies as well as his political struggle with Kaganovich. The underlying message was that Shumsky's

supporters should follow the example of their leader.

Why, though, did Kaganovich go to such lengths in order to keep Shumsky in the mix, to retain him actively in party life and the governing of the Ukrainian SSR? After all, Kaganovich had Stalin's support and the majority of TsK in the struggle with Shumsky. He could have easily marginalized the Commissar of Enlightenment or simply let him go to China, as the latter requested. There were several reasons for Kaganovich's stubbornness, which Stalin shared in his letter to TsK KP(b)U. To begin with, both Stalin and Kaganovich did not consider their disagreements with Shumsky insurmountable. Moreover, as we have seen, Stalin found some of Shumsky's critique quite justified. For Kaganovich the conflict was less about different understandings of the national question in Ukraine, than about political power. If Shumsky agreed at least partly to suppress his political ambitions, Kaganovich believed they could work through their disagreements on Ukrainianization. After all, for the Soviet authorities, Shumsky was a valuable administrative resource. He was one of the best specialists in local specificities and in the Ukrainian culture and language. His skills and knowledge were crucial for the efficient performance of the Soviet power in Ukraine. For the purposes of Ukrainianization, he was key. Finally, he was one of the most visible and influential Ukrainians and one of the most active supporters of Ukrainianization in the KP(b)U. To remove him from his position and to approve his request for transfer would have sent out the message that the party did not take the Ukrainianization process seriously and even imperialistically suppressed any instances of local autonomy. In the circumstances, when Soviet Ukraine – first of all, thanks to the policy of Ukrainianization – was becoming increasingly attractive for the left-leaning part of the Ukrainian political immigration and more

importantly for the Ukrainian-speaking masses in Soviet Ukraine and abroad, the transfer of Shumsky would have considerably undermined that process.⁷⁰ Moreover, Shumsky's removal, could have turned him into a martyr for his ideas, which most likely would only have strengthened his following and the popularity of his ideas in the party. In turn, Kaganovich managed to undermine Shumsky's reputation and authority, also keeping him within the governing leadership. When Stalin suggested in the letter that Shumsky should be kept and even promoted within the Ukrainian party and government and some sort of compromise should be reached, he likely did not expect that Kaganovich would succeed without giving up to Shumsky almost anything in return. By June 1926 Kaganovich exceeded the expectation of his boss in Moscow.

2. 5. The June Plenum of TsK KP(b)U: “Malorossy” against Shumsky

One of the key tasks of the June 1926 Plenum of TsK KP(b)U was to discuss the developments of the national question in the Ukrainian SSR and to pass new theses, which would reinstate the importance of the continuing Ukrainianization. To a significant extent it was also a reaction to the Khvyli'ovyi affair and the Literary Debate. The Plenum's session on the national question was first of all a test for the newly enforced “alliance” between Kaganovich's group and Shumsky. The Commissar of Enlightenment was included in the Politburo commission, which drafted the theses for the Plenum. In the resolution, which was presented as the result of a compromise, Shumsky had to subscribe to most of the suggestions of Kaganovich and his close associates. Of course, they did not

70 Indeed, as the GPU reports suggested, Shumsky's eventual departure from Ukraine in 1927 provoked many talks, that the Soviet power did not take Ukrainianization seriously and sincerely, see Vasyl' Danilenko, ed., *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada: Zvedennia Sekretnogo Viddilu DPU USSR 1927-1929 rr.* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2012), 164.

go completely against Shumsky's views. Yet, no theses, which were part of Shumsky's specific view of Ukrainianization, made their way into the final text. Therefore, despite the emotional speeches of pro-Russian comrades and noticeable differences in some of their pronouncements, both Kaganovich and Shumsky emphasized the role of the drafted resolution for the unity and friendly atmosphere in the party. In Shumsky's words: "The resolution puts correctly the question and gives directives for the solving of the national question and, particularly, for Ukrainianization. It will ensure full unity and friendly work in the party."⁷¹ Kaganovich welcomed Shumsky's conciliatory speech, but he still kept the pressure on: "It is good, better late than never, we appreciate it... We are concerned with work. We did not want to fan the struggle and we do not want it also now."⁷² Eventually, despite numerous clashes between opponents and supporters of Shumsky within TsK, a common resolution in favor of the active, though not radical, Ukrainianization was approved.⁷³

Khvyl'ovyi and his publications figured prominently in the discussions at the plenum. The anti-Ukrainianization part of TsK, particularly Andrei Radchenko, attacked Khvyl'ovyi's writings, using them also to undermine the views of the Ukrainianizers and, in particular, Shumsky. Recognizing some of Khvyl'ovyi's errors, Shumsky stuck to his explanation that they were determined by the lack of the party guidance in artistic matters in the Ukrainian SSR. He also reinstated an interesting and telling distinction between Khvyl'ovyi and numerous Ukrainian *smenovekhovtsy*, who became especially active after

71 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 130.

72 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 215.

73 Can be found in Mykola Khvyl'ovyi, *Tvory v 5 Tomah*, Tom 5 (New York, Baltimore, Toronto: Smoloskip, 1986), 490-503.

the launch of Ukrainianization in 1923.⁷⁴ The moderate Ukrainianizers, such as Zatonsky, Kaganovich and Skrypnyk, introduced a quite detailed critique of Khvyli'ovyi in their speeches, especially focusing on his orientation to Europe and the slogan “away from Moscow.” Yet, their analysis of Khvyli'ovyi's pronouncements was not so one-sided, as that of the anti-Ukrainianization “comrades.” In that sense the tone of moderate Ukrainianizers slightly differed from their previous assessments of Khvyli'ovyi's phenomenon. Thus, Zatonsky being critical of Khvyli'ovyi still mentioned that the latter was “an, undoubtedly, talented young man and, undoubtedly, gifted artist, but one is not born a Bolshevik, one molds into a Bolshevik. From Khvyli'ovyi and Khvyli'ovyi's we must temper Communists.”⁷⁵ To some extent and with clear reservations, the same Zatonsky agreed with Shumsky's explanation of Khvyli'ovyi's publications, pointing to the lack of clear party message in the artistic field, the ambiguities of NEP and the provocative character of “Great Russian chauvinism.”⁷⁶ The influential TsK and Politburo members believed that in spite of his mistakes Khvyli'ovyi still could redeem himself and become a valuable part of Soviet Ukrainian society. Apparently, this new interpretation of Khvyli'ovyi's writings was the only concession, which Shumsky managed to pull out of Kaganovich and his associates in exchange for his almost total capitulation. At the same time, this did not go to well with Shumsky's opponents in TsK. Zatonsky, who presented the keynote speech in the section received numerous indignant critical responses, both for being too lenient towards Khvyli'ovyi's writings, but also for insisting that “Great Russian chauvinism” was still a bigger danger than Ukrainian chauvinism.⁷⁷ Khvyli'ovyi, who was

74 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 126-127.

75 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 204, l. 420.

76 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 204, l. 79.

77 For such criticism, see for instance, TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 12, 16.

invited to this session of the Plenum, though, did himself no good, when in the end of the session instead of carefully executing the party's *samokritika* ritual, attempted to explain himself, reasserting in the meantime some of his provocative statements.⁷⁸

Judging from the transcript of the Plenum, it looks that Shumsky's opponents were disappointed and probably slightly taken aback by the tolerant and conciliatory attitudes of Kaganovich-led group towards Shumsky. Apparently, they expected a much more firm and critical stance against their archenemy. In any case they themselves were not planning to miss the opportunity to attack their weakened opponent. The Plenum was, first of all, a test for Shumsky. Eventually, it was the test of his readiness to follow through with his capitulation to Kaganovich. The Ukrainian General secretary did not make his conditions to Shumsky public in vain. In the course of the Plenum, Shumsky opponents criticized the Commissar of Enlightenment exactly along these four lines and forced him in one way or another to touch upon all of them in his answer. Shumsky responded evasively and without his usual eloquence and arrogance, but eventually confirmed his concessions in his position on the national question, agreeing with Kaganovich.

Yet, there was one additional new issue, which emerged as one of the central questions in discussions at the Plenum. It would also play an important rule in Shumsky fate and, by extension, the evolution of nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR in the near future. Apparently, the issue was provoked by the transcript of one of the closed Politburo meetings. It was a common practice to prepare a set of materials before the Plenum on some of the key issues, which would be discussed, and then send them all out to the participants for the preparation. The transcript of the Politburo meeting was sent out

78 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 337-341.

as part of such a preparatory package. It is quite likely that the transcript was included in the package not by chance. It was used to give an additional argument to criticize Shumsky. After a highly emotional and militant uproar by some of the participants, the copies of the transcripts were retracted. Yet, the seeds had already been planted. Unfortunately, for the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment, the transcript contained a paragraph, which could hardly go unnoticed. Judging from later citations, Shumsky speech contained the following passage:

A Russian Communist dominates in the Party, and treats with suspicion and unfriendliness a Ukrainian Communist. He dominates, thanks to the despicable, selfish (*shkurnicheskii*) type of *Maloross*, who in all historical epochs was equally unscrupulously (*besprintsipno*) hypocritical, slavishly two-faced (*dvoedushnyi*) and treacherously sycophantic (*podhalimen*). He is now parading his false internationalism, flaunting his indifferent attitude towards everything Ukrainian and is always ready to spit on it (sometimes even in Ukrainian), if it gives him the opportunity to curry favor (*vyslujit'sa*) and get a plum job (*tioploe mestechko*).⁷⁹

Apparently, Shumsky threw out the cited passage in the heat of the discussion.⁸⁰

Yet, from the Bolshevik point of view there was no excuse for Shumsky. Using the word *Maloross* in this particularly derogatory and insulting meaning towards the members of TsK KP(b)U and Party, in general, the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment broke a taboo, which existed in the Bolshevik party both in relation to the use of the term and its implied connotations.

The term *Maloross* (Little Russian) and its derivatives⁸¹ had a long history of use,

⁷⁹ RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 107, l. 163. The citation is not taken directly from the transcript of the meeting, but is cited in a later speech. Yet, several sources confirm that the meaning of Shumsky's speech was identical or almost identical to the one expressed in the citation, even if the original wording can be slightly different.

⁸⁰ Shumsky himself would try to justify himself, explaining that he "formulated his speech on his knee," on the run, in the course of the debate, TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 209, l. 35.

⁸¹ Could be used as noun, or *malorusskii* as an adjective. The word *Malorossia* usually referred to the territory, inhabited by the Little Russians and/or where Little Russian was the spoken language/dialect.

discussion and renegotiation of meaning and connotations in the Russian Empire and neighboring Western territories. Eventually, in the late Romanov Empire, two opposing positions on the use and assessment of the term emerged. The debate was strongly centered around the question of whether to use the denomination “Ukrainian” or “Little Russian” for the Ukrainian-speaking (or Little Russian-speaking, depending on the political position of the observer in the Late Romanov Empire) population of the Romanov Empire⁸² and its language. Ukrainian nationalists and sympathizers advocated and struggled for the use the term “Ukrainian.” For them it signified that the Ukrainians were a separate from the Russian nationality with their own culture and language, which, in turn, implied certain political demands from the freedom of cultural development to political independence. At the same time this group usually avoided and despised the term *Maloross*, since for them it suggested the closeness, if not identity, of the Ukrainian nationality, culture, and language to the Russian one. They would, however, use the term *Maloross*, but with derogatory accents, when talking about Ukrainian politicians and intellectuals, who did not recognize the separateness of the Ukrainian nationality.

The other group, which mostly consisted of Russian nationalists (local and imperial) and many imperial officials, on the contrary, strongly supported the use of the term *Maloross*, which had for them a positive meaning. In their understanding the Little Russian population was one of three constituents of the undivided triune Russian nation, the two other being White Russians (*belorussy*) and Great Russians (*velikorussy*). For this group the differences in language and culture were minimal and, in any case, did not

82 The debate on these two terms was also relevant (though, to a lesser degree and with different dynamics) for the Ukrainian-inhabited parts of the Habsburg Empire. Yet, for the purposes of this chapter the former territories of the Romanov Empire are of greater importance.

question the unity of the three branches of the Russian nation. Any differences between three branches could be explained by local and regional specificities and dialects. At the same time the Ukrainophile movement and the struggle for the term *Ukrainian* was viewed mostly as an Austrian or Polish intrigue. This is, of course, a simplification of the debate, which had many more nuances and multiple actors involved.⁸³ Yet, this simplification is also somewhat justified, since in many respects the Bolsheviks understood the history of the two terms in precisely this manner.

When the Bolsheviks struggled to establish their control over Ukraine, they had to make a choice in favor of one of the two competing terms. With their choice in favor of *Ukrainian* Bolsheviks were much closer to the position of the Ukrainian nationalists than to that of the Russian nationalists. It is telling, indeed, that after the Bolshevik capture of Kiev in 1919 among the very first victims of the Cheka were members of the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists, one of the most influential actors advocating the *Maloross* option. Due to the long history and the acuteness of the debate, the Bolshevik choice in favor of the term *Ukrainian* was not simply a question of denomination. It presupposed a concrete political stance and served to send out the message that the Bolsheviks recognized Ukrainians as a separate nationality with its distinct culture and language. At the same time, the Bolsheviks did everything to eliminate any possible associations between them and the Russian nationalists.⁸⁴ This is one of the key reasons, why the term *Maloross* was not simply marginalized, but actually prohibited in the party. The term

83 For a more nuanced analysis of the history of the concept “Maloross,” see A. Kotenko, O. Martyniuk, and A. Miller, “Maloross,” in A. Miller, D. Sdvizhkov, and D. Shirle, ed., “*Poniatia o Rossii*”. *K Istoricheskoi Semantike Imperskogo Perioda*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012), 392-443.

84 On the Russian nationalism as the biggest enemy of Bolsheviks, see Veljko Vujacic, “Stalinism and Russian Nationalism: A Reconceptualization,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 23 (2007): 156-183.

“Maloross” was also removed from list of possible and accepted answers to the question on the nationality in the 1926 all-Soviet census – only “Russian” or “Ukrainian” were permitted.⁸⁵ In the cases, when the respondents declared their native language as “Little Russian,” it was counted as “Ukrainian.”⁸⁶ The organizers of the census also insisted that the respondents stated clearly, whether they were Ukrainian, (Great)Russian, or Belarusian in the regions, where “the representatives of these three nationalities (*narodnosti*) identify their nationality as 'Russian'.”⁸⁷

One of the speakers at the June Plenum pointed out vividly the connection between the term *Maloross* and Russian nationalism and its dangers: “... a poisonous weapon is used. This is the so called term *Maloross*, which had an absolutely odious meaning, which we associate with various Savinkovs and the like.”⁸⁸ Here the speaker referred to Anatolii Savenko,⁸⁹ one the main ideologists of the Kiev Club of the Russian Nationalists, who produced some of the most influential anti-Ukrainian and pro-*Maloross* writings. Even the strongest opponents of Shumsky, Ukrainianization and the Ukrainian culture in TsK KP(b)U wanted nothing to do with the “various Savinkovs.” Some of the speakers were also perplexed: how could Shumsky use the term, when he himself was labeled as a *Maloross* in the White Guardist (*belogvardeiskaia*) rhetoric.⁹⁰

The discussion of Shumsky's use of the term *Maloross*, eventually overshadowed all other aspects of the discussion on the national question and Ukrainianization at the

85 Juliet Kadio, *Laboratoriia Imperii: Rossiia/SSSR, 1890-1940* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2010), 204.

86 RGAE, f. 1562, op. 336, d. 30, l. 56.

87 RGAE, f. 1562, op. 336, d. 9, l. 42.

88 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 171.

89 The reference of the speaker was evidently to Savenko. Yet, the transcript mentions “Savinkov”, which was either the mistake of the stenographer or a mix-up by the speaker.

90 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 171.

June Plenum. Khvyl'ovyi also additionally fueled this side of the debates. Not long before the Plenum he made public his new essay “Ukraine or Little Russia (*Malorossia*)?”, in which he tried to explain and downplay some of the most controversial parts of his previous writing. Nevertheless, the essay still centered around the question in the title and discussed the issue of the Ukrainian future along similar lines to his previous publications⁹¹ – that is whether Ukraine would be *Ukraine* and develop culturally independent from Moscow or whether it would continue to follow in Moscow's steps, and in that sense, remain *Malorossia*, a simple imitator of Moscow's example. Khvyl'ovyi did not add much new to his previous pronouncements. Nevertheless, the introduction of the term *Malorossia* in the discussion brought about an additional twist and even more emotionally critical remarks.

Besides some general remarks on the inadmissibility of the use of the term *Maloross* and its derivatives, the critical discussion of Shumsky's and Khvyl'ovyi's transgressions on that field centered along two key lines. Shumsky was severely criticized for the use of the term in relation to members of the Party and TsK. As Petrovsky emphasized, because of Shumsky's remarks, “now anyone can suspect that he is a *Maloross*,” which was unacceptable and harmful for the Party, especially in relation to all the comrades, “who worked in Ukraine for numerous years, and devoted all their energies.”⁹² Judging from the often overly emotional reactions of a number of Ukrainian opponents, this was exactly, what happened. They took Shumsky's remarks as referring to themselves and, as a consequence, were especially outraged. One of the members of TsK

91 Mykola Khvyl'ovyi, *Tvory v Piatioh Tomah*, vol. 4 (New York, Baltimor, Toronto: Slovo, Smoloskyp, 1983), 413-422.

92 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 279.

A. Dudnik in a letter just after the Plenum wrote:

The concept “Malorossia” is connected with the Russian chauvinist definition of the colonized region with all the ensuing consequences. The concept “Maloross” in the imagination of Ukrainian chauvinism entails the betrayal of the cause of the Ukrainian liberation from the yoke of “Russia,” from the colonial enslavement...⁹³

Shumsky in his notorious citation used the tabooed term in the vein, characteristic of the Ukrainian nationalist discourse. He formulated a construction that Russian Moscovite ruled in Ukraine, while local *Malorossy* helped him. For the Bolsheviks this conclusion would be appropriate in the discussion of the pre-revolutionary period. Yet, the Bolsheviks put their nationality policies explicitly in contrast to the Tsarist ones. The participants of the Plenum emphasized the inappropriateness of the use of the term *Maloross* and *Malorossiia* in Soviet Ukraine after so many years of Soviet construction. Many speakers preferred to see these terms as artifacts of the past. This also demonstrates one context, in which the term *Malorossiia* could be freely used. It was used as a reference to the past, to Ukraine's position within the Romanov Empire, which was contrasted to its new, elevated status within the Soviet Union. For instance:

There was a lot of talk about Malorossiia ... but we should not forget that in place of the Tsarist Malorossia, territory of the Khokol *byt* and Khokhol dumplings (*galushki*), territory fully impregnated by the psychology of slavery, oppression, on this territory a Soviet Republic – Ukraine – was created. Further, in place of *Malorossiia*, a colony from the economical point of view, a colony of Great Russian chauvinism, we have a country with a Soviet economy, one of the characteristic features of which is economic autonomy.⁹⁴

There was also another way that one could use the term without provoking any significant militant reaction. For example, Skrypnyk used the term *Maloross* as a category of social analysis, referring to Russified Ukrainians.⁹⁵ Shumsky, in turn, used it as an

93 RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 48.

94 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 205, l. 259.

95 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 209, l. 36.

emotionally loaded and derogatory political term. Thus, even though the term was mostly exempted from use in the party, it was used in certain contexts. Shumsky's and Khvylovyyi's mistakes from the Bolshevik point of view was that they deliberately used the term with a specific political connotation, which presupposed the submissive, subordinated, even colonial status of Ukraine and the KP(b)U in relation to Moscow. These were associations which the Bolsheviks worked hard to avoid.

Shumsky patiently stood up to all the criticism and accusations launched at him at the June Plenum. The enforced reconciliation, which allowed him to remain engaged in leading party and administrative work even at the expense of multiple concessions from his side, was more important at the time than his willingness to strike back at all his opponents. Kaganovich, in turn, continued to play the role of the merciful and responsible party leader, refraining from attacks on Shumsky and in the meantime scoring points among other members of TsK KP(b)U for his self-publicized ability to go beyond personal grudges for the sake of the party. Eventually, though, the passionate Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment “cracked.” At a short closed session of the Plenum, which contained the last remarks on the national question, Shumsky protested against the use of the word “malicious” (*zlostnyi*) in relation to his actions before the Plenum.⁹⁶ This term was first introduced in the response of TsK KP(b)U to Stalin. The Plenum resolution on the national question, making reference to the letter, in Shumsky's view reconfirmed the characteristic. Making numerous concessions Shumsky was also hoping for some similar moves, at least in terms of certain unpleasant formulations. Yet, for Kaganovich, this

96 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 209, l. 2.

word juggling was inappropriate.⁹⁷ He gave Shumsky a second chance (at a costly price, of course). Therefore, Shumsky's attempts to somehow understate his mistakes were considered as signs of insincerity, doubts and unwillingness to accept his position. Since it was late in the evening, the discussion was closed promptly and the proposed resolution was passed, though a bitter aftertaste from the closing evening session remained.

2. 6. Conclusions

Overall, Kaganovich would be satisfied with the situation after the June Plenum. He managed to outplay Shumsky in the political struggle and successfully undermined the latter's challenge to Kaganovich's leadership. Carefully using his opponent's mistakes and, when needed, setting additional traps, he managed to force a reconciliation with Shumsky on Kaganovich's own terms. In this light he managed to fulfill several tasks. He succeeded both in keeping the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment on board and not compromising the Ukrainianization campaign. At the same time in the eyes of the majority of TsK KP(b)U members Kaganovich also managed to save the party's Ukrainianization drive from Shumsky's excesses and radicalism. Finally and crucially, it looked like Kaganovich was on his way to consolidating under his leadership the conflict-prone Ukrainian party organization, even on such a controversial topic as the national question. He contrived to force Shumsky to publicly denounce (though, with many reservations) his own views on the Ukrainianization and to accept the position of Kaganovich's group. Thus, Kaganovich was gradually and successfully pulling Shumsky and his associates under the his tighter control. Yet, in this achievement, Kaganovich managed not to antagonize too much those members of TsK, who were suspicious of Shumsky and

⁹⁷ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 209, l. 27-28.

Ukrainianization. Shumsky, in turn, played too often into Kaganovich's hands. The Commissar of Enlightenment could have achieved many of his goals continuing his cooperation with Kaganovich and not launching the open conflict with the latter with his visits to Stalin. But Shumsky's conflict with Kaganovich was not only about an understanding of nationality policies in Ukraine, but also about political power, political dominance, and political influence. Shumsky understood that he would not be able to easily manipulate and use Kaganovich. Therefore he pushed for the latter's removal and provoked an open political struggle. As I have claimed, in doing so Shumsky seriously misinterpreted and miscalculated the balance of power and committed a grave political error, for which he eventually paid by losing the political battle. The usage of terms like *Maloross*, only weakened Shumsky's own position and strengthened Kaganovich's stance. In order to fully understand how the conflict played out and the nature of the dynamics involved, one must pay careful attention to the group in TsK KP(b)U, which strongly opposed Shumsky and was suspicious of Ukrainianization, not to mention sometimes of the Ukrainian language and culture, in general. This group is too often disregarded in the historiography, since Kaganovich by virtue of his struggle with Shumsky himself became subsumed into the ranks of the opponents to Ukrainianization. Nevertheless, the transcripts of TsK meetings demonstrate vividly that this group had numerous disagreements and clashes with Kaganovich's group, even though they were, of course, overshadowed by the criticism of Shumsky. At the same time despite the disagreements Kaganovich had willy-nilly to listen to and to take into consideration the interests and positions of the highly influential (especially in the worker's milieu) opponents of rapid and radical Ukrainianization. The group, though, also played another crucial role in the

dynamics of the political conflict. For Kaganovich, they became a valuable political asset, which the General secretary skillfully and gladly used, whenever he needed somebody else to do the dirty work for him and attack Shumsky and his associates. In addition, the group's continuous emotional attacks on Shumsky served for the latter a constant reminder, that in TsK he and his associates were a minority. Therefore, Shumsky eventually depended on Kaganovich's support and protection. Thus, the existence of a strong and numerous group of Shumsky's opponents made it much more difficult for the Commissar of Enlightenment to back down from the enforced agreements with Kaganovich.

Taking into the attempts to reach some sort of compromise between Shumsky and Kaganovich with Stalin's blessing at the end of May and June of 1926 and even the forgiving attitude towards Khvyl'ovyi that emerged at the plenum, several key questions emerge one should put the following questions. What factors determined the change of attitude of the leaders of the KP(b)U towards Shumsky and Khvyl'ovyi in the second part of the 1926 and early 1927? By the end of 1926 and the beginning of 1927, according to the Ukrainian party leaders, Khvyl'ovyi was playing the game of the Ukrainian counter-revolution and Shumsky was basically promoting open factionalism, which put in jeopardy the policy of Ukrainianization and Soviet Ukraine, in general.

By December 1926 there was hardly any evidence of the conciliatory atmosphere. Kaganovich was annoyed and was losing patience, because of Shumsky's procrastination and evasion in the pronouncements on the four previously agreed points. For Kaganovich, Shumsky's reluctance was a sign that Shumsky was not willing to recognize Kaganovich's predominance and still nurtured disagreements as well as hopes for more political

influence. Still, it can hardly be considered as the sole reason for the deterioration of the relations.

In order to understand this transformation in Kaganovich and Shums'kyi's relations, one must take into account parallel developments in neighboring Poland along with the Soviet assessment of them and their consequences.

Chapter 5. The Warsaw-Western Ukraine-Kharkiv Triangle and Soviet Borderland Policies before and after the May Coup

The change of the government in Poland had a major impact on the Soviet politics in Western border republics and, among others, played a crucial role in the fate of Shums'kyi and his adherents. In between 12 and 14 May 1926 the leader of the Polish Socialist Party Jozsef Pilsudski led the coup, which established a new regime, known as *sanacja* (purification). One of the architects of the Polish state was well-known for his ambitious ideas of the restoration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and anti-Bolshevism. Yet, initially some communists did not know how to react to the establishment of the new political regime. In fact, the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) participated in some of the coup actions and, in effect, aided Pilsudski to grab the power. From their point of view Pilsudski was the lesser of two evils and thanks to some of his socialist outlooks represented a certain improvement on the road to socialism and communism in comparison with the previously ruling National Democrats (*endecja*). Yet, almost instantly it became clear that Pilsudski's anti-Soviet attitude by far outweighed his socialist inclinations. Famously, the KPP's decision to support Pilsudski in his coup became known as “the May Error.”¹

Shortly after the coup Pilsudski and his associates revived with renewed energy

1 For the resolution of the Politburo TsK VKP(b) on the “serious political error of the KPP,” see I. I. Kostiusenko, ed., *Materialy “Osoboi Papki” Politburo TsK RKP(b) – VKP(b) po Voprosu Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii 1923-1944 gg.* (Moscow: Institut Slavianovedeniia i Balkanistiki RAN, 1997), 22-23. It is likely that the decision to support Pilsudski initially came from Moscow. In June Stalin tried to lay blame for the “error” on Zinoviev, see Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, ed., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 112.

the political project of Prometheism.² In fact, the period from the 1926 coup until the signing of the 1932 Polish-Soviet non-aggression represented the heyday of the Prometheism. The principal general aim of Prometheist project from Pilsudski's point of view was to weaken the Soviet Union by supporting the national secessionist movements of the non-Russian peoples. In contrast to the pre-1926 period the *sanacja* regime introduced much more tolerant and pro-active policies toward Ukrainians and in many respects supported the preservation and development of the national cultures, especially in the Ukrainian case.

This chapter focuses on the competition between the Polish, Communist and Soviet actors for the aspirations, support and recruitment of the population of the Ukrainian-inhabited contested borderlands. The chapter demonstrates the approaches, personal and geopolitical ambitions of the involved actors and the clash between them. It argues that the developments in Poland (and less evidently in Romania and Czechoslovakia) and in the Ukrainian SSR were closely linked. One of the key issues of the chapter is the impact of the May Coup on borderland and nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR and Western Ukraine.

5. 1. Polish Borderland Policies and the Promethean Movement

The change in the Polish policies towards its eastern minorities and non-Russian nationalities of the Soviet Union after Pilsudski's coup was not totally unexpected and unprepared. Already the Polish-Soviet war demonstrated that Pilsudski and his entourage would have a keen interest in the fate of Soviet Western Republics. In 1920 and 1921 the

2 Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War*; Sergiusz Mikulicz, *Prometeizm w Polityce II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa 1971).

federative plans of Polish leadership³ largely failed. While Poland managed to secure Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and part of Lithuania with Wilno, they still had a strong and potentially dangerous neighbor in the consolidating Bolshevik regime on former territories of the Romanov Empire. In addition, larger parts of Ukraine and Belarus became Soviet. With Pilsudski gradually sidelined and self-withdrawn from the leading role in the Polish politics in the first half of 1920s, his opponents, the ruling National-Democrats and their allies, chose a geopolitically more cautious and less ambitious policies towards the Ukrainian and Belarusian questions and the Soviet Union in general. The general strategy towards the national minorities in Poland was one of assimilation. The National-Democrats considered the creation of a Polish homogeneous nation-state, as their final goal. In addition, the National-Democrats preferred to keep relations with the Soviet Union in a calm vein without the provocation of unnecessary tensions. Therefore, they largely avoided attempts to stir up anti-Soviet attitudes among Ukrainians and Belarusians.

At the same time the influence of Pilsudski's camp in Polish Eastern policies did not disappear entirely despite the marginalization of the Chief of State. Some members of his close circle, engaged in Eastern policy, occupying positions in the state administration also under the ND-led government. Thus, for instance, Roman Knoll was the Polish Ambassador to Turkey beginning with 1924, Tadeusz Schaetzel was the military attache in Ankara. Tadeusz Holowko, the administrative architect of the Promethean movement, was particularly active in 1924 and especially in 1925, traveling all around Europe and

3 M. K. Dzieawanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski: A European Federalist, 1918-1922* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1969); Peter Hetherington, *Unvanquished: Joseph Pilsudski, Resurrected Poland, and the Struggle for Eastern Europe* (Houston: Pingora Press, 2012), 337-425.

building up the skeleton of the organization. The nucleus of the Promethean leadership had much in common. They were all close to Jozsef Pilsudski, sympathetic to or even members of the Polish Socialist Party. They were often originally from the Polish Eastern territories (mostly from the lands with large percentage of Ukrainians) or those regions, which remained outside of the Polish state, under Bolshevik control. This gave their Promethean activities a personal dimension and devotion. Pilsudski himself was from Eastern Lithuanian village, whose belonging to Poland could and was constantly contested. Finally, in the past many Polish Promethean leaders had membership in the Polish Military Organization, a secret military organization, established by Pilsudski in 1914. They gained experience of clandestine activities, intelligence and sabotage, as well as the established networks of connections, fitted well and proved useful within the framework of the Prometheism.

Since the Polish-Soviet war, the views of Pilsudski's circle on the Polish Eastern Policies undertook a certain transformation. Pilsudski's colleagues came to a conclusion that the Polish thrust eastwards looked much more like an occupation, an invasion, rather than liberation.⁴ Instead the new approach advocated a more cooperative and flexible attitude towards national minorities in Poland and non-Russian nationalities under Bolshevik rule. Pilsudski's adherents toned down the discussions on the Poland between the seas (*Międzymorze*) and the (con-)federalist plans of the revival of the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Instead, they emphasized the necessity of the “liberation” and independence of the “subjugated” peoples of the Soviet Union, which

4 Marek Konrat, “Idea Prometejska a Polska Polityka Zagraniczna (1921-1939/1940),” in Marek Konrat ed. *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowę Europy Wschodniej* (Warsawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2012), 48-51.

they portrayed as an oppressive empire, that inherited some of the worst features of the Russian Empire, merging it with Bolshevik elements. This does not mean, that all Pilsudskites and the Polish leader himself gave up entirely the ideals of the larger Poland, which would dominate geopolitically, if not administratively, over at least all Ukrainian and Belarusian territories, and serve as a strong enough counterbalance to the Bolshevik Russia and Germany. Rather they looked for a more flexible formula, which would be more attractive to the national minorities in Poland, foremost Ukrainians and their political leaders and allow Poland to secure their support and aspirations. Even in the case of the absolute success of the Pilsudskite Eastern Policies, that is the “liberation” of the Ukrainian SSR and the Belarusian SSR, the leaders of the Promethean movement expected, that the new states would be in the Polish sphere of influence and control, even while being declaratively independent.

Another important change laid the foundation for the new Promethean movement. Pilsudski's supporters extended their activities and targeted also other non-Russian nationalities under Bolshevik rule, not only their immediate Eastern neighbors. There were some preliminary contacts and discussions with the Caucasian emigration already in the years of the Civil War and Polish-Soviet War. Yet, in mid-1920s the strategy, which aimed at the incorporation of all the “oppressed” nationalities in one movement acquired a comprehensive and consistent character. By early 1930s, with Pilsudski's camp in power, this trend would culminate even in the Polish-Japanese contacts and the common attempts to ignite anti-Soviet attitudes in the Far East.⁵ In mid-1920s this was still a distant

5 Hiroaki Kuromiya, “The Promethean Movement and Japan's Diplomacy,” in *Ruch Prometejski*, 137-148.

prospect. But the Caucasian direction attracted significant attention and organizational efforts of the leaders of the emerging Promethean movement. This was the reason, why Turkey and Knoll's and Schaetzel's presence there became so important. Turkish Kemalist regime was not as anti-Soviet in comparison with the government's of other countries. The Turkish-Soviet relations in 1920s had their ups and downs. Still, some groups in the Turkish government and more specifically, in the secret services found it useful to cooperate with Caucasian and Muslim anti-Bolshevik elites. This was partly a matter of pre-caution against the not always predictable Soviet government and partly a potential resource in case of the geopolitical changes in the region. The representatives of the Pilsudski's circle became a natural ally in this endeavor and in many respects assumed leadership over it. The Polish leadership emerged due to the unwillingness of the Ankara government to create tensions with Moscow. Knoll, Schaetzel and visiting Holowko launched an active campaign in order to organize the Caucasian and Muslim movements. The fact that Istanbul was one of major centers of the concentration of the Caucasian and Muslim political emigration from the Soviet Union undoubtedly augmented the importance of the Turkish direction. In 1925 under Roman Knoll's patronage several groups of Caucasian political emigres created the Committee for the Independence of Caucasus.⁶ In 1926 the Committee would join forces with a similar organization in Paris and would become the center of the Caucasian branch of the Promethean movement.⁷

The Ukrainian affairs was another key direction of the emerging Promethean

6 Henryk Bartoszewicz, "*Prometeizm Romana Knolla*," in *Ruch Prometejski*, 164. In a letter to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Knoll had also requested roughly 3000 USD for the activities of the newly established Committee. Ibid, 164

7 Salavat Ishakov, "Prometei i Musul'mane Kavkaza, Kryma, Povolzh'a, Turkestana i Urala," in *Ruch Prometejski*, 255

movement. The geographical proximity, the importance of the Ukrainian lands in Pilsudski's geopolitical outlook and extensive past contacts of the Pilsudski's circle with many Ukrainian politicians made Ukraine the key element of the Promethean movement. In 1925 Tadeusz Holowko undertook visits to Prague, Paris and Istanbul. His main task was to carry out negotiations with anti-Bolshevik political emigration on the possibilities of the administrative build-up of the Promethean movement. Eventually his most important interlocutors were members of the Ukrainian emigration. In Prague Holowko met Mykyta Shapoval, a key Ukrainian political activist in Czechoslovakia. Paris was the center of Holowko's most extensive activities. He met there with the members of Ukrainian, Georgian, Azeri, Tatar and other emigre circles. Holowko had successful discussions with the leaders of the UNR government-in-exile, among others with S. Petliura, V. Prokopovich and O. Shul'gin.⁸ The result of Holowko's activities was the foundation of the political club Promethee, a predecessor of the Promethean league in Warsaw, in late 1925 or early 1926, which launched the publication of the journal with the same name. Georgian and Ukrainian emigres assumed the leadership over the organization and the journal.

Thus, even before the May Coup in 1926 Pilsudski's associates laid the groundwork for the future Promethean organization. Among others, it meant that Poland was taking over Czechoslovakia, as the main state actor in the Ukrainian affairs besides the Soviet Union. Still, already the early attempts to organize the Promethean movement exposed some of its weakness, which would hinder its development even after its main

8 It is important to point out, that at such meetings Holowko also often handed over financial support for the cooperating emigre organizations and gave the promise of further assistance. For often cash-starved emigres this was a welcome contribution and served as an additional reason to join the Polish-led movement.

ideologues' accession to power in May 1926. It was relatively easy to find common agenda for, for instance, Georgians and Ukrainians, whose respective territories were far away and who had few grounds for political disagreements and mutual claims. The situation, though, was often more complicated in the case of the of emigres of the neighboring territories or different, frequently competing political groups within one national diaspora. Tense relations with its Caucasian neighbors and Turkey basically excluded Armenian emigres from the Promethean movement.

The Ukrainian political immigration was a good example of how the political fragmentation undermined the efforts to create a united Ukrainian front under the aegis of the Promethean movement. Some Ukrainian political groups had reservations against joining the movement, which already included their political opponents. This was the case, for instance, of Mykyta Shapoval group, who was an ardent critique of the UNR government-in-exile. Due to the latter's central role in the Promethean movement, Shapoval's group was reluctant to adhere. Other groups had objections to the leading role of Poland in the movement. Thus, various groups of the Ukrainian nationalists in Galicia considered Poland to be the main enemy. Similarly, Yevhen Petrushevich and his group had anti-Polish views, but in addition adopted more or less coherent pro-Soviet positions. Due to these obstacles the Promethean movement had never met the expectations of its founders and leaders, that is it did not encompass all the anti-Bolshevik emigre groups. Still its influence was significant.

Taking into consideration intense organizational activities, even in the years, when Pilsudski was out of power, it is not surprising that the Promethean movement gained momentum after the May Coup in 1926. Thus, on 21 July, 1926, already an employee of

the Polish Foreign Ministry Tadeusz Holowko reported about his successful mission at Istanbul, at which he managed to mobilize the representatives of the Caucasian emigration for more active struggle against the Soviet rule in the Caucasus under Polish guidance and with Polish financial support.⁹ Previously, the Promethean movement relied mostly of the inconsistent and limited allocations of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs or private funds, raised by Pilsudski's circle. After the coup the movement acquired stable financial assistance of the state institutions. At the same time the Polish leaders and activists of the movement occupied or were promoted to high positions in state administration. Thus, Holowko became the head of the Eastern Section of the Political Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Roman Knoll was promoted to the position of the vice-minister of the Foreign Affairs. Tadeusz Schaetzel assumed the office of the head of the Second Department of the Polish General Staff. The Second Department focused on the intelligence and counter-intelligence. Its division IIa specifically dealt with Eastern policies. In general, the Promethean movement did not have a single official center. In many respects the Second Department of the Polish General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign affairs shared the responsibility and oversaw its main activities. Other relevant government ministries and agencies also contributed, when required.

In practical terms the intensification of the Promethean activities after the May Coup meant a number of clandestine and public actions. The Eastern Institute, inaugurated in Warsaw in 1926, had a double aim of the research on the Soviet Union and

9 *Dokumenty i Materialy Po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), 32-38.

Soviet nationalities and the propaganda of the Promethean ideas.¹⁰ The organizations, associated with the Promethean movement launched a number of new publications on Eastern affairs and topics, which were published in Poland or in the centers of the concentration of political emigration. The Polish Promethean activists used the affiliated political immigrants and their connections in order to gather intelligence on the developments in the Soviet Union. In addition, the Polish state started recruiting the members of minorities for the intelligence, military and educational purposes. These were just some of the activities of the Promethean movement in the first years after the Pilsudski's coup. By 1928 the Promethean activists managed to secure the support of the representatives of “Azerbaijan, Georgia, Don, Karelia, Idel-Ural, Ingria, Crimea, Komi, Ukraine, Kuban, Northern Caucasus, and Turkestan.”¹¹

Still, the main sphere of the Promethean activities focused on Ukraine and Ukrainian issues. To some extent, this may be explained by the fact that in the case of the Soviet Ukraine the Prometheist project intersected and mutually reinforced with the aspirations of the Pilsudski's circle of making Poland again a major regional geopolitical force and possibly even the restoration in one form or another of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is not really clear, what future Pilsudski envisioned for the liberated Ukraine: independent Ukraine under Polish protection and guidance or some kind of (con)federation. In any case, in this period Poland invested significant effort and resources into the promotion of the Ukrainian anti-Soviet cause.¹² For instance, with the

10 Ireneusz Piotr Maj, “W Służbie Koncepcji Prometeskiej – Instytut Wschodni w Warszawie,” in *Ruch Prometejski* (Warsawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2012), 201-203.

11 Volodymyr Komar, *Kontsepsiia Prometeizmu v Polititsy Pol'shi (1921-1939)* (Ivano-Frankiivsk: Misto NV, 2011), 299.

12 Interestingly, Belarusians did not play any significant role in the Promethean movement, despite Pilsudski's prospects on Soviet Belarusian territories. Prometheans considered Belarusians too pro-

support of the Polish military Ukrainians organized the military staff for the Ukrainian People's Republic, which was considered to be a friendly military organization, temporarily stationed on Polish territory. Shortly after, in 1928, the Polish Army started recruiting into its ranks officers of the Ukrainian descent, particularly members of the former Petliurist Army. Besides the close cooperation with the Ukrainian political immigration, plethora of propagandist and educational activities, the support for the clandestine Ukrainian and Polish organizations and networks of informers in the Soviet Ukraine and border regions of Poland, Polish struggle for Ukraine presupposed also certain openly pro-Ukrainian policies.

The most prominent example of the new pro-Ukrainian strategy was the “Wolyn experiment,” which was launched in 1928, when Pilsudski's close associate Henryk Jozewski became the voivode of Wolyn region. In the heavily Ukrainian-populated region the Polish administration under Jozewski's leadership promoted the Ukrainian language, opened Ukrainian schools, organized Ukrainian cultural organizations and activities etc.¹³ Jozewski's policies in Wolyn had several rationales. It was a demonstration and an attempt of the Pilsudski's circle to build a different type of the state, in comparison with the preceding National-Democrats. Jozewski in Wolyn was constructing a Polish state, based upon recognition and incorporation of the national minorities, not their assimilation. In addition, Jozewski's approach aimed at winning over the sympathies of the Ukrainian elites and population in the struggle with the competitors. In opinion of the

Russian and an unlikely ally against the Soviet Union. After the May Coup, there were changes, though, in the nationality policies – “from assimilation to intergration,” see Per Anders Rudling, *The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism, 1906-1931* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 255-256.

13 Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War*, 60-82.

Pilsudski's circle, Poland's main opponents in the Ukrainian question within the country were Ukrainian radical nationalists and various Soviet-controlled political groups. Jozewski aspired to prove that Poland could offer a better political solution for Ukrainians, than the respective opponents. Finally, Pilsudski and Jozewski were looking eastward, beyond the Polish borders, at the Ukrainian SSR. One of the rationales behind the Wolyn experiment was to attract the aspirations of the Soviet Ukrainians and to demonstrate them that Poland would be the defender of the Ukrainian cause, unlike Moscow and Bolshevik regime, which Poles portrayed as the successors of the Romanov Empire's oppressive policies towards Ukrainians. In principle, the logic was very similar to that of the Soviets understanding of the implications of the nationality policies to the struggle over the contested borderlands. In Polish case, though, the class dimension was largely absent. Timothy Snyder even suggested that the Wolyn experiment was a conscious attempt to emulate the Soviet Ukrainian exercise in irredentist nationality policies.¹⁴ In any case, Jozewski managed to give a boost to the Ukrainian cultural life in Poland and raise Ukrainian support for the *sanacja* government. At the same time, the Wolyn experiment frequently encountered strong opposition, especially from local Poles and Ukrainian radical nationalists.¹⁵ The attempts to transfer and apply comprehensively similar approach in the Ukrainian-inhabited regions of Poland were also mostly unsuccessful. Still, the Soviets assessment was revealing:

Kotsiubinskii¹⁶ considers that the situation in Western Ukraine is catastrophic in all

14 Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War*, 41. In this framework despite their own rhetoric Pilsudski and his associates understood that the Soviet Union was after all quite different from the Russian Empire in terms of the nationality policies and the treatment of the Ukrainian issue.

15 The assassination of Tadeusz Holowko by two members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in 1931 in Truskavets was one of the most resonant instances of such opposition.

16 Iuri Kotsiubinskii – a Soviet Ukrainian diplomat and activist.

the spheres, which are of interest to us. He thinks that we are only observers, that we are marking time, and that we are desperately late all the time. The department of the Baltic states and Poland agrees with Kotsiubinskiy's point of view. Benefiting from our delay, the Polish authorities have put into practice a set of vigorous actions in order to attract the Ukrainian population to their side and to spur anti-Soviet sentiments. The appointment of the former Petliurist deputy minister of Internal Affairs, Jozewski, to the position of the voivode of Wolyn region is a serious step in the implementation of the policies of the Polish government in the Ukrainian question. During Jozewski's travel in Wolyn, delegations from the Ukrainian population, including, in some places, those from *prosvitas* and cooperatives, greeted him. Such facts, as the burgeoning rapprochement between UVO and the supporters of the UNR and the intelligence on the organization in Kovel' of the first Ukrainian military units by the Polish authorities, cause particular worry. In these condition we have no right to mark time and be late. The quick and efficient expansion of our economic and cultural ties with Western Ukraine acquires now an especially crucial political significance.¹⁷

5. 2. Soviet Reactions to Pilsudski's Coup and Its Impact on Shumsky's Affair

The activities of the Polish state in Eastern policies, and especially on the Ukrainian front, created numerous problems for the Soviets both in Polish eastern border regions and more importantly on their own territory. Some of them will be discussed in later chapters.

Among others, the May Coup brought the fear of war in the Soviet Union to a new level. The Soviet high officials and diplomats were convinced that Pilsudski's Poland would be among the most active aggressors, instigated by the United Kingdom. From the Soviet point of view throughout 1926 Britain prepared the grounds for the military intervention against the Soviet Union. In 1927 the diplomatic tensions with the United Kingdom would result in the break of diplomatic relations between the two countries, while the fears and suspicions in the Soviet Union would evolve into a full-blown war scare.¹⁸ In general, in various Soviet analyses and projections Pilsudski's Poland figured

17 From the Soviet diplomatic correspondence 01/09/1928, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 170, d. 154, l. 56

18 Previously, in the historiography the Soviet war scare of 1926-1927 was considered a sham, used in the internal political struggle and/or for the mobilization of the population. Yet, recent studies demonstrated

both as a British pawn in the military aggression and a threat of its own.

Soviet leaders almost immediately realized that the May Coup and the take over of power by Pilsudski and his supporters in Poland meant a complete change of balance in the Ukrainian affairs. They did not need to wait for the official elaboration and implementation of the pro-Ukrainian policies or later of the Jozewski's Wolyn experiment in order to understand that their positions became much more complicated, unstable and insecure in the regions, populated by Ukrainians. In Pilsudski's Poland Moscow and Soviet Ukrainian politicians acquired a strong and worthy opponent in the borderland struggle. Ironically, the ideologically more distant Polish National-Democrats and the pre-1926 Polish governments were a much more convenient neighbor for the Soviet Union. They mostly avoided large-scale involvement in Ukrainian affairs outside of Polish borders or any outward anti-Soviet actions, preferring constructive diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. At the same time pre-1926 Polish assimilatory nationality policies provided the Soviets with the possibilities to exploit the national and social grievances of the national minorities. Bolsheviks eagerly embarked on the granted opportunities, using them to strengthen their positions, expand the ranks of the pro-Soviet groups in Poland and to propagate the benefits of their own alternative approach to nationality policies, implemented in Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus. The post-1926 Eastern policies significantly limited these possibilities and issued Soviet activists and politicians major

that the war scare was the result of the sincere concern of the Soviet leaders, which, though, does not necessarily disqualify the claim, that it could have been also manipulated for the political purposes, Andrea Romano, "Permanent War Scare: Mobilization, Militarization and the Peasant War," in ed. Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano, *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914-1945* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000): 103-120; John P. Sontag, "The Soviet War Scare of 1926-27," *Russian Review* 34 (1975): 67; see also Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 216-224.

challenges. Not only the sphere of the nationality policies was overhauled. The *sanacja* government had also addressed some of the social grievances, particularly with its agrarian policies, which the pro-Soviet groups actively exploited previously. Overall, the May Coup had a significant impact on the Soviet borderland and nationality policies and, among others, played a key role in the development and conclusion of the Shums'kyi's and Khvylovyi's affairs.

The Soviet quickness in the comprehension of the changes in the Ukrainian affairs after the May Coup should not come as a surprise. Pilsudski was not a fresh face for them. Bolsheviks' encounter with the Chief of the State during the Polish-Soviet war gave them a clear impression of Pilsudski's general visions of Poland's geopolitical positions and Ukraine's role within them. In addition, Soviet diplomatic and intelligence services managed to trace at least some of the preliminary Promethean activities mid-1920s.¹⁹ It is unlikely that they had a full picture. Still, the Bolsheviks had indications that Pilsudski's circle still pursued their plans for the non-Russian Soviet nationalities, even being in the opposition. They had no grounds to expect that Polish new leadership would give up on these goals after the May Coup.

The concerns of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders after the May coup and the conceptualization of its consequences for the Ukrainian SSR were summarized in two documents of the Ukrainian GPU. It is possible that these reports were written upon the indications of the OGPU head, Felix Dzerzhinsky, shortly before his death. He was well familiar with the Polish context. Both were prepared in late summer 1926. One was

19 Georgii Mamulia, "Popytki OGPU po Razlozheniiu Kavkazskoi Antibol'shevistskoi Emigracii nakanune I v Period Sozdaniia Dvizheniia Prometej (1924-1926)," in *Ruch Prometejski*, 280-285.

devoted to the problem of “Ukrainian Separatism”, while the other dealt with the “revival of the Ukrainian counter-revolution.” In short, both documents recorded and connected the intensification of the Ukrainian counter-revolution and separatism to the changes in the international situation. “The revival of the activities of the Ukrainian nationalist elements dates to the first half of 1926. It was incited by the coup, organized by Pilsudski. Ukrainian anti-Soviet elements saw in Pilsudski an old ally and patron of Petliura, and because of this recovered their spirits.”²⁰ The document went further and drew a broader connection:

The tactics of the behavior of the Ukrainian counter-revolution is elaborated in direct dependence on the international situation. It can be regarded proven, that the level of activity of the internal chauvinistic elements is in direct correspondence with the complexity and acuteness of the international situation of the Soviet Union. They believe that the collapse of the Soviet Union is inevitable and in case of this catastrophe Ukraine can achieve independence. Therefore, the chauvinistic elements consider it necessary to organize themselves in order to be ready in the appropriate moment to perform their 'historical mission' and at the same time in every possible way to hasten the denouement.²¹

The GPU also pointed out the importance of Pilsudski's policy towards Ukrainians in Poland:

Pilsudski's policy in Western Ukraine has a direct impact on the strengthening of the anti-Soviet tendencies in Ukraine. The logic of Pilsudski's maneuvers in Galicia is extremely simply. His goal is to prepare the springboard for the war against the Soviet Union. To this end he needed to deal with the opposition of the Galician bourgeoisie and to tear it away from the orientation on the Ukrainian SSR. Pilsudski achieved this goal relatively simply by means of various concession in the national question.²²

Thus, these documents drew a direct connection between Pilsudski's policies and the switch of the loyalties of some Ukrainians, even of those, who previously had oriented

²⁰ RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 127, l. 234

²¹ RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 127, 264.

²² RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 127, 267.

themselves on the Ukrainian SSR, to the pro-Polish positions. Basically, it linked any national or anti-Soviet pronouncements and actions with the Polish activities and conspiracies. The GPU circulars demonstrated a clear awareness of the entangled character of the Polish and Soviet nationalities policies. The preoccupation with the impact of the cross-border cultural ties was at display in these documents.

The GPU circulars did not target either Shumsky, or Khvyl'ovyi. Though, one of it mentioned that there was much interest in Khvyl'ovyi's writings among the Ukrainian nationalist immigrants and his pronouncements were very welcome there.²³ Yet, these documents summarized well the change in the perception of the Ukrainian issue by the Soviet Ukrainian and central authorities after Pilsudski coup. Khvyl'ovyi's appeals for the orientation towards “psychological Europe” or “away from Moscow” acquired additional layer and meaning in the eyes of the Soviet Ukrainian leadership. It is important to emphasize that the changes in Poland did not prompt the Soviet Ukrainian authorities to give up on Ukrainianization. They continued to implement it and sometimes even more vigorously, than before. But at the same time, the Soviet Ukrainian leaders became much more suspicious and intolerant of any excesses, “deviations,” and open disagreements on the national question. Previously these were often attributed to the “lack of proper party guidance,” membership in non-Bolshevik organizations in the past, “immature class consciousness” etc. After the May Coup and its conceptualization by the Ukrainian GPU a new and frequently dominating explanation emerged – the impact of the rise of anti-Soviet Ukrainian nationalism, inspired and supported by Polish state and the danger of foreign assault or infiltration. Unsurprisingly, there was much less tolerance to anyone,

23 “On Ukrainian Separatism: A GPU Circular of 1926,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 18 (1994): 299.

who was considered as willingly or by accident aiding the Pilsudski's quest to destabilize the situation in the Ukrainian SSR and Western Ukraine.

Already in September 1926, the Politburo TsK KP(b)U issued a resolution on the party policy in the Ukrainian literature. In this resolution Khvylyovyi found himself in one camp with the Ukrainian nationalist writers from the diaspora:

Beyond the Soviet Ukrainian borders Ukrainian writers from the nationalist fascist camp in alliance with fascist Poland organize a campaign in the literary field against the Soviet Ukraine. One can find its evidence also in the Soviet Ukrainian literature. These anti-proletarian currents echoed in the work of the Ukrainian bourgeois literators of the "neoclassicist" type, were not rejected and even found support among some fellow travelers and VAPLITE, first of all, Khvylyovyi and his group.²⁴

This conclusion basically decided Khvylyovyi's fate. Within the logic, outlined in the GPU documents, ended up being a supporter of Polish allies. He still, though, continued his literary activity. Moreover, after performing self-criticism ritual, in May 1928 the special commission on the Khvylyovyi's nationalist views deemed it possible to keep him in the KP(b)U ranks. Yet, of course, his freedom in pronouncements was very limited.²⁵

The developments in Shumsky's case were more complicated. Clearly, after the partially failed attempt of the reconciliation at June Plenum by fall 1926 the change in the international situation also worsened the attitude to Shumsky's actions and pronouncements. The relations between Kaganovich and Shumsky were also deteriorating. Shumsky was quite reluctant to make a pronouncement on the four points outlined by Kaganovich. He tried to relativize and paraphrase the required points, and delayed the matter as much as possible. Kaganovich and Shumsky agreed that the latter's

²⁴ Published in Khvylyovyi, *Tvory v 5 Tomah*, vol. 5, 512.

²⁵ RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 132, l. 15.

penance would be in the form of an article, which would consist of the transcript of his speech from May 1926 and would be accompanied by Shumsky's criticism of his own speech. Basically, Kaganovich asked Shumsky to pass through the party ritual of self-criticism, which would later become widespread.²⁶ In the first version of the article Shumsky referred to himself in the third person. That was unacceptable for Kaganovich, since the ritual presupposed that the penance should be performed in the first person. They returned to the matter already in December 1926. Yet, by that time the relations between the two were strained. Kaganovich was captious to every little inaccuracy and missed point.²⁷ Shumsky, in turn, demonstrated an evident sensitivity to Kaganovich's remarks: "I should frankly tell you, Lazar Moiseevich, that, in general, your corrections made a painful impression of the attitude towards me, as to a stranger and a person, alien to TsK. even though I did everything to overcome the existing frictions and do not significantly differ from TsK."²⁸

After the Plenum in June 1926, the Soviet Ukrainian leadership and, in particular, Kaganovich were still trying to find a way to settle the issue with Shumsky, though, with much less tolerance and patience. After all, he was an influential high party official and his positions were significantly closer to the official line and less provoking and radical than Khvylovyyi's ones. At the same time some of Shumsky's statements, considered inappropriate already in May and June 1926 and sometimes voiced in the heat of the argument, by the end of summer in the new international situation acquired an even more aggravating meaning. Thus, for instance, Shumsky's defense of Khvylovyyi was already

26 Alexei Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy circa 1948," *The Russian Review* 57 (1998): 25-52.

27 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 72,74,109.

28 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 135, l. 116-117.

not tolerated. While Khvył'ovyi was a lost young talented writer, the moderate Ukrainianizers in TsK KP(b)U could within certain limits tolerate Shumsky's pro-Khvył'ovyi pronouncements. When in the eyes of the Bolsheviks Khvył'ovyi basically became the henchman of the Ukrainian nationalist circles supported by Poland, only a complete rejection of the writer's views by Shumsky was acceptable to the party.

In addition, one more actor contributed to Shumsky's eventual ostracism and transfer from the Ukrainian SSR in February 1927. Already during the first discussions of TsK KP(b)U in May and June, the position of the representative of the KPZU aroused some suspicions. Karlo Maksimovich though being quite cautious with his remarks basically sided with Shumsky on many of the discussed issues. It should also be noted, that according to the recollections Shumsky's first visit to Stalin in October 1925 came just after the Second KPZU conference and several leading members of the latter took part in it.²⁹ This was more or less tolerated in the “comradely” atmosphere of May and June 1926. Yet, the attitude changed after the Bolsheviks conceptualized the implications of the political changes in Poland for the Soviet Union and became increasingly preoccupied with the effects of the Polish policies for Western Ukraine and the Ukrainian SSR. In this new framework the pro-Shumsky positions of the representative of the communist party, whose main target group were Ukrainians in Poland, were at least questionable. Since one of central goals of the KPZU was to propagate the benefits of Soviet nationality policies and, in particular, Ukrainianization among Ukrainians in Poland, the fact, that Maksimovich shared Shumsky's erroneous views, was undermining one of the main rationales behind the existence of the KPZU. It put into danger the

²⁹ Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine*, 118.

Communist movement in Western Ukraine and played into the hands of all those, who criticized the Soviet Ukrainianization and claimed that it was just a Bolshevik sham, that is, first of all, Poles and the Ukrainian political immigrants. It had aggravating consequences both for Shumsky and Maksimovich and his KPZU. Throughout 1926 Shumsky became increasingly associated with factionalism and attempts to divide the KP(b)U. Maksimovich's support of Shumsky consolidated these suspicions and, what was worse, suggested that the factionalism spread beyond the borders of the Soviet Union and penetrated the Communist movement in Western Ukraine. By late 1926 and early 1927 this logic aggravated further Shumsky's position, since the latter within the newly acquired understanding of the impact of Polish policies in the Ukrainian affairs was basically bringing grist to Pilsudski's mill. In the new circumstances the Ukrainian Politburo gladly approved Shumsky's new request for transfer from the Ukrainian SSR. Shumsky got the appointment of the rector of the Leningrad University of National Economy. Yet, some of the Ukrainian party activists continued to send demands to Moscow to send Shumsky to some more remote place and even to read him out of the party.³⁰ The party activists, who requested Shumsky's exile to the backwoods, explained its necessity by the dangers of the continuation of the factional activities by Shumsky in the big city like Leningrad, frequently visited by Ukrainians.³¹ Shumsky's persecutors had some reasons for their suspicions, since the struggle in the KPZU was still ongoing.

For Maksimovich and the KPZU the former's support of Shumsky meant much more involvement of the central and Ukrainian authorities, as well as the Comintern, in

30 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 134, l. 47. Interestingly, in the same letter from 1928 its author claimed that the only possible excuse to keep Shumsky in the party were the considerations of the nationalities policies.

31 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 134, l. 51.

their activities. When in March 1927 the joint session of TsK and TsKK KP(b)U was bidding farewell to Shumsky's, Maksimovich gave a speech, in which he emphasized Shumsky's contribution to the Communist movement in Western Ukraine.³² By this time, though, for the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, even for those who remained on the pro-Ukrainianization positions, Shumsky's contribution was a negative, rather than a positive factor. In addition, Maksimovich's praise for Shumsky reinforced the suspicions among the Ukrainian Bolsheviks that there was something wrong in the KPZU. Therefore, Skrypnyk, who already emerged as the leading specialist on the national question in the KP(b)U, immediately inquired, whether this was the official position of the KPZU or just Maksimovich's personal opinion.³³ The latter responded that it was his private judgment. Yet, this did not prevent Kaganovich to mention in his letter to Stalin: "In the end of the Plenum Shumsky tried to make a bit of noise at parting, but he didn't really manage. He used the representative of the KPZU (Galic.) Maksimovich, who came up with some kind of declaration in Shumsky's defense. I think that we should, in general, pay more attention to the KPZU through IKKI."³⁴

Thus, Maksimovich's pronouncements in favor of Shumsky confirmed suspicions among the Ukrainian Bolsheviks that despite the departure of the former Ukrainian Commissar for Enlightenment, he still had organized followers in the Ukrainian party. More disturbingly for the leadership of the KP(b)U Maksimovich's position suggested that the problem could have extensions into the already vulnerable from the Soviet point of view Western Ukraine. Therefore, Kaganovich suggested a closer inquiry into the

32 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 16, d. 6, l. 115-118. See also, Solchanyk, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine*, 258-259.

33 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 16, d. 6, l. 119.

34 RGASPI f. 81, op. 3, d. 120, l. 35.

affairs of the KPZU. It is hard to suggest, whether the outcome would have been different, if not for the KP(b)U's and the Comintern keen interest in the KPZU affairs and the insistence to endorse the KP(b)U's assessment of Shumsky's and Maksimovich's pronouncements and activities. Possibly, a more flexible approach on the part of Moscow and Kharkiv could have prevented a complete organizational collapse of the Communist and pro-Soviet movement in Western Ukraine. In any case, the transfer of the Shumsky's affair into Western Ukraine resulted in a major split in the KPZU, the parallel existence of two competing party leaderships.

The KPZU split was made possible due to the overly involvement of the KP(b)U in its affairs. This was an issue of permanent contention between the Comintern, various actors in the KP(b)U and RKP(b) and the KPP. This was in many respects symptomatic of Soviet Western borderland policies.

5. 3. From Subversion and Insurrection to the Party Politics: Soviet Policies in the Border Regions of Poland and Romania

In general, the Soviet activities in the border regions of their Western neighbors had several directions. One of the early Soviet strategies was an attempt to spur revolutionary activities with the help of the infiltrated and clandestine agents through sabotage, organization of pro-Soviet revolts, and attacks on the officials of the neighboring states. The Soviet leaders considered, that this could be a successful strategy to destabilize and ideally even overthrow the neighboring governments with the prospect of the accession to power of the Soviet-controlled political forces or in some cases the possible annexation of the border areas to the Soviet Union. Some of the most famous Communist actions of this kind include the revolts in Bendery in 1919 and Tatarbunary in

1924,³⁵ or a failed Communist coup d'etat in Estonia in December 1924. Yet, by mid-1920s the support of the Soviet leadership for such tactics had changed. The main impetus arrived from the Soviet diplomatic circles, though there were also endorsed by the Politburo. The perceived stabilization of the political regimes of the Western neighbors suggested that the strategy of (para)military clandestine revolutionary activity, which largely failed even in more unstable years, was increasingly unlikely to bring the expected fruits. In addition, the Soviet leaders became increasingly preoccupied with the possible military operations against the Soviet Union. The dangers of the “capitalist encirclement” were haunting some of them.³⁶

The fears were not completely ungrounded. Since Word War I with the general French support and under the local leadership of Poland the neighboring states on the Western border of the Soviet Union (Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Baltic States) were in active discussions of the creation of *cordon sanitaire*. The main ideological component of the negotiations was the desire to create a defensive block, which should have prevented the spread of communism to Europe. While mostly due to mutual disagreements between potential participants the plans to create a united *cordon sanitaire* failed, Poland and Romania, in turn, managed to establish active bilateral cooperation, one dimension of which presupposed the defensive alliance in case of the Soviet attack.³⁷ In addition, the *Little Entente* (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia) established as a barrier against Hungarian revanchism, sometimes acquired also anti-Soviet elements.

35 For more on the Soviet clandestine activities in Bessarabia, see Rotari, *Miscarea Subversiva din Basarabia*.

36 James Harris, “Encircled by enemies: Stalin's Perceptions of the capitalist world, 1918 – 1941,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30 (2007): 513-545.

37 Florin Anghel, *Construirea Sitemului “Cordon Sanitaire”: Relații Româno-Polone, 1919-1926* (Cetatea de Scaun, 2008).

While both of these projects were defensive, for the Soviet leadership they often acquired the traits of the feared “capitalist encirclement”, especially in the event of various diplomatic incidents and worsening of relations with one of the participating states.³⁸ The Soviet response presupposed a strong effort to establish “normal” diplomatic relations with the capitalist states and, in particular, with the neighboring countries. By means of the development of close diplomatic relations with the neighboring states and the signing of the bilateral treaties, the Soviet diplomacy was aiming to break-up and disrupt the existing and potential anti-Soviet alliances. The subversive activities of the Soviet-controlled groups harmed diplomatic relations with the neighboring countries and built up tensions, which most Soviet diplomats and Politburo members attempted to avoid. The Bolsheviks had an early indication of this in the diplomatic repercussions, caused by the activities of the Zakordot. The Foreign (*Zakordonnyi*) Section of the KP(b)U, established in 1920, carried out subversive and intelligence activities on the territories of the neighboring states. Eventually, Zakordot's vigorous actions created tensions in the diplomatic relations and resulted in Polish diplomatic notes, sent to the Soviet government.³⁹ By October 1921 TsK KP(b)U was forced to disband Zakordot and scale down the intensity of the foreign subversive activities.⁴⁰ In the perception of the Bolshevik leaders Zakordot got associated with recurring diplomatic troubles, spontaneity, lack of discipline and accountability.

By the mid-1920s the changes on the diplomatic level culminated in important

38 For the interpretation of the Polish defensive alliances as “capitalist encirclement” see, for instance *Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Poliskih Otnoshenii*, 82-84.

39 V. S. Sidak, ed., *Zakordot v Systemi Spetssluzhb Radians'koi Ukrainy. Zbirnyk Dokumentiv* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Natsional'noi Akademii SB Ukrainy, 2000), 5.

40 Ibid, 165

repercussions in the Western border areas. The tactics of the work of the local communist party sections and, in particular, of the communist parties in Poland and Romania had changed. Most importantly it presupposed the changes in various clandestine activities of Soviet agents on both sides of the Soviet border. The Soviet activists, agents and partisans, whose main field of work was in the border areas of Romania and Poland, but who often were organized and briefed on the Soviet territory, carried out various subversive, propaganda and reconnaissance actions for the Soviet services. On February 25, 1925, the Politburo of TsK RKP(b) adopted the decision, which sought to bring some order to rather chaotic activities, often based on own local initiative of the subversive groups.⁴¹ Often unsanctioned initiatives of the local groups “harmed our diplomatic work and complicated the work of the respective communist parties.”⁴² Thus, such decision indicated the willingness of the Politburo to dissociate diplomatically the Soviet Union from the clandestine and illegal actions of the communist partisans and activists in Poland and Romania. Some of the groups were disbanded altogether. The Politburo transferred the control over all remaining groups to the communist parties in Poland and Romania and subordinated them to the needs of the communist movements in these countries. In addition, after this decision no financial support to these groups was expected to come directly from the Soviet institutions, only from the Communist parties in respective countries.⁴³ Nevertheless, this did not happen. As evidenced by later Politburo decisions, through various channels the activities on the other side of the border were still financed both by the all-Union and Ukrainian institutions.⁴⁴

41 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 2, l. 79-81.

42 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 2, l. 79.

43 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 2, l. 79-80.

44 For instance, RGASPI f. 17, op. 162, d. 4, l. 66; RGASPI f. 17, op. 162, d. 6, l. 147.

Besides diplomatic considerations several other factors led to the Politburo decision. The lack of proper control over the groups, active in the border areas, arose suspicions among the Soviet authorities of their possible illegal activities, which could also harm the Soviet Union in the sensitive border regions – such as, for instance, smuggling of foreign goods and publications. It is very likely that these suspicions were not totally ungrounded. In any case it is hard to assess the impact of the Politburo decision. The same Politburo continued to send confusing signals. While willing to remove any possible connections between the subversive groups and the Soviet institutions in order to limit the impact of the former on the Soviet diplomacy, the central authorities continued to provide financial support and to use these groups, when the situation obliged. The reconnaissance of the Polish and Romanian military objects remained an important goal of the pro-Soviet clandestine organizations, particularly in the context of the war scare in 1926-27. Moreover, Soviet local (in border regions) and republican Bolsheviks often intervened with their own initiatives. Soviet Ukraine provided usually the bigger half of the finances for the “work in Western Ukraine.” Therefore, some of the ambitious Soviet Ukrainian party leaders were actively engaged in the planning of the clandestine activities across the border, promoting their own interests or rather the interests of Soviet Ukraine, as they understood them.

Still the overall trend was the one of more clear-cut control over the Soviet activities in the neighboring border regions. The intelligence and counter-intelligence were fully transferred under the control of Soviet diplomats, communist party activists, and military or GPU agents. These were less numerous, than the array of various loosely-knit clandestine groups, but were expected to largely avoid reckless and undisciplined

actions. One of the cornerstones of the Soviet borderland policies were Communist and legal pro-Soviet political organizations. After the cut-down on the subversive and sabotage activities the role of the legal or semi-legal Soviet-controlled organizations increased. They became the main local conductors for the pro-Soviet message, which, among others, presupposed the propaganda of the Soviet nationality policies, and the leverage, used to undermine the support for the governments of the neighboring countries in their border areas.

The Soviet-led political organizations had the aim of exploiting the existing national and social grievances of the local population. Therefore, they largely represented the national minorities in the border regions to the West of the Soviet border. Such regions were Western Belarus, Western Ukraine, Transcarpathia, Bessarabia and Bukovina. Basically, in all these regions the Communists created special Communist party organizations or committees to represent local national minorities. Roughly speaking, they represented the territories, which at least some Soviet and Communist leaders considered contested borderlands. Starting with the mid-1920s, when the Soviet intensified quest to create additional legal means to channel the interests of the communist movements under the guidance of the respective Communist parties, peasant-workers organizations were established. This was the case of the Union of the Revolutionary Peasantry of Bessarabia in 1925, the Belarusian Peasant-Workers' Hramada⁴⁵ and the Ukrainian Peasant-Worker Socialist Union "Selrob" in 1926. These agrarian-oriented organizations had a pro-Soviet orientation and also targeted in their

45 On Belarusian Peasant-Workers' Hramada, see Rudling, *The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism*, 189-199.

activities the respective national minorities, with the special focus on the peasantry. Since the communist movement often faced repressions in Poland and Romania or bans on the participation in the elections, the pro-Soviet agrarian organizations were a way to ensure the presence of the pro-Soviet and pro-Communist forces in legal political life of the neighboring countries. Yet, the Comintern expected that the pro-Soviet agrarian unions would be under direct control of the respective communist organization, like the KPZU patronage over Selrob in Western Ukraine. The KPZU delegated its representatives in the governing bodies of the Selrob. In fact, this turned out to be the only path for KPZU representatives to win seats in the Polish parliament in some of the elections in the 1920s. As political entities with broad following, the pro-Soviet agrarian organizations attracted various activists, who saw an opportunity to realize their own agenda, sometimes different from the expectations of the Politburo and the Comintern. At the same time it was hard for the Soviet governing bodies to keep a close watch over the activities of these heterogeneous organizations⁴⁶ in the neighboring states. Therefore, conflicts and misunderstandings between various Communist and pro-Soviet organizations and institutions were a recurring phenomenon.

The Communist parties of the national minorities were the cornerstone of the Soviet attempt to exploit cross-border national and cultural ties. Their establishment were a testament to the special status, attributed to the respective territories in the Soviet geopolitical outlook. At the same time, such communist organizations were in the center of the competition between several Communist parties and different understandings of the

46 For instance, Selrob was divided from the beginning, made up of two different organizations, I. Ia. Soliar, "Radianofil'stvo u Zahidnii Ukraini (1920-ti rr.)," *Ukrains'kyi Istorychnyi Zhurnal*, no. 1 (2009): 60-62.

communist politics in the borderlands. The KPZU exemplified many of the issues, encountered by the Communist parties of the national minorities, and was possibly the most vivid example of the complicated nature of the activities of such organizations. In effect, they had two centers of the subordination. As the communist sections carrying out their work in Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, organizationally they were a constituent part of the respective communist parties, that is Polish, Romanian and Czechoslovakian. That corresponded to the Comintern principle “one country – one communist party.” There should have been one party center, responsible for all the communist activities in one given country, which, in turn, was already responsible to and represented at the Comintern. For instance, in this framework the KPZU, even bearing the title “party” in its name, was still an autonomous division of the Communist Party of Poland. Nevertheless, the organizational hierarchy was complicated by the cross-border cultural ties, which the Communist parties of the national minorities exploited and made one of their key political resources. Thus, the same KPZU, representing Ukrainians in Poland, coordinated its activities with the KP(b)U and often even followed the directives from Kharkiv, bypassing the KPP. On paper such insubordination should not have taken place. Yet, everybody understood that this was the case and up to certain limits considered this situation normal.

Such reliance of the KPZU on the Ukrainian SSR was convenient and often necessary for the leadership of the Western Ukrainian party. The KP(b)U provided the financial and material support for the KPZU.⁴⁷ The KPP funds were limited and the Polish party was reluctant to direct already scarce finances to its semi-autonomous section.

47 RGASPI, f. 17, op. 170, d. 154, l. 60-61, 111-113

Therefore, the KP(b)U allocation became a main source of the resources for the KPZU party life. The character of the KPZU message and propaganda pushed them into a closer cooperation with the KP(b)U. The KPZU was a Ukrainian-oriented party and the existence, just beyond the border of the Ukrainian Soviet state with a Ukrainian Bolshevik party made the cooperation natural. The KPZU had used the successes of the nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR in their propaganda. In many respects it was one of the key KPZU messages to Ukrainians in Poland. To that end they required close contact with the KP(b)U, exchange of information, guidance and a certain synchronization of the activities. The leadership of the KPZU also eagerly exploited their double subordination. The Western Ukrainian Communist leaders frequently played the KPP and the KP(b)U in order to carve out more autonomy for themselves and for their party organization. Thus, when the KPP attempted to curtail the KPZU autonomy, insisting on the predominance of the party hierarchy, the KPZU leaders would mobilize their supporters in the influential KP(b)U. The KP(b)U then in most cases come to the aid of their fellows, asserting in the KPP or in the Comintern the specificity of the KPZU aims in the Polish context, which required significant autonomy in actions.

The KPZU struggle against the KPP dominance had started even before the subordination of the former to the latter. In 1921, then Communist Party of Eastern Galicia struggled against the attempts to place their movement under the command of the Polish Communists. The Polish occupation of Galicia prompted the unification. Eventually, after the Riga peace settlement in 1921, a meeting took place in Moscow. In the capital of Soviet Russia the KP(b)U signed an agreement with the KPP on the subordination of the Communist Party of Eastern Galicia to the Polish Communists. Yet,

not all Eastern Galicians were ready to accept the agreement. It resulted in a split among Eastern Galician Communists the majority, led by Jozef Vasylykiv, opposing the Polish dominance. The split persisted until Galicia decisively became part of Poland in 1923. Then Vasylykiv's group agreed to the subordination to Polish Communists. At the same time, as a consolation, they were allowed to extend their activities beyond Galicia to other Polish lands with sizable Ukrainian population, that is to Wolyn, Kholm, Podlasie and part of Polesie provinces.⁴⁸ This is when the party acquired the name “Communist Party of Western Ukraine.”

This early conflict outlined the tendencies in the relations between the KPP and the KPZU, which would be frequently on display throughout the 1920s. The KPP would periodically aspire to strengthen its predominance and limit the autonomy of the KPZU, either attempting to assert its monopoly and control over all the communist movement in Poland, or simply demonstrating disregard for the national dimension in communist politics. The KPZU would struggle for more autonomy.

5. 4. The “Communist Ukrainian International”

There was another tendency, which intervened in this dynamic. It can be best summed up by the words of one of leading figures in the Executive Committee of the Comintern, Dmirto Manuilsky, himself of the Ukrainian origin, at the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924:

⁴⁸ Interestingly, one of the Ukrainian Bolshevik leaders, Zatonsky, already in 1921 warned against the unification of Ukrainian communist movement in Galicia with the one in Wolyn and Polesie. He considered it “artificial” and “based upon the erroneous information of the Comintern.” Instead, he suggested that Wolyn and Polesie should have the same party relations with Warsaw as Galicia was projected to have with the latter, that is one of autonomy of the Ukrainian-oriented party organization. RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 4, l. 20. It is telling, how seriously the Bolshevik leader took the differences in the historical development of the Ukrainian-inhabited regions.

At the same time we see that some of the [party] sections of the oppressed nationalities in the name of the right for self-determination are inclined to encroach upon the centralized structure of the communist parties. I will give an example of the Galician Communists. They have very strong tendencies to autonomism. They are inclined to transfer the formula of the state relations to the party relations. And this is very dangerous. In the original project of the resolution, proposed by the section of Central (*sredinnaia*) Europe, there was a paragraph, which could be interpreted, as an attempt of the Ukrainian Comrades to create a certain communist Ukrainian International out of the sections of the KP(b)U, Eastern Galicia, Kholm, Podlesie and Transcarpathian Rus'. A part of comrades rose against such article and changed it with good reason. In our opinion, one should not have created the duality in the administration of the party; it was wrong to create two centers in Warsaw and Kiev.⁴⁹

This passage revealed not only the decentralizing (or in the words of some Polish Communists – “separatist”) tendencies of the KPZU leaders, but also the ambitions of the KP(b)U leaders to assume leadership over all the Ukrainian affairs, aptly captured by Manuil'skyi in the metaphor of the “Communist Ukrainian International” in contrast and maybe even in opposition to the real Comintern. Indeed, some of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders were inclined to look upon all the Ukrainian-inhabited regions in neighboring states as their own private main. In many respects they saw them as Ukrainian lands. Since the Ukrainian SSR was a “Piedmont” for all Ukrainians abroad, then Ukrainian-inhabited lands were the sphere of influence of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders. Therefore, the importance of the nationality policies of the KP(b)U was even more significant. Manuilsky and many leaders of the Communist parties of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania apparently thought otherwise. For them the existence of the “communist sections of the oppressed nationalities” was either an unpleasant nuisance or a convenient and instrumental tool in order to saddle national and social grievances and use them to

49 *Piatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, 17 Iiunia – 8 Iiulia 1924 g. Stenograficheskii Otchiot*, part 1 (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1925), 967-968.

boost the communist movements in the scale of the whole country not just border regions.

Nevertheless, the same Fifth Congress of the Comintern gave the pretext for all the “Ukrainian sections” to strengthen their cooperation and for the KP(b)U to intervene even more frequently into the affairs of the Ukrainian “communist sections of the oppressed nationalities.” The resolution of the Congress emphasized the centrality of the Ukrainian question in Central Europe and stated that the “Ukrainian questions in Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia constitute a unified Ukrainian national question, which requires a common revolutionary resolution for all these countries.”⁵⁰ The character of the envisioned resolution of the Ukrainian question, though, was ambiguous:

Supporting the slogan of the struggle against the annexation of Bessarabia to Romania and for the state self-determination of Bessarabia, the Congress concurrently considers necessary the advancement by the Communist parties of the Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania of the slogan of the unification of the Ukrainian lands (*oblastei*), torn apart by the imperialism, into a Soviet worker-peasant republic.⁵¹

At the same time the struggle for the “national liberation can be successful ... only when the Ukrainian peasantry will build its struggle and organization in a tight union... with the struggle of workers and peasants for the downfall of capital, led by the respective communist parties.”⁵² The Comintern resolution was definitely a success for those Ukrainian Communists, who advocated the orientation of all the Ukrainian communist sections at the Ukrainian SSR. It was likely the outcome of the successful lobbying by the influential members of the KP(b)U. It also fitted well the views of the Bolshevik leaders in Moscow after the official launch of *korenizatsiia* and the possibility to exploit its cross-border implications to the full extent. The advocates of the resolution used this context to

⁵⁰ *Piatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kominterna*, part 2, 126.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 127.

⁵² *Ibid*, 127

their advantage. Yet, the Communists read the resolution differently. For some it was a clear-cut and desired recognition of the natural autonomy (up to full independence in actions) of the Ukrainian sections in three East-Central European countries. Others, though, still emphasized the message of the subordination of the activities of the Ukrainian Communist sections to and their coordination with the Communist parties of Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia with the goal of the common revolutionary struggle in respective countries.

The Comintern resolution demonstrated an important evolution of the Communist spatial perception of the Ukrainian question. Long gone were the Zatonsky meticulous differentiation of Galicia, Wylno and Polesie based upon their historic, political and social specificities. The resolution went beyond these differences and united them under a common umbrella of the “Ukrainian question.” Basically, the underlying assumption was the understanding of the symbolic borders of the Ukrainian national and social territory, which could take precedence over the existing political borders. Interestingly, in this endeavor the Communists united in their imagination the territories, which had not been part of the same state (not even a non-Ukrainian one) at the same time, even if one excludes Bessarabia. In this sense the geopolitical imagination of Ukrainianness by at least some Soviet and Communist leaders could rival in its scale some of the most ambitious Ukrainian nationalists.

Due to this confusion on the means of the “national liberation” of the Ukrainian lands and, in general, on the understanding of the “national liberation,” the question resurfaced frequently in the relations between the Ukrainian sections and their respective communist parties. For instance, at the second Congress of the KPZU, which took place

in May 1925 and featured, among others, Mykola Skrypnyk, the delegates were debating on the issues of the possible secession of the Western Ukraine and its unification with Soviet Ukraine. The decisions of the Fifth Comintern Congress on the Ukrainian question undoubtedly instigated the discussion. Some members took the resolution close to heart and straightforward, interpreting it as an evident hierarchy of the goals of the Western Ukrainian Communist movement, with the unification with the Ukrainian SSR at the top of the list. A minority, especially some of the representatives of the KPP, attempted to downplay the significance of the slogan of the secession of Western Ukraine. Thus, one of the Polish Communists, Mickiewicz, claimed that the goal of the communist movement in Poland, the KPZU included, was to bring about the socialist revolution in whole Poland, not just parts of it. The questions of the “national liberation” of Western Ukraine, according to Mickiewicz, could be resolved only afterward.⁵³ Hence, the call for the unification of Western Ukraine with the Ukrainian SSR was instrumental to reinforce pro-Soviet support among Polish Ukrainians, but not an end in itself. As the result, the Polish Communist faced accusations of the “great-power chauvinism” at the KPZU congress.

Skrypnyk, in fact, despite his already apparent ambitions to play a key role in the Ukrainian Communist movement beyond the borders of the Ukrainian SSR, attempted to find some kind of middle-ground at the Congress. He criticized the tendency of putting too much stress on the slogans of unification of the Western Ukraine with the Ukrainian SSR, which “lead to the passivity of the masses ... who expect that the Soviet Army will soon annex Western Ukraine.”⁵⁴ Skrypnyk carped also at the opinions, widespread in the

53 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 19, l. 65-67.

54 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 19, l. 58.

Polish Communist ranks, that the slogan was wrong, since it alienated Polish workers. Eventually Skrypnyk suggested his own solution: “Every member of the party should know, that only as the result of the united action, united victorious revolt in entire Poland, only after the victory of the social revolution in Poland, the national liberation will arrive.”⁵⁵ It is not clear whether Skrypnyk truly believed in such sequence or whether his own opinions differed, which is likely. Possibly as an invited guest and the representative of the Comintern this time, he only attempted to reconcile the opposing views. In any case, his ambiguous message was not too convincing and maybe even in some cases understandable to many delegates, to say nothing of the larger Ukrainian population in Poland. The discussion rather centered around two opposing positions and was symptomatic of many misunderstandings between the KPP and the KPZU throughout 1920s.

In 1924 Manuilsky hoped that the tendency, captured under the sarcastic “Communist Ukrainian International” was a “passing mistake.”⁵⁶ The following years rather proved otherwise. There was an intensification of the intervention of the KP(b)U and some of its ambitious leaders in the affairs of the Communist parties and sections of the national minorities. The KP(b)U even managed to establish an influential presence in the Bessarabian obkom of the Communist Party of Romania (PCR). Ukrainians constituted a minority in Bessarabia, which was possibly the most unlikely candidate for the title of a “Ukrainian land.” Its Soviet “Piedmont” was the Moldovan ASSR, not the Ukrainian SSR. Also Bessarabia featured very rarely and mostly insignificantly in the

55 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 19, l. 59.

56 *Piatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kominterna*, part 1, 968.

existing interpretations of the Ukrainian symbolic space. Probably the only notable exception was the attempts of the UNR in 1918 to subordinate Bessarabia. It is not clear how Bessarabia figured in Soviet plans in the early 1920s, in case of the successful “re-cession” of the region. Likely, the Bolsheviks envisioned a separate Bessarabian Soviet republic.

By the mid-1920s the situation changed. The Ukrainian SSR consolidated its status and the KP(b)U acquired significant autonomy and influence within the Soviet Union. The geographical proximity favored the Soviet Ukrainian interventions in Bessarabian affairs. Soviet Ukraine became a key re-distributor of the resources for the activities of the Bessarabian obkom, which was often pushed into the underground by the Romanian police and Siguranta. In 1924 beginning with the process of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR, as demonstrated earlier, the Soviet Ukrainian leadership became a crucial actor in the Bessarabian-Moldovan affairs. In the conflict over the leadership in the Moldovan ASSR the KP(b)U sided with Bessarabian and local Moldovan activists against the group, led by the Romanian emigres. This gave the KP(b)U a foothold and many allies in the Moldovan ASSR. The fact that the Moldovan ASSR was part of the Ukrainian SSR gave Ukrainians another pretext to intervene in the Bessarabian affairs on behalf of the “Moldovan” interests. The Bessarabian obkom was interested in the support of the Ukrainian SSR. Ukrainians provided much needed resources. More importantly, similarly to the KPZU in relation to the KPP, Bessarabian communists were inclined to rely on the Ukrainian colleagues in their permanent conflicts with the CC of the PCR. There was a constant breakdown in the communications between the CC of the PCR and the Bessarabian obkom. Partly it was caused by the difficulties of the communist

clandestine activities in the conditions of the permanent pressure of the Romanian interior services. Yet, there were also ideological and political disagreements, which fostered the atmosphere of distrust. The Romanian Communists were unnerved by the constant attempts of the Bessarabian obkom to assert its autonomy and devotedness to the idea of the return of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. While the latter was the approved line of the Soviet foreign policy, which did not recognize the union of Bessarabia with Romania, many Romanian Communists had issues with this slogan. Some had difficulties accepting the idea of the stipulated existence of the separate Moldovan nationality (though, there were usually finding veiled ways to state this). Others considered that the separatist message in regards to Bessarabia created too many problems for the Communist propaganda and appeal in other regions of Romania.

The outreach of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders in Bessarabia consolidated in the end of 1925 and early 1926. To a large extent the CC of the PCR facilitated the strengthening of the Soviet Ukrainian influence over the Bessarabian affairs. In November 1925 after another series of misunderstandings and miscommunication, the CC PCR disbanded the Bessarabian obkom.⁵⁷ On 12 October, 1925, the head of the obkom, Iur'ev, referring to the lack of the communication with the CC PCR, wrote a letter directly to the Comintern, describing the miserable state of the organization and the difficulties in the relations with the CC.⁵⁸ This was an embarrassment for the leadership of PCR and an instance of the insubordination, since the CC claimed that they even received Iur'ev's letter from the Comintern. In any case, after the disbandment the weak regional organization remained

⁵⁷ RGASPI, f. 495, op. 52, d. 26, l. 66.

⁵⁸ RGASPI, f. 495, op. 52, d. 26, l. 4-5.

beheaded and in a disarray. Due to the sensitivity of the Bessarabian question the issue of the obkom was discussed in the Romanian Commission of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in late 1925 and early 1926.

The Ukrainian Bolsheviks also got invited to the proceedings of the Commission in recognition of their expanding role in Bessarabian affairs and upon Iur'ev's suggestion. After the discussions the Ukrainian Politburo adopted its resolution on the Bessarabian issue. Among others, it included a suggestion to create “a Bessarabian communist party with its TsK, as a constituent part of the Romanian communist party.”⁵⁹ Basically, TsK KP(b)U was aiming at the model of the relations, similar to the one of the KPZU and the KPP, which, among others, implicitly presupposed the participation of an external actor, like the KP(b)U in the KPZU affairs. This point raised questions and objections and was not accepted into the Comintern resolution. Still, the final version called for the reconsideration of the decision on the disbandment of the Bessarabian obkom and the exclusion of Iur'ev. In addition, it called for a closer cooperation between the RCP and the KP(b)U on the Bessarabian issue. This resolution gave the KP(b)U a Comintern sanction to intervene more actively in the Bessarabian affairs. Though, in reality the KP(b)U influence in Bessarabia was already on the rise, especially after the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR. By the beginning of 1926 the participation of Besarabia in the “Communist Ukrainian International” became much more prominent.

Manuilsky restated his objections on the involvement of the Soviet Ukrainian leaders in summer 1927, this time more forcefully and naming concrete names. Mykola Skrypnyk, in Manuilsky views, was the most active figure in the attempts to subordinate

59 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 52, d. 26, l. 75.

the Ukrainian sections of the neighboring Communist parties to Kharkiv. The immediate pretext was Skrypnyk's visit to the Transcarpathian section of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. After the visit, the head of the local section, T. Mundok, sent a memorandum to the Comintern, where, among others, he apparently claimed that “the general line of the communist politics in Ukrainian affairs is being elaborated” in Ukraine.⁶⁰ For Manuilsky such statements was an indication of the dangerous trend, which he had noticed at the Fifth Comintern Congress. He demanded from the KP(b)U a discussion on Skrypnyk's actions. Since Manuilsky did not manage to arrive, he summarized his criticism in a letter to the Ukrainian Politburo on 17 August, 1927. The Comintern leader criticized Skrypnyk for his defense of and support for the KPZU throughout the 1920s.⁶¹ Manuilsky claimed that Skrypnyk and Shumsky used every opportunity to attack the KPP for the “great-power” tendencies. Supporting the “separatist tendencies of the KPZU,” Skrypnyk overlooked the “nationalist deviations” of the KPZU leadership.⁶² Manuilsky warned that the Ukrainian Bolshevik was already adopting the same approach to the “young Transcarpathian regional organization... without deep Marxist or Bolshevik roots in the past.”⁶³ The Comintern leader concluded, asking to prevent Skrypnyk's further interference in the activities of the Ukrainian sections.⁶⁴

Clearly, the case of the Transcarpathian regional organization was just a pretext for Manuilsky. He had reservations to the interference of some of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks in Ukrainian affairs beyond the borders of the Ukrainian SSR at least for some time.

60 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 32, l. 12

61 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 32, l. 10-11

62 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 32, l. 11.

63 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 32, l. 12.

64 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 32, l. 13.

Nevertheless, the timing of Manuilsky's letter was not an accident. In summer 1927 the KPZU split was getting deeper and became already the issue of the concern in Poland, the Comintern, Moscow, and Kharkiv. Manuilsky attempted to exploit the turned up opportunity and to deal with the phenomenon, he found inappropriate. Skrypnyk's and other Soviet Ukrainian leaders' actions were bypassing the established chain of command, belittling the role of the respective Communist parties, and of the Comintern, which was possibly even more importantly for Manuilsky, as one of the leading figures of the international organization. Manuilsky's letter basically made Skrypnyk along with Shumsky partly responsible for the developments, taking place in the KPZU. This was a grave accusation at this time, though, the outcome of the affair was not yet fully clear. In fact, if taken seriously, Manuilsky's accusation could not only mean the marginalization of Skrypnyk in the international Ukrainian affairs, but it could even cost him his political career, like in the case of Shumsky.

As the document suggest, Manuilsky withdrew his critical letter upon the request of TsK KP(b)U.⁶⁵ Apparently, the Soviet Ukrainian party leadership had no intention to throw under the bus one of their most influential members. Several considerations could have guided their decision. The timing, which Manuilsky found convenient for his outburst, was less appropriate for any serious campaign against Skrypnyk, from the point of view of the Ukrainian Politburo. It was hard to predict the consequences of the possible removal of another major, public Soviet Ukrainian leader, whose specialization was nationality policies and who had just assumed the position of the Commissar for Enlightenment. Skrypnyk, unlike Shumsky, was also an old Bolshevik, deeply embedded

65 RGASPI, f. 495, op. 126, d. 32, l. 9.

and highly influential in the KP(b)U leadership. In fact, Skrypnyk was one of the most ardent critics of Shumsky's (and eventually the KPZU leadership's) positions and actions. This undoubtedly raised his authority in the KP(b)U to its highest, exactly in these years. It is also very likely, that at least some members of the Ukrainian Politburo, Kaganovich included, shared Skrypnyk's understanding, possibly in a less ambitious form, of the role of the Ukrainian SSR and the KP(b)U in the international Ukrainian affairs. During his tenure as the General secretary of the KP(b)U, Kaganovich started almost every Plenum, with the prolonged discussion of the international significance of the Ukrainian SSR and the Soviet construction in the republic. On paper they could agree with the Comintern's chain of command, but the international situation, personal ambitions, and ideological predispositions prompted them to go beyond the established limits of actions.

Manuilsky failed to get Skrypnyk marginalized or at least limited in his activities. On the contrary, Skrypnyk went out of the Shumsky's affair as the biggest authority on the national question in the Ukrainian SSR. As the next chapter will demonstrate, Skrypnyk left his imprint on and was a central figure in the Soviet Ukrainian borderland and nationality policies beginning with 1927 and up to the early 1930s. Nevertheless, his influence on the international Ukrainian affairs indeed got limited. The limits, though, were imposed not by his colleagues, the Comintern, or his own regained sense of the party discipline. It was the collapse in the Western Ukrainian communist movement, which undermined the possibilities of Skrypnyk and other Ukrainian leaders to engage in efficient borderland policies.

5. 5. The KPZU Split

The split in the KPZU exposed most of the problematic issues of Soviet borderland policies and the activities of the communist parties of national minorities described earlier. The outline of the general development of the split was already published.⁶⁶ In this subchapter I will give only a general overview of the developments in the KPZU in 1926-1928, focusing on some of the issues, relevant for current chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the keen interest in the KPZU's position on the KP(b)U debate on Shumsky emerged after Maksimovich, the KPZU representative in Kharkiv, made a speech, defending Shumsky's contribution to the development of the communist movement in Western Ukraine. There was an accumulating discontent among the leadership of the KP(b)U due to the KPZU silence on the Shumsky affair throughout 1926 and early 1927. The KPZU-controlled press had also kept silence on the debate on the national question, taking place in the Ukrainian SSR. In order to reveal the positions of the KPZU Mykola Skrypnyk attended the Plenum of the KPZU on 9-10 April, 1927, as a representative of the Comintern and the KP(b)U. After giving his overview on the situation in Western Ukraine and in the Ukrainian SSR in connection with the Shumsky's and Khvyli'ovyi's affairs, the Ukrainian Bolshevik posed the questions directly: "Are you with Maksimovich and Shumsky or with the KP(b)U? With Bolshevism or with national Bolshevism?"⁶⁷

To his surprise the majority of speakers, recognizing the correctness of Skrypnyk's assessment of the situation in Western Ukraine and of KP(b)U nationality policies, still

66 Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1929*, 127-169; Solchanyk, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine*, 222-294; Iu. Iu. Slivka, *Storinky Istorii KPZU* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1989).

67 Quoted in Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1929*, 128.

defended Maksimovich and Shumsky. After the voting on Maksimovich's statements the majority of the present KPZU members, including the leading figures in Vasyl'kiv and Turiansky, voted in support of Maksimovich. This was an early indication of the impending split in the KPZU. Skrypnyk left, unable to secure support. While the KPP largely avoided the issue, it was discussed in detail by the Ukrainian Politburo. This meeting is of interest, since Skrypnyk first formulated there the interpretation of the “deviation” in the KPZU, which was supported by Kaganovich and eventually became predominant.

Skrypnyk enumerated some of the conditions, which made the KPZU vulnerable to the misreading of the nationality policies: the origin of many members in the Galician USDP, known for its nationalism, or even directly in the national liberation movement; lack of the solid Leninist tradition; the party's predominantly non-worker structure; the party's work among the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, which in turn influenced the party. These were the factors, which most of the critics of the KPZU found sufficient in order to explain the mistaken line of the support for Shumsky and Maksimovich. Skrypnyk, though, backed by Kaganovich, went beyond and added another factor. He emphasized the changed situation in Western Ukraine, particularly the change in the policy towards Ukrainians after the May Coup and the attempts, often successful, to convince some groups of Ukrainians to cooperate with the Polish authorities.⁶⁸ Skrypnyk-Kaganovich's interpretation had the capacity to give an answer to the question of the time of the KPZU “deviation.” Other mentioned factors were more or less permanent. Only the change in Polish nationality policies had a dynamic. In that sense Skrypnyk and Kaganovich besides

68 Quoted in Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1929*, 133.

ideological and political explanations, applied also the situational analysis to the case of the KPZU.

At the time of the Ukrainian Politburo discussion there was still hope that the KPZU issue could be resolved relatively smoothly, with the removal of Maksimovich and the critical resolutions on Shumsky by the Western Ukrainian party organization. By the end of the year few illusions remained on this matter. The majority, led by Vasyl'kiv and Turiansky, and the minority, led by Sukhy and Alexander, were trying to outplay each other organizing competing KPZU Plenums and accusing each other of playing behind each other's back.

The minority attempted to play the role of the disciplined party organization, which strictly followed and reproduced the decisions, adopted by the KP(b)U and the Comintern. They were pressing the majority to do the same and presented their prevarication, as the refusal to accept the correctness of the KP(b)U and the Comintern line on Shumsky. The majority found itself in a tough spot. They recognized Khvyly'ovyi's errors and the correctness of the nationality policies of the KP(b)U, but attempted to avoid strong statements on Shumsky. Moreover, when it became clear that without outright critique of Shumsky the reconciliation with the KP(b)U and the Comintern would be impossible, and as the split aggravated, the majority switched its rhetoric to the one of support for Shumsky and others, “the best Ukrainian forces” driven away “under the pretext of deviation.”⁶⁹

Why was the majority so insistent in going against the line, suggested by the KP(b)U and the Comintern? I have no definitive answer to that question. Apparently, the

69 *Postanovy VIII Konferencii KPZU* (Lviv: Vydannia TsK KPZU, 1928), 32.

leaders of the KPZU majority misread the degree of their own autonomy and the importance of the party discipline. The successful experience of balancing between the KPP and the KP(b)U possibly gave them a wrong impression of the limits of their independence in party decisions. The close contact between the KPZU and the KP(b)U, which the leaders of the former so cherished, turned against the leaders of the majority, in the context of the Shumsky affair. The figure of Shumsky himself was also of importance. It is even possible that Maksimovich was speaking relatively sincere, when he described Shumsky's positive input in the Western Ukrainian communist movement. Shumsky was the USSR's diplomatic representative in Poland in the early 1920s. In this capacity he did play a key role in the first organizational years of the Western Ukrainian communist movement and had numerous close contacts within. It is unlikely, though, that he deliberately staged the KPZU "deviation," as the Soviet Ukrainian and the Comintern leaders would present it, painting the whole affair as part of one organized phenomenon. For the KPZU majority Shumsky was a rather a symbol of certain understanding of the nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR. On the other they saw a trend, which negated Ukrainianization or downplayed its significance. The KPZU majority built their political careers and their following around the understanding of the nationality policies, which they, possibly erroneously, associated almost exclusively with Shumsky and his circle. Therefore, the disavowal of Shumsky, as they could see it, would mean the political bankruptcy and the loss of the built-up support in Western Ukraine.

The majority had few chances for the success in the struggle for power in Western Ukrainian communist movement. The KP(b)U and the Comintern were against them. The KPP, which initially avoided pronouncements on the issue, had also used the opportunity

to strike a blow at the problem organization, which caused the Polish Communists many headaches. The majority's only left resource in the struggle was the support of local organizations. Yet, under the pressure of other Communist organizations and with time this support eroded. In addition, by 1928 the Polish authorities intensified their crackdowns on the Western Ukrainian communist movement. For the supporters of the majority, who were already deprived of much material support from the Comintern and the KP(b)U, this was fatal. After a continuous struggle, the leaders of the majority basically ceased their political activity. The KPZU, though, never came even close to the level of influence, it had before the split.

5. 6. Conclusions

The May Coup had a profound impact on the evolution in Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and Western Ukraine. Before the coup the Bolsheviks felt relatively comfortable in promoting the benefits of their nationality policies in the contested borderlands of the neighboring states. In fact, some of the main problems occurred due to the misunderstandings, ambitions and mutual distrust of the activists in the Communist parties and their sections. One of the underlying issues of the all the debates and conflicts was the balance between national and social/class in the communist movement and the propaganda. Some of the most ambitious Soviet Ukrainian leaders attempted to expand their own influence and that of the KP(b)U to all the Ukrainian-inhabited lands. This encountered the resistance of the organizations, whose domain was infringed, that is the Communist parties of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia and the Comintern. The May Coup erupted the already tense web of interests, ambitions and

mutual (dis)trust.

Pilsudski's coup and the ensuing policies towards Ukrainians changed the equation in the Ukrainian borderland politics. Now not only the Soviets were eager to use cross-border cultural ties. They found a strong opponent in the Polish leader and his associates, who were also eager to play an active role in the Ukrainian affairs and exploit the Ukrainian cross-border cultural ties. The new situation with the constant pressure from Poland limited the possibilities for the discussion on alternative directions in the national question and its international implications. The outward critique of and disagreement with the general line was treated with much suspicion and contemplations on the hidden motives of such actions. Yet, this did not mean that the Soviet Ukrainian leadership became less ambitious in its borderland and nationality policies. Even though, they had to be more careful and more attentive to the Polish actions. In certain respects the consolidated position, which emerged after the crisis and presuppose less space for discussion, proved to be a strong enough ground for the reinforced implementation of Soviet nationality policies. Mykola Skrypnyk became a key figure in this context.

Chapter 6. Skrypnyk's Experiment: Soviet Borderland Policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the late 1920s.

The Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in 1920s presupposed not only the definition of the relations of the two republics with the neighboring Poland and Romania and their respective Eastern border regions. As demonstrated in previous chapters, they also encompassed the delineation of the relations of the borderland Republics with their respective higher administrative center: Moscow – for the Ukrainian SSR and Kharkiv – for the Moldovan ASSR. It also included the problem of other nationalities, inhabiting the republics. Of particular importance for borderland and nationality policies were Russians and Russian-speaking population in the Ukrainian SSR and Ukrainians in the Moldovan ASSR. The role of these groups in nationality policies and the balance between them and the titular nationalities, which the republics were named after, were frequently at the center of debates and tensions.

This chapter will focus on the nationality policies in the second half of the 1920s. A key figure, who emerged as the most influential in the region in these years, was Mykola Skrypnyk. As the previous chapter demonstrated, Skrypnyk became a highly-influential party activists in the international Ukrainian affairs and was one of the most propagator of the idea of the Ukrainian SSR as the “Ukrainian Piedmont.” His political weight within the Ukrainian SSR was growing throughout the mid-1920s and reached its peak after 1927, when he succeeded Shumsky as the Commissar of Enlightenment of the Ukrainian SSR. In the aftermath of the Shumsky affair and especially after the departure

of Kaganovich from Ukraine in 1928, Skrypnyk emerged as the leading authority and theoretician on the national question in the Ukrainian SSR, a position he long aspired to.¹ As the Commissar of Enlightenment, the Old Bolshevik of the Ukrainian origin, could attempt to implement most of his theoretical ideas in practice. This chapter will focus on some of the key endeavors and innovations, which took place in the late 1920s during the first several years of Skrypnyk's tenure. First, I will deal with the issue of Russians and Russian-speaking population in the Ukrainian SSR. I will then discuss nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR and the issue of Ukrainianization in the small republic, in addition to the Moldovanization campaign. In the second part I will analyze, how Soviet policies towards the orthography and literary norm of the Ukrainian and Moldovan languages in the late 1920s evolved. In the last part of the chapter I will briefly discuss the trial of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU). This was not only a crucial moment for Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR. The trial had also signaled an important change for Skrypnyk's tenure, as allegedly the most important party activist in Soviet Ukraine. Dealing with both the issue of Russian in the Ukrainian SSR and the SVU the chapter will touch upon the problem of two crucial social groups for borderland policies in Ukraine: the Russian-speaking proletariat and the (old) Ukrainian intelligentsia.

6. 1. Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Defining the Status of Russians in the Ukrainian SSR

The issue of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Ukrainian SSR

1 James Mace's argument that Skrypnyk became the dominant political figure in the Ukrainian SSR after 1927 is somewhat an overstatement, Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation*, 192. Undoubtedly, Skrypnyk influence in the nationality sphere was almost unrivaled. In other directions of the Soviet politics his weight was not so overwhelming. Moreover, even in nationality policies some of his intents and decisions could be blocked by other leaders of the KP(b)U, as the case of Skrypnyk's invitation of 1.500 Galician teachers to the Ukrainian SSR demonstrated.

was a potentially explosive question. Therefore, frequently in the discussions on the nationality policies Soviet Ukrainian party leaders preferred to not address the problem explicitly. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks were well aware that in too many cases the party and Soviet administration relied on the Russian language. Ukrainianization was supposed to at least partially change this tendency. This, though, left the issue of the Russian population open and for some time unaddressed. In many discussions the question of Russian and Russian-speakers in the Ukrainian SSR became the elephant in the room. Everyone was aware of the issue, took it into consideration, but few were willing to tackle it openly. Even a careless slip of the tongue in favor or sometimes even in defense of the Russian language could be interpreted and spanned as the manifestation of the “Great-Russian chauvinism.” At the same time the overly aggressive anti-Russian pronouncements met the fierce resistance of those Soviet Ukrainian party activists, who were opponents of the fast pace of Ukrainianization and more often than not represented the industrial East and South of the republic.

A key problem in this context was the ethnic and linguistic composition of the proletariat and the major industrial towns in the Ukrainian SSR, which were predominantly Russian-speaking. As the result, pursuing aggressively the policy of Ukrainianization, the KP(b)U often provoked the grievances of those social groups, which along with the KP(b)U was considered to be the backbone of the Soviet regime in Ukraine. The paradox was clear to the Soviet Ukrainian leaders. Yet, they advocated different solutions to it. In that respect the differentiation between Russians and Russian-speakers was an important dimension of the problem. Some Ukrainian Bolsheviks disregarded this division almost entirely. For them Russian-speakers had already adopted

Russian language, and should have been treated not much differently from Russians, irrespective of their original ethnicity and native language. For others, the Russian-speakers, unlike ethnic Russians, were primarily the victims of the Tsarist Russification. Therefore, they intended to struggle with the consequences of the Tsarist policies and to reverse them to the extent possible. It was Skrypnyk, whose approach settled the issue at least for a short period of time, though it still left some of its dimensions unresolved. There were, though, other attempts to suggest a solution for the problem of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Ukrainian SSR.

Possibly, the most prominent in the effect it produced, was the intervention of Dmitro Lebid, then the Second secretary of the KP(b)U. In March 1923, he published an article in the newspaper *Kommunist*. In the article Lebid stated that “the party should carry out its educational work in the village ... in the language, that is comprehensible to the peasantry ... therefore, we should come to a conclusion that our party should master the Ukrainian language and spread (*provodit'*) the culture, using it.”² Thus, Lebid treated the Ukrainian language only as a tool and opposed “Ukrainianization for the sake of Ukrainization,” even suggesting that “the Party should check whether the Ukrainian language gives the possibility to accelerate the cultural process among the Ukrainian people, especially among the peasantry ... or whether it hampers it, complicating the mastery of the culture, rather than helping it.”³ Thus, stating the possible general usefulness of the Ukrainian language for limited goals, Lebid in fact questioned the benefits of Ukrainianization and eventually even found it harmful:

2 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2255, l. 11.

3 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2255, l. 11-12.

It would be a reactionary (*reakcionnaia*) measure for the interests of the cultural movement now, to put the task of the active Ukrainianization of the Party, and, by extension, of the working class... since nationalization, that is the artificial imposition of the Ukrainian language, in the context of the current political, economic, and cultural balance between the town and the village, – means to support the culture of village in comparison with the higher urban culture ... We know theoretically that the struggle of two cultures is inevitable. In Ukraine, due to historical circumstances, the urban culture is Russian culture, while the rural culture is the Ukrainian one. No Communist or true Marxist can say, that 'I advocate the victory of the Ukrainian culture,' if this culture will impede our progressive movement.⁴

Thus, in the article Lebid stated the inevitability of the struggle of the Russian urban proletarian and Ukrainian village cultures, and emphasized the more progressive character of the former. For him the main division is between towns and villages, between the proletarian culture and the peasant one. The class categories played decisive role in his analysis. Since for Lebid the urban proletarian culture in the Ukrainian SSR was predominantly Russian, he saw no need and even dangers in the imposition of the Ukrainian village one. Therefore, the active Ukrainianization in this scheme was the movement against the current of the inevitable historical progress.

This was possibly the most eloquent and coherent pronouncement against the fast-paced Ukrainianization in the Ukrainian SSR and in certain respects Ukrainianization as such. Yet, Lebid's article likely should not be treated, as a simple statement of opinion and the attempt at a policy shift. The date of the publication suggests that there could have

4 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2255, l. 12.

been other reasons behind the publication of the article. Exactly at this moment major shake-ups in the Soviet Ukrainian leadership were taking place. The First secretary of the KP(b)U, Dmytro Manuisky, got increasingly occupied with the Comintern affairs and eventually was appointed to one of the leading positions at the international organization. At the same time it was becoming clear that due to the conflicts with Moscow the days of Christian Rakovsky, as the head of the Soviet Ukrainian Sovnarkom and basically the most influential politician in Kharkiv, were likely numbered. The leading positions in Kharkiv were open. Therefore, the article can be also interpreted as a possible bid for power on the behalf of Dmytro Lebid, especially taking into consideration that the outgoing leader of Soviet Ukraine, Rakovsky, earned the reputation of the defender of Ukrainian interests. He attempted to mobilize the support of the adversaries of Ukrainianization in the KP(b)U, which suggests that the Second secretary considered and likely knew that there were a sufficient number of the former among the members of the party. Similarly, it could be also an attempt to mobilize support for himself and his vision of nationality policies in Moscow.

Lebid's manifest provoked an uproar among the Soviet Ukrainian party activists, who supported an active involvement of the Soviet authorities in the cultural development of the Ukrainian nationality. Shumsky came up with the most publicized and stinging reply. He questioned Lebid's assessment of the national composition of the proletariat in Soviet Ukraine and clear-cut division between the Russian and Russified urban working class and the Ukrainian village peasantry.⁵ Shumsky paid even more attention to Lebid's claim that the struggle between two cultures is inevitable. Shumsky argued that this was

5 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2255, l. 16.

not a Marxist point of view and it contradicted the internationalist worldview of the proletariat.⁶ Both Lebid and Shumsky in their discussion claimed to represent the proper Marxist understanding of the question.

Whatever the reasons behind Lebid provocative pronouncements, they did him a bad turn. Unfortunately for him, soon after the publication of his article, the Twelfth Party Congress officially proclaimed *korenizatsiia*. As Terry Martin concluded one of the features of the new campaign was the inadmissibility of the neutrality in nationality policies.⁷ Soviet authorities were expected to intervene actively in nationality issues and mostly on the behalf of the “previously oppressed” national groups, even if at the expense of the interests of Russians. In this context Lebid's somewhat fatalistic position with the pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian accents found itself in contradiction with the officially stated official stance of the party. In addition, while possibly attracting some sympathies of the members of the KP(b)U, who opposed active Ukrainianization, Lebid alienated its supporters. As the result, even though major changes did take place in the Soviet Ukrainian leadership, Lebid remained in the position of the second secretary and soon left Ukraine altogether. The “theory of the struggle of two cultures” became a scarecrow and a strong accusation in all the debates on the national question in Ukraine in the upcoming years.⁸ Emanuel Kviring, who occupied the position of the First secretary of the KP(b)U before the arrival of Kaganovich, was not an ardent supporter of Ukrainianization himself. Eventually it would be one of the reasons of his removal from the position. Still, he largely avoided such explicit and provocative pronouncements, as Lebid's.

6 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2255, l. 17.

7 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 16.

8 See for example, E. F. Hirschak, *Na Dva Fronta v Bor'be s Natsionalizmom* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Sotsial'no-Ekonomicheskoe Izdatel'stvo, 1931), 19-22

Due to the scale of the reaction and the consequences the issue of the Russian and Russian-speaking population, particularly the working class, largely disappeared from the open debates. In the following couple of years despite the lack of the enthusiasm of the head of the KP(b)U, Kviring, Ukrainianianization was on everybody's lips. In many cases it still, though, remained on paper. The actual implementation of the nationality policies depended much on local actors: local party activists, heads of the enterprises, newspaper editors, school principals, teachers and the scarcity of resources. Nevertheless, the lack of the clear instructions on the satisfaction of the Russian cultural and educational interests was more or less evident. At the same time Russians and Russian-speakers encountered the necessity to learn Ukrainian or at least the persistent declarations on this topic. Often the situation, which favored the promotion of the Ukrainian culture and language, and was ambivalent or even militant towards the Russian language, provoked grievances of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Ukrainian SSR. A short note, which the head of the Odesan section of the KP(b)U Korniushev received during the meeting of the Party activists from Odesa on January 1, 1926, sums up some of the major complaints and attitudes⁹ aptly:

Comrade Korniushev,

For you, more than for anybody else, it should be clear that the majority of the population of Odesa and Odesa region consists of Russians and Jews. Why then childishly fool oneself (*po-rebiach'i teshit'*) that it is not so. The universal (*pogolovnaia*) Ukrainianization - of the predominantly non-Ukrainian population – is a forcible action, characteristic of the colonizing policies of bourgeoisie. There is an attempt to press All non-Ukrainian population, contrary to its will, into the alien Ukrainian culture and language. Current line leads to the artificial assimilation of the Russian and Jewish population within the privileged Ukrainian nation. Where is

9 For an overview of some of similar complaints, see E. Iu. Borisionok, "Russkie ob ukraincah i ukrainizatsii, 1910-1930-h godov," in E. Iu. Borisionok ed., *Russkie ob Ukraine i Ukraincah* (SpB: Aleteia, 2012).

the connection to the nationality policy, to the party program? There is none. There is a forgery (*podlog*) in nationality policies. Why should one fool oneself that the population of the Odesa region itself fell in love with the Ukrainian language. Whom are you kidding and who are you ingratiating yourself with? It is time finally to take of the blinders and to stop suppressing the freedom of the language of the non-Ukrainian nation. How long will TsK KP(b)U carry out the forced Ukrainianization and were will it get us?

The note highlights some of the attitudes, which existed among the rank-and-file of the KP(b)U. Similar grievances existed among the broader population. In fact, some of the leaders of the KP(b)U, especially from the South and the East of the Ukrainian SSR, had also shared at least partly such attitudes, as some of the documents discussed in previous chapters suggest. They did so based on their political views, understanding of the party priorities or the influence of the rank-and-file party members and the non-party population. Still, the leaders of the KP(b)U, who opposed the rapid Ukrainianization, were more careful in their pronouncements, understanding that they can share the fate of Lebid.

Thus, as the result of the ambivalence in nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR, the position and status of Russians and Russian-speakers in the nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR remained unclear. Soviet nationality policies aspired to satisfy the cultural needs of all nationalities. Therefore, education and cultural activities in Russian were widespread, partly also because of the lack of the Ukrainian-speaking personnel. At the same time, since Russians were not a formerly “oppressed nationality” for the Bolsheviks it was unclear to what extent the Soviet authorities should satisfy their cultural needs or to what degree Russians and Russian-speakers should be drawn into the Ukrainianization campaign. With Russian-speakers it was even more complicated, since they could be of different ethnic origins. The ambiguity persisted at least for several years.

The question of the Russian and Russian-speaking population, particularly the working class, came again to the foreground and became an issue of open debate in spring 1926. During the Shumsky affair and in its aftermath. Shumsky, himself or in Stalin's interpretation of his words, raised the issue of the “forced Ukrainianization” of the proletariat in their discussion. Stalin and many leaders of the KP(b)U agreed that the “forced Ukrainianization” was inadmissible. Stalin and Kaganovich on several occasions were rather vague on the issue – rejecting the “forced Ukrainianization,” they concluded that it would happen over time naturally. Soviet nationality policies in the 1920s explicitly declaratively rejected coercion and force, considering those part of the oppressive state approach. At the same time there was much force in place in the Ukrainainization campaign and other instances of *korenizatsiia*. The Bolshevik leaders understood that well and the bone of contention in the debate on the “forced Ukrainianization” was on the tempo and the aggressiveness of the process. For instance, people were forced to choose the identity among those, which were permitted – one could not identify him/herself as a “Maloross” in the 1926 census. In any case the emergence of the concept of the “forced Ukrainianization” of the proletariat in the Soviet Ukraine put the issue of the Russian and Russian-speaking population again in the center of attention.

Just at the same time the problem of the Russian population in Ukraine was voiced on the all-Union level. In April 1926, at the TsIK session Iurii Larin criticized Kharkiv's approach to nationality policies and emphasized that Russian were not treated as a national minority and were denied national soviets. The secretary of TsIK, Avel Enukidze, in many respects supported Larin's pronouncements. The Ukrainian participants of the session defended Kharkiv's nationality policies. Zatonsky argued that as a former ruling

nationality Russians were already too strong culturally to give them additional support. Skrypnyk, though, claimed that with the growing success of Ukrainianization, Russians became a national minority.¹⁰

The participants of this debate on the TsIK session somewhat distorted the actual situation. In fact, on 1 August, 1923, the decrees of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom and VUTsVK already proclaimed Russians the “largest national minority in Ukraine.”¹¹ Afterwards, though, for several years Russians were not put into the category of a “national minority.” This also did not result in the creation of Russian national soviets, unlike other national minorities in Ukraine, who by 1 April, 1925, had already more than 100 village soviets. The situation changed soon afterwards, likely after the arrival of Kaganovich, who reinforced the Ukrainianization campaign. Some Soviet Ukrainian leaders claimed that before 1925 there was no need for Russian national soviets, since the local Soviet authorities in the regions with large Russian population anyway used Russian in the administration.¹² With the demands on the switch of the administration to the Ukrainian language, the problem of the Russian soviets became more pressing. By March 1926 there were already 119 newly established Russian village soviets.¹³ Thus, the speakers at the TsIK session did not take into consideration some of the latest developments of the Russian issue in the Ukrainian SSR. Still, the debate highlighted that these initial efforts had not yet evolved into an elaborated comprehensive approach.

As the result of these developments in December 1926, when Shumsky's case was

10 For the discussion of the TsIK session, see Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 37-39.

11 I. F. Kuras, ed., *Natsional'ni Vidnosyny v Ukraini u XX st. Zbirnyk Dokumentiv i Materialiv* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1994), 106; Viktoriia Efimenko, “Stvorennia Rosiis'kyh Natsional'nyh Raioniv USSR,” *Problemy Istorii Ukrainy: Fakty, Sudzhennia, Poshuky* 21 (2012): 74.

12 Efimenko, “Stvorennia Rosiis'kyh Natsional'nyh Raioniv USSR,” 77.

13 Ibid, 78.

largely settled, approaching the transfer of the ambitious Commissar of Enlightenment from the Ukrainian SSR, the Ukrainian Politburo held a meeting, which aimed to settle the problem of the Russian and Russian-speaking population. Mykola Skrypnyk, who with the gradual ostracism of Shumsky¹⁴ became the leading and unrivaled authority on the nationality question, was a key figure in the discussion.

A number of participants addressed the issue of the non-satisfied cultural needs of the minority groups or the cases of the forced education in the languages, which the parents found inappropriate for their children. For instance, Samuil Lazovert gave examples of the “forced Jewification (*evreizacii*),” when Jewish children, who did not know the language at all were sent to Jewish schools despite the protests of their parents.¹⁵ Apparently, Lazovert referred to the cases of Russian-speaking Jews. This case is a vivid manifestation of one of major problems of Soviet nationality policies, of the difficulties of the definitions of one's nationality and the choice of the appropriate policies to satisfy one's cultural and educational needs. More importantly, Lazovert raised explicitly the issue of the Russian population in the Ukrainian SSR. He also told an anecdote about the demarcation of the Ukrainian and Russian population in the Artemovsk region. There one of the Soviet officials identified one's nationality based upon the quantity of the tea drunk: “if one drinks a little of tea – then one is a Ukrainian, if a lot – then a Russian. He [the Soviet official] says that the local population speaks Russian, but has Ukrainian family

14 Skrypnyk himself contributed to the demise of Shumsky, as one of the most active and comprehensive critics and accusers of the latter in the debates. In fact, Skrypnyk's role in the affair became a good springboard for him in his ascent to the status of one of the most influential party activists in the Ukrainian SSR in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Later Skrypnyk also took pride in the fact, that he was among the first to recognize and reveal Shumsky's “deviation”

15 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2247, l. 99

names”¹⁶ Lazovert concluded that there was no clear understanding in Soviet Ukraine on the composition of the Russian population.

Skrypnyk used Lazovert's speech as a starting point to state his own argument:

Lazovert said correctly, that we have not determined, what the Russian population in Ukraine is. I advocated and advocate the point of view, which presupposes the frank acknowledgment that the Russian population in Ukraine is a national minority. Since it is a national minority, we should ensure it with the appropriate rights. At the same time, we do not have a single Russian raion, even on the territory of the former Chernigiv gubernia with the predominantly Russian population. We have continuous territories with the predominantly Russian population. But we do not see it after the raionirovanie. Then we have another problem of looking at Ukrainians in national regions, as a national minority. This is not reflected in the legislation.¹⁷

In fact, Skrypnyk took Lazovert's conclusions further than the latter suggested. In this statement Skrypnyk, indeed, expressed his long-standing opinion on the necessity to address the cultural needs of Russians in the Ukrainian SSR, just in the same way as of other national minorities in Ukraine. He also made the issue of the status of Russians in the Ukrainian SSR explicit. Skrypnyk, though, did not discuss the issue of Russian-speakers and their position in nationality policies the Ukrainian SSR. He would find a solution to this problem later.

The speakers, who followed Skrypnyk's statement, in many respects expressed similar ideas. The ensuing adopted decision stated the necessity to provide Russians in the Ukrainian SSR with the education and culture in the native language. This policy would be followed consistently in the following years of Skrypnyk's tenure as the Commissar of Enlightenment of the Ukrainian SSR. The party leaders avoided the official proclamation of Russians a national minority in Soviet Ukraine¹⁸ after the meeting in December 1926.

16 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2247, l. 100

17 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 2247, l. 104

18 On the policies towards national minorities in the Ukrainian SSR, see Oleksandr Rubliov and Larisa Iakubova, *Organy Etnopolitychnogo Reguliuvannia v Konteksti Polityky Korenizatsii: Ukrains'kyi*

limiting to the declarations on the Russian cultural rights. The resolution of TsK KP(b)U in April 1927 avoided the ambivalence:

Taking into consideration the rise of the chauvinist attitudes among both Russian and Ukrainian petty bourgeoisie, which attempts to influence the proletariat and some party members, TsK KP(b)U declares that the tool in the struggle against chauvinism would be further, determined and resolute implementation of Ukrainianization and the guarantee of the interests of national minorities. The Russian population also belongs to national minorities and the guarantee of its cultural interests should take place, like with other national minorities. Yet, since the Russian language is the language of a significant part of workers and in some cases (particularly in the most industrialized regions) of the majority of workers, it is necessary to give the Russian language a special attention, equating it to the languages of other national minorities in Ukraine (obligatory instruction of the Russian language in schools, obligatory publication of Soviet decrees also in Russian, besides the Ukrainian version). Yet, this should be in no way a cover for the attempts to create for Russian culture in Ukraine the preferential status, which it had in Tsarist times.¹⁹

While the discussion centered on the satisfaction of the cultural needs of Russians, the decision to grant Russians the status of the national minority had a crucial underlying dimension. The question, which Skrypnyk's quote also highlights, was whether Russians in the Ukrainian SSR was just a national minority, like all other non-Ukrainian nationalities in the republic, and should be treated accordingly or whether they had a unique position. Basically, in terms of the satisfaction of the cultural needs before the decision from December 1926, Russians had a specific position in the Ukrainian SSR. Since Russians were not a formerly “oppressed nationality” some of the key Soviet Ukrainian leaders as well as politicians in Moscow considered that there was no urgency or even need to focus on the specifically Russian cultural necessities. In many respects

Dosvid (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2014); for the analysis of primarily Moscow's perspective on the Western national minorities, see Viktor Dionninghaus, *V Teni “Bol'shogo Brata”: Zapadnye Natsional'nye Men'shinstva V SSSR (1917-1938 gg.)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011).

19 Published in *Visti VUTsVK* on 19 April 1927 // <http://oldnewspapers.com.ua/node/413> (accessed on 10 December, 2015).

Soviet nationality policies were carried out at their expense, as the case of Ukrainianization demonstrates. This was the burden of the former core nationality of the empire. Russians were asked to silence their own cultural and political demands and to listen and adapt to the necessities of other nationalities. In certain respect the Bolsheviks attempted to reverse the former hierarchies on the territories of the national republics. Basically, at the core of this approach there existed a recognition that Russians still remained a core nationality in the Soviet Union as well. Yet, for the Bolsheviks this entailed a very different set of policies and attitudes in comparison with the Romanov empire.

What Skrypnyk attempted, consciously or accidentally, with his suggestion, was to strip Russians from their special status in Soviet Ukraine, and by extension, in the Soviet Union as well. Proclaiming Russians a national minority in the Ukrainian SSR created a somewhat paradoxical situation in the light of nationality policies in the Soviet Union. It provided the ideological and political foundations and means to satisfy their cultural and educational needs.²⁰ Yet, at the same time these came with a price. Skrypnyk's logic suggested that Russians were just another nationality in Soviet Ukraine, with no special position in nationality policies. In many respects this was an innovation in Soviet nationality policies, introduced by the KP(b)U on Skrypnyk's suggestion.

Skrypnyk was disassembling. Russians, indeed, had a specific status Soviet nationality policies in general and in particular in Soviet Ukraine, and preserved it even after the decision of the KP(b)U in April 1927. While the KP(b)U decided to address the

20 It is possible that Skrypnyk needed at least basic satisfaction of the Russian cultural and educational needs, due to his plans to deepen and widen the Ukrainianization process. He understood that this would likely provoke the grievances of the Russian population and prepared a compensation for them.

cultural needs of Russians in Ukraine, similarly to other national minorities, there could still hardly be any positive talk Russification, in contrast to Polonization, Moldovanization etc. The term “Russification” could emerge in the discussions only with critical assessments or in the historical retrospective, as the phenomenon of the pre-Soviet past. Moreover, the Soviet Ukrainian authorities were reluctant to provide all the spectrum of the benefits of Soviet nationality policies to Russians, even despite the declared intent to do so. Even if one excludes the issue of the ambivalent status of Russians in Soviet nationality policies, the sheer size of the Russian and Russian-speaking population and its share among the working class in the Ukrainian SSR made it a special case, which required the selective application of the nationality policies. Thus, despite Skrypnyk desire to create “separate (*vydelennyi*) Russian regions”, no Russian autonomous region appeared. The Soviet Ukrainian authorities avoided any official initiative of this sort, since it was not clear, what the borders of such region would be. As many leading members of the KP(b)U pointed out, the provision of all cultural and political rights to Russians and, by extension, the creation of Russian regions, may result in the announcement of the a significant part of Ukraine's East and South, and more importantly, some of the major industrial cities, as Russian. This was likely one of the motivations, which delayed the official declaration of Russians, as a national minority in the Ukrainian SSR. When such statement arrived in April 1927, it came with a crucial clarification. The next paragraph of the resolution of TsK KP(b)U specified:

Recognizing, that the best guarantee of the realization of the interests of national minorities, where they form a compact majority in one or another region, is the detachment of these regions into separate administrative-territorial units from these regions – to consider such detachment (*vydelenie*) impermissible in the case of towns, even with the majority non-Ukrainian population, since towns are economic,

political and cultural centers of all the surroundings. The detachment of towns would lead to the rupture in the cultural connections between the working class and peasantry, which is predominantly Ukrainian. The detachment of towns is also inexpedient, since the dynamics of social development inevitably leads to their Ukrainianization.²¹

Without this clarification the declaration on the status of Russians as a national minority could create a legal leverage to demand a large Russian autonomy in Ukraine, which would include some key industrial centers. Thus, the KP(b)U attempted to silence some of the grievances of the Russian and, to some extent, Russian-speaking population by the introduction of more pro-active cultural and educational policies. Still though, the Ukrainian party stopped short of the introduction of the whole set of Soviet nationality policies for Russians, since this could legally empower Russians to make increasingly stronger claims.

Skrypnyk did not consider the possible Russian autonomy a major danger. He elaborated a theoretical foundation, which allowed Soviet Ukrainian authorities to reduce the potential number of Russians in Ukraine, claim that a significant number of the Russian-speaking proletariat were in fact Ukrainians and incorporate Russian-speakers into the Ukrainianization campaigns and their children into the Ukrainian schools. Skrypnyk's solution was the category of "Russified Ukrainians," whom he even called "Malorossy" in one of the earlier discussions, but later avoided the term. Two conditions allowed Skrypnyk's formula to be convincing. First, as the anecdote about the habits of the tea-drinking demonstrated, at least in some regions of the Ukrainian SSR there was a lack of the clear-cut definitive markers, which would separate Russians from Ukrainians. Secondly, for the Bolsheviks the spoken language did not necessarily determine one's

21 <http://oldnewspapers.com.ua/node/413>

ethnicity. Moreover, in some cases, like with the Ukrainianization of the “Russified Ukrainians,” one of the goals of the nationality policies was to “cure” the historical consequences the Tsarist Russification. Using the category of “Russified Ukrainians” one could send Russian-speaking pupils to Ukrainian schools.²² The decision on the true “native” language of pupils was a complex process and depended much on local teachers.

Skrypnyk's plans to satisfy the cultural needs of the Russian population during his tenure as the Ukrainian Commissar for Enlightenment fitted his views on the national question both within and outside the Ukrainian SSR. On a larger scale Skrypnyk apparently attempted to implement in Ukraine nationality policies that he envisaged for all Soviet republics. It was not by chance that the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment had repeatedly called the Ukrainian SSR a laboratory for nationality policies. Skrypnyk's policies presupposed a core nationality in each Soviet republic, Ukrainians in the Ukrainian SSR, for instance, but with broad autonomy for, up to the creation of the national autonomous regions, and the satisfaction of the cultural needs of all the national minorities. At the same time he expected the same treatment of the Ukrainian minorities in other republics, as his recurring statements demonstrate.²³ For instance, Skrypnyk constantly lamented over the poor satisfaction of the Ukrainian minorities in the RSFSR. The Soviet Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment saw the national question internationally. The Ukrainian SSR was a protector of and beacon, a “Piedmont,”²⁴ for all Ukrainians, inside (in other republics) and outside of the Soviet Union. Therefore, he

22 For more details see Matthew D. Pauly's discussion of the category of the “Russified Ukrainians” by Skrypnyk and its role in education in the Ukrainian SSR, Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 152-160.

23 Skrypnyk, *Statii i Promovy z Natsional'nogo Pytannia*, 105-117. For a collection of documents on the treatment of the Ukrainian population in the RSFSR, see Serhiychuk, “*Ukrainizatsiia Rosii*.”

24 Skrypnyk, *Statii i Promovy z Natsional'nogo Pytannia*, 178-184.

actively engaged in the Ukrainian affairs in the neighboring states and in other Soviet republics.

Skrypnyk encouraged the proper treatment of the national minorities in the Ukrainian SSR. Yet, he expected the reciprocity in the policies towards Ukrainians in other Soviet republics. In terms of nationality policies the Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment expected that the Soviet power, overcoming the repressive legacy of the Tsarist Russia, would establish the equality of the Soviet nationalities. Among others, that entailed the declaration of Russians within the Ukrainian SSR the national minority, as all others. The same decree, though, recognized the specific status of the Russian language, which was in many public settings the means of communication for national minorities in Ukraine.

At the same time Skrypnyk's actions and some of the declarations suggest that the equality of the nationalities and the overcoming of the Tsarist legacies, did not necessarily mean the breakdown of the strict centralized hierarchy in the relations of the various levels of the Soviet authorities. As an ambitious party activist, Skrypnyk, who aimed to extend his personal influence and to maximize the amount of the available resources, did attempt to carve as much autonomy and space as possible for the realization of his own agenda. Yet, this did not necessarily presuppose that he wanted to remove Kharkiv altogether from the subordination to Moscow.

Within the borders of the Ukrainian SSR, Skrypnyk envisaged Ukrainians as the patrons and the locomotive for the cultural growth of all other nationalities. Ukrainians should not only be preoccupied with their own cultural development, but also support and encourage the development of other nationalities. In theory these scheme looked

harmonious and promising. The reality was much more complicated. The territories inhabited by different nationalities were overlapping and did not form clear-cut culturally homogeneous regions. Frequently even the nationality of each person was difficult to identify, due to the weak national consciousness and lack of clear indicators, which would separate the representatives of one nationality from the other. The material and human resources were scarce.²⁵ As the result, the necessity to carry out nationality policies, which would satisfy the needs of all the nationalities and even – in Skrypnyk's view – Russians in the Ukrainian SSR, created numerous problems. The situation in the Moldovan ASSR was illustrative in this sense.

6. 2. Searching for Balance between Ukrainianization and Moldovanization

In the Moldovan ASSR the problem of the balance between Ukrainianization and Moldovanization was an acute problem. The 1926 census was the first to provided the authorities with more or less precise data on the population of the autonomous republic. Before this the authorities possessed only some quite rough numbers, which resulted in certain awkward situations. At the moment of the establishment the Moldovan ASSR occupied a narrow strip of land along the River Dniester. This gave the possibility to create almost the highest possible share of the Moldovan population. On the Third Session of the VUTsVK, on October 11 1924, the head of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom Vlas Chubar proclaimed that Moldovans constituted 58% of the 400.000 inhabitants of the established on the next day Republic.²⁶ As the later census in 1926 demonstrated, Chubar miscalculated significantly both the share and the total number of the Moldovans in the

²⁵ Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 1923-1934.

²⁶ *Alcătuirea Republicii Autonome Sovietice*, 9-10.

Republic. According to the census, Moldovans comprised 30.1% out of 572.338 inhabitants of the Moldovan ASSR, Ukrainians – 48.6%, Russians – 8.56%, Jews – 8.5% etc.²⁷ Thus, Moldovans were neither a majority, nor even the most sizeable group in the Republic. That situation created a discursive paradox in the usage of the category of “national minorities” in the MASSR. From the political point of view, Moldovans were the titular nationality and all other, Ukrainians included, were a national minority in the Moldovan ASSR. However, numerically Ukrainians were not a minority. Therefore, local authorities frequently faced the necessity to specify the status of Ukrainians in the Moldovan ASSR. Some Soviet Moldovan documents included all non-Moldovan nationalities in the category of “national minorities.” As a result Badeev had to specify the main nationalities in the republic were Moldovans, Ukrainians, and Russians, while Jews, Germans, Bulgarians, Poles and Czechs were national minorities.²⁸

The situation could have been slightly less dramatic, but the territorial revisions, which were taking place from 1924 to 1926²⁹ reduced the already not impressive share of the Moldovans. Major territorial expansion of the Moldovan ASSR occurred in less than two months after the establishment of the Republic. On November 26, 1924, VUTsVK and Ukrainian Sovnarkom abolished the Balta region and transferred the town Balta and part of the former region to the Moldovan ASSR.³⁰ Balta became the capital of the Moldovan ASSR. The proclaimed reasons were economic: remoteness of the region from

27 Galushchenko, *Naselenie Moldavskoi ASSR*, 10, 13.

28 O. Galushchenko, “Deiatel'nost' Komissii po Proverke Sostoiianiia Mezhetnicheskikh Otnoshenii v Moldavskoi ASSR (1926 g.),” *Revista de Etnologie si Culturologie* 7 (2010): 60.

29 For a thorough detailed description of the administrative-territorial changes in the Moldovan ASSR, see K. Stratievskii, “Izmeneniia v Administrativno-Territorial'nom Delenii i v Sostave Naseleniia Moldavskoi ASSR (1924-1940 gg.),” *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, no 2 (1995): 24-37.

30 *Nachalo Bol'shogo Puti*, 79.

its new center (Pervomaisk) after the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR.³¹ Yet, the fact that the town became the capital of the Republic demonstrates that there were other additional considerations that necessitated such redrawing of the borders. There were three candidates for the status of the temporary capital, while Chisinau was considered to be the “real,” but in fact symbolical one. Tiraspol was the most logical choice judging from the size and the share of the Moldovan population in the town and its surroundings. Birzula (later Kotovsk) was the “economic center of the Republic”³², “center of proletariat...vanguard of the Republican development.”³³ In this respect the only advantage of Balta was its relative remoteness from the Romanian border, while Tiraspol and to a lesser extent Birzula were borderline towns. At the same time Balta was predominantly a Ukrainian- and Russian- speaking town, which created significant problems for the Moldovanization campaign.

At first, just after the creation of the Moldovan ASSR, the necessity to find the balance between Ukrainianization and Moldovanization was not a primary goal. In many respects the Soviet Moldovan authorities lacked the resources for either campaign and there were other pressing issues, such as the formation of the administrative bodies of the republic etc. Nevertheless, by 1926-1927 the problem came to the foreground. The Soviet Moldovan authorities had actively engaged in Moldovanization, which was not only the requirement of Soviet nationality policy and the rationale behind the creation of the

31 *Darea de Samă a Congresului Întii al Sfaturilor din RSSA Moldovenească de Deputați, Muncitori, Țărani și Ostași Roși* (19-23 Aprilie 1925) (Balta: n/a), 21.

32 Badeev's speech at the First Moldovan Party Conference, AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 1, d. 15, f. 7. Badeev also added that the center of economic management should be moved to Birzula, since Balta was an inappropriate economic center.

33 Staryi's speech at the *Darea de Samă a Congresului Întii al Sfaturilor din RSSA Moldovenească de Deputați, Muncitori, Țărani și Ostași Roși*, 13.

republic, but also had major geopolitical significance for the Bessarabian question. At the same time with the arrival of Kaganovich to Ukraine in 1925 and even more so with Skrypnyk's appointment to the position of the Commissar for Enlightenment, the Ukrainianization campaign acquired magnitude and gained momentum. Due to the sizable Ukrainian population, the Soviet Moldovan authorities had to implement Ukrainianization on the territory under their jurisdiction.

As the result, the Soviet Moldovan authorities faced the need to carry out both Ukrainianianization and Moldovanization in the circumstances, when also a significant part of non-Russian population preferred to use the Russian language. Thus, for example the commission, which supervised the practical implementation of *korenizatsiia* in the Moldovan ASSR, bore the name “Commission of Ukrainianization and Moldovanization.” The inclusion of Balta and surrounding areas additionally intensified the conflicts between Moldovanization and Ukrainianization. Interestingly, in the plan for 1927 the local controlling bodies in Balta should have only been Ukrainianized, while in other parts of the Moldovan ASSR both Ukrainianized and Moldovanized.³⁴

Therefore, as radical Moldovanizers were becoming increasingly influential in the local leadership (roughly from 1926), the question of the territorial revision emerged. In May 1926 at the Second Moldovan Congress of Soviets the speakers mentioned that there was certain ambiguity and lack of clarity in terms of the Moldovan borders.³⁵ Later in September the Moldovanizers, particularly P. Chior-Ianachi, were much more explicit calling the Balta region an “eyesore” and a “blind that encloses us from the Moldovan

³⁴ *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 49.

³⁵ *Darea de Samă Stenografică a S'Ezduului al Doilea al Sfaturilor de Deputați, Muncitori, Țărani și Ostași Roși din RASSM (9-14 Mai 1926)* (Balta: 1926), 16-17.

masses.”³⁶ In 1927, at the Fourth Moldovan Party Conference Chior-Ianachi stated that because of Balta Ukrainianization and Moldovanization were two equivalent issues. Therefore, Balta should be returned to Ukraine, in order to make Moldovanization a primary object and pursue it at full pace.³⁷ Behind these suggestions there was a desire to create a more ethnically homogeneous Moldovan republic, without Balta region and with the inclusion of several districts, which were not part of the Moldovan ASSR, but had a sizable Moldovan population. It is unlikely, though, that even such a territorial revision would put Moldovanization ahead of Ukrainianization in the priority list of the Soviet Moldovan authorities. There would still be a sizable Ukrainian population, possibly even still the largest nationality, in the Moldovan ASSR. As the result, Kharkiv would still demand the implementation of Ukrainianization in the districts with the Ukrainian population. The Moldovanizers did not manage to convince Ukrainian authorities and their opponents in the republic to give up the Balta region in order to make the republic “more Moldovan.” In early 1928 the requests of the Soviet Moldovan leadership to move the capital of the Moldovan ASSR to Birzula met resistance in Kharkiv.³⁸ Still, partially under their pressure, in 1929 the capital of the Moldovan ASSR moved to Tiraspol. Tiraspol and her surroundings had a significant Moldovan population. In that respect, for radical Moldovanizers, it was a more appropriate administrative center for the Moldovanization campaign.

In any case, throughout the interwar period the necessity to carry out Ukrainianization along with Moldovanization complicated the implementation and

36 AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 1, d. 516, f. 44

37 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 72.

38 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 142, ll. 31, 66.

significantly limited the effect of nationality policies, elaborated by the Soviet Moldovan leadership. The comparison of the treatment of Moldovans and Russians in the Ukrainian SSR demonstrates also, that not all national minorities enjoyed the same benefits of Soviet nationality policies. Moldovans in the Ukrainian SSR acquired their own autonomous republic and in the second half of the 1920s Moldovanization became one of the key goals of the party in the region. With Russians the situation was quite different, even though they were a much more sizable minority. Only in the end of 1926 the Soviet Ukrainian authorities attempted to bring some clear instructions on the satisfaction of the cultural needs of Russians. Still, the extent of the support provided was much less significant, than in the case of Moldovans. Different factors shaped this difference in approaches, including the specific position of Russians within nationality policies in the Soviet Union and particularly in the Ukrainian SSR. In the case of Moldovanianization, the Soviet Ukrainian authorities could claim that they support and guide the cultural development of other “backward” nationalities. With Russians the situation was different. The excessively strong support for Russians could hamper Ukrainianization, which had the reversal of the effects of the Tsarist Russification, as one of its goals. Finally, for the Soviet foreign policy goals the strong emphasis on Moldovanization with Bessarabia in mind, and the limited cultural support for Russians, with the goal of the attracting of Western Ukrainians and countering the Polish pressure in the Ukrainian question, made much sense.

6. 3. Systematization of the Orthography and the Linguistic Norms in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR

The issue of the cross-border cultural ties and to some extent the concerns of Soviet foreign policies had also an impact on another issue, which preoccupied both the Soviet Moldovan and Soviet Ukrainian authorities in the last several years of the 1920s. In both cases the issue of the orthography and the official literary norms of the Ukrainian and Moldovan languages ended up in the center of attention of the Soviet governing bodies. Yet, the chosen solutions differed.

The problem of the common unified orthography for the Ukrainian language emerged already in the first years of Soviet Ukraine. In 1921 the Soviet Ukrainian Commissar for Enlightenment approved the “General Rules of Ukrainian Orthography,” which the All-Ukrainian Academy of Science elaborated and adopted on 17 May, 1919, and 12 July and 29 November, 1920. The rules, though, did not settle all the issues. The Ukrainian language remained quite diverse even within the borders of the Ukrainian SSR, to say nothing of the territories inhabited by Ukrainians outside of the republic, primarily in Western Ukraine. To address the issue, on 23 July, 1925, the Ukrainian Sovnarkom established a State Commission for the Regularization of the Ukrainian Orthography under the supervision of the Commissariat of Enlightenment. The Commission elaborated new rules of the Ukrainian orthography, based on the regulations, adopted in 1921. The Commission involved 36 people, was headed by the Commissar of Enlightenment, but its day-to-day matters were carried out under the guidance of the linguist Oleks Sin'avs'kyi.³⁹

While, the Commission started its work already in 1925, only in 1927 it produced first public practical results. It was Mykola Skrypnyk, who after his accession to the

39 *Ukrainizatsiia 1920-1930-h Rokiv*, 129-130.

office of the Commissar of Enlightenment prompted the shift from the academic debates and preliminary work to the realization of their outcomes.⁴⁰ On his insistence between 26 May and 6 June, 1927, the All-Ukrainian Orthography Conference took place in Kharkiv. The Conference agreed on the common rules of the Ukrainian Orthography, which Skrypnyk approved on 4 September, 1928. They were published the same year⁴¹ and became the norm until the removal of Skrypnyk in 1933. George Shevelov in his overview of the history of the Ukrainian language in the first half of the 20th century gave the following assessment to the approved orthography: “Never before was the spelling and the morphology of the Ukrainian language codified in such detail and precision.”⁴²

Skrypnyk's insistence on the organization of the Orthography Conference was not surprising in light of his devotedness to the policies of Ukrainianization. The lack of clear unified rules undermined the status of the Ukrainian language and significantly hampered the Ukrainianization efforts. Yet, if we take into consideration Skrypnyk's views on the role of the Ukrainian SSR as the “Piedmont” for all Ukrainians, then the Orthography Conference can be also seen in a different light. The invitation of three West Ukrainian scholars to the Conference, and the involvement of the West Ukrainians in the activities of the Commission, had much significance. Scholars usually interpret this move by the desire of the organizers, Skrypnyk foremost, to create the balance between the representatives of the two schools in the study of the Ukrainian language, West Ukrainian tradition and the Center-Eastern one and to counter the attempts to adopt excessively

40 V. F. Soldatenko, *Nezlamnyi: Jittia i Smert' Mykoly Skrypnyka* (Kyiv: Knyga Pamiati Ukrainy, 2002), 152-153.

41 *Ukrains'kyi Pravopis* (Kharkiv: Derzhavne Vidavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1928).

42 George Y. Shevelov, “The Language Question in the Ukraine in the Twentieth Century (1900-1941),” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 11 (June 1987): 138.

Russified forms.⁴³ Yet, likely Skrypnyk, backed by the Politburo of TsK KP(b)U had also other goals in mind. After all, there were enough representatives of the Western Ukrainian tradition among the academic circles of Soviet Ukraine. There was no pressing need to invite Western Ukrainians only to have the representatives of Western Ukrainian linguistic tradition. Moreover, the advocacy of the Western Ukrainian tradition by non-Soviet scholars could even weaken the arguments in favor of the former. Skrypnyk and the KP(b)U needed Western Ukrainian linguists,⁴⁴ since they provided legitimacy for the decisions of the Orthography Conference not only within the Ukrainian SSR, but also among non-Soviet Ukrainians. Thus, the Conference was creating the literary norm, which had the potential to become common for all “Ukrainian lands.” This was in line with Skrypnyk's desire to make the Ukrainian SSR the 'Piedmont' for all Ukrainians. It had to become the cultural beacon for Ukrainians within and outside of the Soviet Union. In certain respects the organizers of the Conference succeeded. In 1929, in Lwow the Shevchenko Scientific Society adopted the new orthography for its publications. With the help of the conference, exploiting the cross-border ties, the Soviet Ukrainian authorities managed to extend and to strengthen their influence in Western Ukraine. Skrypnyk emphasized this achievement in his report on the conference:

The declaration of the Shevchenko Scientific Society before the conference, that they on behalf of the Ukrainian society in Western Ukraine take part in the discussion on Ukrainian orthography and contribute to the elaboration of the orthography their own input has great importance. They declare that they recognize the need for unified orthography for the Ukrainian people, as a whole, and that they join and adhere to the orthography, which would be elaborated by the conference. After the conference the representative of Western Ukrainian culture confirmed again this declaration. The declaration of the representative of Transcarpathian

43 For instance, *Soldatenko, Jittia i Smerti Mykoly Skrypnyka*, 153

44 On 6 May 1927 the Politburo of TsK KP(b)U issued a special resolution, requiring the invitation of the Western Ukrainians to the conference, TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 121, l. 68.

Ukraine, the deputy of the Czechoslovakian Seim, Comrade Mondok at the conference was a characteristic example of the aspirations for the unity of cultural life of all Ukrainian peoples on all Ukrainian lands. He also proclaimed that on behalf of the working masses of Transcarpathia they participated in the proceedings of the orthography conference and would implement the elaborated orthography.⁴⁵

The proceedings of the Conference did not go smoothly. The debates between the representatives of two traditions sometimes took a quite emotional twist. Nevertheless, at the insistence of the presiding committee, headed by Skrypnyk, the compromise was struck. It attempted to reconcile two traditions, but the representatives of both left unsatisfied. Still, the importance of the adoption of the single orthographical norm for the Ukrainian language cannot be underestimated.

There was another interesting development, which took place at the conference. A group of linguists, headed by the Soviet Ukrainian writer M. Yogansen, suggested the Latinization of the Ukrainian language. This was an isolated Soviet Ukrainian development. The process of the Latinization of the languages of the Soviet nationalities first started among the Turkic peoples, primarily Azeris. Gradually the Latinization drive spread from the Turkic to other Soviet nationalities. At a certain moment there were even discussions about the Latinization of the Russian language.

The proposition to use the Latin script for the Ukrainian language was rejected at the Orthography Conference.⁴⁶ Skrypnyk himself spoke out against it. He found the introduction of the Latin script too complicated and costly, conceding, though, that it can suit the Ukrainian language. The organizers of the conference had the main goal of the

45 Mykola Skrypnyk, "Pidsumky Pravopisnoi Diskussii," *Visti VUTsVK*, 19 June, 1927 // <http://oldnewspapers.com.ua/node/454> (accessed on December 10, 2015).

46 The conference, though, did attempt to introduce several signs from the Latin script. Nevertheless, they were later rejected by the Ukrainian Politburo, as 'politically inexpedient,' TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 121, l. 86.

reconciling two main traditions, the Western and Eastern Ukrainian ones.⁴⁷ The choice in favor of Latinization would be too much of a provocation for both major schools and could undermine the emerging compromise. Moreover, in his conclusions on the conference Skrypnyk linked the projects of the Latinization of the Ukrainian language with the possible external threat. Among the proponents of Latinization, the Commissar of Enlightenment cited, for instance, “the leaders of the Polonization in Western Galicia in 70s-90s, and recently the leaders of the Czechization in Transcarpathian Ukraine and the Romanian government, which carries out a forcible introduction of the Latin script for the Ukrainians in Bessarabia and Bukovina.”⁴⁸ In his conclusions Skrypnyk did not go as far as to accuse the advocates of Latinization at the conference of the complicity in potentially anti-Soviet actions. A bit later, though, the responsible authorities would formulate accusation against the proponents of Latinization exactly along these lines and much more directly, that Skrypnyk hints. It should be mentioned in November 1926 a similar linguistic conference took place in Belarus, where also the representatives of Belarusian immigration participated. At the Belarusian conference, the idea of the Latinization of the Belarusian language figure much more prominently. The head of Belarusian Sovnarkom, Iosif Adamovich, raised the issue of the introduction of the Latin script and received support from some participants. Even though the proposal was eventually rejected, the proponents of Latinization of the Belarusian language at the conference were severely criticized by Moscow. The Belarusian TsK concluded in the

47 Alexei Miller and Oksana Ostapchuk, “The Latin and Cyrillic Alphabets in Ukrainian National Discourse and in the Language Policy of Empires,” in Georgiy Kasianov and Phillip Ther ed., *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* (Budapest, New York: Central European University, 2009), 190.

48 Skrypnyk, *Pidsumky Pravopisnoi Diskussii*.

aftermath: “The raising of [the question of Latinization] objectively reflects the orientation of part of our intelligentsia toward ‘independence’ and the West, rather than toward proletarian Moscow.”⁴⁹

In the Moldovan ASSR the issue of the elaboration of the orthography and the literary norm of the Moldovan language was no less important. After the choice in favor of the Moldovanization strategy for the *korenizatsiia* in the Moldovan ASSR, the question of the practical implementation of the strategy arose. One of the key problems was the definition and the elaboration of the norms of the Moldovan language. The insistence of the Soviet Moldovan authorities, bred also by their power struggle with the Romanian Communist emigres, that the Moldovan language and culture were different from their Romanian counterparts created numerous problems in the realization of Moldovanization. Convincing Kharkiv and Moscow of the existence of the separate Moldovan language was one thing, introducing it in schools or in the party bureaucracy was – another. The Soviet Moldovan authorities could not fully rely on the Romanian literary norm, which they claimed to be poorly comprehensible to the Moldovan population. Yet, unlike the Soviet Ukrainian authorities, they even had no even basic rules at hand. In addition, the academic specialists, who could undertake the task of the elaboration of the literary norms of the Moldovan language were almost non-existent. In this sense again the choice in favor of the Moldovan language, distinct from the Romanian one, significantly hindered Moldovanization. The Soviet Ukrainian authorities had a much richer base of the Soviet academic cadres and, in addition, could “import”

49 On the conference in Soviet Belarus, see Rudling, *The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism*, 221-225.

Ukrainian intellectuals and scholars from the abroad. The Soviet Moldovan leaders were deprived of such possibility, since they could hardly invite Romanian academics to elaborate the Moldovan language. At the same time the pro-Communist Bessarabian movement did not have a significant enough number of the Moldovan-speaking intelligentsia to fill the lacuna. This situation strengthened the positions of the moderate Romanianizers, like the head of the Soviet Moldovan Sovnarkom from 1926 to 1928 and one of the creators of the Moldovan ASSR, Grigorii Staryi. He considered that it made sense and was much more economical to rely on the already existing Romanian norm and Latin script. Yet, the choice, approved also in Kharkiv and Moscow, was in favor of the separate Moldovan language in Cyrillic script.

The major institution that undertook the task of the systematization, cataloging and creation of the Moldovan culture was the Moldovan Scientific Committee (MSC). Within the walls of this institution the most radical ideas of the Moldovanizing trend were voiced and cherished.⁵⁰ Later almost all the participants would fall into the category of “bourgeois nationalists.” The Committee was established in 1926, two years after the creation of the Moldovan ASSR. The delay was most likely explained by the lack of required specialists and the fact that the decisive shift toward internally-oriented cultural building occurred only by the end of 1925. Initially the MSC had only a linguistic section. Only later the Moldovan authorities added ethnographic, literary, historical and other sections. This underscores the fact that the linguistic issue was crucial for

50 At a certain moment some radical Moldovanizers (or “samobytniks” [~autochthonists] as they were often referred to) went as far as to claim the biological differences between Moldavians and Romanians, proposing to carry out serological and physiognomic researches, AOSPRM, f. 49, inv. 1, d. 2225, f. 16-17.

Moldovanization.⁵¹ By this time the Soviet Moldovan authorities had failed to proceed from the statement of the distinctiveness of the Moldovan and Romanian languages to the documentary evidence, either in form of linguistic studies or school textbooks. The grammar manual, compiled in haste by the Soviet Moldovan Narkompros G. Buciuscanu was hardly different from the Romanian ones save for the Cyrillic script.⁵² At the same time the lack of proper study materials reinforced the position of Romanianizers, who claimed that there was neither time nor resources to invent a new language, when the Romanian canon could be used.

The campaign for the distinctive Moldovan language was launched in December 1926 by two articles in the local party newspaper: P. Chior-Ianachi's "On the Road of Moldovanization" and L. Madan's "Moldovan Orthography."⁵³ Chior-Ianachi and Madan were the representatives of the local Soviet Moldovan intelligentsia, though with the origins in the religious families, and were key members of the Moldovan Scientific Committee. Both authors emphasized that the spoken language of Moldovans does not correspond to the language of the books, which they read. Madan saw the reason in the usage of the Romanian literary norm.⁵⁴ In his opinion, the Moldovan language, though, should not follow the rules of the Romanian language, which were often incomprehensible to Moldovans. The common argument of both articles was the idea that the Moldovan language should be based upon "democratic premises," that is, derived from the spoken language of Moldovans on both banks of the Dniester. In Madan's words:

51 For a careful and insightful account of the Moldovan language construction in the 1920s, see King, "The Ambivalence of Authenticity."

52 G. Buciușcanu. *Gramatica Limbii Moldovenești* (Balta: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1925).

53 Both articles can be found in, *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 53-58.

54 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 54.

“People do not speak according to the elaborated grammar, but the grammar is elaborated based upon the popular language – Grammar for people, and not people for grammar.”⁵⁵

In practice this presupposed the struggle with the perceived excessive import and usage of the Romanian and Russian words and grammatical structures,⁵⁶ and their substitution with the words and radicals from the colloquial speech of Moldovans. It is important to emphasize that this debate added and eventually implemented a new dimension in the linguistic issue of the Moldovan ASSR. While previously the main “linguistic enemy” of the Moldovan language was Romanian, in the work of the MSC the purification of the language from the excessive usage of Slavic borrowings also acquired importance. Therefore, it is incorrect to consider, like many historians do, Moldovanization in the 1920s a Russifying and assimilating ideology. As it becomes evident from the work of the MSC, its members struggled both with Slavic and Romanian influences. Most of the invented words were not necessarily based upon the Slavic borrowings, mostly these words were carved out from local dialects.

The ideologues of the radical Moldovanization struggled also fiercely with the perception that the Moldovan language was “poor” and, thus, unsuitable to become the core of the new literary norm. Chior-Ianachi responded: “It should not be a problem that our language is poor, 'simple', oppressed by Russian Tsarist policies, in the past. We must enrich it.”⁵⁷ Chior-Ianachi was not opposed in principle to the limited borrowings from Romanian or Russian. Yet, the main source of the enrichment of the language he saw in

55 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 54.

56 The radical Moldovanizers did not rule out the usage of the 'foreign' words and grammar entirely. They advocated the moderation and the elimination of the condescending perception of the local Moldovan options.

57 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 56.

the local Moldovan vocabulary.⁵⁸

The political struggle in the Soviet Moldovan leadership between the Moldovanizer and the First secretary of the Moldovan obkom of the KP(b)U, I. Badeev and the moderate Romanianizer and head of the Soviet Moldovan Sovnarkom, Staryi impeded the work of the radical Moldovanizers in the MSC. TsK KP(b)U had to intervene on several occasions in order to settle the misunderstandings between two Soviet Moldovan leaders. The resolutions of the Politburo of TsK KP(b)U, which claimed that there were no fundamental differences in the views of Badeev and Staryi on the national question, did not correspond to the actual situation and was rather an attempt to impel two leaders to stick to the party discipline and implement the chosen party line. Eventually, in 1928 both conflicting leaders were transferred from the Moldovan ASSR to other party work in order to remove the source of the constant instability in the administrative work. This was a major loss for the Soviet Moldovan governing bodies, which even before that experienced significant deficit in competent party cadres. Yet, for the Moldovanizers from the MSC this was an opening, which allowed them to finally finish and incorporate the products of their work in the Moldovanization policies.

In 1929 Leonid Madan published his “Moldovan Grammar,” which became the main reference in the linguistic sphere until the shift to Latinization in 1932.⁵⁹ In the prefaces to the book P. Chior-Ianachi, the head of the MSC and the Moldovan Narkompros at this moment, and the author himself reiterated the above-mentioned arguments. In a pamphlet published at the same time P. Chior underlined that in its work

⁵⁸ *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 56.

⁵⁹ L.A. Madan, *Gramatica Limbii Moldovenesti* (Tiraspol: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1929).

MSC threw away “rumynisms” (Romanian words) and “dead slavinisms” (Slavic words).⁶⁰ Madan emphasized also that the grammar was elaborated in close cooperation with the Moldovan masses, especially the teachers’ staff.⁶¹

Since in the framework of Moldovanization Romanians and Moldovans were considered different nationalities, the Moldovan authorities in their cultural and nation-building work could not refer to the Romanian literary heritage. At the same time local Moldovanizers had to acknowledge the lack of a distinctive Moldovan literary canon. Therefore, they actively supported the development of the artistic movement in the region helping and promoting writers, musicians and theatrical groups. In 1928 in the collaboration with the MSC the Union of the Moldovan writers “Octombrie” (October) was established, which was expected to launch the mass “production” of the Moldovan literary works.⁶² Yet, most of the products came already in the Latinization period (e.g. first Moldovan play by S. Lehtir in 1933). Therefore, ironically in the period of Moldovanization the manual and reading book (materials for the literacy campaigns) hardly contained any Moldovan literary works or at least the works, initially published in Romanian or Moldovan. For example, the reading book from 1928 contained short biographies and literary pieces of Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko, but none of the local or Romanian authors.⁶³

Despite all the energy put into the Moldovanizing campaign its success was rather

60 P.I. Chior. *Dispri Orfografia Lingii Moldovinești* (Birzula: 1929), 6.

61 Madan, *Gramatica Limbii Moldovenesti*, xiii-xiv.

62 On the role and politics of the literary sphere in the Moldovan ASSR, see Petru Negura, *Nici Eroii, Nici Tradatorii: Scriitori Moldoveni si Puterea Sovietica in Epoca Stalinista* (Chisinau: Cartier, 2014), 88-99.

63 L. A. Madan, ed., *La Lunini. Carti di Lucru si Cetiri pentru Grupa a IV-a* (Balta: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1928), 226-229, 257-258.

limited. Some of its consequences as for example in the artistic sphere, became visible only in the 1930s. To some extent it can be explained by the lack of material and human resources. At the same time the necessity to carry out Ukrainization parallel to Moldovanization was dispersing the concentration and even those scarce available resources. More importantly the Moldovanization campaign had quite short life span.

6. 4. The SVU Trial

The event, which signified a major change in nationality and borderland policies during Skypnyk's reign, as the Soviet Ukrainian Narkompros, took place in March-April 1930. In these months a show-trial against the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (*Spilka Vyzvolennia Ukrainy* – SVU) took place in the building of the opera house in Kharkiv. Scholars agree that the Ukrainian GPU with the support of the leadership of the KP(b)U and the VKP(b) fabricated the case, creating the non-existent organization and accusing the convicted of the uncommitted crimes. According to the legend, presented in the indictment, the SVU was a clandestine organization, which existed from June 1926 till its exposure by the GPU in July 1929. The SVU had a representation abroad and a youth organization – the Union of the Ukrainian Youth. According to the indictment, the SVU aimed at the liberation of all the Ukrainian ethnographic lands and the creation of the independent Ukrainian state with parliamentary and democratic power structure. The SVU had a Polish and eventually German orientation. The clandestine organization prepared insurrections and the terrorist acts against the all-Union and Ukrainian communist leaders.⁶⁴

64 See the document in the collection Volodymyr Prystaiko and Yuri Shapoval, ed., *Sprava “Spilky Vyzvolennia Ukrainy”*: *Nevidomi Dokumenty i Fakty* (Kyiv: Intel, 1995), 202-208.

The defendants in the trial consisted primarily of the academicians from the VUAN, teachers, students, leaders of the UAPT^s (Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church). Many of the accused were in the past members of the Ukrainian parties of the socialist orientation. The list was headed by Serhiy Efremov, one of the most influential academicians of the VUAN, its vice-President from 1922 to 1928 and former deputy Chairman of the Central Rada and head of the Ukrainian Party of the Socialist-Federalists. Scholars usually interpret the fabrication of the case of the SVU as the Soviet onslaught on the old Ukrainian intelligentsia,⁶⁵ and in general, the Ukrainian intelligentsia as such. Some even go as far as to claim that the SVU trial was an attack on Ukrainianization.⁶⁶ Indeed, taking into consideration the composition of the defendants, the attack on the old Ukrainian intelligentsia was one of the dimensions of the SVU process. Still, there can be a debate on the motives, timing and aims of the SVU trial.

The relations of the Soviet power with the old Ukrainian intelligentsia had a long difficult history. Many received the Bolsheviks with suspicion or even hostility and were initially in opposition to the Soviet power. Some went into the exile because of the disagreements with Bolshevik policies. Nevertheless, when it had become clear, that the Bolshevik regimes were not a temporary phenomenon, a significant number of the representatives of the old Ukrainian intelligentsia opted for the cooperation with the Soviet authorities. Moreover, many Ukrainian intellectuals in exile attempted to come back to Soviet Ukraine in order to build further their professional career in the new,

65 "Old" refers here to the fact that such representatives of the intelligentsia had a visible and successful enough academic, professional or non-Bolshevik political career before the establishment of the Soviet power, foremost in the years of the Hetmanate and the UNR. Moreover, frequently in the first years of the Soviet power they were in opposition to the Soviet power and sometimes in exile.

66 Mykola Shapoval, *Ukraina 20-50-h Rokiv. Storinky Nenapysanoi Istorii* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1993), 63-64.

Soviet Ukrainian context. The new context of Ukrainianization and the general reformist spirit of the 1920s provided some of them with the possibility to try to introduce some of their own social and cultural agenda. It is arguable, though, to what extent the representatives of the intelligentsia were consciously using such possibilities and to what extent they managed to succeed. The Ukrainian SSR was not an ideal for many of them, but it was the best option available at this moment.

The members of the old intelligentsia mostly occupied the positions in the academy, education, and the cultural sphere in the Ukrainian SSR. There their expertise was most needed. The VUAN turned out to be the center, where some of the most prominent members of the old Ukrainian intelligentsia concentrated. The VUAN was expected to be a key institution for Soviet Ukraine, which provided the expertise and the advice to the Party officials in the socialist construction in the republic. It also could be indispensable for the nationality policies of the KP(b)U, elaborating and producing the necessary cultural, academic, and educational materials. Therefore, until the late 1920s the Ukrainian Bolsheviks often demonstrated patience in their dealings with the old Ukrainian intelligentsia, despite the permanent sense of suspicion and distrust of the latter. For instance, already in winter 1927 the GPU report gave the following characteristic to Efremov:

Academic Efremov is turning from our passive opponent into an active enemy, who attempts to harm us in the area, which is his main preoccupation, that is, in the area of science and literature, especially in the Academy of Science, where he is grouping close to himself anti-Soviet elements... in the declarations on the representatives of the proletarian literature, Efremov is demonstrating an uncompromising attitude to the Soviet power.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Danilenko, *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada*, 60.

Despite such critical assessments, which sound like a sentence, Efremov had the possibility to continue his work and exert crucial influence on the VUAN on one of the key administrative posts for almost two years.

According to GPU reports, VUAN did not meet the high expectations. In June 1927, one assessment of its activities concluded:

In the Academy there is almost no academic work done. During last 3-4 years, not a single serious scientific lecture was given. All the meetings of academic are limited to the discussions on financial and administrative questions, squabbles over money, mutual accusations, etc.⁶⁸

This opinion may be an exaggeration, but it did capture some of the characteristic features of the work of VUAN during the 1920s. The constant factions struggles hampered the academic work at VUAN. There were two major groups. One was headed by Krymsky, one of the organizers of the Ukrainian Academy of Science in 1918 together with Vernadsky. Efremov was the second pillar of this group. Together, they had enough influence and weight to hold monopoly over the administration of VUAN. In certain respects they managed to control VUAN through their protege, Lypsky, the President of the academy from 1922 to 1928. Yet, their hegemony was challenged by the return of Myhailo Hrushevsky to Soviet Ukraine in 1924. Undoubtedly, the personality of such magnitude had most ambitious plans for his work in the VUAN and gathered a significant group of supporters around him. The next several years passed in the struggles between the Krymsky-Efremov group and Hrushevsky.⁶⁹ The former managed to maintain the

⁶⁸ Danilenko, *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada*, 138.

⁶⁹ The level of the antipathy between the groups can be summarized in a letter, sent by Krymsky to an academician in Moscow and intercepted by the GPU: "People like me, Loboda, Efremov, Balagei, who remaining Ukrainians, feel deep, squeamishness at forced Ukrainianization are facing recurring accusations in the obrusitel'stvo, Moscowphilism etc. The instigator, as you may guess, is Hrushevsky, the evil genius of Ukraine, summoned from abroad by someone in the Narkompros. Under the patronage of the Commissar of Enlightenment Shumsky, who is a bestial (zoological) nationalist, this

predominance, but had to always keep in mind the danger of Hrushevskyi's group. In 1927 Skrypnyk even promised to Hrushevsky the position of the President of VUAN, the position, the latter aspired to. Yet, due to the opposition of the Krymsky-Efremov group and the changing context the promise was not fulfilled.⁷⁰

In late 1927, a new trend to introduce more communists in the administration of the Academies of Science formed in the Soviet Union. In the new tendency the KP(b)U leaders and specifically Skrypnyk, as the Narkompros and in this capacity responsible for the activities of VUAN, saw an opportunity to bring order to the activities of the institution, undermined by factional struggles. The Politburo of TsK KP(b)U embraced Skrypnyk's approach and proclaimed "unacceptable" the leading role of the Krymsky-Efremov group and the situation, when Efremov was "basically the head of the Academy" and "carried out a politically harmful line." The Politburo considered necessary to avoid the predominance of any of the two conflicting factions.⁷¹ The KP(b)U reserved the right to nominate the President of VUAN and even to participate in the elections of its members and Presidium. The academicians saw in this move the violation of the autonomy of their institution. The competing groups of Krymsky-Efremov and Hrushevsky even had a rapprochement against the common enemy. The next elections of the governing bodies in 1928 turned into a scandal. The majority of the academicians, led

hopeless liar, dishonest politico, and pupil of the Polish-Austrian school is muddling waters, intriguing and doing everything, so that Great Russians feel abhorrence and disdain... he manages to create here in Kiev the atmosphere of a dirty, smelly bog, the stench of which, probably reaches even you in Moscow and Petersburg. When I lived in Moscow, I was disgusted Purishkeviches and other "truly Russian" people. Here, in Kiev, thanks to Hrushevsky, I comprehended the exclusive aromaticity of "truly Ukrainian" people," Danilenko, *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada*, 69.

70 For more on the bureaucratic struggle between two groups in the VUAN, see Serhii Plokhyy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of the Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 233-249.

71 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 122, l. 83.

by Krymsky and Efremov, voted against Skrypnyk's chairmanship over the proceedings of the election meeting, after the latter was nominated by one of academics. The members of the Academy confirmed the candidate for the Presidency of VUAN, suggested by the KP(b)U and Skrypnyk. Yet, Krymsky himself and the protege of his group occupied two other highest administrative positions.⁷² The refusal to elect Skrypnyk to the largely symbolic role of the chairman of the meeting was a slap in the face of the ambitious Commissar of Enlightenment. Not surprisingly, the KP(b)U refused to confirm Krymsky's election. Moreover, the next year even more external communist members were introduced in the governing bodies of VUAN. For Efremov and Krymsky, though this already mattered little. The former was already on his way to becoming the head of the fabricated SVU, while the latter was lucky enough to escape the fate of his colleague. Still, from the end of the 1920s Krymsky was persecuted and marginalized from academic life.

This episode and the situation in VUAN may seem to matter little in the fabrication of the SVU case and Efremov's part in it. Other factors, which will be discussed in more detail, were crucial for the Bolshevik motives behind the show-trial and public indictment. Nevertheless, it could also had its impact. To begin with, the personal insult of Skrypnyk, a person responsible for the academic and cultural fronts, was not a farsighted move. The relations between Skrypnyk and Efremov were already tense. In Skrypnyk Efremov and other accused members of the Academy lost probably not an advocate, but at least an equidistant partner. In fact, Skrypnyk was quite open to the

72 Later the GPU found evidence, that such combination was planned. Krymsky, Efremov and others found the opposition to the nominated candidate for the Presidency too risky and provocative, Danilenko, *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada*, 353.

incorporation of non-Bolshevik and non-Soviet specialists in the cultural work, as long as they behaved loyally. Moreover, the head of the Narkompros had nothing against and even welcomed the foreign contacts of the academicians and cultural workers, particularly with Ukrainians and Ukrainian institutions abroad. For him, unlike the GPU, the foreign connection did not necessarily breed suspicion of the foreign threat. Skrypnyk even insisted on the “import” of 1.500 teachers from Galicia for the needs of Ukrainianization. The proposition was, though, rejected by the KP(b)U. Instead, the Krymsky-Efremov group made Skrypnyk their enemy. Some contemporaries even considered that Skrypnyk himself was orchestrating the public campaign against Krymsky and Efremov,⁷³ which started with the latter's publication in a foreign Ukrainian journal and preceded the SVU affair.

Beyond the personal dimension, the situation in VUAN confirmed some of the worst suspicions of the old Ukrainian intelligentsia, which the Bolsheviks had. The leaders of the KP(b)U were ready to tolerate the views of the old intelligentsia and their sometimes dubious pronouncements. The academicians even had some freedoms, which the common people were deprived of. They could have extensive contacts abroad, travel more freely or read foreign publications. Yet, in return the Bolsheviks expected to benefit from the professional expertise of the intelligentsia and demanded at least declarative loyalty and obedience. The situation in VUAN, which supposedly encompassed some of the most talented members of the old intelligentsia, demonstrated the failure on both accounts. The factional struggle largely paralyzed the work of the Academy, as the scientific institution. The demarche of the academicians at the election meeting was

⁷³ Danilenko, *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada*, 363.

possibly the last drop in the long line of other incidents, which demonstrated, that despite the hopes of the party leadership the intelligentsia or at least some of its most visible representatives did not adopt the disciplined pro-Soviet positions even by the late 1920s.

The relations of the Bolsheviks with the old Ukrainian intelligentsia was one important dimension, which framed the SVU case. The other, as Matthew Pauly has convincingly demonstrated, was the growing preoccupation of the GPU and the Soviet Ukrainian authorities, particularly the low-level Soviet administration, with the activities of the broader circles of the Ukrainian intelligentsia in the context of Ukrainianization.⁷⁴ The Ukrainian GPU and its head Vsevolod Balitsky had long considered the Ukrainian intelligentsia an unreliable social group and kept it under strict surveillance.⁷⁵ Thus, the responsible authorities opened a specific file on Hrushevsky already in 1924, when he returned to Soviet Ukraine.⁷⁶ In addition, to the surveillance on major Ukrainian cultural figures, the Ukrainian GPU documented the activities of the local, low-level Ukrainianizers, that is primarily Ukrainian teachers and educators. There was a growing concern that these actors could lead the Soviet Ukrainianization astray. That was particularly troubling for the Soviet leaders, since educators and teachers had a direct influence of children, the future participants of the socialist development.⁷⁷ As a result, the circle of the accused in connection with the SVU case widened. While 45 defendants stood the SVU trial, 700 people more were arrested shortly after the trial in connection

⁷⁴ Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 240-257.

⁷⁵ To some extent the GPU's attitude can be explained by the general attitude towards the old Ukrainian intelligentsia and the composition and views of the GPU. Yet, it should be mentioned that the GPU's suspicious attitudes were to a certain degree shaped by the goals of the institution. It was the aim of the GPU to seek and reveal the hidden activities, views, etc.

⁷⁶ Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia*, 236.

⁷⁷ See Pauly's book for the examples of such observations of the Soviet Ukrainian officials.

with the SVU case.⁷⁸

These factors framed the SVU affair. The context of the late 1920s, of the First Five-Year Plan, was another crucial element for the SVU affair. In this framework, the Ukrainian GPU had the possibility to embody its tradition of suspicion into an elaborated public indictment. The Soviet leadership under Stalin launched a major social and economic transformation of the country, pillared by the collectivization and industrialization. The move came partially as the reaction to some of the failures of the NEP to provide enough agricultural resources. The perception of the foreign threat, particularly after the war scare, inspired by the crisis in the British-Soviet relations, and of the poor preparedness of the Soviet Union for the possible war played a major role in the decision. The First Five-Year Plan with its return of the explicit rhetoric of the class war and large-scale project was also attractive to the young radical Soviet generation, which saw in the new course many opportunities, among others for the upward social mobility as well. Sheila Fitzpatrick argued that the “cultural revolution” was a “political confrontation of 'proletarian' Communists' and the 'bourgeois' intelligentsia... The aim of the Cultural Revolution was to create a new 'proletarian intelligentsia.' Its method was class war.”⁷⁹

In this context, the SVU affair was not the only show trial in the Soviet Union and even in the Ukrainian SSR in the late 1920s. It should be interpreted in connection to other cases. The most important and interesting case was the Shakhty trial. Shakhty an

78 Ukrainian historians also estimated that about 30 000 people were arrested, executed, or exiled during and after the SVU trial, Iu. Shapoval, Volodymyr Pristaiko, and Vadim Zolotariov, *ChK-GPU-NKVD v Ukraini: Osoby, Fakty, Dokumenty* (Kyiv: Abris, 1997), 41. However, it is not clear, whether all these people were repressed in connection with the SVU case.

79 Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 115.

industrial region, rich with coal, was transferred from the Ukrainian SSR to the RSFSR in 1924. In 1927 the local OGPU started the investigation on the industrial sabotage and “counter-revolution” at the local industrial plants. The process gradually engaged the whole North-Caucasian district of the RSFSR and also the administration of the Donugol' with the headquarters in Kharkiv. The process culminated in the show-trial in Moscow in 1928.⁸⁰ The process became known for *spetsedstvo* (targeting of the non-Communist specialists) and for the accusation of a number of foreigners, who worked in the Soviet industry in the Shakhty region. Due to the latter the process had an international resonance and even caused some frictions in the German-Soviet relations. Yet, the Soviet accusation needed foreigners in order to make the connection with the foreign threat in the trial against the sabotage and counter-revolution more vivid and explicit. The issue of the foreigners among the accused sometimes overshadows other defendants, who were much more numerous. These “old” specialists were often of the representatives of social groups, which Bolsheviks considered to be hostile. Workers also frequently had a negative perception of *spetsy*, whom they considered the symbol of the old regime and the encountered injustices with real capitalists mostly gone.⁸¹ The Shakhty process aimed to discredit the “class enemies” and to protect against their potentially harmful actions. It is also worth to mention that the predominant majority of the non-Communist specialists in the industrial regions of the Ukrainian SSR and the neighboring districts of the RSFSR were Russians and Russian-speakers. They were not targeted as such in the trial. Yet, targeting the potential “saboteurs” and “counter-revolutionaries” the OGPU also struck a

80 For the overview of the process and thought-provoking documents see S. A. Krasil'nikov, ed., *Shakhtinskii Protsess 1928 g.: Podgotovka, Provedenie, Itogi v 2 Knigah* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011).

81 Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbass: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 141-142.

blow to a part of the Russian-speaking industrial elite in the region. The SVU trial did target some of the visible members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. Yet, the earlier Shakhty trial accused the representatives of the Russian-speakers.

Even though the SVU affair targeted a very different group of people, it had some similarities with the Shakhty trial. It also accused a social group that the Bolsheviks considered suspicious and potentially hostile, which allegedly had threatening foreign connections. Since it was a publicized show trial and a fabricated one, its most important dimension was the message, which the organizers attempted to send to the general public. Bolsheviks understood that the introduced policies would provoke discontent and resistance. They needed to discredit the organizational potential of such attitudes.⁸² They could achieve it by claiming the existence of the large counter-revolutionary organization, which aimed to breed anti-Soviet sentiments and to organize insurrections. To those, who remained convinced with the GPU arguments, after the trial any anti-Soviet statement or appeal, particularly with the separatist overtones, could be seen as a part of the larger conspiracy, rather than just a simple opinion of one person. Therefore, such statements could be treated with suspicion and requiring denunciation. Thus, the target were not simply the “undesirable” social groups. The SVU trial aimed to discredit not simply the old Ukrainian intelligentsia but foremost the views and political positions, which the Ukrainian intelligentsia (academic, cultural, religious, or educational) was associated with or which the indictment attempted to attribute them.

It should be emphasized that similar situation took place in the Academy of Science of the Soviet Union. There, also there was an attempt to introduce more party

82 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 251-252.

figures into the administration of the Academy, which partially failed during the voting. This became a pretext for a closer investigation into the Academy. There were a number of arrests starting with 1929. The OGPU also fabricated the case of the “National Union of the Struggle for the Revival of Free Russia (Vsenarodnyi Soiuz Bor'by za Vozrozhdenie Svobodnoi Rossii),” headed by a number of prominent academic, like historians Platonov and Tarle. According to the OGPU, this organization planned to “overthrow the Soviet power by means of an armed insurrection and a foreign military intervention, and the establishment of the constitutional monarchy, headed by the former Grand Duke Andrei Vladimirovich.”⁸³

An important dimension of the SVU trial was the inability of a significant number of the Ukrainian intelligentsia to demonstrate that they were indispensable for the Soviet construction in Ukraine. The Bolsheviks used them until their perceived utility outweighed their shortcomings, such as, for instance, ambiguous declarations on the Soviet power in Ukraine, dubious connections within the country and abroad, anti-Bolshevik political career in the past etc. By the end of the 1920s, the Bolsheviks could decide to target the Ukrainian intelligentsia (and the industrial specialists, for that matter), since they aimed to promote a new Soviet-raised generation, which can with relatively little actual loss in efficiency substitute the suspicious and potentially harmful social groups. The new up-and-coming generation was educated under the Soviet regime. Therefore, in the eyes of the Bolshevik leaders it was much more reliable, without the long history of the anti-Bolshevik and other suspicious actions. The SVU trial had the

83 “*Sovershenno Sekretno*”: *Lubianka – Stalinu o Polozhenii v Strane (1922-1934 gg.)*, vol. 9 (Moscow: Institut Istorii RAN, 2013), 458-460.

goal to correct the course of Ukrainianization and to discredit some of the views, inspired by it and included in the indictment.

The relation of the SVU trial to and its implications for Ukrainianization were not entirely clear. The indictment mentioned among others the incorrect realization of Ukrainianization as one of the motives for the emergence of the SVU. Yet, it did not imply a direct attack on Ukrainianization. The aim was rather the correction of the course of Ukrainianization in the tense international environment and the course of the First Five-Year Plan. The SVU trial targeted the opinions in favor of the independent Ukraine or the cooperation with foreign powers, such as Poland and Germany. In the SVU trial the link between foreign threat and “Ukrainian nationalism” was much more evident and explicit than in the earlier Shumsky affair. The Bolsheviks attempted to tame nationalism and to create the Soviet Ukrainian culture, loyal and useful to their project, deprived of the features, which they considered harmful and dangerous, such as *samostiinost'*, pro-Western and pro-Polish and anti-Moscow orientation, the predominance of the potentially “anti-Soviet” social and political groups etc. Therefore, Ukrainianization proceeded. It was an attempt of correction, not abolition.

However, the inclusion of the low-level Ukrainianizers, teachers and educators, who were tasked with the implementation of Ukrainianization, in the lists of the accused and repressed gave a clear signal. Ukrainianization would still remain a key target of the Bolsheviks, but after the trial it was constrained and stalled. The “association of Ukrainianization with the SVU spoiled the campaign.”⁸⁴ The party and cultural activists feared to implement Ukrainianization, as vigorously as before. In the process of

84 Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue*, 235-237.

Ukrainianization during the 1920s the distinction between the Soviet Ukrainian and non-Soviet Ukrainian was not always entirely clear and remained vague. It may have been clear to some of the highest party officials. For the broader audiences, including even their most pro-Soviet representatives, the nuances were not always tangible. After the SVU trial, the risks of the misunderstanding these nuances skyrocketed. The SVU trial inspired additional caution in one's pronouncements or actions for the development of the Ukrainian culture and language. Many Soviet Ukrainianizers now feared to end up in GPU files with similar characterizations as the SVU defendants and preferred to keep a low profile. Moreover, other similar fabricated cases followed soon.

6. 5. Conclusions

The nationality and borderland policies in the end of the 1920s in the Ukrainian SSR were carried out under the dominating leadership of Mykola Skrypnyk. It would be an exaggeration to claim that Skrypnyk was the only party leader, who defined Soviet nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR. Yet, the imprint and the influence of the ambitious Commissar for Enlightenment was visible in almost all the dimensions. Under Skrypnyk's leadership the percentages of the Ukrainian and Ukrainianized institutions went up significantly, even though major work in that direction was already done before his appointment.⁸⁵

The changes, though, were not only quantitative. Skrypnyk was the main architect of the resolution of the status of the Russian population in the Ukrainian SSR. The solution suggested by Skrypnyk and eventually embraced by the KP(b)U was to treat Russians as national minority, and to provide the cultural rights, which this status entails.

⁸⁵ Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of the National Liberation*, 222-224.

Whether willingly or unwillingly Skrypnyk had introduced a major innovation in the Soviet nationality policy and the position of Russians within.

Skrypnyk's preoccupation with the cultural development of the national minorities found its embodiment in the case of the Moldovans and Moldovanization. In the years of his tenure, Moldovanization was at its height, taking some of the most radical forms. The Soviet Moldovan authorities, though, faced the problem of the balance between Moldovanization and Ukrainianization.

Finally, Skrypnyk maintained his preoccupation with the international Ukrainian affairs. It found embodiment, for instance, in his interventions in the activities of the Ukrainian Communist sections in the neighboring states. Also a major act was the adoption of the common Ukrainian orthography, recognized not only in Soviet Ukraine, but also in some major Ukrainian institutions abroad. The discussions, though, revealed the link, which the authorities saw between the orthography, and more specifically the script and the perceived foreign 'threat.' Similar motives one can find in the elaboration of the Moldovan linguistic building in these years.

The issue of the foreign “threat” was also one, though not the only, dimension of the SVU trial. While likely attempting to correct some of the “distortions” of Ukrainianization and to discredit the potential resistance during the First Five-Year Plan, the Soviet Ukrainian authorities had failed to provide the clear indications on the “correct” course of Ukrainianization. The arrests of low-level Ukrainianizers undermined the impetus to the vigorous implementation of Ukrainianization and put significant limits of the initiative of local activists. Skrypnyk and other Soviet leaders still continued to push for Ukrainianization. Yet, the campaign had lost its ambitious drive.

Moreover, Skrypnyk's activities were partially overshadowed by the following trials in the Soviet Ukraine and ultimately by the social and economic consequences of the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan. At the same time the SVU trial significantly limited the possibilities for the work among Ukrainians abroad. There was a permanent danger that such activities could be interpreted, as the cooperation with the “enemies” of Soviet Ukraine. The upcoming crisis of the first half of the 1930s resulted in major changes in borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR.

Chapter 7. Borderlands Transformed: Collectivization, Famine and the Reshaping of Soviet Borderland Policies in the first half of the 1930s.

The years of the First Five-Year plan had a profound impact on the society and the Bolshevik policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR. The social transformations and the profound ensuing crisis, coupled with the major changes on the international arena accentuated the borderland, contested status of the two Soviet republics and the sense of the Soviet vulnerability in the border regions. Eventually, this led to the reconfiguration of the republican leadership and ultimately the directions of nationality policies.

This chapter will trace the evolution of the Soviet borderland policies in the early 1930s in the context of the agricultural transformations, undertaken by the Soviet leadership, and its consequences. Undoubtedly, the collectivization campaign was not the only feature of the First Five-Year Plan. The industrialization was the other key direction. Collectivization was in part driven by the necessity to sponsor and support the industrialization drive. Yet, for the purposes of this study the impact of the collectivization is of greater importance.

The industrialization issue should not be underestimated, though. The Soviet Ukrainian leadership had lost the argument on the location of the key region of the industrialization in the Soviet Union. Despite their effort to promote the South-East of the Ukrainian SSR, the Donbass region, for this title the Soviet leadership chose the Ural

region.¹ The strategic considerations of the proximity and the remoteness of the industrial regions from the Soviet border, and by extension, of the potential front line, did factor in in the decision of the Soviet governing bodies. During the Second World War this decision proved to be farsighted one. Nevertheless, while the main focus of the industrialization in the all-Soviet context fell on the Urals, the Ukrainian SSR still benefited significantly from the industrial investments as well. The scale of the industrialization effort in the Ukrainian SSR during the First Five-Year Plan may seem insignificant only in comparison with the grandiose projects in the Urals, like the creation of the Magnitogorsk from the ground up.² The Ukrainian SSR had also experienced its share of the industrial boost in these years, Dneprostroi being one of the most prominent embodiment thereof.³

7. 1. The Collectivization Crisis in the Border Regions

The collectivization of the agriculture had not only transformed the economy and social structure. The collectivization and the reaction of the population had raised the concerns of the Soviet leadership over the vulnerability of the Soviet borderlands. In particular, the problem of the border regions came to the fore. The Soviet authorities had been long preoccupied with the conditions of the regions on the Soviet Western border. In 1925 the Politburo of TsK RKP(b) had created a special commission, whose main goal was to analyze the challenges to the consolidation of the Soviet power on the Western

1 For the short overview of the discussion, see James Harris, *The Great Urals: Regionalism and the Evolution of the Soviet System* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 77-81.

2 On the establishment and development of the Magnitogorsk, see Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

3 Anne D. Rassweiler, *The Generation of Power: The History of Dneprostroi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

border and to suggest solutions.⁴ The concern was not only over the vicinity of the “anti-Soviet” neighbors, like Poland and Romania. The social and economic conditions in the border regions were the other preoccupation for the Soviet authorities. These issues nourished the sense of the vulnerability in the border regions and fears of the foreign intervention among Soviet leaders and activists.

The western border areas were densely populated. The main problem for the Soviet leaders was that high population density in the region was not the result of the existence of a number of large urban industrial centers. On the contrary, these were mostly absent. The population of the Soviet western border areas of the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR lived mostly in small towns and villages. Part of the small towns were predominantly Jewish. In the pre-revolutionary times these territories were part of the Pale of Settlement.

In addition to high density, the population of the Western border regions was generally quite poor. The scarcity of agricultural lands, due to high density, was one of the reasons of the poverty. At the same time the lack of large urban centers also highlighted the low level of industrial development in the Soviet border areas. For Soviet leaders the underdeveloped industry entailed an additional problem of the small number of workers. Thus, the social group, which the Soviet authorities considered the most reliable and one of the pillars of their power, was underrepresented. Before the First World War the sugar industry in these regions was the main direction of industrial development. Yet, the War and ensuing military conflicts left it largely in ruins, as well as other areas of local economy. As the result, one of the few ways to escape the poverty was to engage in illegal

4 Some of the most interesting files of the commission are available at, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 164, d. 29-31.

and semi-legal activities, such as, for instance, smuggling. Smuggling had a history in the region. Yet, for Soviet authorities the illegal crossing of the border, the smuggling of goods and the participation of or tacit neglect by the Soviet border guards presented a particular challenge and reason for concern. In addition to economic reasons, they were preoccupied with the political consequences, primarily with the exposure of the impoverished population to the Polish and Romanian published materials and the personal and economic contacts in the neighboring states.

Throughout the 1920s, the Soviet authorities proclaimed the necessity of and issued directives on the strengthening of the Western border areas. Besides the building of the military fortifications,⁵ Soviet authorities designed and implemented with various degrees of success a set of policies in order to address the main challenges, which they faced. In response to the high density of the population in the Western border regions, the Soviet authorities carried out campaigns of the resettlement of the population to other less populated inner regions. A vivid illustration of this approach was the Jewish agricultural colonization in Southern Ukraine and Northern Crimea.⁶ In certain respects, the Soviet governing bodies followed in the footsteps of the Russian Imperial authorities, who introduced the idea of the Jewish agricultural colonization in Novorossia region. Yet, the Soviet leaders in Moscow and Kharkiv had mostly different goals and motivations in comparison with the pre-revolutionary authorities. A significant part of population in the

5 The large-scale military fortification started in the second half of the 1920s, most likely in connection with the Soviet war scares, the deterioration of the Soviet-British relations and the May coup in Poland. On the Soviet defensive line, see Neil Short, *The Stalin and Molotov Lines: Soviet Western Defences 1928-1941* (Osprey Publishing, 2008). In general, on the Soviet military and political preparations for the war from the late 1920s and to mid-1920s, see O. N. Ken, *Mobilizatsionnoe Planirovanie i Politicheskie Resheniia (Konets 1920-h – Seredina 1930-h gg.)* (Moscow: O.G.I., 2008).

6 For more details, see Jonathan Dekel-Chen, *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1924-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

new colonies arrived from the densely populated Western border areas, which allowed to partially relieve the demographic pressure.

In order to spur the economic and industrial development in the region the Soviet authorities invested and attempted to revive the sugar industry in the West-bank Ukraine and the Moldovan ASSR. The Soviet leaders expected that the recovery of the sugar-refineries would allow to create new workplaces, reduce poverty, and eventually breed the working class, consolidating the Soviet grip over the border areas. At the same time, the financial and human resources for this task were scarce.

The Soviet authorities also had to address the issue of weakness of the party structures in the border areas. The quality of the Soviet activities was undermined by the perception of the border areas among the party workers. Frequently the party activists considered the work in the border areas as a sort of exile, a demotion. Those, who made their career in the border regions, often were looking for a transfer to other positions and less problematic regions. This was not surprising. The assignment in the border areas presupposed numerous difficult tasks in the sensitive regions with limited resources at one's disposal. As a result, the decisions on the transfers of “responsible” and qualified party workers to the border areas from the inner regions of the Ukrainian SSR were frequent.

Finally, the Soviet authorities paid particular attention to the “correct” and comprehensive implementation of nationality policies in the border areas. The Moldovan ASSR as a whole should have been the showcase of the successes of the Bolsheviks, particularly in terms of nationality policies, for the population of Bessarabia. After all, this was one of the motivations behind the establishment of the autonomous republic. The

Ukrainian SSR also served as a demonstration of the Soviet approach to the national question. Yet, unlike the Moldovan ASSR, Soviet Ukraine was a much larger republic, with a significant part of the territory not in the proximity to the border. Therefore, besides the general emphasis on nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the importance of their foreign implications, there was a special attention to the border regions among the Soviet leadership in Moscow and Kharkiv. On numerous occasions the resolutions of the Soviet governing bodies mentioned the necessity to carry out Soviet nationality policies comprehensively due to the sensitive position of the regions along the border. That presupposed not only nationality policies towards Ukrainians, but also towards national minorities, such as first of all Poles, Jews, Germans etc. The border regions were on display. It was crucial for the Soviet authorities to implement the proclaimed principles of Soviet nationality policies in full measure. For instance, creating in 1925 the Marchlewska Polish autonomous region, the Bolsheviks in Moscow and Kharkiv attempted to satisfy the cultural needs of local Poles, counter the Polish propaganda and addressed to its kin population, and to exert pressure abroad, constructing the prototype of the future Soviet Poland.⁷ The emphasis on the comprehensive implementation of the nationality policies in the border regions was also driven by the belief of the Soviet leaders that the remnants of various counter-revolutionary groups and nationalist organization concentrated in the right-bank (*Pravoberezh'e*) Ukraine. The proper management of the nationality issue then had the goal of undermining their influence among the broader population.

7 Kate Brown gave a nuanced account of the history of the Marchlewska autonomous region. She convincingly highlighted the lack of resources, which the leaders of the region encountered from the first days of its establishment, Kate Brown, *A Biography of no Place: from Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

In general, despite the efforts and insistence of the Bolsheviks in Kharkiv and Moscow these policies were not fully successful. The lack of resources, the complexity of the tasks, and the insufficient number of the well-trained party activists undermined the initiatives of the central authorities. By the end of 1920s, the Bolsheviks did not feel fully secure in the border regions. The limited successes in the socio-economic and political development of the border regions contributed to the growing fear of the foreign threat and possible intervention. Stanislav Kosior, the General secretary of the KP(b)U, summarized the problems of the Pravoberezh'e in November 1929:

The next question, similarly important and burning is about our Pravoberezh'e and the border regions. In the Pravoberezh'e we have a type of small-scale farms. It is enough to say that about a half of farms are of two dessiatinas or less. The closer you get to the border, the more the fragmentation. In the whole Pravoberezh'e we have an enormous overpopulation, of 73 persons per square km ... and in the border area the density goes up to 100 persons ... The enormous abundance of the manpower, almost total lack of income, since its exclusively ... a region of small-scale farming. For us the Pravoberezh'e and in particular the border area are the question of the tremendous importance, which poses not only an economic, but also a political problem, since there is a border nearby – Poland. And precisely in the border areas the situation is particularly poor. To this day with respect to the border area we, while accomplishing a few things, on the large-scale limited ourselves only to talks, since the development of the Pravoberezh'e rests on a number of general economic questions, which we cannot resolve without their inclusion in the sight of the all-Union governing bodies. Till recently we saw the resolution of the question of the Pravoberezh'e and the border areas in the resettlement. Certainly, we will not renounce resettlement, but it is an extremely expensive operation. Until now we have not received any tangible results... We have the branches of industry, which in the interests of the whole Union require major investments. In the meantime the Pravoberezh'e is truly a region, forgotten by everybody.⁸

The collectivization campaign reinforced the concerns of the Soviet leadership over the vulnerability in the border areas and in the borderland republics in general. As a result, the Bolsheviks incorporated certain new approaches in their repertoire of the

8 Valerii Vasiliev and Lynne Viola, ed., *Kollektivizatsiia i Krestianskoe Soprotivlenie na Ukraine (Noiabr' 1929 – Mart 1930)* (Vinnytsa: Logos, 1997), 104-105.

consolidation of the Soviet regime in the border areas.

The Bolsheviks had few illusions about the attitude of the peasantry to the collectivization. They anticipated that they would encounter resistance in the villages. The Soviet leaders largely attributed it to the wealthy peasants, kulaks, middle peasantry, and local village intelligentsia, such as priests, teachers etc. At the same time the Soviet authorities misjudged the scale of the peasant resistance. In Soviet Ukraine, including its border areas, the wave of the peasant resistance was one of the most considerable. According to the OGPU data in 1930 – a key year in the collectivization campaign – there were 13 754 cases of mass disorder and protests, out of which a one third in Ukraine.⁹ In the Ukrainian SSR in 1930 the GPU recorded 4098 cases of mass arrests, among which 3208 with the known number of participants. Altogether 956 587 people participated in 3208 protests.¹⁰

The protests in the border areas were a particular concern for the Soviet leadership. Thus, in February 1930 the mass protests engulfed the border Shepetovsk region. A protesting group of women¹¹ proclaimed anti-Soviet slogans and even attempted to cross the border to Poland.¹² Similar acts took place in other border regions. In some localities the Soviet power was basically non-existent for several days. The peasant resistance and protest were a troubling phenomenon for the Soviet leadership as such. Yet, in the sensitive border areas this was a particularly disturbing development. It reinforced the

9 Lynne Viola, “Kollektivizatsiia i Istoriia,” in Vasiliev and Viola, *Kollektivizatsiia i Krestianskoe Soprotivlenie*, 25.

10 Valerii Vasiliev, “Pervaia Volna Sploshnoi Kollektivizatsii I Ukrainskoe Krestianstvo,” in Vasiliev and Viola, *Kollektivizatsiia i Krestianskoe Soprotivlenie*, 66.

11 This apparently was an instance of such phenomenon, as babii bunt. For more on this, see Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 181-204.

12 Vasiliev, “Pervaia Volna Sploshnoi Kollektivizatsii”, 56.

fears that the governments of the neighboring states or the various anti-Soviet groups on the other side of the border could exploit the instability in the border regions. It was also an embarrassment for the Bolsheviks, who claimed the progressiveness and the superiority of their policies in comparison with other regimes. Therefore, the vivid examples of their failure at the border undermined some of the pillars of the Soviet rhetoric and propaganda.

The security concerns over the disorder in the border areas unsurprisingly preoccupied the Soviet leadership above all. In order to “pacify” the revolting localities in the border areas the Soviet authorities deployed the OGPU forces under the personal leadership of the head of the Soviet Ukrainian GPU, Balitskiy. This was an extraordinary measure. Yet, a more systematic approach was also in place.

The dekulakization campaign was one of the ways of countering the peasant resistance and bringing the radical change into the countryside. Therefore, the dekulakization campaign “most often accompanied or even preceded the collectivization campaign in 1930. It was deployed as a preemptive strike, an OGPU security operation to pacify the countryside in preparation for the collectivization and the 'socialist transformation' of the countryside.”¹³ Eventually, kulak became a lax category, which included a variety of groups, not necessarily only wealthy peasants. Basically, almost everyone, who resisted or was not active in the collectivization campaign, could end up in the category of “kulaks” and face the corresponding punitive measures of the Soviet authorities. The socio-economic definition of the kulak was also applied flexibly.

13 Lynne Viola, *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 16.

The Soviet central authorities in Moscow, under the guidance of the commission headed by Molotov, divided all the kulaks in three categories. The central directives ordered the arrests of the first “most dangerous” category of kulaks and their confinement in prison camps. The second category was deported to the remote regions.¹⁴ The third category remained within the region of their residence, but faced resettlement and at least a partial confiscation of the property. The scholars have paid much attention to the dekulakization campaign and the repressive measures, implemented by the Soviet authorities, particularly the OGPU. In respects to the border areas the dekulakization campaign was implemented vigorously in order to remove any perceived hotbed and source of the resistance and anti-Soviet activities in the sensitive and vulnerable border regions.¹⁵

It should be mentioned that the dekulakization was not the first Soviet campaign of deportations in the circumstances of the real or perceived crisis and foreign threat. Olga Velikanova demonstrated, how the war scare of 1927 led to the arrests of the potential “fifth column” all around the Soviet Union.¹⁶ There were also earlier instances, when the perceptions of the foreign threat led to the contemplations of the deportations, particularly in the border areas. On 8 February, 1923,¹⁷ the vice-chairman of GPU Unshlikht sent a memo to the Politburo of TsK RKP(b), in which he requested the introduction of the

14 Lately a couple of interesting studies of the *spetsposelentsy* were published, Viola, *Unknown Gulag*; Viktor Berdinskih, *Spetsposelentsy: Politicheskaya Ssylka Narodov Sovetskoi Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2005).

15 In view of the Bolshevik authorities the border areas of the Ukrainian SSR also required special attention in the dekulakization activities, since they had a larger number of the (potential) “saboteurs” in the individual sector of the agriculture, TsDAGO f. 1, op. 16, d. 11, l. 241.

16 Olga Velikanova, *Popular Perceptions of Soviet Politics in the 1920s: Disenchantment of the Dreamers* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 45-81.

17 Velikanova connects the war panic of 1923 with the paralyzation of Lenin on March 10, see Ibid, 26. Unshlikht's memo suggests that there were also other, earlier sources of war scares in Moscow.

“extraordinary measures” due to “the possibility of military complication on the Western and South-Western borders (the announcement of mobilization in Poland; the preparation of the bands for the attacks on the Soviet republics on its territory; the mass resettlement of the elements, suspected of the Russophilism, in Bessarabia).” Unshlikht proposed the cleansing of the border areas of 150 versts of the “unreliable” and “unwanted elements.” These included the resettlement of, among others, Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Romanians, Finns.¹⁸

Unshlikht's information and proposals alarmed the Politburo and led to the urgent summons of Polish activists. The proposals were not realized likely on the insistence of Chicherin. On March 20, he sent a note to Stalin and leading NKID. Chicherin wrote, that the mobilization in Poland could have different rationales behind it. Therefore, it should be first closer investigated, and there was no need for panic and hasty measures. Even if some of the suspicions turned out true, the head of the NKID proposed to attempt to resolve the matter through diplomatic means.¹⁹ In an earlier personal letter to Radek, Chicherin was more outspoken

I do not know, whose fantastic information from Poland alarmed here our circles... Unshlikht comes up with panic plans... I am truly afraid that this agitation will artificially create some kind of collisions for no reason at all (na pustom meste)... In general, I am tired of this labor of Sisypheus: you work, work, and then some unexpected declarations, Comintern stories, like Zorin's scandal in Turkey, the GPU panic – and everything falls apart. Moscow has terribly lost touch with the real life of Europe. Sometimes one comes across the most fantastic conceptions.²⁰

This case is of interest as an example of the Bolshevik overreaction to a perceived foreign threat. More importantly, it demonstrates that the Bolshevik instinctive response

18 RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 37, l. 84.

19 RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 37, l. 90.

20 RGASPI, f. 159, op. 2, d. 37, l. 85-86.

to such situations was frequently repressive measures and deportations. Still, during the 1920s the Bolsheviks preferred to consolidate their power in the border areas by other means, primarily by the socio-economic development, the strengthening of the party organization, the “correct” implementation of nationality policies, etc. From the early 1930s the repressive approach acquired priority.

Still, repressive measures and most importantly deportations were not the only approach, which the Soviet authorities implemented in order to consolidate their power in the border areas and to reduce the vulnerability of these regions in the 1930s. The other policy, designed by the Soviet leadership, was the resettlement into the border regions (*dopriselenie*) not only from them. This dimension more rarely attracts the attention of historians in comparison with the issue of deportations. The decisions on the settlement into the border regions was the outcome of the concerns of the Soviet leadership over the vulnerability of the border regions, which was reinforced by the collectivization campaign and the resistance of the population to it.²¹ The first wave of the settlement in the border areas of the Ukrainian SSR took place in 1930 and was followed by other ones in the following years. Each year the Soviet Ukrainian governing bodies under Moscow's insistence ordered the settlement of approximately 5000 families. The groups, which were chosen to be the sources of the settlement in the border regions, are of interest. Thus, in 1931 the directive was to settle 5500 new families in the border regions, recruited out of two groups discharged Red Army men and the red partisans.²² Similarly, in 1932 the same two groups were expected to provide 4500 families for the Soviet Ukrainian border

21 Terry Martin calls the Soviet preoccupation with foreign influences and threats “Soviet xenophobia.” He considers the organization of the Red Army kolkhozes a manifestation thereof, Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” 842.

22 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 20, d. 4274, l. 100.

regions.²³ In 1935 the Ukrainian Politburo gave the directive to resettle 4000 “kolkhozniks-udarniks, first of all, those, who served in the Red Army” from Kyiv and Chernihyv regions in place of 8000 resettled to Eastern regions of the Ukrainian SSR.²⁴ The new settlers either organized their own kolkhozes or joined the already existing. The consulted documents suggest that the resettlement to the border regions of the Ukrainian SSR took place yearly at least till 1935, with the possible exception of 1933.²⁵ It was evidently a continuing practice, even though not always successful. The border regions were not always ready to receive new settlers. There was not enough accommodation, building materials, food reserves etc. Also as Pavel Polian suggested, despite the proclaimed voluntaryism, there was much compulsion in the recruitment of the settlers.²⁶ Therefore, a significant part of the new settlers found a way to escape.

Apparently, with the settlement of the demobilized Red Army men, red partisans, and kolkhozniks-udarniks into the border areas the Soviet leadership in Moscow and Kharkiv attempted to achieve two objectives. For the Bolsheviks the settlement of these two groups near the border was “exceptionally important for the strengthening of the defensive potential of the country.”²⁷ In light of the perceived threat of the foreign intervention the Soviet leaders found it necessary to have near the border groups, which they considered politically reliable, with preferably rich enough experience in military activities. In the case of the military conflict they could be among the first defense lines

23 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 16, d. 8, l. 281.

24 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 16, d. 12, l. 66.

25 For 1933 there is though, an indirect evidence in the form of a circular of the Vinnytsa obkom of the KP(b)U from July 1933, which described the organization of the Red Army kolkhozes as a successful and continuing practice, TsDAGO f. 1, op. 20, d. 6265, l. 139-140.

26 Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (New York, Budapest: Central European University, 2004), 47.

27 TsDAGO f. 1, op. 20, d. 6265, l. 139.

or organize partisan activities in the situation of the foreign occupation. In addition, the kolkhozes, made of the resettled Red Army men, were “as a rule politically and economically solid footholds” for the Soviet power.²⁸ The Bolsheviks expected these kolkhozes to demonstrate the benefits of the collectivization, creating politically loyal and economically efficient examples. Similarly, those settlers, who reinforced already existing collective farms, had to play the same role in a slightly different setting. It is possible to suggest that the switch in the recruitment from demobilized Red Army men to kolkhozniks-udarniks, preferably with the Red Army experience, took place due to the lack of the guarantees that the former would create efficient model-kolkhozes. Demobilized Red Army men strengthened the defense potential, but not necessarily had rich experience in the development of the successful collective farms. Therefore, the resettlement of those, who already demonstrated the ability to function efficiently in the kolkhoz setting and ideally with Red Army experience, became preferable.

It is crucial that the settlers came from Soviet Ukraine. The demobilized Red Army men were recruited from the Ukrainian Military District. The red partisans and kolkhozniks-udarniks came from the central regions of the Ukrainian SSR. The directives did not suggest any national criteria behind the selection of the recruits for the settlement in the border areas. Yet, since they were recruited from the Ukrainian Military district or central regions of the Ukrainian SSR, there was a high probability that the majority of them was of the Ukrainian ethnic origin and likely from peasant families. This was likely not by chance. After all, there was always an option to import settlers from other places, RSFSR primarily, as it was the case in many other cases of the creation of the Red Army

²⁸ TsDAGO f. 1, op. 20, d. 6265, l. 139.

and red partisan kolkhozes. In the Ukrainian SSR itself, the southern, eastern and central regions depleted by the famine received new settlers from the RSFSR regions and the Belarusian SSR.²⁹ Yet, for the sensitive border areas Soviet authorities chose to settle those, who were already familiar with the conditions in the Ukrainian SSR. This presupposed the familiarity with the agricultural conditions of Soviet Ukrainian lands. Yet, it also meant the grasp of the cultural specificity of Soviet Ukraine. The new settlers most likely possessed at least basic knowledge of the Ukrainian language. They were also familiar with Soviet nationality policies. Despite the significant reduction of the intensity of the Ukrainianization in the first half of the 1930s, it still continued. For the settlers, coming from Soviet Ukraine, this setting was not surprising, unlike those from other republics, especially the RSFSR. Finally, despite the predominance of the “Soviet xenophobia” over the “Piedmont principle,” the latter was not abandoned entirely, as Martin claims.³⁰ The preservation of the KPZU until 1938, despite the waves of repressions in the party and the significant reduction of the appeal of the Ukrainian SSR among Ukrainian abroad after the radical First Five-Year plan and the subsequent famine, was a testimony to this. Bolsheviks still attempted to exploit cross-border cultural ties, yet more with the defensive aims in mind. It still mattered that the border areas did not get the settlers from the RSFSR.

The case of the resettlement to the Soviet Ukrainian border areas from the groups, which came from Soviet Ukraine, suggest that the “ethnization of the Soviet xenophobia,”

29 Many of the new settlers eventually left. There are many political speculations on the issue of the resettlement from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR after the famine. For a figure-based careful overview, see Gennadiy Efimenko, “Pereseleennia ta Deportacii v Postholodomorni Roky (1933-1936): Poraionnyi Zriz,” *Problemy Istorii Ukrainy: Fakty, Sudzhennia, Poshuki*, no. 22 (2013): 136-165.

30 Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” 860.

discussed by Terry Martin,³¹ was quite selective. Indeed, this argument may be partly true in the case of the smaller diaspora nationalities. Yet, the Soviet Ukrainian case demonstrates its limits. Bolsheviks took also other factors into consideration besides nationality. Despite the crisis of the first half of the 1930s in the Ukrainian SSR and the preoccupation with Ukrainian nationalism, they considered that they could rely even in the crucial matters of the security of the border regions on those Ukrainians and even Ukrainian peasants, who proved their loyalty to Soviet power in the army or in the kolkhozes. Bolsheviks did not treat Ukrainians and Ukrainian peasants as by default disloyal and suspicious. Their policies were still based upon a differentiated perception, which relied on the socio-political criteria besides the national one.

7. 2. The Famine in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR

Undoubtedly, the biggest tragedy of this period in the region was the famine of 1932-1933. The famine claimed millions of lives and had a devastating impact even on survivors. The famine affected a number of areas of the Soviet Union, including regions of the RSFSR and Kazakhstan.³² Yet, in the Ukrainian SSR the death tolls were some of the highest. The famine in the Ukrainian SSR is well-researched topic. There is a great number, and it is permanently growing, of studies³³ and document collections,³⁴ covering

31 Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," 860.

32 For reflections of the famine in Ukraine within the all-Union context, see Halyna Hryn, ed., *Hunger by Design: The Great Ukrainian Famine and Its Soviet Context* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 2008).

33 For instance, David R. Marples, *Holodomor: Causes of the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine* (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2011); Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, *Ukrains'kyi Holodomor v Konteksti Polityky Kremliia Pochatku 1930-h rr.* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2013); N. A. Ivnitskii, *Golod 1932-1933 Godov v SSSR: Ukraina, Kazakhstan, Severnyi Kavkaz, Povolzh'e, Tsentral'no-Chernozemnaia Oblast, Zapadnaia Sibir', Ural* (Moscow: Sobranie, 2009).

34 For instance, Ruslan Pyrig, ed., *Holodomor 1932-1933 Rokiv v Ukraini: Dokumenty i Materialy* (Kyiv: Kyivo-Mogylians'ka Akademiia, 2007); *Holodomor: The Great Famine in Ukraine, 1932-1933* (Warsaw, Kiev: Instytut Pamieci Narodowej, 2009).

different dimension of the phenomenon. Unfortunately, there is much politicization of the issue of the famine. A significant number of studies on the famine in the Ukrainian context can be rather attributed to history politics, rather than just academic work.³⁵ For instance, one of the topics of discussion is the number of deaths, caused by the famine in the Ukrainian SSR. The figures, articulated by historians and politicians, differed dramatically and were often used in the political declarations. Currently a group of demographers revisited the issue, basing upon a number of sources, including recently discovered notes of Soviet Ukrainian demographers. Their calculations estimated the total losses at 4.5 million, with 3.9 million excess deaths and 0.6 million lost births.³⁶ The Harvard project *Mapa: Digital Atlas of Ukraine*³⁷ provided convenient possibilities to see the effects of the famine from the regional point of view.

The analysis of the famine lies beyond the focus of this PhD thesis. Yet, it was a crucial factor, as well as the collectivization drive and failures of the grain-procurement, for the evolution of Soviet borderland and nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR. It should be noted that the crisis, which started in early 1930s and culminated with the famine, reinforced the sense of the insecurity in borderland republics among Bolsheviks and put their contested character to the fore. This led eventually to a number of significant political and administrative decisions. Both Moscow and Kharkiv paid particular attention to the border areas. The deportations from and resettlement to border areas of the

35 On the role of the famine in Ukraine and historiography, dedicated to it, in politics, see H. V. Kasianov, *Danse Macabre: Holod 1932-1933 Rokiv u Polititsi, Masovii Svidomosti ta Istoriohrafii (1980-ti - Pochatok 2000-kh)* (Kyiv: Nash chas, 2010)

36 Omelian Rudnytskyi, Nataliia Levchuk, Oleh Wolowyna, Pavlo Shevchuk, and Alla Kovbasiuk, "Demography of a Man-Made Human Catastrophe: The Case of Massive Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933," *Canadian Studies in Population* 42, no. 1–2 (2015): 53–80.

37 <http://gis.huri.harvard.edu/the-great-famine/about-the-great-famine-project.html> (accessed on 20 March, 2016).

Ukrainian SSR were on the chosen directions to deal with the challenges, encountered in the border areas. There were also other. Border areas were the first to receive support, albeit very insufficient, in circumstances of the growing famine. The regional map of the famine available at *Mapa* suggests that Moscow's and Kharkiv's help possibly had some impact. At least border regions had lower death tolls in comparison with the neighboring ones. This was not necessarily the result of the concerns of Soviet leaders over the deaths of thousands of people. Rather it was the preoccupation with the effect, which the famine in the border areas had on Soviet defense capabilities and the international image of Bolsheviks. Soviet leaders had no intention to allow the Soviet power erode in sensitive border areas. Additionally, the famine was at display to observers across the border. It reduced significantly the appeal of the Soviet Union abroad. The famine also sent the message of the vulnerability of the Soviet Union to potential enemies. The cases of famished and sometimes even swollen people attempting to cross the border was not the image, which Soviets wanted to send either to potential sympathizers or possible opponents. Both Polish and Romanian diplomacy and intelligence monitored and diligently analyzed the developments in the Soviet Union and particularly in Ukraine and the Bolsheviks were aware of this.³⁸

The Moldovan ASSR was one of the border areas, which exemplified many of these trends and considerations. Affected by famine,³⁹ Soviet Moldova was the first region

38 Jan Jacek Bruski, ed., *Holodomor 1932–1933: Wielki Głód na Ukrainie w Dokumentach Polskiej Dyplomacji i Wywiadu* (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2008); Vadim Guzun, ed., *Chestiunea Refugiatilor de peste Nistru: Documente Diplomatice si ale Serviciilor Romane de Informatii, 1919-1936* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy, “George Barițiu” History Institute, 2013).

39 On the famine in the Moldovan ASSR, see K. V. Stratievskii, *Golod v Moldavskoi ASSR, 1932-1933* (Chisinau: Akademiia Nauk Respubliki Moldova, Institut Istarii, 2001); Igor Casu, *Dușmanul de Clasă. Represiuni Politice, Violență și Rezistență în R(A)SS Moldovenească, 1924-1956* (Bucuresti, Chisinau: Cartier, 2014), 58-75.

in the Ukrainian SSR to receive grain support.⁴⁰ The cases of crossing the Soviet-Romanian border were frequent. Thus, in January 1932 314 families crossed the border, in February – 425, in March – 503.⁴¹ It should be noted that from 1929 the Moldovan ASSR demonstrated some of the worst rates in grain requisitions in the Ukrainian SSR, which attracted annoyed attention of Kharkiv and Moscow.⁴²

The crisis of grain-procurements of early 1930s prompted the change in the directions of Soviet nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR and numerous personnel changes in the republican leadership. In the case of the Ukrainian SSR, such changes took place mostly during the later phases of and in the aftermath of the famine in the end of 1932 and during 1933. In the Moldovan ASSR they began even earlier. Possibly, the recurring under-performance of the Moldovan ASSR in the collectivization and grain procurement was one the factors, which facilitated this processes. In the remainder of the chapter I will outline the changes in nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR and in the Ukrainian SSR before, during and in the aftermath of the famine.

7. 3. Introduction of Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR

The crisis of the collectivization and grain-procurement campaigns created opportunities for the reshuffles in the local party leadership. The Moldovan ASSR had some of the worst rates of the fulfillment of the plans in grain requisitioning and collectivization in the Ukrainian SSR. This alone was significant enough reason to attract keen interest in Kharkiv and provoke changes in the Soviet Moldovan leadership. Yet, the

40 R. W. Davies, Oleg V. Khlevniuk, and E. A. Rees, ed., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 134.

41 Stratievskii, *Golod v Moldavskoi ASSR*, 33.

42 Ibid, 25-27.

border proximity and the flight of the population over the Dniester to Romania, caused by the collectivization drive and famine, made the issue even more pressing. This situation created possibilities for shifting the balances of power in the Moldovan ASSR. Nobody in the leadership felt secure. Many tried to avoid the responsibility for the failures and reprimands, sometimes attempting to redirect them onto their opponents in the party and governing structure. The removal and transfer of some of the leaders in the Moldovan ASSR opened the gates for the attacks on their proteges. In that sense the situation in the Moldovan ASSR was similar to other regions.

The head of the Moldovan obkom at that time, Bogopol'skii, was the first “victim” of the reshuffles, as the result of the collectivization crisis. In March 1930 he was removed and TsK KP(b)U sent Il'ia Il'in to take his place. Il'in was the head of obkom only till October 1931, when he possibly anticipating the deterioration of the situation or under the pressure from Kharkiv resigned. The new executive secretary, Placinda, occupied the position only till July 1932. Thus, the leadership of the Moldovan ASSR was unstable and it created repercussion in the whole party organization and the governing bodies. The performance of the leadership also not always corresponding to the challenges of the collectivization crisis. Thus, Grigorii Staryi, soon after his return to the Moldovan ASSR in April 1932 to the position of the head of the Moldovan Sovnarkom, noted on the Chairman of the Moldovan TsIK: “Voronovich, in my opinion, is totally discredited. Others told me directly, jokingly: 'When does he manage to get drunk, so early, and already drunk?' His discourses evoke smiles even among peasants.”⁴³

The collectivization crisis and the recurring reshuffles in the Moldovan leadership

43 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 5259, l. 31.

coincided with an important change in borderland and nationality policies. On 2 February 1932, the Moldovan obkom passed the decision on the switch to Latinization of the Moldovan language:

1. To consider the switch to Latin alphabet in the Moldovan ASSR quite timely and expedient.
2. To proceed from the necessity to enrich the Moldovan language with the generally accepted words among Moldovans of Old Moldova and Bessarabia in further work on national-cultural construction.⁴⁴

Further resolutions also specified the source as the “toiling Moldovans from Bessarabia and Moldova.”⁴⁵

This was a shift from the previously dominating direction of Moldovanization, based on the Cyrillic script, which under guidance of the Moldovan Scientific Committee and Madan's group evolved into an experimentation with the invention of new words, based upon local dialects. A popular interpretation claims that the main goal of the shift was the expansionist intent of Soviet leaders to exert pressure in the Bessarabian question.⁴⁶ This interpretation, though, is questionable. It is largely based upon the general perception of the Moldovan ASSR, as an exclusively expansionist project, and the recorded in 1956 discussion of then head of the MSC, Ochinskii. He claimed that after the decision on Latinization, he visited Stalin together with Kosior. Stalin, in Ochinskii's words in 1956, explained the necessity of Latinization in terms of the future of socialist Romania. Yet, Stalin's sign-on book does not confirm any such visit.⁴⁷ Neither does

44 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 133.

45 Negru, *Politica Etnoculturală în R.A.S.S. Moldovenească*, 168.

46 King, *Moldovans*, 82; Negru, *Politica Etnoculturală în R.A.S.S. Moldovenească*, 36-37; Elena Negru, “Introducerea și Interzicerea Grafiei Latine în R.A.S.S.M.,” *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, no. 3-4 (1999): 35-36; Gheorghe Negru, *Politica Etnoligvistică în R.S.S. Moldovenească* (Chișinău: Prut International, 2000), 19.

47 *Na Priiome u Stalina*.

Ochinskii's own activities after the supposed talk with the General secretary in spring 1932. Ochinskii apparently attempted to sabotage the realization of the directive on Latinization.⁴⁸ It is hard to imagine that he could choose such course of action after Stalin's alleged personal endorsement of Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR.

The interpretation of Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR as primarily an expansionist move does not fit easily the direction of Soviet foreign policy in these years. By the early 1930s the Soviet Union was significantly less aggressive on the international arena. The doctrine of "socialism in one country" was predominant and the idea of the "export of the Revolution" was to a large extent given up. Under the influence of the multiple problems emerging during the First Five Year Plan the Soviet leadership also felt quite insecure, particularly in border areas. Therefore, Soviet diplomats at this moment were quite willingly participating in and even initiating negotiations on various non-aggression pacts with the neighboring and distant states. The normalization and stabilization of the Soviet diplomatic relations with the capitalist countries became the main agenda of the Soviet officials.⁴⁹ Even such institution as the Comintern, whose initial purpose was to spread the socialist revolution, at this moment considered its main goal the defense of the "cradle of the Revolution", that is the Soviet Union, against the threat of "imperialist attack."⁵⁰

The situation in Romanian-Soviet relations was in many respects similar. When

48 *Politica de Moldovanizare*, 144.

49 In light of the Soviet attempts to normalize the relations with Romania Dennis Deletant proposed an explanation of the Latinization as a token of goodwill from the Soviet side, Dennis Deletant, "Language Policy and Linguistic Trends in the Republic of Moldavia, 1924-1992," in Donald L. Dyer (ed) *Studies in Moldovan: the History, Culture, Language and Contemporary Politics of the People of Moldova* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 58. Yet, there are no traces, that the Soviet diplomats used the shift to Latinization in order to soften the position of the Romanian diplomacy.

50 Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: a History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1996), 95-97.

despite the Averescu-Racovsky agreement the Romanian army did not withdraw from Bessarabia, Bolsheviks broke off all diplomatic relations with Romania. Moreover, the Soviet diplomacy considered that the USSR was at war with Romania. At all subsequent diplomatic conferences and meetings Soviet diplomats were explicitly aggressive on the Bessarabian issue, assigning to it primary importance in the Soviet-Romanian relations. Yet, already during the signature of the Litvinov protocol (application of Brian-Kellogg pact) the Soviet authorities were much less insistent upon the Bessarabian issue, though making reservations and leaving the question open.⁵¹ The issue came to the surface once again in 1931-1932, during the attempts to conclude the non-aggression agreements between the Soviet Union and neighboring states, including Romania. While with other states the Soviet diplomats reached the agreement comparatively easily, in the Romanian case the negotiations failed due to the Bessarabian question. Yet, as the evidence suggests, some of the leading Soviet diplomats, particularly Litvinov, was ready even to “silence” the Bessarabian issue in order to reach the sought agreement. The Bolsheviks attempted to keep the issue open, but not to overstress it, fearing it would undermine the rapprochement.⁵² Despite the failure, in 1933 the issue was resolved by the signature by both sides of the “Convention for the Definition of Aggression” in London. The parties interpreted the signature in a slightly different manner, but the general agreement was that

51 Tacu, *Problema Basarabiei si Relatiile Sovieto-Romane in Perioada Interbelica*, 121; Lilia Padureac, *Relatiile Romano-Sovietice (1917-1934)* (Chişinău: Prut International, 2003), 73. Both authors underscore the Soviet emphasis on the Bessarabian question. In my opinion, they underestimate (though mentioning it) the major shift of the Soviet accents to the normalization of diplomatic relations with Romania contrary to previous primacy of the territorial litigation in the discourse. For a more balanced account, see Dov B. Lungu, *Romania and the Great Powers, 1933-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 23-25.

52 Walter M. Bacon Jr., *Behind Closed Doors: Secret Papers on the Failure of Romanian-Soviet Negotiations, 1931-1932* (Stanford, Cal.: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1979), 40, 44, 66-70.

for the time being the Bessarabian question would not be the permanent focus point of the Soviet-Romanian relations.⁵³

Thus, at the moment of the shift to Latinization Soviet leaders were more preoccupied with the security of their borders and the preservation of the status quo in Europe,⁵⁴ rather than the aggressive expansion. It does not exclude, that they were keeping their options open, but it suggests that projection of Soviet influence abroad, with the risk of upsetting Romanian government and more importantly, as Bolsheviks saw it, their patrons in France, was not the imperative at the moment. The other interpretation puts the shift to Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR in the context of the all-Union Latinization campaign.⁵⁵ Starting as part of the struggle between Soviet Azeri and Tatar leaders for the leadership among Soviet Turkic nationalities⁵⁶ and the attempt to undermine the influence of Old Muslim elites, the Latinization campaign acquired an all-Union scale.⁵⁷ In the interpretation of the Bolshevik advocates of Latinization, the Latin script was the future alphabet of the international proletariat. The supporters of the Latin

53 See for the analysis of the agreement and the perception of both sides, Mitrasca, *Moldova: a Romanian Province under Russian Rule*, 129-131. The Politburo decision from June 1, 1934 considered it possible to “silence the moot issues” for the sake of the successful re-establishment of the diplomatic relation, O.N. Ken and A.I. Rupasov, ed., *Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Otnosheniia SSSR s Zapadnymi Sosednimi Gosudarstvami* (Sankt-Peterburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 2000), 443. In fact, already in 1924 Litvinov was ready to recognize the Romanian sovereignty over Bessarabia, but he encountered strong opposition from other Soviet leaders, Robert R. King, *A History of the Romanian Communist Party* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1980), 28.

54 Ken and Rupasov, *Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Otnosheniia SSSR s Zapadnymi Sosednimi Gosudarstvami*, 101.

55 Argentina Ciocanu-Gribincea and Mihai Gribincea, “Politica de Moldovenizarea în R.A.S.S. Moldovenească,” *Cugetul*, no 4 (2000): 24; Popa, *Românii, Basarabia și Transnistria*, 75. For a more sophisticated version of this argument that emphasizes the Soviet perception of Moldovans as a “backward” nationality with similarities to Soviet East, see Andrei Cusco, “Between Revolutionary Utopia and State Pragmatism: the Moldavian ASSR as a Controversial ‘Soviet Piedmont’,” *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics* 4 (2004): 19-22.

56 Frings, “Playing Moscow off Against Kazan,” 249-266.

57 On the Soviet Latinization campaign see Michael G. Smith, *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917-1953* (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), 121-142.

script also considered it an alternative to the Cyrillic, which was perceived as the legacy of the Tsarist Russification. As a result, in some contexts the campaign had received de-Russifying overtones.⁵⁸ Eventually, more than 60 languages became latinized. There were even discussions on Latinization of the Russian language. In 1929 the Narkompros of the RSFSR established a commission, which studies the issue of the Latinization of Russian. Yet, three projects, elaborated by the commission, were not realized. Thus, the Latinization of the Moldovan language was likely one more instance of the all-Union phenomenon. Yet, the gradual marginalization of the activists, who defined Soviet nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR in the second half of the 1920s, laid the basis for this shift and facilitated it.

When, as the result of the collectivization crisis the KP(b)U leadership decided to look closer into the affairs in the Moldovan ASSR, the reports mentioned the “chauvinistic tendencies” in the MSC and the rise of local nationalism in the context of Moldovanization.⁵⁹ The conclusions of the examination did not mention the leading radical Moldovanizers. Still, this was an indication that the dominant radical Moldovanizers, like Chior and Madan, were open to criticism. Soon, articles appeared, criticizing the MSC for distancing themselves from the masses. The radical Moldovanizers had many opponents. Not everybody was convinced of their linguistic experiments. Among Soviet activists in the Moldovan ASSR there were still those, who argued for the introduction of the Romanian language and literary norms in the autonomous republic.⁶⁰ There were also others, particularly in the obkom structures, who

58 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 194-203.

59 *Materialurile Șerșetării Organizației Partințești din Moldova* (Tiraspol: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1930), 33-34; King, *Moldovans*, 79.

60 *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 111.

were annoyed by Madan's and Chior's predominance in the sphere of nationality policies.⁶¹ In 1930-1931 leading radical Moldovanizers got marginalized. In 1931 Chior left for studies to Moscow. Already mentioned Ochinskii, sent from Kharkiv, occupied his position of head of the MSC. In the same year after a clash at the Plenum of the MSC Madan was ousted from the positions of the secretary of the MSC and the head of its linguistic section. Thus, it was clear that the course of the radical Moldovanizers with their orientation towards the emphasis on the particular local elements of language and culture, up to the invention of new words, would not be continued. The marginalization of radical Moldovanizers paved the way for the reorientation of nationality policies. It was not entirely evident, though, which direction it would take. The decision of February 1932 provided the direction.

The scale of change, though, is subject to a debate. The party directives had two key elements: the introduction of the Latin script and the possibility of the enrichment of the Moldovan language with the words, used by Moldovans (workers) in Bessarabia and Old Moldova.

The orientation on Bessarabian dialects was not something new. Rhetorically, this was the norm also at the height of the Moldovanization campaign in the second half of the 1920s. Madan and Chior claimed that they were elaborating the norms of the Moldovan language, basing upon Bessarabian and Transnistrian dialects. Their interpretation, though, was quite different from others. The novelty in the directives, beginning with 1932, was in the mentioning of "Old Moldova." Soviet claims on Bessarabia were based not only on the idea of the unification Moldovan population in Bessarabia and the

61 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 20, d. 4379, l. 25.

Moldovan ASSR, but primarily on the diplomatic non-recognition of the Bessarabian incorporation into Romania in 1918. Yet, the appearance of “Old Moldova” suggest the existence of a symbolic vision of the Moldovan cultural space, which included also territories, which had not experienced Bolshevik revolution or were part of the Romanov Empire. The novelty in the reference of “Old Moldova” was relative. On 25 April 1931, at a meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Nationalities of TsIK SSSR, devoted to the issues of the Karelian language,⁶² one of the leading Ukrainian Bolsheviks, Zatonsky, claimed that the choice in favor of the development of the Moldovan language was useful “to have a Moldavian Piedmont in Bessarabia and even beyond Bessarabia, in the part of the Transprutian Moldova, where the dialect is closer to our Moldovans, rather than to the language of Bucharest Vlachs, which formed the basis of the Romanian language.”⁶³ Zatonsky and Skrypnyk, also present at the meeting, were both the supporters of the distinctiveness of the Moldovan language and culture. At the meeting they juxtaposed the situation in the Moldovan ASSR with the situation in Soviet Karelia, where Finnish communists introduced the Finnish language and did not recognize the Karelian one, in favor of Soviet Moldova. Thus, for them orientation towards Bessarabia and even “Old Moldova” was present in the 1920s as well and did not presuppose Romanianization.

In terms of the shift to the Latin script the change was not totally unexpected and did not have too much significance for everyone. Even the attitude of radical

62 On the linguistic issue in Soviet Karelia, see Nick Baron, “The Language Question and National Conflict in Soviet Karelia in the 1920s,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 349-360; Paul M. Austin, “Soviet Karelian: The Language that Failed,” *Slavic Review* 51 (1992): 16-35; for a comparative take on the identity politics in the Moldovan and Karelian cases, see Mark Lawrence Schrad, “Rag Doll National and the Politics of Differentiation on Arbitrary Borders: Karelia and Moldova,” *Nationalities Papers* 32 (2004): 457-496.

63 “Stennogramma Zasedaniia Prezidiuma Soveta Natsional'nostei TsIK Soiuzu SSR ot 25-go Aprelia 1931 Goda,” *Ab Imperio* no. 2 (2002): 376.

Moldovanizers was ambiguous and not, as it might have been expected, negative. The radical Moldovanizers themselves claimed that Cyrillic script was not really convenient for the Moldovan language (though mentioning that Latin was also not fully compatible) and contemplated the option of Latin script.⁶⁴ At first the usage of the Cyrillic script was an objective, visible distinctive feature that, in turn, underscored the thesis of the distinctiveness of the Moldovan language from the Romanian. Therefore, for local Soviet Moldovan leaders and activists, who were invested and engaged in the debates on the Moldovan language, the shift might have looked significant. Yet, as the remarks of the same Zatonsky at the meeting on the Karelian language suggest, the issue of script was not key. Thus, ardently advocating the necessity to promote Karelian language and to stop the Finnishization of Karelia, when it came to the issue of alphabet, suggested the use of the Finnish one for the Karelian language.⁶⁵ The choice of the script for some of the leading Soviet Bolsheviks was instrumental and did not define the distinctiveness of language, especially in relation to the linguistic idiom, dominant in the neighboring non-socialist state. In Skrypnyk's words: "Linguistic difference multiplied by different social roads means something."⁶⁶

Thus, possibly from the perspective of Kharkiv and Moscow, the changes, introduced in 1932, did not look too substantial and were rather a correction of nationality policies. In the local Soviet Moldovan context the change seemed significant, since it reinforced the never-ending debate on the distinctiveness of Moldovan culture and language, especially in relation to Romanian. The marginalization of radical

64 Chior, *Dispri Orfografia Lingii Moldovinești*, 6-7.

65 "Stenogramma Zasedaniia," 412.

66 Ibid, 406.

Moldovanizers, changes in local leadership and the difficulties of the First Five-Year plan added additional dimensions. Some interpreted (and also advocated) the change as Romanianization in the Moldovan ASSR, in terms of the introduction of Romanian literary norms and the orientation towards Romanian literary heritage. Kharkiv and Tiraspol authorities quickly dismissed such interpretations, emphasizing that Latinization did not mean Romanianization. They insisted on the distinctiveness of the Moldovan language and culture. The stress on the language of Moldovan workers and masses in contrast to the Romanian language of ruling elites underscored this. The differentiation between the language of elites and the language of masses was important rhetorically and ideologically. Nevertheless, it was often unclear what it implies in practical terms. During the 1930s Soviet Moldovan authorities and all those, participating in the implementation of nationality policies, had to walk a fine line between the excesses of radical Moldovanizers and no less dangerous accusations of Romanianizing tendencies. Both were considered to be the embodiment of “local chauvinism” even if in different forms.

Besides latent resistance, Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR encountered other obstacles. Resources were scarce, particularly in light of other more pressing problems in agriculture. Population was often unwilling to undertake the learning of the Latin script and new words, just after they recently got literate in the Moldovan language, developed by radical Moldovanizers. Finally, leading functionaries, devoted to the Latinization, were lacking. Therefore, in spring 1932 TsK KP(b)U transferred Grigorii Saryi, one of the founders of the autonomous republic and the supporter of Latinization, back to the Moldovan ASSR. In addition, some pro-Soviet Bessarabians got the permission to enter the Soviet Union and to participate in the implementation of the nationality policies in the

Moldovan ASSR. Due to these problems and the ambiguities of the new direction in nationality policies, the impact of Latinization was relatively limited.

Latinization did not lead to the enlivening of the activities on Bessarabian front. In 1933 Bagrov, then the head of the historical section of the MSC and one of advocates of the usage of Romanian language and culture, concluded that after 1930 there was no progress in the consolidation of Soviet influence in Bessarabia. Moreover, any activities in that sense basically seized.⁶⁷ Latinization to Bagrov's disappointment did not change the situation. Bagrov unsurprisingly did not mention the impact, which the collectivization drive and famine had on Soviet image abroad, even among sympathizers. Bagrov's letter, though, suggests that with the introduction of Latinization there was no particular drive, beyond rhetoric, to exploit it and cross-border cultural ties in order to strengthen Soviet claims on Bessarabia or even "Old Moldova." If such considerations existed among leaders in Tiraspol, Kharkiv or Moscow, then it was a long-sighted perspective, overshadowed by other tasks.

It is worthwhile also to compare Latinization in the Moldovan ASSR with the Latinizing attempts in the Ukrainian case. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the attempts to introduce the Latin script for Ukrainian and Belarusian failed particularly because of the fears of the Polish influence. In the Moldovan case there were also similar fears in relation to the Romanian influence. Nevertheless, this did not preclude from the introduction of Latinization. One possible explanation lies in the difference of borderland policies of Poland and Romania. Poland, the "fist of world capitalism," under Pilsudski attempted to exploit cross-border cultural ties and their Promethean movement in order to

67 Negru, *Politica Etnoculturala in R.A.S.S. Moldoveneasca*, 190-191.

challenge Soviet rule in Western borderland republics. Poland was also one of the most active players on diplomatic arena in the region, aiming to forge defensive alliances with neighboring non-Soviet countries. Romania, in the interpretation of Soviet leaders, was a less dangerous actor, rather a sidekick of Poland and major capitalist countries, primarily France.⁶⁸ In addition, unlike Pilsudski's Poland, Romanian governments did not demonstrate a coherent use of cross-border cultural ties to change the loyalty of the population of the Moldovan ASSR.⁶⁹ Romanian claims on the Moldovan ASSR were rather limited, mostly to rare declarations. Romanian governments were more preoccupied with the consolidation of their own power in the contested borderlands, Bessarabia included. Often harsh and even repressive policies in Bessarabia, presented vividly in Soviet publications, could hardly create an attractive image for Romania in the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ Thus, Soviets felt relatively more secure on the Romanian border, rather than on the Polish one. If this interpretation is correct, it also presupposes that, despite the general fear of the foreign intervention and capitalist encirclement, Soviet leaders still analyzed each case, each state separately.

7. 4. “The Fortress Ukraine”

The collectivization, grain requisitioning and famine crises had significant impact on borderland and nationality policies in the Ukrainian SSR, as well. The SVU trial was

68 Ken and Rupasov, *Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Otnosheniia SSSR s Zapadnymi Sosednimi Gosudarstvami*, 99-101.

69 Romanians, though, organized a radio-station, which broadcasted in Moldovan and Russian, targeting Bessarabian, but also left-bank population. This prompted the leaders of the Moldovan ASSR to advocate the necessity of the organization of a radio station of their own in the republic, *Politica de Moldovenizare*, 91.

70 On Romanian policies in Bessarabia, see Svetlana Suveica, *Basarabia in Primul Deceniu Interbelic (1918-1928): Modernizare prin Reforme* (Chisinau: Pontos, 2010); Alberto Basciani, *La Difficile Unione: La Basrabia e La Grande Romania, 1918-1940* (Roma: 2007).

already a signal to the participants in the implementation of Ukrainianization. Non-party members of intelligentsia were the main target. The SVU trial warned against too enthusiastic and autonomous implementation of Ukrainianization and attempted to put it under stricter party control. At this moment, though, it meant primarily Kharkiv control. Skrypnyk particularly made strides to put the VUAN under his control, some of the leading members of which featured in the SVU trial. Some other similar cases followed.⁷¹ One of the most prominent was the case of the Ukrainian National Center, allegedly headed by Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi.⁷² Still, a major change in Ukrainianization took place in the end of 1932 in the context of the grain requisitioning crisis and famine in the Ukrainian SSR and Kuban region with a significant share of the Ukrainian population. Terry Martin suggested that the TsK VKP(b) Politburo decree of 14 December 1932 was key for the evolution of Ukrainianization and ultimately in his interpretation, of the Affirmative Action Empire.⁷³ The decree focused on the issue of grain procurements in Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and the Western oblast and among others concluded:

In view of extremely poor efforts and the absence of revolutionary vigilance in a number of local Party organizations in Ukraine and the North Caucasus, a significant number of raions has been infiltrated by counterrevolutionary elements: kulaks, former officers, petlurites, supporters of the Kuban Rada, and so on. They have managed to find their way into collective farms as directors and other influential administration members, accountants, storekeepers, threshing floor foremen, and so on. They have succeeded in infiltrating village councils, land management bodies and cooperative societies, and are now trying to direct the work

71 Olga Berthelsen and Myroslav Shkandrij, "The Secret Police and the Campaign against Galicians in Soviet Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 42 (2014): 37-62; Shkandrij and Berthelsen, "The Soviet Regime's National Operations in Ukraine, 1929-1934"; Yuri Shapoval, "The GPU-NVKD as an Instrument of Counter-Ukrainianization in the 1920s and 1930s," in Andreas Kappeler, Zenon E. Kohut, Frank E. Sysyn and Mark von Hagen, ed., *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600-1945)* (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 325-344.

72 See a collection of documents on the UNTs, Volodymyr Pristaiko and Iurii Shapoval (ed.), *Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi: Sprava "UNTs" i Ostanni Roki (1931-1934)* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 1999).

73 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 302-308.

of these organizations against the interests of the proletarian state and Party policy... The TsK and SNK instruct party and government organizations of the Soviet Union that the worst enemies of the Party, working class, and collective farm peasantry are the saboteurs of grain procurement who have Party membership cards in their pockets.

Ukrainianization was partly to blame:

The TsK and SNK point out that instead of the correct Bolshevik implementation of nationality policy, “Ukrainization” was carried out mechanically in a number of raions of Ukraine, failing to take into consideration the peculiarities of every raion and without the meticulous selection of Bolshevik cadres. This made it easier for bourgeois-nationalist elements, petliurites and others to create their legal facades and counterrevolutionary cells and organizations.

In Northern Caucasus: “

the irresponsible, anti-Bolshevik “ukrainization” which affected nearly half of the raions in the North Caucasus do not correspond to the cultural interests of the population... provided the enemies of Soviet rule with legal facades for organizing resistance to the endeavors of Soviet authorities by kulaks, [czarist] officers, re-emigrating kozaks, members of the Kuban Rada, etc.⁷⁴

Thus, the decree made the “mechanic” Ukrainianization and lack of party vigilance on that front one of the key reasons of the failure of grain requisitioning. Terry Martin called this “the national interpretation of the grain requisitions crisis” and concluded that “the national interpretation, then, was not a cause of the grain requisitions crisis and famine. Rather, it emerged as a consequence of it.”⁷⁵

The growing preoccupation of Moscow leadership and Stalin personally with the situation in Ukraine in 1932 is well-studied.⁷⁶ Still, it makes sense to summarize and quote some of the key excerpts from the correspondence between Bolshevik leaders in Moscow and Kharkiv. I will also pay specific attention to the international situation.

74 The decree is available in the original in a number of documents collections, for instance *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros*, 696-698; I have used the translation available at <http://www.faminegenocide.com/resources/hdocuments.htm#35> (accessed on 19 March 2016).

75 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 303.

76 For instance, Vasil'ev, *Polytichne Kerivnytstvo*.

Hiroaki Kuromiya argued that it was an important factor and it was often missing in the debates on the famine and grain requisitions.⁷⁷

The failure of Kharkiv authorities to meet the plans in grain requisitioning attracted the attention of Moscow. Ukraine was one of the breadbaskets of the Soviet Union. Therefore, significant underperformance there put into jeopardy the all-Union plans, which affected the industrialization campaign. The other issue was the eroding Soviet power in villages. On 26 April 1932 Stalin wrote to Kosior: “Judging from these materials, it looks that the Soviet power ceased to exist in some settlements in the Ukrainian SSR. Is it really so? Is the situation so bad in villages of Ukraine? Where is GPU, what are they doing? Could you maybe look into this issue and inform the TsK VKP about taken actions?”⁷⁸

In May 1932 the Politburo decided to send a commission, headed by Molotov, to Ukraine in order to investigate on spot the existing problems in agriculture and to come up with solutions. On 10 June 1932, the head of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom Chubar and the Chairman of the Ukrainian TsIK Petrovs'kyi sent two letters to Molotov and Stalin. In these letters both Soviet Ukrainian leaders described the grave state of the republican agriculture and requested aid from Moscow or the reduction of plans.⁷⁹ On 12 June Kaganovich forwarded the letters to Stalin, who was then on a vacation. He added:

Petrovsky starts from the very first lines to shift blame to the CC of the VKP(b), he declares that “I understood the necessity of fulfilling the directives of the CC of the

77 Hiroaki Kuromiya, “The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Reconsidered,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 60, no. 4 (June 2008): 670.

78 V. A. Kondrashin, ed., *Golod v SSSR. 1929-1934. T. 1: 1929 — Iul' 1932: Kn. 2* (Moscow: MFD, 2011), 229.

79 The letters were published in Valerii Vasiliev and Iurii Shapoval, ed., *Komandyry Velykogo Holodu: Poizdky V. Molotova i L. Kaganovicha v Ukrainu ta na Pivnichnyi Kavkaz 1932-1933 rr.* (Kyiv: Geneza, 2001), 206-215.

VKP(b) on grain procurements” as if they couldn’t have come to the CC of the VKP(b) and raise all their issues in a timely and honest manner... then he has to admit that they [the Ukrainians] concealed the truth from the CC of the VKP(b) and began to talk only when the CC pointed out the flagrant outrages to them from Moscow. Essentially his letter boils down to an effort, first, to lay the groundwork for rejecting grain procurements this year, which is absolutely inadmissible, and second, he and Chubar raise the question of providing grain assistance for food needs... Kosior has written nothing.⁸⁰

Stalin responded in several days, largely agreeing with Kaganovich's assessment of Chubar's and Petrovsky's letters:

I did not like the letters from Chubar and Petrovsky. The former works up some “self-criticism”—in order to get new millions of poods of grain from Moscow, while the latter plays the hypocrite who has sacrificed himself to the “directive by the CC of the VKP”—in order to obtain a reduction in the plan for grain procurements. Neither one is acceptable... The worst aspect of this situation is Kosior’s silence. What is the explanation for this silence. Does he know about the letters from Chubar and Petrovsky?⁸¹

These letters reinforced the concerns of the party leaders over the state of the KP(b)U and its command of the situation. Kaganovich's and Stalin's emphasis on Kosior's silence demonstrated their preoccupation with the leadership in the KP(b)U. Whether Kosior was not controlling the situation in the Ukrainian SSR or was preferring to conceal problems, any of these options were unacceptable for Bolsheviks leaders. The Moscow Politburo eventually decided to meet some of the requirements of Ukrainian leaders. Yet, the amount of the support hardly matched the gravity of the situation.

On 2 July 1932 in a letter to Molotov and Kaganovich Stalin already gave a more categorical assessment of the Ukrainian situation:

Give the most serious attention to the Ukraine. Chubar’s corruptness and opportunistic essence and Kosior’s rotten diplomacy (with regard to the CC of the VKP) and criminally frivolous attitude toward his job will eventually ruin Ukraine.

⁸⁰ *Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 130.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 137.

These comrades are not up to the challenge of leading Ukraine today... I have formed the impression (probably even the conviction) that we will have to remove both of them from Ukraine – Chubar and Kosior. Maybe I am mistaken. But you have an opportunity to check this situation at the conference.⁸²

Stalin also insisted on Kaganovich's and Molotov's participation in the Third KP(b)U conference in order to, among others, “ensure genuinely Bolshevik decisions by the conference.” “Bolshevik decisions” meant the realization of the decrees and plans of grain requisitions. Even though almost all Ukrainian participants requested the reduction of the plans, Kaganovich and Molotov managed to push through the resolution, which stated the necessity to stick to the original plans. Stalin apparently saw one of the possible solutions to the Ukrainian crisis in personnel changes. At this moment he saw the main problem in the Soviet Ukrainian leadership. Within this interpretation, Stalin also questioned the autonomy of Soviet Ukrainian leaders. For him the maneuvering and insubordination of Ukrainian Bolsheviks was one of the roots of the crisis. Stalin's contemplated the possibility of sending Kaganovich instead of Kosior, but did not want to lose him in Moscow.⁸³

Despite Stalin's insistence to reject the requests for the changes of plans on the Conference in the beginning of July, he suggested that some reductions of grain-procurements plans were in order. On 24 July Stalin sent a telegram to Molotov and Kaganovich: “it is necessary to make an exception for the specially suffering districts of the Ukraine, not only from the point of view of justice, but also in view of the special position of the Ukraine, its common frontier with Poland.”⁸⁴ This was the first time, when in the available correspondence from summer 1932 between Soviet leaders the issue of

⁸² *Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 152.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 158.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 168.

the Ukrainian crisis intertwined with the perception of the foreign threat. Yet, Soviet leaders kept the international situation in mind and monitored it diligently. The scale and the duration of the Ukrainian crisis reinforced their preoccupation with foreign developments. Poland was only one of the troubling actors for Bolsheviks. In the Far East Japan's occupation of Manchuria in 1931 and creation of the puppet government there in February 1932 alarmed Bolshevik leaders.⁸⁵ Stalin followed the data provided by OGPU and NKVD attentively.⁸⁶ In the end of 1931 he wrote to Voroshilov in light of the situation in Manchuria that “it is possible that this winter Japan will not try to touch us. But next year it could make such an attempt”⁸⁷ and issued directives to increase the military presence in Far Eastern border regions. Also in the Far East, in the neighboring Mongolia the pro-Soviet government faced a rebellion in spring 1932. Bolshevik leaders did not exclude the possibility of Japanese or Chinese influence behind the revolt.⁸⁸

Japan and Manchuria may seem far from Ukraine. Yet, Bolsheviks feared the possibility of a military action on two remote fronts. Therefore, Soviet leaders were particularly satisfied with the signature of a non-aggression pact with Poland on July 25 1932.⁸⁹ There was also a connection of the Japanese threat in the Far East with the Ukrainian question. In March 1932 Soviet diplomats reported the enlivening of “white emigration, both Russian and Ukrainian... In the Far East, besides the enlivening of Russian White Guard, there are symptoms of the organization of the Ukrainian emigration

85 On the Manchurian crisis and Soviet foreign policy, see Jonathan Halsam, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930-1933: The Impact of Depression* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 71-82.

86 V. N. Khaustov et al. ed., *Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD (Ianvar' 1922 – Dekabr' 1936)* (Moscow: MFD, 2003), 292, 295.

87 A. V. Kvanoshkin, L. P. Kosheliova, L. A. Rogovaia and O. V. Khlevniuk, ed., *Sovetskoe Rukovodstvo. Perepiska, 1928-1941 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999), 162.

88 Kuromiya, “The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Reconsidered,” 671.

89 On the connection between the situation in the Far East and the Soviet relations with their Western neighbors in the early 1930s, see Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia*, 123-124.

with the goal of the conquest of Nikol'slo-Ussuriiskii region (so-called Zelionyi Klin) and the establishment of the Ukrainian Far-Eastern republic their.”⁹⁰ The document suggested that Japanese ruling circles consider it possible to create a Ukrainian republic in the Far East and also mentioned that a “former Petliurist colonel” carried out recruitment in Eastern Galicia for Ukrainian Far-Eastern Army. The NKID report concluded that “Japan may make use of all newly organized anti-Soviet groups in the interests of its imperialist policy in the Far East, among other of the Ukrainian organization in order to create at first allegedly buffer state (Ukrainian), and then to move further.”⁹¹ Thus, the events in the Far East got intertwined with the Ukrainian question. In November 1933 at the Plenum of the TsK and TsKK of the KP(b)U, Popov, one of the key figures in the KP(b)U at the time, emphasized the orientation of “all enemies of the Ukrainian SSR, including Ukrainian counter-revolution” towards Japan, which was the key player in the possible intervention in the Soviet Union.⁹² The Polish-Japanese intelligence cooperation had also continued even after the signature of Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact on July 25, 1932.⁹³

No less importantly, Bolshevik leaders were preoccupied with the rise of Nazi party in Germany. Bolsheviks were aware of Nazi plans for Eastern Europe and Ukraine specifically. In a letter from July 2, 1932, a Soviet diplomatic representatives in Germany wrote: “We can safely assert, that in the National-Socialist milieu... there is a conviction that future carnage of Bolshevik union should go and will go along the lines of the

90 AVPRF, f. 0122, op. 16, p. 161, d. 18, l. 11 // available at <http://archive-ukr.mid.ru/view/?DOC=1095&ITEM=2> (accessed on 20 March 2016).

91 Ibid, 10.

92 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 419, l. 58.

93 Hiroaki Kuromiya and Andrzej Peplonski, *Między Warszawą a Tokio: Polsko-Japońska Współpraca Wywiadowcza 1904-1944* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2009); Hiroaki Kuromiya and Andrzej Peplonski, “Stalin, Espionage, and Counterespionage,” in Timothy Snyder and Ray Brandon, ed., *Stalin and Europe: Imitation and Domination, 1928-1953* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78.

German expansion to Ukraine... The Ukrainian question come up not by chance. In the context of the immediate war threat, and even more in the case of war, it will acquire increasing significance.”⁹⁴ Thus, the combination of international developments, which consisted of the situation in the Far East, Nazi rise and still active in Ukrainian affairs Poland, made the crisis of the grain requisitions and famine in Ukraine not just an internal issue, but a matter of the international security of the Bolshevik state.

On 11 August, 1932 Stalin sent a famous letter, in which he expressed his indignation with the leadership of the Ukrainian SSR and the necessity to introduce significant changes in order to counter the crisis:

The most important issue right now is Ukraine. Things in Ukraine have hit rock bottom. Things are bad with regard to the party... This is not a party but a parliament, a caricature of a parliament. Instead of leading the districts, Kosior keeps maneuvering between the directives of the CC of the VKP and the demands of the district party committees—and now he has maneuvered himself into a total mess... Chubar is no leader. Things are bad with the GPU. Redens is not up to leading the fight against the counterrevolution in such a large and distinctive republic as Ukraine. Unless we begin to straighten out the situation in the Ukraine, we may lose the Ukraine. Keep in mind that Pilsudski is not daydreaming, and his agents in the Ukraine are many times stronger than Redens or Kosior thinks. Keep in mind, too, that the Ukrainian Communist Party (500,000 members, ha-ha) has quite a lot (yes, quite a lot!) of rotten elements, conscious and unconscious Petliura adherents, and, finally, direct agents of Pilsudski. As soon as things get worse, these elements will waste no time opening a front inside (and outside) the party, against the party. The worst aspect is that the Ukraine leadership does not see these dangers.⁹⁵

Stalin again suggested major personnel changes. He stated the necessity to remove Kosior to Moscow, and to make Kaganovich the head of the KP(b)U. Stalin insisted that Balitsky should takeover the Ukrainian GPU. In a short a period of time he expected that Chubar would also be recalled to Moscow. Stalin contemplated Hrynko as his possible

94 AVPRF, f. 0122, op. 16, p. 163, d. 36, l. 96-95 // available at <http://archive-ukr.mid.ru/view/?DOC=1099&ITEM=11> (accessed on 20 March 2016).

95 *Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 180-181.

substitute. Interestingly, Hrynko was a former Borotbist, recalled to Moscow in the course of Shums'kyi affair. There he apparently managed to prove his loyalty, becoming the Narkom of Finances of the Soviet Union.

Stalin's ultimate goal for Ukraine was “transforming Ukraine as quickly as possible into a real fortress of the USSR, into a genuinely exemplary republic. We should be unstinting in providing money. Without these and similar measures (the economic and political strengthening of the Ukraine, above all its border districts, etc.), I repeat, we may lose Ukraine.”⁹⁶

It was possibly no accident that Stalin lost his patience soon after the Nazi victory in German federal elections in the end of July 1932. The preoccupation with the vulnerability of the Ukrainian SSR, as a contested borderland republic is at full display in the letter. In Stalin's view the scale of the crisis required a swift and determined intervention on behalf of Moscow. In the “fortress Ukraine” there was little space for the autonomy, albeit limited, of local Soviet Ukrainian leaders left. Strict party discipline and subordination to Moscow was a priority. Ukrainianization had not yet received the negative evaluation it would acquire in the Politburo December decrees. It would, though, in the interpretation of the results of Molotov's commission to Ukraine and Kaganovich's commission to Kuban region, which carried out their activities in the late autumn 1932. Brian J. Boeck argued that the Kuban issue was particularly important, since it was a region outside of the Ukrainian SSR, which Ukrainianization was introduced. He documented, how Kaganovich's chose and selectively interpreted the data during his visit to Kuban. Kaganovich took one case of the *stanitsa* Poltavskaia and made it an exemplary

96 *Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 181.

one, privileging some documents at the expense of the other. The former stanitsa ataman Omel'chenko, who during the civil war demonstrated a pro-Ukrainian orientation, lived abroad after the civil war, but according to the OGPU, still maintained contacts with the stanitsa and organized resistance to the Soviet power. Omel'chenko's case allowed Kaganovich and Moscow leadership to weave all the elements, such as Ukrainianization, the foreign intrigue, and the grain requisitions crisis into one coherent picture.⁹⁷

After the Poliburo decree of December 14 criticized the “mechanic” Ukrainianization, it also adopted a resolution to abandon Ukrainianization outside of the Ukrainian SSR, among others in the Northern Caucasus. The Politburo decree did not, though, abolish Ukrainization in Soviet Ukraine, at least explicitly. The decree rather focused on the incorrect implementation of Soviet nationality policy and the lack of vigilance in the selection of the cadres, leading Ukrainianization. The signal was to take Ukrainianization under strict party control, which presupposed Moscow's close supervision, since the KP(b)U failed to achieve that. In practice it meant a significant step back in the Ukrainianization drive. The SVU and UNTs cases had already reduced the ambitions of activists, engaged in Ukrainianization. Mostly, though, it affected non-party figures. The Politburo decree and subsequent events put the party leadership over Ukrainization in the center of the scrutiny. Mykola Skrypnyk as the leading figure of Ukrainianization turned out to be the main target and for at least some Soviet Ukrainian leaders, a convenient scapegoat.

The attacks on Skrypnyk started with the personnel changes in the Ukrainian

97 Brian J. Boeck, “Complicating the National Interpretation of the Famine: Reexamining the Case of Kuban,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 30 (2008): 31-48.

leadership in January 1933. Moscow sent Postyshev to occupy the position of the second secretary of the KP(b)U, but de facto he became the head of the party. Balitsky, Popov, Khataevich were other new old names in the Soviet Ukrainian leadership. Skrypnyk's dominant position in Ukraine drew some resentment well before 1933. He had numerous conflicts and disagreements with his colleagues.⁹⁸ Skrypnyk had extensive contacts abroad and attempted to bring representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora to work in Soviet Ukraine on numerous occasions. Skrypnyk was also an advocate of Ukrainianization outside of the Ukrainian SSR. He was also an Old Bolshevik, with undoubted revolutionary credentials. Skrypnyk was in many respects an emblematic figure of the Ukrainianization campaign. His downfall was a strong signal in terms of the priorities of Soviet nationality and borderland policies.

After first attacks in speeches and in press Skrypnyk was dismissed from the position of Commissar of Enlightenment in February 1933. He was transferred to the positions of the deputy-chairman of the Sovnarkom and the head of Gosplan of the Ukrainian SSR. At the same time, though, the GPU was looking closely into Skrypnyk's affairs, arresting and interrogating his closest associates. They were incorporated into the case of the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO), which the GPU elaborated beginning with December 1932. The campaign against Skrypnyk was accompanied by a number of articles in press on the pitfalls of Ukrainianization in previous years, particularly the Ukrainianization of Russian children, linguistic reforms etc.

The direct attacks came on June plenum of TsK KP(b)U. A number of speakers attacked Skrypnyk on practical and theoretical grounds. Postyshev had also rejected

98 See Liubchenko's letter to Stain, *TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros*, 711-716.

Skrypnyk's attempt to confess to his mistakes. The issues of the international affairs figured prominently in discussions: "Current situation is characterized by the establishment of Hitler's fascist dictatorship in Germany, which became the main orientation for the Ukrainian counter-revolution."⁹⁹ Thus, helping out and not resisting to the "Ukrainian counter-revolution" meant playing into the hands of Bolshevik foreign enemies.

The problem of cross-border cultural ties, which was a key dimension in Skrypnyk's activities also deserved a critical discussion:

It is not bad, that we and Nikolai Alexandrovich talked about Soviet Ukraine, as a Piedmont of Ukrainian lands... We told this and will tell this, and we are not renouncing and not even thinking of renouncing from the fact, that Soviet Ukraine, our industry, our collectivization, our nationality policy would be a powerful weapon of the revolutionary impact on Ukrainian toiling masses on the other side of the border. On the contrary, we consider that the cleansing of our party organizations and Soviet apparatus from the double-dealing counter-revolutionary scam, from the agents of Hitler and Pilsudski, will only facilitate the revolutionary influence of Soviet Ukraine on Ukrainian lands in capitalist countries. It was not the mistake of Nikolai Alexandrovich that he often talked about the liberation of the toiling masses of Western Ukraine from the fascist and capitalist yoke... but that he infinitely trusted so-called representatives of these masses... it was not the mistake of Nikolai Alexandrovich that he talked about the establishment of the unified orthography for Soviet Ukraine and Western Ukraine, since there is nothing awful in that, but that in the question of the orthography he let himself be led by bourgeois social elements of Western Ukraine, for whom orthography... is a weapon of nationality policy, the rupture between working masses of Ukraine and other Soviet republics, a weapon of the separation of Ukraine from the Soviet Union and its subjugation to the international imperialism.¹⁰⁰

Skrypnyk was criticized for allowing the dangerous foreign influences of the hostile social groups to penetrate nationality policies and, thus, put into jeopardy the unity

⁹⁹ TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 1, d. 407, l. 78.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 78-79; it should be noted that the Ukrainian Politburo, indeed, continued to invest into the foreign activities, supporting pro-Soviet groups. Yet, after the famine and purges among Ukrainian communists in neighboring states, the impact was very limited. On the impact of the famine among Ukrainian population in Poland, see Myroslav Shkandrij, "Ukrainianization, Terror and Famine: Coverage in Lviv's *Dilo* and the Nationalist Press of the 1930s," *Nationalities Papers* 40 (2012): 431-451.

of the Soviet Union. This was a grave accusation in any context. In 1933 this was basically a sentence. Skrypnyk was still given another chance to repel his mistakes in a written document. Yet, when the Ukrainian Politburo rejected his another submission on 7 July, 1933, he committed suicide. The subsequent campaign categorized Skrypnyk's mistakes as a nationalist deviation. Together with Skrypnyk, some of the key dimension of his understanding of Ukrainianization were abandoned, such as the Ukrainian orthography of 1928, the “national minority” status of Russians in the Ukrainian SSR,¹⁰¹ Ukrainian schooling for children from mixed families etc. Many of Skrypnyk's proteges were purged at different levels of the Soviet Ukrainian government.

The November 1933 Plenum of the TsK and TsKK KP(b)U saw the inauguration of Skrypnyk as a nationalist deviationist. There was, though, another important development. The Plenum concluded that Ukrainian nationalism was the greatest danger in the Ukrainian SSR.¹⁰² Terry Martin convincingly argues that this was a major change.¹⁰³ This set the stage for the renegotiation of the Russian question in the Soviet Union. The resolution of the Plenum concluded:

Great-power Russian chauvinism still is the greatest danger in the scale of the whole Union, whole VKP(b). But this in no way contradicts the fact that in some republics of the Soviet Union, particularly in Ukraine, at the present moment Ukrainian nationalism, closing up with imperialist interventionist, is the greatest danger... Therefore, he, who attempts even in the least possible degree to weaken or undermine the connection between Ukraine and the Soviet Union... he plays into the

101 Hennadii Efimenko claims that Russians were not referred to as a national minority in the Ukrainian SSR after 17 August, 1933, Hennadii Efimenko, *Natsional'no-Kul'turna Politika VKP(b) shchodo Radians'koi Ukrainy (1932-1938)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy, 2001), 33.

102 Interestingly, in the Moldovan ASSR, where local leaders often attempted to emulate their Ukrainian superiors, this declaration led to an embarrassment. Following the claim that local nationalism was the greatest danger, Soviet Moldovan leaders passed a resolution that local Moldovan nationalism was the greatest danger. They were quickly rebuked, had to admit their mistake, and state that in fact Ukrainian, not Moldovan, nationalism was the greatest danger in the autonomous republic, which was part of the Ukrainian SSR.

103 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 356.

hands of the enemy, of the Ukrainian and Russian counter-revolution, he puts Ukrainian people at the mercy of Polish and German landowners and capitalists.¹⁰⁴

The common appearance of Polish and German factors in speeches, as key foreign threat for the Soviet Union in Ukraine, was not surprising. During these months Bolshevik leaders became increasingly preoccupied with the possibility of rapprochement between Poland and Germany, as many Soviet leaders suspected on anti-Soviet grounds.¹⁰⁵ This basically undermined Soviet attempts to unite East-European countries with a set of diplomatic agreements, confining Nazi ambitions and, thus, providing additional buffer for the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ Roughly at the same time the Ukrainian GPU “uncovered” the Polish Military Organization (POW), alleged member of which faced trial in spring 1934.¹⁰⁷

In another move on 18 January, 1934, the Ukrainian Politburo decreed the transfer of the capital of Soviet Ukraine from Kharkiv to Kyiv: “Taking into consideration the necessity to draw the Ukrainian government and party and soviet apparatuses closer to most important agricultural regions, which are situated in Right-bank Ukraine, and also for further and quicker development of the national-cultural construction and Bolshevik Ukrainianization on the basis of industrialization and collectivization – to move the capital of Ukraine to Kyiv, which is its natural geographic center.”¹⁰⁸ It is likely, that this decision aimed to tighten the party and Soviet grip over the troublesome and sensitive

104 S. Kosior and P. Postyshev, *Itogi i Blizhaishie Zadachi Provedeniia Natsional'ni Politiki na Ukraine* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1933), 95-96.

105 Pauly, “Soviet Polonophobia,” 182-184.

106 Ken and Rupasov, *Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Otnosheniia SSSR s Zapadnymi Sosednimi Gosudarstvami*, 101-105.

107 Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War*, 116-119; for a collection of documents on POV, see *Sprava “Pol'skoi Organizatsii Viiskovoi” v Ukraini. 1920-1938 rr. Zbirnyk Dokumentiv ta Materialiv* (Kyiv: Golovna Redkolegia Naukovo Dokumental'noi Serii Knyg “Reabilitovani Istoriei,” 2011).

108 TsDAGO, f. 1, op. 6, d. 338, l. 14.

Pravoberezh'e. In the circumstances of the imminent foreign threat, as Bolsheviks read the situation, this was a necessary decision.

7. 5. Conclusions

The conclusions of the November Plenum on Ukrainianization and Skrypnyk, as its symbol for several key years, made it clear that Ukrainianization would not enjoy the same possibilities of the experimentation and discussions, as it had before. Bolsheviks still did not denounce Ukrainianization. Yet, after such harsh pronouncements on Soviet nationality policies and the personalities, which embodied them, it was not clear, what it entailed. The collectivization, grain-procurement crisis, and famine within the perceived deterioration of the international situation led leading Bolsheviks to the conclusion that the ambitious Ukrainianization failed to serve their goals and on the contrary in some respects played into the hands of their enemies. Somewhat similarly and a bit earlier Bolsheviks denounced the radical Moldovanization and switched to Latinization and less experimental approach to the development of the Moldovan language and culture. Interestingly, the impact of the international developments and cross-border cultural ties was much more explicit in the Ukrainian case, then in the Moldovan one.

The changes in the first half of the 1930s did not mean, though, a complete abandonment of Ukrainianization. Bolsheviks introduced a more moderate course in Ukrainianization under stricter party control and vigilance with less intensity and administrative pressure. Moreover, as the case of the resettlement into the border areas of the Ukrainian SSR demonstrated, Bolsheviks preserved a differentiated view of Ukrainians and their understanding was often based upon the perceived loyalty of various

social groups.

Yet another crucial change was the gradual “reemergence of Russians” within Soviet nationality policies. What it actually meant is open to a debate in existing historiography. In Conclusion I will discuss this issue in more detail.

Conclusion

In August 1946 two teachers from the Chernivtsy region sent a letter to Stalin. In this letter the authors, reacting to the intensive campaign of the Ukrainianization of schools in the region, claimed:

Everybody knows, that Great Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians came out of one cradle of Kievan Rus' and represent a one and indivisible nation of "Russians" with the dialects of the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages ... the tendency to separate Ukrainian from Russian and, in general, the division of Russian nation into Great Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians (Little Russians) as separate nationalities (narody) is a pernicious road of regress and, if we take this path backwards, then Ukrainians can be divided into ancient tribes of Polians, Drevlians, Dregoviches, Radimiches etc. Yet, no country fragments its people, its nation into the tribes of great age (glubokoi sediny) and our task is to unite, to cement into one, whole, monolithic state all close, kin Russian tribes.¹

Coming from the region, which only recently became part of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian SSR, the two teachers had not yet understood the essence of the Soviet approach to the Ukrainian question. They were still thinking within the pre-revolutionary framework of the Russian triune nation. They did not experience the Soviet nationality and borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR during the interwar years. Therefore, the insistence of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities on the Ukrainianization of schools and the use of the Ukrainian language came as an unpleasant and troubling surprise to the authors of this letter.

Another region annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940 and secured after the Second World War was Bessarabia. On 26 June 1940, Molotov handed the Romanian

1 O. V. Khlevniuk et al, ed., *Sovetskaia Natsional'naia Politika. Ideologiya i Praktiki. 1945-1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2013), 862.

representative the declaration of the Soviet government, which demanded the “return” of Bessarabia and the annexation of Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union. Somewhat unexpectedly Ukrainians and the Ukrainian SSR played a key role in the declaration: “In 1918 Romania, benefiting from the military weakness of Russia, forcibly annexed from the Soviet Union (Russia) a part of its territory – Bessarabia. Thus, it [Romania] violated the unity of Bessarabia, inhabited mainly (*glavnym obrazom*) by Ukrainians, with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.”² Even with the questionable statements on the political affiliation of Bessarabia after 1917, the most surprising was the claim that the Bessarabian population was predominantly Ukrainian. This was by any statistical estimations not true. Yet, these statements were likely the result of the deep involvement of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities in the Moldovan-Bessarabian affairs from the early 1920s, which Soviet Ukrainian leaders considered to a significant extent their sphere of influence. In addition, it was an indication that despite the Soviet efforts and due to the zigzags in the interwar borderland and nationality policies in the Moldovan ASSR the ambiguity on the question of the relations between Romanians and Moldovans persisted. In this context for the Bolshevik leaders the claim based upon the imaginary Ukrainian irredentism had more legitimacy and weight, than the Moldovan one.

* * *

This thesis has shown that the negotiations, different interpretations and the interplay between actors (mostly Soviet activists and leaders) on both sides of the Soviet Western border influenced and framed the evolution of borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR in the 1920s and early 1930s. The Soviet

² *Bessarabiia na Perekrestke Evropeiskoi Diplomatii*, 348.

struggle for borderlands and the use of the cross-border cultural ties was, in fact, undermined by the clashes of different understandings of borderland policies and the jockeying for power and spheres of influence. It was in this framework of shifting balances of power, spheres of influence and international developments that the Bolsheviks were defining and redefining, what “Ukrainian,” “Moldovan,” or “Russian” meant in the Soviet context, what was the balance between class, social, and national, what it presupposed in territorial and administrative terms. There were different interpretations and understandings of these issues. The decisions on the prevalence of one of them or any sort of compromise took place in specific circumstances. This dissertation suggests that despite the centralizing tendencies in politics and economy Moscow left some space for the autonomous spheres of influence in the implementation borderland policies on both sides of the border for local republican leaders. Bolsheviks leaders were open to certain experimentation in borderland and nationality issues, looking for the most advantageous option. Thus, Soviet Ukrainian leaders got the permission to infringe the Comintern authority in Ukrainian-inhabited lands, which even included Bessarabia. The crisis of the first half of the 1930s, consolidation of political monopoly and international developments, though, eventually left no space for such autonomous endeavors.

The appearance of two cited documents in this form would have been hardly possible without the developments in the Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian SSR and the Moldovan ASSR, described in the thesis. The civil war and the Polish-Soviet war convinced Bolsheviks that Soviet Ukraine, as a separate political unit, the support for distinct Soviet Ukrainian culture and the staunch stance against Russian nationalism or “Great-Russian chauvinism” in Lenin's wording was the best option for the consolidation

of the Bolshevik regime in the face of internal and external challenges. Poland, a strong and ambitious neighbor, forced Bolsheviks to always keep in mind that the national question and cross-border cultural ties could be used against the Soviet regime. At the same time the civil wars had demonstrated to the Bolsheviks that Russian nationalism served as a strong mobilizing and unifying factor for their social and political opponents. The most active bearers of Russian nationalism were social groups, which Bolsheviks considered hostile. It was after the Bolshevik Revolution, during the civil wars and in the aftermath such cases, as the “Georgian affair” that the generally critical attitude to “Great-Russian chauvinism” among some of the most influential Bolshevik leaders, like Lenin, turned to the outward hostility to and the preoccupation with the phenomenon, which became considered to be the “greatest danger.” In the Soviet Ukrainian case a combination of these considerations and pressures ultimately added up to the active promotion and sometimes forceful imposition of the distinct and explicitly non-Russian Soviet Ukrainian identity, culture and language. Historiography tends to emphasize the Bolshevik concerns over non-Russian nationalisms, which often leads to the interpretation of Soviet nationality policies as a concession to their strength. Yet, Bolsheviks were no less and possibly more preoccupied with Russian nationalism, but there were hardly any concessions to it in the beginning of the 1920s. Bolsheviks were ready to make use of nationalism, when they felt that they could control it and instrumentalize in order to reach certain goals.

In the all-Union context the interplay of certain ideological premises, the lessons of the post-revolutionary military conflicts and the analysis of the specific conjuncture led the Soviet authorities to the introduction of *korenizatsiia* policies, the territorization of

nationality and the promotion of non-Russian national cadres and cultures. While Bolshevik leadership had elaborated general directives, what these actually meant in concrete circumstances and local national contexts was subject to different interpretations and debates, mostly by republican and local leaders and activists in negotiations with the center. For instance, the ruling group in the Moldovan ASSR in the process and after its establishment favored the policies, which underscored the distinctiveness of the Moldovan nationality and language in relation to Romanian ones. Yet, this view was hotly contested by Romanian Communist emigres, who were the other contender for the ruling positions in the republic, or even among some of the members of the chosen Soviet Moldovan leadership, like Staryi. The success of the group, which stood for distinct Moldovan identity and culture, was possible due to specific conjuncture and balance of power at the time, which favored active involvement of the Soviet Ukrainian central authorities in the matter. The case of the establishment of the Moldovan ASSR demonstrates, how the specific circumstances allowed Kharkiv to assume a significant role in the Moldovan-Bessarabian affairs.

It should be noted that the introduced support for non-Russian territorial units, cultures and languages did not have the consolidation of non-Russian nationalism and identities as a goal in itself. These processes did occur in many cases, but they were not the primary aims. The ultimate goals were the consolidation of the Bolshevik regime in the borderlands and non-Russian territories, strengthening the unity of the Soviet state, the mobilization of the support of the population for Bolshevik policies and campaigns, the social transformation of the society, etc. Bolsheviks also did not promote and construct non-Russian identities per se. They attempted to foster such forms of national

identity, which would be useful for them. Therefore, as some of the discussed cases has demonstrated, the Bolsheviks from Moscow and Kharkiv faced the challenge of the promotion of the Soviet Ukrainian culture, which would base upon the “politically reliable” social groups, be explicitly non-Russian, but would not be anti-Moscow, anti-Soviet and secessionist. The choice of the allies among Ukrainian nationally-minded Marxist parties served also as an indication that not every understanding of the Ukrainian identity and of the relations between Soviet Ukraine and Moscow, even if in socialist framework, was acceptable.

The variety of the possible interpretations of Soviet nationality policies in the context of the Ukrainian SSR and the internal divisions in the KP(b)U was on display during the so-called Shumsky affair. Some Soviet Ukrainian leaders considered Ukrainianization a secondary and even harmful goal, not worthy of the invested efforts and allocated resources. Others, Shumsky included, on the contrary, claimed that Ukrainianization proceeded too slowly and a more forceful approach was needed. Finally, there were those, who advocated Ukrainianization, but in a more moderate form, which strengthened the cohesion of the Soviet Union and the orientation towards Moscow as the Bolshevik capital, rather than weakened it. The Shumsky affair highlighted also that the differences in the views on Soviet nationality policies intertwined with the struggle for political power. Kaganovich managed to outplay Shumsky. Shumsky misread the situation from the beginning, leaving both himself and the views, which he stood for, vulnerable to critical attacks. The latter's use of the “radioactive” concepts, like “maloross” also made the task of Shumsky's opponents much easier. Yet, it was the events in the neighboring Poland, which sealed Shumsky's fate and resulted in the significant

changes in Soviet borderland and nationality policies.

The May coup in Poland in 1926 and the accession of Pilsudski's circle to power had a profound impact on Soviet borderland policies. Before it the Bolsheviks could have seen themselves in the pole position in the struggle for the Western borderlands. They actively promoted their approach to the nationality question abroad and spread their influence through communist parties (sections) of national minorities or other pro-Soviet groups in Poland and Romania. The Polish and Romanian governments were less ambitious on the external front and tended to resolve their Eastern borderland concerns within their countries, sometimes also by repressive means, playing thus into the Bolshevik hands. The arrival of Pilsudski's circles to power changed the equation. Poland again became a much more active player in the struggle for the borderlands, which looked ambitiously across its Eastern border. It had also raised the stakes of the pronouncements and actions, which could be interpreted as an attempt to undermine the connections of Soviet Ukraine and Belarus, for that matter, to the Bolshevik center in Moscow. Therefore, the May coup in Poland turned Shumsky's affair from the case of factional struggle for power in Ukraine and disagreements on the nationality policies into a matter of the security and vulnerability of the Western borderland republic. This ruled out any option of compromise, even if enforced and uneven, for Shumsky. The splits in the KPZU and Selrob only reinforced the connection between the calls for the increased pace of Ukrainianization and Pilsudski's approach to the Ukrainian question.

The contrast to the Moldovan case is illustrative. On the Moldovan-Bessarabian borderland the Soviet neighbor, Romania, was much less ambitious in comparison with Pilsudski's circles. Romanian governments had their hands full with the socio-economic

issues and the challenge of the integration of new provinces. Their claims to the territories to the East of the river Dniester were rare and predominantly limited to declarations. Therefore, the Bolsheviks felt relatively secure on this front. They did not experience the same pressure as on the Polish border. As the result, despite the originally proclaimed role of the Moldovan ASSR in the return of Bessarabia, the evolution of nationality policies in Soviet Moldova were mostly framed by the internal Soviet developments, the balances of power in the small republic and the negotiations between the local and central actors.

Shumsky's downfall paved the way for the Skrypnyk's accession to the positions of Ukrainian Commissar of Enlightenment and the biggest specialist on the national question in Soviet Ukraine. Skrypnyk's policies aimed to raise the status of the Ukrainian SSR on the all-Union and international arenas. He was devoted to the idea of the Ukrainian SSR as the Piedmont for all Ukrainians. To that end Skrypnyk ambitiously engaged in the international Ukrainian affairs, patronizing the Ukrainian communist parties and sections in neighboring states and even the Bessarabian obkom, which was also the reflection of Ukrainian influence in the Moldovan-Bessarabian question. Skrypnyk's activities aroused indignation of the Comintern officials and the Communist parties of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The recurring conflicts over the spheres of influence in the borderlands between the Soviet Ukrainian authorities, the Comintern officials and the representatives of the Communist parties constantly undermined the potential of Soviet borderland policies in the Ukrainian and Bessarabian questions. Nevertheless, the case of the Ukrainian communist parties and sections in neighboring states and the Bessarabian obkom illustrate, how Soviet Ukrainian leaders managed to carve out a space, a sphere of influence, for their active participation in Soviet foreign

policy, a field, which is usually considered an almost exclusive prerogative of Moscow. The cross-border cultural ties served as a basis for this international engagement. Some Soviet Ukrainian leaders saw the possibility of the realization of their ambitions and agenda in the active participation in the international Ukrainian affairs. The foreign involvement of the Soviet Ukrainian authorities challenged some of the Comintern principles of subordination. Moscow, though, was ready to tolerate the “Ukrainian International,” as long as such exercises promised to strengthen Soviet positions in the neighboring states and the international prestige of the Ukrainian SSR among Ukrainians abroad. Still, such foreign connections could be also considered suspicious and potentially dangerous.

An important innovation, which Skrypnyk advocated and introduced during his tenure as the Ukrainian Narkompros was the explicit recognition of the status of Russians as a national minority in the Ukrainian SSR. This was a complex decision. It allowed the Ukrainian authorities to address the grievances of the Russian population and meet some of their cultural requirements. At the same time it stripped Russians of their uniqueness in nationality policies, giving them the status of a national minority in the Ukrainian SSR, like any other.

By the late 1920s Bolsheviks became increasingly preoccupied with the possibilities of the external infiltration into the Soviet Union, and the connections between foreign powers and the potential “counter-revolutionary elements.” The result was a series of show trials in the Soviet Union, which focused on the real or imagined wrongdoers and their foreign connections. The radical context of the First Five-Year plan is important here. Possibly the most famous show trial in the Ukrainian SSR was the case

of the SVU. It targeted a group of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. It served as a signal to the perceived or anticipated dangers of the Ukrainian national development and possible resistance to Bolshevik policies. It also sent the message that the Soviet Ukrainian culture should not have been anyhow based on the secessionist ideas and opposition to Moscow, as the socialist capital.

The collectivization campaign reinforced Soviet concerns over the vulnerability of the borderlands and specifically border regions. Repressions and deportations was one of the responses. The other was the (re)settlement into the border areas. At least in the first half of the 1930s in order to consolidate the Ukrainian border areas Soviet authorities (re)settled there demobilized Red Army soldiers from the Ukrainian military district, red partisans and kolhozniks-udarniks from the Ukrainian central regions. Thus, the Bolsheviks considered these groups reliable and loyal enough to consolidate the Soviet power in the sensible and vulnerable border areas. The documents did not mention nationality as a selection criterion. Yet, taking into consideration the targeted groups, it is likely that the core of the settlers were Ukrainian peasants. The case of (re)settlement into the border areas demonstrate that Bolsheviks still had a differentiated view of peasantry and Ukrainians, despite peasant resistance, particularly strong in Ukraine, and the growing concern over the Ukrainian national sentiments.

The Soviet leadership interpreted the collectivization and famine crisis as another indication that the approach to nationality policies, implemented in the 1920s and early 1930s, failed to achieve a stronger cohesion of the Soviet Union and the active participation in and loyalty to the Bolshevik regime and its policies. It is questionable to what extent it could serve the first goal. The *korenizatsiia* and the emphasis on the

territORIZATION of all nationalities favored particularistic interests, even among those representatives of the local Soviet authorities, who had no national elements in their worldview. It had also complicated the structure of government, creating numerous conflicts of interests between nationalities and the leaders, who claimed to represent them, and necessitating Soviet and party officials to become polyglots.

At the same time the Soviet leadership treated the international situation as increasingly hostile. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria on the Soviet border, Hitler's rise to power and the still active Pilsudski made the issue of the consolidation of the Soviet Union and the creation of the "Fortress Ukraine" a top priority for the Bolsheviks. There was little room left for further experimentation. Other instruments were required in the situation of internal crisis and troubling external developments, in addition to Ukrainianization. Bolsheviks sought solutions in the stronger monopoly of the party and within the party, the tighter grip over the nationality policies, the reduction of the number of the nationalities and national territorial units, which benefited from them, and the gradual reemergence of Russians, as the pivot of the Soviet multinational state. While Ukrainianization proceeded,³ the spirit of the policy altered, there was much less administrative force and imposition.

The major change, though, was the reemergence of Russians. While this phenomenon largely falls outside of the chronological boundaries of the PhD thesis, it deserves a short overview in the conclusion. This was a gradual process, which likely started after the collectivization and famine crisis and the proclamation of local

3 The full reversal of the policies of the *korenizatsiia* would also be hardly possible, whether Bolshevik leaders contemplated such possibility or not. Bolsheviks had to deal with social, political and national realities, which they constructed with their policies in the 1920s and early 1930s. There was also no need for

nationalism as the “greatest danger,” primarily in the Ukrainian SSR in 1933 and culminated in the course of the Second World War and in the postwar years. Terry Martin concluded that, since “Great-Russian chauvinism” was no longer the greatest danger, then there were no grounds for the discrimination against Russians, their language and culture.⁴ From the mid-1930s the core position of Russians in the Soviet state became publicly recognized in the speeches of Bolshevik leaders and central publications. Russians assumed the position of *primus inter pares*. The Russian canon and national heroes were resurrected.⁵

The scholarly interpretations of the phenomenon differ. Some argue for the analysis of the reemergence of Russians within the general context of Stalin's “turn to the right” from the mid-1930s.⁶ Others attribute the change to Stalin's cherished Russocentric views. David Brandenberger offered an interpretation that the rehabilitation of Russian past and symbols was largely a populist strategy, which he defined as a “top-down political campaigning designed to mobilize society on the mass level through the co-option of grassroots beliefs and values.”⁷ As the accidental by-product of this approach, Brandenberger sees the creation of Russian national identity.⁸ Veljko Vujacic offered an

4 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 361-362.

5 Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger, ed., *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

6 Andreas Umland, “Stalin's Russocentrism in Historical and International Context,” *Nationalities Papers* 38 (2010): 741-748.

7 David Brandenberger, “Stalin's Populism and the Accidental Creation of Russian National Identity,” *Nationalities Papers* 38 (2010): 726; David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2002).

8 Though, the concept of “Russian national identity,” especially in the context of Soviet nationality policies in the interwar period is highly problematic. It could hardly mean “Russian identity” in the pre-revolutionary sense of the triune Russian nation. The Bolshevik policies in the 1920s basically buried this project. Despite the changes in nationality policies in the first half on the 1930s, Soviet leaders demonstrated no intent to revive this idea. Whether “Russian national identity” meant a strictly Russian ethnic, some sort of supra-ethnic cultural or any other type of the identification is unclear.

alternative interpretation. He suggested that there was a more or less conscious attempt to construct a Soviet Russian identity.⁹ This identity was in no way a return, spontaneous or conscious, of the pre-revolutionary ideals. Bolsheviks fought desperately with “old Russia” during the civil war and in the 1920s. The elements of the Russian past and national canon were merely symbols, instrumentalized and filled with the content required for the regime:

the resurrection of the Russian “national form”—complete with Pushkin, army ranks, school uniforms, and traditional family values—was a sign that the last socially and culturally significant and thus politically threatening (dangerous “from the proletarian point of view”) vestiges of old *Rus*’ had been destroyed. Once rendered politically harmless, select Russian symbols and traditions could be assimilated to a new Soviet Russian identity.¹⁰

In Vujacic's interpretation the core of the Soviet Russian identity should have been on the Bolshevik ideals of the socialism and proletarian culture:

The Stalin's “Moscow center” coincided with the traditional center of old Russia geographically and historically, but not politically or symbolically. In the Stalinist *Weltanschauung*, the “Moscow center” played the same role for the Soviet Union that the USSR as the first country of socialism played for communists abroad: it was the incarnation of the October revolution and of socialism and, as such, the locus of the sacred in the Communist charismatic “hierophony.”¹¹

Vujacic's interpretation is more convincing. The usage of the Russian past and canon and the elevated status of Russians could have spurred some sort of Russian national identity. Yet, the Bolshevik interpretation of these symbols and a careful selection thereof demonstrate that their goals were quite different. To what extent, though, there was a coherent and planned attempt to create a Soviet Russian identity is also unclear.

The revision of the Soviet nationality policies, which took place in the first half of

9 Vujacic, “Stalinism and Russian Nationalism: A Reconceptualization,” 156-183.

10 Ibid, 168.

11 Ibid, 170

the 1930s, did not provide a clear guidance on the further directions of the nationality policies. With the redefinition of the “greatest danger,” it was more or less clear that a recognition of Russians as the backbone of the Soviet multinational state was in order. Bolsheviks made use of the Russian symbols, raised the declarative status of Russians, and gave more support to the Russian language and culture in order to mobilize the Russian population. Yet, the support for the cultural development of non-Russian nationalities (at least the most numerous ones) was not officially discarded and in a limited form in comparison with the 1920s continued. Thus, there were different options in place. Bolsheviks could attempt to use either of these tools, when the situation obliged.

It was in the postwar period that the Soviet empire as a work-in-progress acquired more or less clear contours. The contested territories to the West of the Soviet border, which Soviet borderland policies targeted in the interwar period, became part of the Soviet Union during the Second World War. The exercises in alternative history are always tentative, but they can be a useful tool to appreciate certain historical phenomenon and the range of the possible alternatives. The annexation of Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia to the Soviet Union and their integration could have had a quite different form or not happen at all, if the evolution of the Soviet approach to nationality and borderland policies in the interwar period took some other direction. The nationality factor could have been disregarded altogether. There could have been a significantly less critical stance against Russian nationalism. Nationality policies could have been much less based on the territorization of ethnicity or the promotion of local languages. In any of these cases the Soviet state would have taken a different political and administrative form. The Moldovan ASSR may have never been

established and the idea of the distinct Moldovan nationality, explicitly contrasted to the Romanian one, may have never become part of the state policy and would have been eventually buried by a combination of Soviet and Romanian educational, cultural and repressive policies. The Ukrainian SSR could have taken a different form, if any. Soviet Ukraine could have been smaller in size, with much less emphasis on the Ukrainian distinctiveness and less ambitious pro-Ukrainian nationality policies. Such Ukraine could hardly claim the title of the Ukrainian Piedmont. The implications for all the nationalities, including Russians, would have been different, since for a significant part of the Soviet population the 1920s were the years of acquiring literacy. Many did so in the language of their ethnicity or the language, imposed by the national attribution of the territory. This had a long-lasting effect.

The annexation of the new territories to the Soviet Union in the course of the war and the subsequent deportations and exchanges of the population¹² partially resolved the problem of the kin-groups, divided by the state borders. The postwar Poland and Romania, becoming socialist, were reluctant or had no possibility to engage in a struggle for the borderlands with the Soviet hegemon. Nevertheless, the borderland issues did not disappear altogether. The Soviet authorities faced the challenge of the integration of the territories with the different interwar and wartime experience in the united republics. The ambiguity on the relations between Romanians and Moldovans and their languages and

12 The attempt to resolve the issue of the contested borderlands with population resettlement was a common phenomenon in postwar Central and Eastern Europe, see Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, ed., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Alfred J. Rieber, ed., *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939-1950* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); Philipp Ther, and Ana Siljak, ed., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

cultures persisted. In addition, beginning with late 1950s and even more in the 1960s socialist Romania chose an increasingly autonomous and nationalist course in its development.¹³ Finally, living on the border the populations of the Soviet Western republics was particularly exposed to comparisons with the situation with the neighboring states, which had significant differences despite their affiliation with the socialist camp.

The collapse of socialism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union created a new type of situation, which redefined some of the borderland issues in the region. In fact, the situation is quite dynamic and the interrelations between the actors and the general context are in flux. Yet, as the events of already almost thirty years had demonstrated, there is still a belief among many politicians that the cross-border cultural ties can have political consequences.

13 Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 105-106.

Bibliography

Archives

Central State Archive of Public Organisations of Ukraine (TsDAGO)

Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI)

State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF)

Russian State Archive of Economics (RGAE)

Archive of Socio-Political Organization of the Republic of Moldova (AOSPRM)¹

Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation – AVPRF (last accessed at <http://archive-ukr.mid.ru>)

Published Primary Sources

“On Ukrainian Separatism: A GPU Circular of 1926.” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 18 (1994): 275-302.

“Iz Istorii Obrazovaniia SSSR.” *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* no. 9 (1989): 191-218.

“Sovershenno Sekretno”: *Lubianka – Stalinu o Polozhenii v Strane (1922-1934 gg.)*, vol. 9 (Moscow: Institut Istorii RAN, 2013).

“Stenogramma XII S'ezda RKP(b).” *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 3 (1991): 169-182.

“Stennogramma Zasedaniia Prezidiuma Soveta Natsional'nostei TsIK Soiuzs SSR ot 25-go Aprelia 1931 Goda.” *Ab Imperio* no. 2 (2002): 361-413.

Alcatuirea Republicii Autonome Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenesti: Darea de Seama Stenografica a Sessiei a 3-a a VUTIK-ului, 8-12 Octombrie 1924 (Harkiv: 1924).

Amiantov, Iu. A., et al, ed., *V. I. Lenin. Neizvestnye Dokumenty. 1891-1922 gg.* (Moscow, 1997).

Badulescu, A. *Vosstanie v Tatar-bunare* (Moscow: 1925).

Bessarabiia na Perekrestke Evropeiskoi Diplomatii: Dokumenty i Materialy (Moskva: Indrik, 1996).

Bruski, Jan Jacek, ed. *Holodomor 1932–1933: Wielki Glod na Ukrainie w Dokumentach Polskiej Dyplomacji i Wywiadu* (Warsaw: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2008).

Buciușcanu G. *Gramatica Limbii Moldovenești* (Balta: Editura de Stat a Moldovei,

1 My deepest gratitude goes to late Kirill Stratievskii, who kindly shared some of his materials, gathered in the AOSPRM during his years of archival work there.

1925).

Chernobaev, A. A., ed., *Na Priiome u Stalina: Tetradi (Jurnaly) Zapisei Lic, Priniatyh I. V. Stalinyam (1929-1953 gg.)* (Moscow: Novyi Hronograf, 2010).

Chetverta Konferentsi'a Komunistychnoy Partii (Bil'shovykiv) Ukrainy, 17-23 Bereznia 1920 r. Stenograma (Kyiv: Vydavnychii Dom "Al'ternativy", 2003).

Chior, P. I. *Dispri Orfografia Lingii Moldovinești* (Birzula: 1929).

Clark, Charles Upson, *Bessarabia: Russia and Romania on the Black Sea* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1927) // http://depts.washington.edu/cartah/text_archive/clark/meta_pag.shtml (Retrieved on June 6, 2014).

Danilenko, Vasyl', ed. *Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia i Vlada: Zvedennia Sekretnogo Viddilu DPU USSR 1927-1929 rr.* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2012).

Danilov, V., and T. Shanin, ed., *Nestor Makhno. Krestianskoe Dvizhenie na Ukraine. 1918-1921: Dokumenty i Materialy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006).

Darea de Samă a Congresului Întii al Sfaturilor din RSSA Moldovenească de Deputați, Muncitori, Țărani și Ostași Roși (19-23 Aprilie 1925) (Balta: n/a).

Darea de Samă Stenografică a S'Ezduului al Doilea al Sfaturilor de Deputați, Muncitori, Țărani și Ostași Roși din RASSM (9-14 Mai 1926) (Balta: 1926).

Davies, R. W., Oleg V. Khlevniuk, and E. A. Rees, ed., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

Dembo, V. and S. Timov, *Vosstanie Bessarabskikh Krest'ian protiv Rumynskikh Pomeshchikov* (Moscow: 1925); *10 Let Krovavoi Okkupacii* (Obshchestvo Bessarabcev, 1928).

Dokumenty i Materialy Po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii, vol. 5 (Moscow: Nauka, 1967).

Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR (DVP), vol. 2 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1958).

Galkin, Iu. *Sbornik Dokumentov o Pogranichnom Spore mezhdru Rossiei i Ukrainoi v 1920-1925 gg. za Taganrogsko-Shakhtinskuiu Territoriiu Donskoi Oblasti* (Moscow: Shcherbinskaia Tipografiia, 2007).

Gribincea, Argentina, Mihai Gribincea and Ion Șișcanu, ed., *Politica de Moldovenizare in R.A.S.S. Moldoveneasca: Culegere de Documente si Materiale* (Chișinău: Civitas, 2004).

Guzun, Vadim, ed., *Chestiunea Refugiatilor de peste Nistru: Documente Diplomatice si ale Serviciilor Romane de Informatii, 1919-1936* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy, "George Barițiu" History Institute, 2013).

Hirchak, E. F. *Na Dva Fronta v Bor'be s Natsionalizmom* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Sotsial'no-Ekonomicheskoe Izdatel'stvo, 1931).

- Holodmor: The Great Famine in Ukraine, 1932-1933* (Warsaw, Kiev: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2009).
- Holostenco, V. *3 Goda Natsional'nogo Stroitel'stva v AMSSR i 10 Let Natsional'nogo Ugneteniiia v Bessarabii* (Balta, 1928).
- Kaganovich, Lazar. *Pamiatnye Zapiski* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2003).
- Ken, O.N., and A.I. Rupasov, ed., *Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Otnosheniia SSSR s Zapadnymi Sosednimi Gosudarstvami* (Sankt-Peterburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 2000).
- Khaustov, V. N. et al, ed., *Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD (Ianvar' 1922 – Dekabr' 1936)* (Moscow: MFD, 2003).
- Khlevniuk, O. V., et al, ed., *Sovetskaia Natsional'naia Politika. Ideologiiia i Praktiki. 1945-1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2013).
- Khvyl'ovyi, Mykola. *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine: Polemical Pamphlets, 1925-1926* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1986).
- Khvyl'ovyi, Mykola. *Tvory v Piatioh Tomah*, vol. 4 (New York, Baltimor, Toronto: Slovo, Smoloskyp, 1983).
- Khvyl'ovyi, Mykola. *Tvory v 5 Tomah*, Tom 5 (New York, Baltimore, Toronto: Smoloskip, 1986).
- Kommunisticheskoe Podpol'e Bessarabii. Sbornik Dokumentov i Materialov v 2-h Tomah, 1918-1940* (Chişinău: 1987-88).
- Kondrashin, V. A., ed., *Golod v SSSR. 1929-1934. T. 1: 1929 — Iul' 1932: Kn. 2* (Moscow: MFD, 2011).
- Kosior, S., and P. Postyshev, *Itogi i Blizhaishie Zadachi Provedeniia Natsional'ni Politiki na Ukraine* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1933).
- Kostiushko, I. I., ed. *Materialy "Osoboi Papki" Politburo TsK RKP(b) – VKP(b) po Voprosu Sovetsko-Pol'skih Otnoshenii 1923-1944 gg.* (Moscow: Institut Slavianovedeniia i Balkanistiki RAN, 1997).
- Krasil'nikov, S. A., ed., *Shakhtinskii Protsess 1928 g.: Podgotovka, Provedenie, Itogi v 2 Knigah* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011).
- Kul'tura Moldavii za Gody Sovetskoi Vlasti. Sbornik Dokumentov v 4-h Tomah. Tom 1-2* (Chisinau: 1975-1976).
- Kuras, I. F., ed. *Natsional'ni Vidnosyny v Ukraini u XX st. Zbirnyk Dokumentiv i Materialiv* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1994).
- Kvanoshkin, A. V., L. P. Kosheliova, L. A. Rogovaia and O. V. Khlevniuk, ed., *Sovetskoe Rukovodstvo. Perepiska, 1928-1941 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999).
- Kyivs'ka Starovyna*, no.4 (2012): 144-146.
- Lenin, V. I. *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii v 55 Tomah, 5-oe Izdanie (PSS)* (Moscow:

- Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1967-1981).
- Lih, Lars T., Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, ed. *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
- Madan, L.A. *Gramatica Limbii Moldovenesti* (Tiraspol: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1929).
- Madan, L. A., ed. *La Lunini. Carti di Lucru si Cetiri pentru Grupa a IV-a* (Balta: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1928).
- Mapa: *Digital Atlas of Ukraine* // <http://gis.huri.harvard.edu/the-great-famine/about-the-great-famine-project.html> (accessed on 20 March, 2016).
- Materialurili Sersetarii Organizației Partiinesti din Moldova* (Tiraspol: Editura de Stat a Moldovei, 1930).
- Nachalo Bol'shogo Puti. Sbornik Dokumentov i Materialov k 40-letiiu Obrazovaniia Moldavskoi SSR i Sozdaniia Kompartii Moldavii* (Kishinev: 1964).
- Natsional'nyi Vopros na Balkanah cherez Prizmu Mirovoi Revoliucii, chast' 1* (Moscow: URSS, 2000).
- Obrazovanie Moldavskoi SSR i Sozdanie Kommunisticheskoi Partii Moldavii: Sbornik Dokumentov i Materialov* (Chișinău: 1984).
- Ostashko, Tet'ana, and Serhiy Kokin, ed., *Vyrok Ukrainskii Revol'utsii: "Sprava TsK UPSR"* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2013).
- Pecionaia, L. *Doua Lagere – Doua Politici. Dispri Zidirea Nationalo-Culturnici în RASSM sî Starea 'n Basarabia Ocupati* (Tiraspol, 1931).
- Piatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, 17 Iiunia – 8 Iiulia 1924 g. Stenograficheskii Otchiot, parts 1-2* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1925).
- Pol'sko-Sovetskaya Voina, 1919-1920 (Ranee ne Opublikovannye Dokumenty i Materialy)* (Moscow: Institut Slavianovedeniia i Balkanistiki RAN, 1994).
- Postanovy VIII Konferencii KPZU* (Lviv: Vydannia TsK KPZU, 1928).
- Pristaiko, Volodymyr, and Iurii Shapoval, ed., *Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi: Sprava "UNTs" i Ostanni Roki (1931-1934)* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 1999).
- Prystaiko, Volodymyr, and Yuri Shapoval, ed. *Sprava "Spilky Vyzvolennia Ukrainy": Nevidomi Dokumenty i Fakty* (Kyiv: Intel, 1995).
- Pyrig, Ruslan, ed. *Holodomor 1932-1933 Rokiv v Ukraini: Dokumenty i Materialy* (Kyiv: Kyivo-Mogylians'ka Akademiia, 2007).
- Rakovsky, C. G. *Roumania and Bessarabia* (London: W. P. Coates, 1925).
- Richyts'kyi, And. "Do Edinoi Partii." *Bil'shovyk: Organ Tsentral'nogo Komitetu Komunistychnoi Partii (b) Ukrainiy*, no. 2-3 (1925) 42-54.
- Rubliova, N. S. and O. S. Rubliov, ed., *Ukraina i Pol'shcha. Dokumenty i Materialy*

1920-1939 rr. (Kyiv: Duh i Litera, 2012).

Shliakhom Jovtnia: Borot'ba Trudiashchih Zarapattia za Natsional'ne i Social'ne Vyzvollenia ta Vozz'ednannia z Radians'koiu Ukrainoiu (Uzhgorod: Zakarpats'ke Oblastne Vydavnytstvo, 1957).

Sidak, V. S., ed. *Zakordot v Systemi Spetssluzhb Radians'koi Ukrainy. Zbirnyk Dokumentiv* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Natsional'noi Akademii SB Ukrainy, 2000).

Skoropads'kii, P. *Spogadi. Kinets' 1917 – Gruden' 1918* (Kyiv: 1995).

Skrypnyk, Mykola. *Statti i Promovy z Natsional'nogo Pytannia* (Munchen: Suchasnist, 1974).

Skrypnyk, Mykola. "Pidsumky Pravopisnoi Diskussii," *Visti VUTsVK*, 19 June, 1927 // <http://oldnewspapers.com.ua/node/454> (accessed on December 10, 2015)

Sprava "Pol'skoi Organizatsii Viiskovoi" v Ukraini. 1920-1938 rr. Zbirnyk Dokumentiv ta Materialiv (Kyiv: Golovna Redkolegia Naukovo Dokumental'noi Serii Knyg "Reabilitovani Istorieiu," 2011).

Stalin, Iosif. *Sochineniia* (Moscow: 1948).

Stenogramma Vechernego Zasedaniia... // *Isvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 3 (1991): 171.

Surilov, A. V., ed., *Gosudarstvenno-Pravovye Akty Moldavskoi SSR (1924-1941 gg.)* (Kishinev: Cartea Moldovenească, 1963).

Tainy natsional'noi politiki TsK RKP (Moscow: INSAN, 1992).

Tănase, Stelian, ed., *Racovski: Dosar Secret* (Iași: Polirom, 2008).

TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Natsional'nyi Vopros. Kniga 1. 1918-1933 gg (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005).

Ukrains'kyi Pravopis (Kharkiv: Derzhavne Vidavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1928).

Vasiliev, Valerii, and Iurii Shapoval, ed., *Komandyry Velykogo Holodu: Poizdky V. Molotova i L. Kaganovicha v Ukrainu ta na Pivnichnyi Kavkaz 1932-1933 rr.* (Kyiv: Geneza, 2001).

Vasiliev, Valerii, and Lynne Viola, ed., *Kollektivizatsiia i Krestianskoe Soprotivlenie na Ukraine (Noiabr' 1929 – Mart 1930)* (Vinnytsa: Logos, 1997).

Visti VUTsVK from 19 April 1927 // <http://oldnewspapers.com.ua/node/413> (accessed on 10 December, 2015).

Zatonsky, Vl. *Otkrytoe Pis'mo Tsentral'nomu Komitetu Ukrainskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii Borot'bistov* (1919).

Zatonsky, Volodimir. *Natsional'na Problema na Ukraini* (Kharkiv: Derjavne Vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1927).

Secondary Bibliography

- Afteniuk, S. *Leninskaia Natsional'naia Politika Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Obrazovanie Sovetskoi Gosudarstvennosti Moldavskogo Naroda* (Chisinau: Cartea Moldoveneasca, 1971).
- Anghel, Florin. *Construirea Sitemului "Cordon Sanitaire": Relații Româno-Polone, 1919-1926* (Cetatea de Scaun, 2008).
- Aspaturian, Vernon V. *The Union Republics in Soviet Diplomacy: A Study of Soviet Federalism in the Service of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Genève: Droz, 1960).
- Austin, Paul M. "Soviet Karelian: The Language that Failed." *Slavic Review* 51 (1992): 16-35.
- Bacon Jr., Walter M. *Behind Closed Doors: Secret Papers on the Failure of Romanian-Soviet Negotiations, 1931-1932* (Stanford, Cal.: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1979).
- Baron, Nick. "The Language Question and National Conflict in Soviet Karelia in the 1920s." *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 349-360.
- Bartoszewicz, Henryk. "Prometeizm Romana Knolla." In *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowe Europy Wschodniej*, ed., Marek Kornat (Warsawa: Institut Historii PAN, 2012): 159-170.
- Basciani, Alberto. *La Difficile Unione: La Basrabia e La Grande Romania, 1918-1940* (Roma: 2007).
- Berdinskiĭ, Viktor. *Spetsposelentsy: Politicheskaiia Ssylka Narodov Sovetskoi Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2005).
- Berthelsen, Olga, and Myroslav Shkandrij, "The Secret Police and the Campaign against Galicians in Soviet Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 42 (2014): 37-62.
- Boeck, Brian J. "Complicating the National Interpretation of the Famine: Reexamining the Case of Kuban." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 30 (2008): 31-48.
- Boguslavs'kii, Oleg. *Pressa Mijvoennoi Ukrains'koi Emigracii i Borot'ba za Nezalejnist' Ukrainy* (Zaporijjia: Prosvita, 2008).
- Borisionok, E. Iu. "Russkie ob ukraincah i ukrainizatsii, 1910-1930-h godov." In *Russkie ob Ukraine i Ukraintsah*, ed., E. Iu. Borisionok (SpB: Aleteia, 2012): 362-414.
- Borisionok, E. Iu. "Vliianie Pol'skogo Faktora na Politiku Bol'shevikov po Natsional'nomu Voprosu (Bol'sheviki i Ukraintskii Vopros v 1917-1923 godah)," In *Revoliutsionnaia Rossia 1917 Goda i Pol'skii Vopros: Novye Istochniki, Novye Vzgliady* (Moscow: Institut Slavianovedeniia RAN, 2009): 179-194.
- Borisionok, Elena. *Fenomen Sovetskoi Ukrainizatsii, 1920-e – 1930-e Gody* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006).

- Borzecky, Jerzy. *The Soviet-Polish Peace of 1921 and the Creation of Interwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
- Brandenberger, David. "Stalin's Populism and the Accidental Creation of Russian National Identity." *Nationalities Papers* 38 (2010): 723-739.
- Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- Brown, Kate . *A Biography of no Place: from Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- Bruhis, Mihail. *Rusia, România și Basarabia. 1812, 1918, 1924, 1940* (Chișinău: Editura Universitas, 1992).
- Bryndak, O. B. *Likvidatsiia Bil'shovykamy Politychnoi Opozitsii ta Vstanovlennia Odnopartiinoi Systemy v Ukraini v 20-ti Roky XX Stolittia* (Odesa: Astroprint, 1998).
- Casu, Igor. "Was the Soviet Union an Empire? A View from Chisinau." *Dystopia: Journal of Totalitarian Ideologies and Regimes* 1 (2012): 277-290.
- Casu, Igor. *Dușmanul de Clasă. Represiuni Politice, Violență și Rezistență în R(A)SS Moldovenească, 1924-1956* (București, Chisinau: Cartier, 2014).
- Ciocanu-Gribincea, Argentina, and Mihai Gribincea. "Politica de Moldovenizarea în R.A.S.S. Moldovenească." *Cugetul*, no 4 (2000): 18-30.
- Cojocaru, Gheorghe E., ed., *Cominternul și Originele "Moldovenismului"* (Chisinau: Civitas, 2009).
- Conte, Francois. *Christian Rakovsky, 1873-1941: A Political Biography* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1989).
- Cusco, Andrei , Grom, Oleg and Solomon, Flavius. "Discourses of Empire and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Bessarabia: Russian-Romanian Symbolic Competition and the 1912 Anniversary," *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2015): 91-129.
- Cusco, Andrei, and Victor Taki (with the participation of Oleg Grom), *Bessarabia v Sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii (1812-1917)* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012).
- Cusco, Andrei. "Between Revolutionary Utopia and State Pragmatism: the Moldavian ASSR as a Controversial 'Soviet Piedmont'." *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics* 4 (2004): 7-27.
- Davies, Norman. *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War, 1919-1920* (London: Orbis, 1983).
- Dekel-Chen, Jonathan. *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1924-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- Deletant, Dennis. "Language Policy and Linguistic Trends in the Republic of Moldavia,

- 1924-1992.” In *Studies in Moldovan: the History, Culture, Language and Contemporary Politics of the People of Moldova*, ed., Donald L. Dyer (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996): 53-87.
- Deshyns'kyi, L. E. *Mizhnarodni Vidnosyny Ukrainy: Istoriiia I Suchasnist'* vol. 2 (Lviv: Beskyd Bit, 2004).
- Dionninghaus, Viktor. *V Teni “Bol'shogo Brata”: Zapadnye Natsional'nye Men'shinstva V SSSR (1917-1938 gg.)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011).
- Dzieawanowski, M. K. *Joseph Pilsudski: A European Federalist, 1918-1922* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1969).
- Efimenko, G. G. “Natsional'ni Aspekty u Formuvanni Kompartiino-Radians'kogo Aparatu v URSS (1932-1938).” *Ukrains'kyi Istorychnyi Jurnal*, no. 5 (2000): 3-17.
- Efimenko, Hennadii. *Vzaemovydnosyny Kremlia ta Radians'koi Ukrainy: Ekonomichnyi Aspekt (1917-1919 rr.)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2008).
- Efimenko, Hennadii. *Status USRR ta II Vzaemovydnosyny z RSFR: Dovgii 1920 Rik* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2012).
- Efimenko, Hennadii. “Pereselennia ta Deportacii v Postholodomorni Roky (1933-1936): Poraionnyi Zriz.” *Problemy Istorii Ukrainy: Fakty, Sudzhennia, Poshuki*, no. 22 (2013): 136-165.
- Efimenko, Hennadii. “6 Lipnia iak “Chervonyi Den' Kalendaria”: Prychyny Poiavu Stalins'kogo Mifu pro Datu Stvorennia SRSR ta Potreba Iogo Dekonstrukcii.” *Problemy Istorii Ukrainy: Fakty, Sudzhennia, Poshuki* 16 (2007): 134-153.
- Efimenko, Hennadii. *Natsional'no-Kul'turna Politika VKP(b) shchodo Radians'koi Ukrainy (1932-1938)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy, 2001).
- Efimenko, Viktoriia. “Stvorennia Rosiis'kyh Natsional'nyh Raioniv USSR.” *Problemy Istorii Ukrainy: Fakty, Sudzhennia, Poshuki* 21 (2012): 72-99.
- Fagan, Gus. “Biographical Introduction to Christian Rakovsky.” In *Christian Rakovsky, Selected Writings on Opposition in the USSR 1923-30* (London: Allison & Busby, 1980).
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. “The Civil War as a Formative Experience.” In *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, ed., Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985): 57-76.
- Ford, Christopher. “Outline History of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Independentists): An Emancipatory Communism 1918-1925.” *Debate: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 17 (2009): 193-246.
- Frings, Andreas. “Playing Moscow off Against Kazan: Azerbaijan Maneuvering to Latinization in the Soviet Union,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2009): 249-266.
- Galuşcenko, Oleg. “Crearea Republicii Sovietice Socialiste Moldoveneşti (R.A.S.S.M.),”

Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, no. 3-4 (1997): 65-82.

Galushchenko, Oleg. "Bor'ba mejdu Rumynizatorami i Samobytnikami v Moldavskoi ASSR (20-e gody)" // <http://www.iatp.md/articles/borba.htm> (accessed on June 6, 2014)

Galushchenko, Oleg. "Obrazovanie Moldavskoi ASSR: Sovremennyyi Vzgliad Istorika." *Problemy Natsional'noi Strategii*, no. 5 (2014): 202-218.

Galushchenko, Oleg. *Naselenie Moldavskoi ASSR (1924-1940 gg.)* (Kishinev: Tipografiia Akademii Nauk, 2001).

Galushchenko, O. "Deiatel'nost' Komissii po Proverke Sostoianiia Mezhethnicheskikh Otnoshenii v Moldavskoi ASSR (1926 g.)," *Revista de Etnologie si Culturologie* 7 (2010): 58-61.

Gatrell, Peter, and Nick Baron, ed., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Gatrell, Peter. *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2000).

Gilley, Christopher. "Volodymyr Vynnychenko's Mission to Moscow and Kharkov." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 84 (2006): 508-537.

Gilley, Christopher. *The "Change of Signposts" in the Ukrainian Emigration: A Contribution to the History of Sovietophilism in the 1920s* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2009).

Gorlizki, Yoram, and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Gurevits, Baruch. *National Communism in the Soviet Union, 1918-1928* (Pittsburgh, PA: University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1980).

Hagen, Mark Von. "Does Ukraine Have a History?," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 658-673.

Hagen, Mark von. *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918* (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, 2008).

Halsam, Jonathan. *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930-1933: The Impact of Depression* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

Hardeman, Hilde. *Coming to Terms with the Soviet Regime: The "Changing Signposts" Movement Among Russian Émigrés in the Early 1920s* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994).

Harris, James. "Encircled by enemies: Stalin's Perceptions of the capitalist world, 1918 – 1941." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30 (2007): 513-545.

Harris, James. "Intelligence and the Threat Perception: Defending the Revolution, 1917-

- 1937.” In *The Anatomy of Terror: Political Violence under Stalin*, ed. James Harris (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013): 29-46.
- Harris, James. *The Great Urals: Regionalism and the Evolution of the Soviet System* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999).
- Haugen, Arne. *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- Hausleitner, Mariana. *Deutsche und Juden in Bessarabien, 1814-1941: Zur Minderheitenpolitik Russlands und Grossrumäniens* (München: IKGS Verlag, 2005).
- Hetherington, Peter. *Unvanquished: Joseph Pilsudski, Resurrected Poland, and the Struggle for Eastern Europe* (Houston: Pingora Press, 2012).
- Hirik, Serhii. “Selianstvo ta Agrarne Pytann'a v Ideologii Ukrain's'koi Komunistychnoi Partii (Borot'bistov).” *Naukovi Zapysky. Zbirnyk Prats' Molodyh Vchenyh ta Aspirantiv* (Kyiv: IUAD im. M. S. Hrushevs'kogo NANU, 2012): 478-491.
- Hirik, Serhii. “Tsentralizatsi'a bez Tsentru? Borot'bysts'kii Proekt 'Federacii Radians'kih Respublik'.” *Kyivs'ka Starovyna*, no.4 (2012): 138-148.
- Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).
- Hryn, Halyna, ed. *Hunger by Design: The Great Ukrainian Famine and Its Soviet Context* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 2008).
- Hryn, Halyna. *Literaturnyi Iarmarok: Ukrainian Modernism's Defining Moment* (PhD Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2005).
- Hrytsak, Iaroslav. “Ukrainsjaia Istoriografii: 1991-2001. Desiatiletie Peremen.” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2003): 427-454.
- Iekelchuk, Serhii. *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Ishakov, Salavat. “Prometei i Musul'mane Kavkaza, Kryma, Povolzh'a, Turkestana i Urala.” In *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowe Europy Wschodniej*, ed., Marek Kornat (Warsawa: Institut Historii PAN, 2012): 245-276.
- Istoria Partidului Comunist al Moldovei: Studii* (Chişinău: Cartea Moldovenească, 1982).
- Istoriia Moldovy s Drevneishih Vremion do Nashin Dnei* (Chisinau: Elan-Poligraf, 2002).
- Ivnitskii, N. A. *Golod 1932-1933 Godov v SSSR: Ukraina, Kazakhstan, Severnyi Kavkaz, Povolzh'e, Tsentral'no-Chernozemnaia Oblast, Zapadnaia Sibir', Ural* (Moscow: Sobranie, 2009).
- Jacobson, Jon. *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
- Kadio, Juliet. *Laboratoriia Imperii: Rossiia/SSSR, 1890-1940* (Moscow: Novoe

Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2010).

Karpus, Zbignev. *Shidni Soiuznyky Pol'shi u Viiny 1920 Roku* (Torun': Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1999).

Kasianov, Georgiy. "The 'Nationalization' of History in Ukraine." In *The Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012): 141-174.

Kasianov, Georgiy. "Ukraine between Revolution, Independence, and Foreign Domination" In Wolfram Dornik, Georgiy Kasianov, Hannes Leidinger, Peter Lieb, Alexei Miller, Bogdan Musial, and Vasyl Rasevych, *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922* (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015), 76-132.

Kasianov, Georgiy. *Stalinizm I Ukrains'ka Inteligentsia (20-30-i Roki)* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1991).

Kasianov, H. V. *Danse Macabre: Holod 1932-1933 Rokiv u Polititsi, Masovii Svidomosti ta Istoriohrafii (1980-ti - Pochatok 2000-kh)* (Kyiv: Nash Chas, 2010).

Ken, O. N. *Mobilizatsionnoe Planirovanie i Politicheskie Resheniia (Konets 1920-h – Seredina 1930-h gg.)* (Moscow: O.G.I., 2008).

Ken, Oleg. *Collective Security or Isolation? Soviet Foreign Policy and Poland, 1930-1935* (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 1996).

Khlevniuk, Oleg S. *In Stalin's Shadow: The Career of Sergo Ordzhonikidze* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

King, Charles. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2000).

King, Charles. "The Ambivalence of Authenticity, or How the Moldovan Language Was Made." *Slavic Review* 58, no. 1 (1999): 117-142.

King, Jeremy. *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.

King, Robert R. *A History of the Romanian Communist Party* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1980).

Kojevnikov, Alexei. "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy circa 1948." *The Russian Review* 57 (1998): 25-52.

Komar, Volodymyr. *Kontseptsiiia Prometeizmu v Polititsy Pol'shi (1921-1939)* (Ivano-Frankiivsk: Misto NV, 2011).

Konrat, Marek. "Idea Prometejska a Polska Polityka Zagraniczna (1921-1939/1940)." In *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowe Europy Wschodniej*, ed., Marek Kornat (Warsawa: Institut Historii PAN, 2012): 35-90.

Kornilov, Vladimir. *Donetsko-Krivorozhskaia Respublika: Rastreliannaia Mechta*

(Kharkiv: Folio, 2011).

- Kotenko, A., O. Martyniuk, and A. Miller, "Maloross." In "*Poniatia o Rossii*". *K Istoricheskoi Semantike Imperskogo Perioda*, vol. 2, ed., A. Miller, D. Sdvizhkov, and D. Shirle (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012), 392-443.
- Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- Krawchenko, Bohdan. "The Social Structure of the Ukraine in 1917," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 (1990): 97-112.
- Krawchenko, Bohdan. *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1987).
- Kul'chitskyi, S. V., et al. *Narysy z Istorii Dyplomatii Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 2001).
- Kul'chyts'kyi, Stanislav. *Ukrains'kyi Holodomor v Kottekti Polityky Kremlia Pochatku 1930-h rr.* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2013).
- Kul'chyts'kyi, Stanislav. *Komunizm v Ukraini: Pershe Desitirychchia (1919-1928)* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1996).
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki, and Andrzej Peplonski. "Stalin, Espionage, and Counterespionage." In *Stalin and Europe: Imitation and Domination, 1928-1953*, ed., Timothy Snyder and Ray Brandon (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 74-91.
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki, and Andrzej Peplonski. *Między Warszawą a Tokio: Polsko-Japońska Współpraca Wywiadowcza 1904-1944* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2009).
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki. "The Promethean Movement and Japan's Diplomacy." In *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowe Europy Wschodniej*, ed., Marek Kornat (Warsawa: Institut Historii PAN, 2012): 137-148.
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki. "The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Reconsidered." *Europe-Asia Studies* 60 (2008): 663-675.
- Kuromiya, Hiroaki. *Freedom and Terror in the Donbass: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Lazarev, A. M., *Moldavskaia Sovetskaia Gosudarstvennost' i Bessarabskii Vopros* (Kishinev: Cartea Moldovenească, 1974).
- Levit, I. E. *Moldavskaia Respublika (Noiabr' 1917 – Noiabr' 1918)* (Chisinau: Central'naia Poligrafia, 2000).
- Lewin, Moshe. *Lenin's Last Struggle* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).
- Liber, George. *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- Liubovets', O. M. *Ukrains'ki Partii i Politychni Al'ternatyvy 1917–1920 Rokiv* (Kyiv: Osnova, 2005).

- Liulevicius, Vejas Gabriel. *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Livezeanu, Irina. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000).
- Lohr, Eric. *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).
- Luckyj, George S.N. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).
- Lungu, Dov B. *Romania and the Great Powers, 1933-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989).
- Mace, James E. "The Komitety Nezamozhnykh Selyan and the Structure of Soviet Rule in the Ukrainian Countryside, 1920-1933." *Soviet Studies* 35 (October 1983): 487-503.
- Mace, James E. *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).
- Magocsi, Paul R. *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
- Maj, Ireneudż Piotr. "W Służbie Koncepcji Prometejskiej – Instytut Wschodni w Warszawie." In *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowę Europy Wschodniej*, ed., Marek Kornat (Warsawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2012): 201-218.
- Majstrenko, Iwan. *Borotbism: A Chapter in the History of Ukrainian Communism* (New York: Research Program on the U.S.S.R., 1954).
- Malik, Ia. I., ed. *Ukraina v Mizhnarodnykh Vidnosynah XX Stolittia*, vol. 2 (Lviv: Svit, 2004).
- Mamulia, Georgii. "Popytki OGPU po Razlozheniiu Kavkazskoi Antibol'shevistskoi Emigracii Nakanune i v Period Sozdaniia Dvizheniia Prometej (1924-1926)." In *Ruch Prometejski i Walka o Przebudowę Europy Wschodniej*, ed., Marek Kornat (Warsawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2012): 277-308.
- Marchukov, A.V. *Ukrainskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie: USSR 1920 – 1930-e Gody* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006).
- Marples, David R. *Holodomor: Causes of the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine* (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2011).
- Martin, Terry. "An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism." In *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 67-90.
- Martin, Terry. "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *The Journal of Modern History*

70 (1998): 813-861.

Martin, Terry. "The Russification of the RSFSR." *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 39 (1998): 99-117.

Martin, Terry. "The Soviet Union as Empire: Salvaging a Dubious Analytical Category," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 91-105.

McDermott, Kevin, and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: a History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1996).

Mikulicz, Sergiusz. *Prometeizm w Polityce II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa 1971).

Miller, A. I. *The Ukrainian Question: the Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003).

Miller, Alexei, and Oksana Ostapchuk. "The Latin and Cyrillic Alphabets in Ukrainian National Discourse and in the Language Policy of Empires." In *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, ed., Georgiy Kasianov and Phillip Ther (Budapest, New York: Central European University, 2009): 167-210.

Miller, Alexei. "Pochemu Vse Kontinental'nye Imperii Raspalis' v Rezul'tate Pervoi Mirovoi Voyny" // <http://polit.ru/article/2006/04/11/miller2/> (last accessed on March 3, 2016).

Miller, Alexei. "Russia's Ukrainian Policy before 1917." In Wolfram Dornik, Georgiy Kasianov, Hannes Leidinger, Peter Lieb, Alexei Miller, Bogdan Musial, and Vasyl Rasevych, *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self-Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922* (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015): 298-320.

Miller, Alexei. "The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation." *Nationalizing Empires*, ed. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2014), 309-368.

Miller, Alexei. *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2008).

Mogil'ner, M. "Recenziia na Hirsch F. Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union," *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2005): 538-554.

Moraru, Anton. "Destinul unui Document." *Cugetul*, no 5-6 (1992): 53-58.

Moraru, Pavel. *La Hotarul Românesc al Europei: din Istoria Siguranței Generale în Basarabia, 1918-1940* (București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2008).

Moraru, Pavel. *Serviciile Secrete și Basarabia: Dicționar, 1918-1991* (București: Editura Militară, 2008).

Narysy Istorii Ukrains'koi Revoliutsii 1917-1921 Rokiv: u 2 kn. (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka,

2011-2012).

- Negru, Elena. "Introducerea și Interzicerea Grafiei Latine în R.A.S.S.M." *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei* no. 3-4 (1999): 34-42.
- Negru, Elena. *Politica Etnoculturală în R.A.S.S. Moldovenească* (Chisinau: Prut International, 2003).
- Negru, Gheorghe. *Politica Etnoligvistică în R.S.S. Moldovenească* (Chișinău: Prut International, 2000).
- Negura, Petru. *Nici Eroii, Nici Tradatori: Scriitori Moldoveni și Puterea Sovietică în Epoca Stalinistă* (Chisinau: Cartier, 2014).
- Nowak, Andrzej. *Polska i Trzy Rosje. Studium Polityki Wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do Kwietnia 1920 Roku)* (Cracow: Arcana, 2001).
- O Istorie a Regiunii Transnistrene: Din Cele mai Vechi Timpuri până în Prezent* (Chișinău: Civitas, 2007).
- Oleksandr Rubliov and Larisa Iakubova, *Organy Etnopolitychnogo Reguliuvannia v Konteksti Polityky Korenizatsii: Ukrains'kyi Dosvid* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2014).
- Padureac, Lilia. *Relatiile Romano-Sovietice (1917-1934)* (Chișinău: Prut International, 2003).
- Palko, Olena. "Ukrainian National Communism: Challenging History," *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 22 (2014): 27-48.
- Pauly, Matthew D. *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education, and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923-1934* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).
- Pauly, Matthew. "Soviet Polonophobia and the Formulation of the Nationality Policy in the Ukrainian SSR, 1927-1934." In *Polish Encounters, Russia Identity*, ed., David L. Ransel and Bozena Shallcross (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005): 172-188.
- Platt, Kevin M. F., and David Brandenberger, ed., *Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature as Stalinist Propaganda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).
- Plokhyy, Serhii. *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of the Ukrainian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
- Polian, Pavel. *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (New York, Budapest: Central European University, 2004).
- Popa, Ioan, Luiza Popa, *România, Basarabia și Transnistria* (București: Editura Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2009).
- Popovici, Andrei. *The Political Status of Bessarabia* (Washington: 1931).
- Radziejowski, Janusz. *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1929* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1983).

- Rassweiler, Anne D. *The Generation of Power: The History of Dneprostoi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- Ree, Erik van. “‘Lenin’s Last Struggle’ Revisited.” *Revolutionary Russia* 14 (2001): 100-113.
- Rees, E. A. *Iron Lazar: A Political Biography of Lazar Kaganovich* (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2013).
- Repida, A. *Obrazovanie Moldavskoi ASSR* (Chisinau: Stiinta, 1974).
- Rieber Alfred J. *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- Rieber, Alfred J. “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretative Essay.” *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, ed., Hugh Ragsdale (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993): 315-359.
- Rieber, Alfred J. “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers.” in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2004): 177-208.
- Rieber, Alfred J. *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of the Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- Rieber, Alfred J., ed., *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939-1950* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).
- Riga, Liliana. *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Romano, Andrea. “Permanent War Scare: Mobilization, Militarization and the Peasant War.” In *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914-1945*, ed., Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000): 103-120.
- Rotari, Ludmila. *Mișcarea Subversivă din Basarabia în Anii 1918-1924* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004).
- Rubl'ov, Oleksandr. *Zahidnoukrains'ka Inteligentsia u Zagal'nonatsional'nyh Politychnyh ta Kul'turnyh Procesah (1914-1939)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2004).
- Rudling, Per Anders. *The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism, 1906-1931* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).
- Rudnytskyi, Omelian, Nataliia Levchuk, Oleh Wolowyna, Pavlo Shevchuk, and Alla Kovbasiuk. “Demography of a Man-Made Human Catastrophe: The Case of Massive Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933.” *Canadian Studies in Population* 42 (2015): 53–80.
- Schrad, Mark Lawrence. “Rag Doll National and the Politics of Differentiation on Arbitrary Borders: Karelia and Moldova.” *Nationalities Papers* 32 (2004): 457-

496.

- Sergiichuk, V.I. *'Ukrainizatsiia Rosii': Politichne Oshukanstvo Ukraintsiv Rosiisikoiu Bil'shovitskoiu Vladoiu v 1923-1932 Rokah* (Kyiv: Ukrains'ka Vydavnycha Spilka, 2000).
- Service, Robert. *Stalin: A Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).
- Shapoval, Iu. I. "Alexander Shumsky: Sud'ba Narkoma v Imperii 'Pozitivnogo Deistviia.'" In *Sovetskie Natsii I Natsional'naia Politika v 1920 – 1950-e Gody: Materialy VI Mezhdunarodnoi Nauchnoi Konferencii* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2014): 54-64.
- Shapoval, Mykola. *Ukraina 20-50-h Rokiv. Storinky Nenapysanoi Istorii* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1993).
- Shapoval, Yuri. "The GPU-NVKD as an Instrument of Counter-Ukrainianization in the 1920s and 1930s." In *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600-1945)*, ed., Andreas Kappeler, Zenon E. Kohut, Frank E. Sysyn and Mark von Hagen (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003): 325-344.
- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).
- Shevelov, George Y. "The Language Question in the Ukraine in the Twentieth Century (1900-1941)." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 11 (June 1987): 118-224.
- Shkandrij, Myroslav. "Ukrainianization, Terror and Famine: Coverage in Lviv's *Dilo* and the Nationalist Press of the 1930s." *Nationalities Papers* 40 (2012): 431-451.
- Shkandrij, Myroslav. *Modernists, Marxists, and the Nation: the Ukrainian Literary Discussion of the 1920s* (Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992).
- Shkandrij, Myroslav, and Olga Berthelsen, "The Soviet Regime's National Operations in Ukraine, 1929-1934." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 55 (2013): 417-447.
- Short, Neil. *The Stalin and Molotov Lines: Soviet Western Defences 1928-1941* (Osprey Publishing, 2008).
- Slezkine, Yuri. "The Soviet Union as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." *Slavic Review* 53 (1994): 414-452.
- Slezkine, Yuri. *Arctic Mirror: Russian and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
- Slivka, Iu. Iu. *Storinky Istorii KPZU* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1989).
- Slyvka, Iu. Iu. *Storinky Istorii KPZU* (Lviv: Kameniar, 1989).
- Smith, Jeremy. "The Georgian Affair of 1922. Policy Failure, Personality Clash or Power Struggle?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 50 (1998): 519-544.
- Smith, Jeremy. *Red Nations: The Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR*

- (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Smith, Jeremy. *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
- Smith, Michael G. *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917-1953* (Berlin ; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998).
- Smolii, V. A., ed., *'Ukrainizatsiia' 1920 – 30-h Rokiv: Peredumovy, Zdobutky, Uroky* (Kiev, 2003).
- Smolii, V. A., ed., *Natsional'ne Pytannia v Ukraini XX – Pochatku XXI St.: Istorychni Narysy* (Kyiv: Nika-Centr, 2012).
- Snyder, Timothy. “Covert Polish Missions Across the Soviet Ukrainian border, 1928–1933.” In *Confini: Construzioni, Attraversamenti, Rappresentazioni*, ed. Silvia Salvatici (Soveria Mannelli: Sissco, Societa Italiana per lo Studio della Storia Contemporanea, Rubbettino, 2005), 55-78.
- Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
- Snyder, Timothy. *Sketches from a Secret War: a Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- Solchanyk, Roman. *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919-1938* (University of Michigan: PhD Thesis, History, 1973).
- Soldatenko, V. F. *Nezlamnyi: Jittia i Smert' Mykoly Skrypnyka* (Kyiv: Knyga Pamiaty Ukrainy, 2002).
- Soldatenko, Valerii. *Revoliutsiina Doba v Ukraini (1917-1920 Roki): Logika Piznannia, Istorychni Postati, Kliuchovi Epizody* (Kyiv: Parlamets'ke Vyd-vo, 2011).
- Soliar, I. Ia. “Radianofil'stvo u Zahidnii Ukraini (1920-ti rr.)” *Ukrains'kyi Istorychnyi Zhurnal*, no. 1 (2009): 55-67.
- Sontag, John P. “The Soviet War Scare of 1926-27.” *Russian Review* 34 (1975): 66-77.
- Stratievskii, K. “Izmeneniia v Administrativno-Territorial'nom Delenii i v Sostave Naseleniia Moldavskoi ASSR (1924-1940 gg.),” *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, no 2 (1995): 24-37.
- Stratievskii, K. “Izmeneniia v Administrativno-Territorial'nom Delenii i v Sostave Naseleniia Moldavskoi ASSR (1924-1940 gg.),” *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei* no 2 (1995): 24-37.
- Stratievskii, K. V. *Golod v Moldavskoi ASSR, 1932-1933* (Chisinau: Akademiia Nauk Respubliki Moldova, Institut Istorii, 2001).
- Stratievskii, K.V. *Golod 1932-1933 gg. v Moldavskoi ASSR* (Kishinev: 2001).
- Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1994).

- Suny, Ronald Grigor. *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1993).
- Suveica, Svetlana. *Basarabia in Primul Deceniu Interbelic (1918-1928): Modernizare prin Reforme* (Chisinau: Pontos, 2010).
- Swoboda, Victor. "Was the Soviet Union Really Necessary." *Soviet Studies* 44 (1992): 761-784.
- Tănase, Stelian. *Clienții lu' Tanti Varvara: Istorie Clandestine* (București: Humanitas, 2008).
- Ther, Philipp, and Ana Siljak, ed., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).
- Tismaneanu, Vladimir. *Stalinism for All Seasons: a Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003).
- Umland, Andreas. "Stalin's Russocentrism in Historical and International Context." *Nationalities Papers* 38 (2010): 741-748.
- Vasil'ev, Valeriy. *Politychne Kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR: Dynamika Vidnosyn Tsentr-Subtsentr Vlady (1917-1938)* (Kyiv: Instytut Istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy, 2014).
- Vasiliev, Valerii. "Pervaia Volna Sploshnoi Kollektivizatsii I Ukrainskoe Krestianstvo." In *Kollektivizatsiia i Krestianskoe Soprotivlenie na Ukraine (Noiabr' 1929 – Mart 1930)*, ed., Valerii Vasiliev and Lynne Viola (Vinnytsa: Logos, 1997): 43-69.
- Velikanova, Olga. *Popular Perceptions of Soviet Politics in the 1920s: Disenchantment of the Dreamers* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Velychenko, Stephen. *State Building in Revolutionary Ukraine: A Comparative Studies of Governments and Bureaucrats, 1917-1922* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).
- Verdery, Katherine. *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
- Viola, Lynne. "Kollektivizatsiia i Istoriia." In *Kollektivizatsiia i Krestianskoe Soprotivlenie na Ukraine (Noiabr' 1929 – Mart 1930)*, ed., Valerii Vasiliev and Lynne Viola (Vinnytsa: Logos, 1997): 15-28.
- Viola, Lynne. "The Aesthetic of Stalinist Planning and the World of the Special Villages," *Kritika* 4 (2003): 101–28.
- Viola, Lynne. *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Viola, Lynne. *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Volkovyns'kyi, V. M., and E. V. Kul'chyts'kyi. *Khrystyian Rakovs'kyi: Politychnyi Portret* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Politychnoi Literatury Ukrainy, 1990).

- Voronovici, A. A. "Protivorechivye Istorii Sovetskogo Mnogonatsional'nogo Gosudarstva: Nekotorye Problemy Sovetskoi Natsional'noi Politiki v Sovremennoi Zarubezhnoi Istoriiografii." In *Proshlyi Vek: Sbornik Nauchnyh Trudov*, ed. A. I. Miller (Moscow: RAN INION, 2013), 367-387.
- Vujacic, Veljko. "Stalinism and Russian Nationalism: A Reconceptualization." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 23 (2007): 156-183.
- Zahra, Tara. "Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis." *Slavic Review* 69 (Spring 2010): 93-119.
- Zamoyski, Adam. *Warsaw 1920: Lenin's Failed Conquest of Europe* (London: HarperPress, 2008). Shapoval, Iu., Volodymyr Pristaiko, and Vadim Zolotariov, *ChK-GPU-NKVD v Ukraini: Osoby, Fakty, Dokumenty* (Kyiv: Abris, 1997).