

NEW EUROPE

Olena Palko, Manuel F  rez Gil (eds.)

# Ukraine's Many Faces

Land, People, and Culture Revisited



[transcript]

## From:

*Olena Palko, Manuel Férez Gil (eds.)*

### **Ukraine's Many Faces**

### Land, People, and Culture Revisited

July 2023, 402 p., pb., 12 b/w and 11 col. ill.

48,00 € (DE), 978-3-8376-6664-9

E-Book: available as free open access publication

PDF: ISBN 978-3-8394-6664-3

EPUB: ISBN 978-3-7328-6664-9

Russia's large-scale invasion on the 24th of February 2022 once again made Ukraine the focus of world media. Behind those headlines remain the complex developments in Ukraine's history, national identity, culture and society. Addressing readers from diverse backgrounds, this volume approaches the history of Ukraine and its people through primary sources, from the early modern period to the present. Each document is followed by an essay written by an expert on the period, and a conversational piece touching on the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine. In this ground-breaking collection, Ukraine's history is sensitively accounted for by scholars inviting the readers to revisit the country's history and culture.

With a foreword by Olesya Khromeychuk.

**Olena Palko** is an assistant professor at Universität Basel. She was awarded her Ph.D. from the University of East Anglia in 2017 and previously held a position of the Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Birkbeck College, University of London. Her first book, *Making Ukraine Soviet. Literature and Cultural Politics under Lenin and Stalin* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020) was awarded the Prize for the Best Book in the field of Ukrainian history, politics, language, literature and culture (2019-20) from the American Association for Ukrainian Studies. Her research interests lie in the field of early Soviet cultural history and the interwar history of Eastern Europe.

**Manuel Férez Gil** is a doctoral student at the University Alberto Hurtado in Santiago de Chile and has taught classes and courses on the Middle East and the Caucasus at various universities in Mexico and Chile. His areas of research are the ethnic and religious minorities of the Middle East and the Caucasus. Previously, he coordinated the Jean Monnet Chair in European studies at the International University of Cuernavaca, Mexico.

For further information: [www.transcript-verlag.de/en/978-3-8376-6664-9](http://www.transcript-verlag.de/en/978-3-8376-6664-9)

© 2023 transcript Verlag, Bielefeld

# Contents

---

<b>Illustrations</b> .....	13
<b>Timeline of Ukrainian History</b> .....	17
<b>Foreword. Where is Ukraine?</b> How a Western Outlook Perpetuates Myths about Europe’s Largest Country <i>Olesya Khromeychuk</i> .....	21
<b>Introduction. Ukraine’s Many Faces</b> <i>Olena Palko and Manuel Férez Gil</i> .....	29

## I. Modernity at the Crossroads of Empires

### *Primary Sources*

<b>Ukrainian Draft Treaty of 1654</b> A Byelorussian Copy of the Articles sent by the Cossack Envoys Samoylo Bohdanov and Pavlo Teterya on the 14th day of May, 7162 (A.D. 1654).....	41
<b>To My Fellow-Countrymen, In Ukraine and Not in Ukraine, Living, Dead and as Yet Unborn</b> My Friendly Epistle <i>Taras Shevchenko</i> .....	45

<b>Bohdan Khmelnytsky's Entry to Kyiv in 1649 (1912)</b> <i>Mykola Ivasiuk</i> .....	51
---	----

## ***Conversation Pieces***

<b>Revealing Pan-Slavic Russian Imperialism</b> <i>Ewa Thompson, in conversation with Manuel Férez Gil</i> .....	55
---	----

<b>Ukrainian History through Literature</b> <i>Tamara Hundorova, in conversation with Manuel Férez Gil</i> .....	61
---	----

## ***Analytical Articles***

<b>Between East and West: Understanding Early Modern Ukraine</b> <i>Oleksii Sokyрко</i> .....	73
--	----

<b>Between Empires: Ukraine in the Nineteenth Century</b> <i>Fabian Baumann</i> .....	83
--	----

<b>Jews in Habsburg Galicia: Challenges of Modernity</b> <i>Vladyslava Moskalets</i> .....	91
---	----

<b>Grain, Coal, and Gas. Ukraine's Economy since the Eighteenth Century</b> <i>Baris Belge</i> .....	101
---	-----

## **II. Ukrainian Selfhood in the Soviet Era**

### ***Primary Sources***

<b>Ukrainian Declaration of Independence (1918)</b> January 9th, 1918 .....	123
--	-----

**Letter from the Collective Farmer Mykola Reva to Joseph Stalin about the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine** ..... 129

**Fedir Krychevsky, Life Triptych (1925)** ..... 131

## ***Conversation Pieces***

### **Ukraine: Between Empires and National Self-Determination**

*Olena Palko, in conversation with Manuel F rez Gil* ..... 135

## ***Analytical Articles***

### **The Ukrainian Revolution, the Bolsheviks, and the Inertia of Empire**

*Hanna Perekhoda* ..... 149

### **The Territory of Ukraine and Its History**

*Stephan Rindlisbacher* ..... 165

### **Constructing Ethnic Identities in Early Soviet Ukraine**

*Olena Palko and Roman Korshuk* ..... 175

### **Street Children in Early Soviet Odesa**

*Matthew D. Pauly* ..... 191

### **Selfhood and Statehood in Interwar Ukraine: Inventing the “New Man”**

*Oksana Klymenko and Roman Liubavskiy* ..... 205

### **Stalinism and The Holodomor**

*Daria Mattingly* ..... 221

### **Ukrainian Greek Catholics in Search of Ancestry, Belonging, and Identity**

*Iuliia Buyskykh* ..... 233

<b>Crimean Tatars: Claiming the Homeland</b> <i>Martin-Oleksandr Kisly</i> .....	247
---	-----

### **III. Sovereignty Regained: Ukraine in the Post-Soviet Age**

#### ***Primary Sources***

<b>Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine (1990)</b> Passed by the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic ....	267
---	-----

<b>Home is still possible there...</b> <i>Kateryna Kalytko</i> .....	273
---	-----

<b>Matvey Vaisberg, The Wall [Stina] (2014)</b> .....	275
---	-----

#### ***Conversation Pieces***

<b>Between the Holodomor and Euromaidan: In Search of Contemporary Ukrainian National Identity</b> <i>David Marples, in conversation with Manuel F3rez Gil</i> .....	279
---	-----

<b>Ukraine: Between National Security and the Rule of Law</b> <i>Maria Popova, in conversation with Manuel F3rez Gil</i> .....	291
---	-----

#### ***Analytical Articles***

<b>Society in Turbulent Times: The Impact of War on Ukraine</b> <i>Anna Chebotarova</i> .....	299
--	-----

<b>Competing Identities of Ukraine's Russian Speakers</b> <i>Volodymyr Kulyk</i> .....	315
---	-----

<b>The Donbas: A Region and a Myth</b>	
<i>Oleksandr Zabirko</i> .....	331
<b>Towards Gender Equality in the Ukrainian Society</b>	
<i>Tamara Martsenyuk</i> .....	345
<b>The Art of Misunderstanding</b>	
<i>Kateryna Botanova</i> .....	357
<b>The Territory Resists the Map</b>	
Geolocating Reality and Hyperreality in the Russo-Ukrainian War	
<i>Roman Horbyk</i> .....	365
<b>Afterword. Let Ukraine Speak</b>	
<b>Integrating Scholarship on Ukraine into Classroom Syllabi</b>	
<i>John Vsetecka</i> .....	375
<b>Contributing Authors</b> .....	393

## **Foreword. Where is Ukraine?**

### **How a Western Outlook Perpetuates Myths about Europe's Largest Country**

---

*Olesya Khromeychuk*

Let's perform an experiment, the same one I do with my students of modern European history at the start of the academic year. Visualise the map of Europe. And now visualise the easternmost border of what you think of as Europe. Where is this border? Will it stretch as far as the Urals? If it runs along the eastern side of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, what does it do when it reaches Belarus? Is Belarus in, or is it out? Once the line gets to northern Ukraine, where does it go from there? Does it go farther east to encompass the whole of Ukraine? Kharkiv? Donbas? Will it run along the western border of Ukraine, leaving Lviv and Uzhhorod outside of Europe? Or do you visualise the easternmost border of your mental map of Europe, as do most of my students of modern European history, running along the Dnipro River, splitting Ukraine in half? And, if so, what does it do when it gets to the Black Sea? Where does Crimea fit on the map inside your mind?

Our mental maps are formed from the places we visit, the languages we understand, the literature we read, the culture we appreciate, the people we meet and care about. Our mental maps are just as important as those used in classrooms and war rooms. Ukraine has existed on the official map of Europe for at least 30 years. Placenames were misspelled, the definitive article added before the name for no good reason. But it was there, printed and coloured. The largest country in Europe. Yet it was mostly missing from our mental maps.

Are we able to name a 'Ukrainian Shostakovich', a 'Ukrainian Solzhenitsyn', a 'Ukrainian Akhmatova'? Can we tell when someone presented as a Russian avant-garde artist, or a Russian filmmaker, or a Russian playwright, is actually Ukrainian? Did we spot that Degas' 'Russian Dancers' were actually wearing Ukrainian outfits before the National Gallery renamed the drawing in April



2022, finally releasing them from the Russian imperial embrace? The gallery itself seems only to have spotted it in the context of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the pressure to decolonise its art collection.

Russia's attack on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 demonstrated that understanding of the region among politicians, journalists and societies more widely was lacking. As the Director of the Ukrainian Institute London and a historian, I received numerous requests for commentary in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. Most began with a question asking me to elaborate on the actual difference between Russia and Ukraine. The question was well meant; it was intended to debunk Putin's weaponised mythology. But the interviewers were oblivious to their own entrapment in the imperialist framework even as they attempted to give Ukraine a voice. This framework has been cultivated by years of uncritical reading of Russia and, more recently, aggressively propagated by Putin. Weary of giving a 'proper' answer (starting with Volodymyr the Great and ending with Volodymyr Zelenskyi) for the umpteenth time, I asked one journalist a question in return: "What, exactly, is the difference between Ireland and England?" Instead of an answer, I heard a nervous giggle. We have mostly figured out the inappropriateness of asking such questions related to western empires. But we are not yet as skilled at seeing the same inappropriateness when it comes to other empires.

It soon became obvious that, even in the middle of a full-scale attack, western observers viewed Ukraine simply as a pawn in a geopolitical game being played by Russia and the collective West. Some were beating their chests and saying "Yes, Ukraine's agency has been overlooked. We will have no more conversations about Ukraine without Ukraine." And yet, many panels went ahead with no in-house Ukraine experts or no Ukraine experts at all.

The question we need to ask ourselves in the curatorial rooms of galleries and museums, in academia, in think tanks, on political advisory boards, is why, until Ukraine was attacked, had we not thought of securing mandatory in-house expertise on the largest country in Europe? Why had we thought of a nation of over 40 million as small and insignificant? Why had we chosen to dismiss its culture as minor? Why had we decided that learning the Ukrainian language was pointless because 'they all speak Russian there anyway'? The answers to these questions are likely to be uncomfortable. They are likely to speak to our own prejudices, and conscious and unconscious biases.

The uncritical reading of Russian history and culture made many observers blind to Putin's neo-imperialism. They were thus shocked by the invasion, by the fabricated reasons the Kremlin chose to justify the attack, and the brutal-

ity of the Russian military campaign, including war crimes of which we are learning more and more every day. The experiential knowledge of Russian imperialism and resistance to it possessed by Ukrainians and others in the region – for instance, the Baltic States, Poland and Finland – if taken seriously, could have better prepared 21st-century Europe for Russia's full-scale invasion of a sovereign state. Maybe it could have even prevented it altogether. At the least, it might have awakened us from our slumber of inaction in 2014, when Crimea and Donbas were occupied.

In 2014, we watched the 'Russian world' brought to life in Crimea, where Crimean Tatars were targeted *en masse*, in a way reminiscent of the persecution they suffered in 1944. The 'Russian world' where all, including ethnic Russians, could be sent to jail on fabricated charges simply for disagreeing with the occupation. We watched the 'Russian world' unfold in Donbas, too, where a gallery was overtaken by the Russian proxies, modern art executed, literally, with guns, and the space turned into a concentration camp where civilians were illegally kept, tortured and deprived of all rights.

How many of us responded to the creation of this 'Russian world' by introducing a discussion on the culture of Crimean Tatars and its repression by Russian imperial or Soviet power? How many proposed to curate an exhibition or a talk by the artists exiled from Donbas? How many, after visiting one of numerous exhibitions on the centenary of the Russian Revolution, left a critical entry in the visitor's book about a Ukrainian filmmaker presented as Russian? How many reviewed a book by an author who witnessed war crimes in the Russian-occupied territories of eastern Ukraine for an English-language outlet? And as we reviewed the growing number of books on what was termed the 'Ukraine crisis' penned by western scholars, how many commented that such books should really try to reference Ukrainian sources?

Scholars of Ukraine have been doing all this for years. And, for years, we have been viewed as killjoys spoiling the party. Being a vocal Ukrainianist meant being perceived like an angry woman who will not stop screeching about the patriarchy. Suddenly, though, there is a desire to hear Ukrainian voices, even if just to figure out how to pronounce the name of the capital of Ukraine: we all now know it shouldn't be 'Kiev', but how on earth are you meant to say 'Kyiv'?

Hearing Ukrainian voices is good, but it is not enough. Just as it is good, but not enough, to set up emergency funds for Ukrainian scholars and artists. 'Emergency' implies temporary. For the duration of the war only. A systemic change would require setting up centres for the study of the region, including

Ukraine. And if the funding was to be found for such a centre, some imagination would be required when coming up with a name for it. 'Russian and Eurasian' will no longer work if the centre wishes to study the entire region in a meaningful way. Here is a suggestion: how about the Lesia Ukraïnka Centre for the Study of Europe? After all, Ukraïnka is one of Ukraine's foremost writers; best known for her poems and plays, she knew nine languages in addition to Ukrainian and translated works from English, German, French and Greek. What better patron for a new centre than a *fin-de-siecle* modernist, feminist writer who rewrote European classical myths from the point of view of a woman in the language of the subaltern?

What we need is a permanent alteration – de-colonisation, de-imperialisation – of our knowledge. We need to equip ourselves with appropriate terminology to discuss the region not just as 'post-Soviet', but in ways that will reflect the different trajectories taken by the former republics in the three decades since the collapse of the USSR and how each tackled the legacy of the Russian as well as Soviet empire over this time.

Knowledge is not only about power; it is also a matter of security. The mental maps our students form in their classrooms will be carried with them into galleries, newsrooms, boardrooms, parliaments, military barracks and, of course, back into classrooms by the next generation of educators. If Ukraine does not exist on these mental maps, its existence on the actual map of the world will continue to be at risk.

Self-reflection and the expansion of our knowledge is a good start. But that, too, is not enough. I have seen Russia experts who wish to improve their understanding of Ukraine lament that they cannot become Ukraine experts overnight. But that is not what they are asked to do. In fact, they are asked to do the opposite: to not try to explain Ukraine. To not speak on panels on Ukraine unless those panels have Ukraine experts. And not just one expert tucked on at the end to tick the box of a 'Ukrainian voice', like a woman scholar who discusses gender on the last panel scheduled on the last day of a conference. Inclusivity is not about adding all subjects to the list. It is about making sure that the discussion is fair. And that means using our expertise in a politically responsible way.

It is the Russia experts who were well placed to warn us that widespread support of Putin's annexation of Crimea meant that the Russians could be expected to show the same widespread support, and not condemnation, of Putin's so-called 'special operation' of shelling civilians, looting and pillaging in Ukraine. It is these experts who could have warned us that annual Victory

Day parades – which included driving around in cars with stickers that said, “To Berlin for German women!” or “We can do it again!” – were not just a peculiar Russian way of commemorating the Second World War. That there was a chance that they would do it again. Not taking seriously the Russian *pobedobesie* – a violent Victory Day frenzy complete with rape culture, hate speech and glorification of violence – is the result of our acceptance of the vision of Russia not as a perpetrator, but as an ally of the West, a victor in and a victim of the Second World War, and thus not obliged to face up to the crimes committed by its own government and its own army.

The Russians’ choice to reject the term ‘Second World War’ in favour of the anachronistic ‘Great Patriotic War’ should have set off alarm bells, as it highlights that, for Russia, the war began in 1941, when Hitler attacked the USSR, not in 1939, when the USSR attacked Europe together with Hitler. The Russian army continued the legacy of the Soviet armed forces with its cult of violence, bullying, acceptance of war crimes and disregard for human life, not only that of the enemy – whether military or civilian – but of its own personnel. It perfected this criminal behaviour in Chechnya and Syria and, for the last eight years, in Ukraine.

Yet, somehow, it is the Ukrainian armed forces that are being dissected by journalists and scholars today: does the Azov regiment hold far-right views or does it not? This discussion is being had in a great many articles I have read about Russia’s war in Ukraine. However, few of these texts point out that, in 2019, after Putin had already attacked Ukraine and long after the formation of Azov and its incorporation into the National Guard, all the Ukrainian nationalist parties put together received just above 2% of the vote in Ukraine, meaning that they did not meet the 5% threshold for admission to parliament. Few point out that, at the same time, in France, Italy and Germany the far right won between 10% and 17% of the vote. Not to mention the popularity of a certain presidential candidate who delivered the biggest ever share of the French vote to the far right in her race against President Emmanuel Macron in France’s recent (April 2022) general election.

Even fewer contemplate what ideology drives the Russian soldiers who are sent on the mission to ‘de-nazify’ Ukraine and kill the very Russophone civilians they are meant to ‘liberate’ from their Jewish, Russophone president. The same ideology that drives them not only to kill Ukrainians by shelling their cities, claiming they had been aiming to kill the Azov fighters, but by shooting civilians with their hands tied behind their backs in the back of their heads.

Could the 'great Russian culture' have anything to do with this ideology? Have we done enough to critically examine the imperialism inherent in the often-aggressive attitude towards Ukraine that we find in poets from Pushkin to Brodsky? But surely it is the fault of Putin, not Pushkin. Many in the West are reluctant to boycott Russia, especially Russian culture. It seems too violent a move to many. Let me make a different suggestion: let us boycott the remnants of our own imperialist view of the world and focus our energies on getting to know the culture that doesn't seem to be there: Ukrainian culture.

Where is the 'Ukrainian Pushkin' after all? If he doesn't exist on our bookshelves, does it mean that he doesn't exist at all? And if he is to be found on our bookshelves, is he there by accident? I once got excited in a London bookshop when I spotted a book with Taras Shevchenko, the 19th-century Ukrainian Romantic poet, the 'father of the nation', on the cover. I thought a badly needed new translation of Shevchenko's *Kobzar* must finally have been published. When I picked it up, it turned out to be Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. The publisher must have thought that any moustached man in a big coat and furry hat would do for the cover of a book about the mysterious Russian soul.

Taras Shevchenko. Lesia Ukraïнка. Ivan Franko. Olha Kobylianska. Maik Iohansen. Mykola Kulish. Vasyl Stus. Lina Kostenko. Oksana Zabuzhko. Boris Khersonskiy. Serhy Zhadan. Olena Stiazhkina. Iryna Shuvalova. The vast majority of those reading this will not know these names. This literature is absent from our shelves not because it is not worthy, but because its existence has been systematically undermined through political repression, as well as scarce linguistic knowledge and chronic lack of funding for translations. Another uncomfortable truth is that these authors do not live on our shelves because our cultural appetite for the whole of eastern Europe is easily satisfied by Dostoyevsky.

The sudden appearance of Ukraine in the limelight has not yet brought about a better understanding of the country. Paradoxically, western admiration of and surprise at Ukrainian bravery in the face of Russian aggression merely emphasise the limited knowledge we possess about Ukraine. When we admire the resilience of Ukrainians, let us think of what turns ordinary people into heroes. What would it take for us, civilians, perhaps pacifists, to pick up arms or at least to donate all we can to the army? I do not know what drove my brother, Volodya, a civilian, an artist, a reader, to enlist in the Ukrainian Armed Forces in 2015, but I know it was not the desire to become a hero. Especially a dead hero.

Glorifying Ukrainian resilience without understanding its roots is another form of misunderstanding the country and its people. The root of that resilience is the intolerance of imperialist oppression, both historic and recent. It is the knowledge that, although Ukraine is the largest country in Europe, people still do not see it and might not even notice if it disappeared from the map. It is thus up to Ukrainians, all 40 million of them, to make sure that their country stays on the map with its borders intact. It is up to all of us to make sure that it appears on our mental maps. And that it stays there. With its borders intact.

*This article first appeared as: Olesya Khromeychuk, "Where is Ukraine? How a western outlook perpetuates myths about Europe's largest country," Royal Society for Arts Journal (Issue 2, 2022): <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/journals/rsa-journal-issue-2-2022.pdf>. Reprinted with permission.*

## Introduction. Ukraine's Many Faces

---

*Olena Palko and Manuel F  rez Gil*

Ever since the start of Russia's war on Ukraine in 2014, western commentators have attempted to explain events in the country through the lens of linguistic and regional divide. Maps of Ukraine split between a presumably Russian-speaking south-east and Ukrainian-speaking north-west inundated the Internet and were used by political analysts across the ideological spectrum.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, this linguistic heterogeneity was also used to justify Moscow's occupation of Crimea and Russia's support for the two breakaway regions in Ukraine's east. As such, the ongoing war in Ukraine had been framed as a confrontation, or competition, between the Ukrainian majority and the large Russian minority, to which Russian-speaking Ukrainians would often be uncritically ascribed.

Ukraine's heterogeneity fed into Vladimir Putin's aspirations to recreate the might of the Russian Empire. It is no surprise that that immediately prior to Russia's unprovoked full-scale aggression of Ukraine February 24th 2022, the president called for the use of armed force in defence of the rights of Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine, and "to denazify" the country itself.<sup>2</sup> Rather than an anticipated groundswell of support, the Kremlin's military campaign promptly saw the Ukrainian population, regardless of their everyday spoken language, rally around the central government in Kyiv, effectively neutering further efforts by Moscow at manipulating its neighbour's ethnic differences.

On the contrary, in 2022 no region welcomed the invading forces of the Russian Federation. As a full-scale ethnic conflict under the Russian banner failed to materialize, western pundits once again turned to Ukraine, this time seeking to comprehend the strength of its unexpected national resilience. This concise yet wide-ranging volume of articles offers readers a possibility to do exactly this – to look beyond simplistic binaries and demonstrate how Ukraine's differing historical experiences, regional diversity, and compound identities

have contributed to an indomitable Ukrainian national character, the shaping of which is happening in front of our eyes.

The essays comprising this volume cover a vast historical period extending from the 16th century to the present, as such they will help the readers navigate the complex history of the Ukrainian lands, divided for centuries between belligerent empires and nationalizing governments. Unsurprisingly, it was these varied historical experiences that determined the disparate character of the regions that now form contemporary Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> Equally, this collection accounts for various ethnic communities who had populated the Ukrainian lands and whose presence is deeply ingrained into the country's cultural landscape. Its contributing authors, however, also seek to move beyond the simple provision of ready-made answers and confront more complicated questions concerning Ukraine's entangled history and identities. Each of the collection's three chronologically organized sections is supplemented by a set of primary sources, as well as conversational pieces with highly esteemed scholars and experts on the history of Ukraine and the region more broadly. In this regard, the aim of this volume is to encourage readers to form their own conclusions about Ukraine, its culture, and its people.

The volume opens with an essential essay by Olesya Khromeychuk, who poses the question of how, historically, a lack of wider international interest in Ukraine has perpetuated numerous myths about the country and its people. Khromeychuk particularly highlights how, prior to 2022, the majority of western academics had continuously omitted, or downplayed, Ukraine as a separate subject in much of their research. As a result, despite having been an independent sovereign state since 1991, Ukraine itself has been missing from Western mental maps or was presented simplistically as part of a wider Rus-sophone cultural sphere, or even as a "lesser Russia". This collection of essays, therefore, takes its cue from Khromeychuk's motion to ensure Ukraine's subjectivity, making the country a fully-fledged subject of historical analysis.

The first section, *Modernity at the Crossroads of Empires*, traces the origins of Ukraine's compound identity between the 17th and 19th centuries. The section opens with three equally important primary sources. The first of these include excerpts from the *Pereiaslav Agreement* of 1654, widely construed by Russian propagandists as a formal unification agreement between Russia and the Ukrainian lands. Its inclusion looks to establish how this treaty was in fact a pact of military alliance between two equal parties – Cossack Ukraine and Muscovy, representing an agreement through which the Muscovite Tsar had offered military assistance to Ukraine in the latter's on-going war of liberation



against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This is followed with an *Epistle* by “the father of Ukrainian literature”, Taras Shevchenko. The poem, written in 1845, is directed “to my fellow-countrymen, in Ukraine and not in Ukraine, living, dead and as yet unborn” and attempts to rally the territory’s inhabitants against Russian authoritarianism, its dominance over Ukraine, and highlight the need for national unity and fraternity to overcome ordeals which are yet to come. The final source is a painting by the artist Mykola Ivasiuk, entitled *The Entry of Bohdan Khmelnytsky to Kyiv in 1649*, depicting the renowned Cossack hetman’s triumphant entry into Kyiv, where he was celebrated as a national hero by the Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem and Kyiv metropolitan Sylvester Kosiv, along with a crowd of several thousand residents.

These primary sources are followed by two expert interviews that focus on Russia’s imperial legacy. Professor Ewa Thompson at Rice University discusses the origins of the Russian imperialist project. Despite its explicit expansionist nature, Thompson maintains that most western scholars continue to shy off those complex topics, ignoring Russian imperialism’s detrimental impact on Ukraine and non-Germanic Central and Eastern Europe more generally. The second expert interview is with Professor Tamara Hundorova at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, who presents the history of Ukrainian literature in the *long dur e*, with a particular emphasis on the development of Ukrainian modernism. Hundorova underlines the unique role of literature in dealing with multiple traumas, including the legacies of colonialism or the memory of inter-ethnic violence committed in the Ukrainian lands.

The next four essays tackle different aspects of Ukraine’s imperial past. Oleksii Sokyрко starts by examining socio-economic and political changes in the region following the disintegration of the Kyivan Rus, when parts of today’s Ukraine were incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and later the Russian Empire. In particular, his essay provides an overview of the history of the Cossack Hetmanate, an early iteration of the Ukrainian state encompassing the provinces of today’s Central Ukraine between 1648 and 1764. Fabian Baumann follows up with an exploration of the 19th century, when the Ukrainian lands were split between the Habsburg Monarchy and Romanov Empire. Special attention is devoted to the emergence of the Ukrainian national movement and choices for self-identification available to 19th-century intellectuals. Vladyslava Moskalets offers an intimate account of Jewish life in Eastern Galicia during this same period. Following the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the province was incorporated into Habsburg Austria while remaining home to one of Eastern Europe’s largest

Jewish communities. Lastly, Boris Belge evaluates the economic role that the Ukrainian lands came to play as part of the Russian Tsardom and how this economic potential shaped the territory's political status within a unitary and highly centralised empire.

The second section, *Ukrainian Selfhood in the Soviet Era*, problematizes the role of Ukraine as part of the Soviet Union, with particular attention given to the USSR's formative early decades. The documentary block includes the *Fourth Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada* (Council), which proclaimed full state independence for the Ukrainian People's Republic on January 22nd, 1918, only for it to be crushed by the Bolsheviks later that year. The second source is a letter from a collective farmer to Joseph Stalin depicting the horrors of the man-made famine that devastated Soviet Ukraine from 1932 to 1933. Lastly, the visual source is a triptych by Fedir Krychevsky, entitled *Life* (1925), and is considered to be one of the finest examples of Ukrainian modernism, incorporating elements of the European *art nouveau* and traditional Ukrainian religious painting. These primary sources are followed by an expert interview with Professor Olena Palko at the University of Basel, who discusses the relationship between Russia and Ukraine in a historical perspective. Highlighting examples of how such experiences had been widely abused within Russian propaganda, Palko argues that this distorted historical legacy has led to widespread misconceptions of Ukraine's past and present, especially during the Soviet period.

The seven essays that form the rest of the second section collectively undertake the important task of shifting the readers' perspective away from Moscow and invite them to learn more about its so-called peripheries. These diverse contributions show how important decisions were often influenced by developments and conditions on the ground. The section opens with an essay by Hanna Perekhoda, which analyses political debates regarding a future soviet Ukraine during the Russian Civil War, and the various forms of statehood which were proposed or established on Ukraine's territory during the early years of Soviet rule. Stephan Rindlisbacher reconstructs the chronological process of modern Ukraine's territorial delineation, starting with 1919, the year when the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was established. Particular attention is devoted to the formation of Russo-Ukrainian border, including the transfer of Crimea in 1954. Olena Palko and Roman Korshuk follow on by examining the challenges Ukraine's linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity posed for the early Soviet authorities, outlining key strategies for managing ethnic diversity employed at the official level.

Matthew Pauly's discussion of early Soviet efforts to sovietise street children in the southern city of Odesa sheds light on Soviet experimentalist practices in early education, and the state's attempts to mould children into model citizens. Soviet social interventionism is also the focus of Oksana Klymenko and Roman Liubavskyi's chapter that evaluates Soviet approaches to create a "New Soviet man" as a prerequisite of the future construction of socialism. Discussion of the interwar Soviet period continues with Daria Mattingly's important essay on the Holodomor, the manmade famine of 1932–33, when some 4 million people died as a consequence of excessive grain requisitioning to aid Stalin's accelerated industrialization drive. Martin-Oleksandr Kisly turns our attention to Crimean Tatars, the indigenous people of Crimea, who's community were subjected to mass deportations from the peninsula in 1944, and the challenges they would subsequently face when seeking to return to their homeland. Lastly, Iuliia Buyskykh explores the evolution of religious identities across the Polish-Ukrainian border, discussing aspects of belonging and self-determination among the Ukrainian Greek Catholic community, which was declared illegal under Soviet rule. Taken together, these essays contribute to the epistemological need to decentre Soviet studies, and allow Ukraine, as well as other former Soviet republics, to reclaim the Soviet past, moving out of the shadows of Russian nationalist ideology and propaganda.

The third section, *Sovereignty Regained: Ukraine in the Post-Soviet Age*, considers the main challenges Ukraine has faced since 1991, paying particular attention to the war which the Russian Federation has been waging since 2014. The section opens with the *Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine* from July 16th, 1990, which determined the supremacy, independence, integrity, and indivisibility of Ukraine's authority within the boundaries of its territory, and its independence and equality in foreign relations. This is followed with a 2014 poem by the author Kateryna Kalytko that intimates the feeling of those displaced by war and sporadic memories which are often used to reclaim the lost home. Finally, our collection features a painting from Kyiv-based Matvey Vaisberg's *The Wall* (2014) cycle, in which the artist, himself an eyewitness, reflected on the tragic events that transpired during the Maidan Uprising, which centred on a series of violent clashes in Kyiv's Independence Square in early 2014.

The conversational block includes two expert interviews on historical and political developments in Ukraine since 1991. Professor David Marples at the University of Alberta exposes the links between historical memory and identity building. Marples considers the contemporary history of Ukraine and how the tragic events post-2014 have changed the face of the country and its peo-

ple. The subsequent conversation with Professor Maria Popova at McGill University touches upon questions concerning the rule of law, political corruption, and the legal repression of dissent in post-Communist Eastern Europe and Ukraine in particular. Popova evaluates the actions taken by the Ukrainian government in anticorruption and law-enforcement efforts and suggests that the popular mobilization against corruption and electoral fraud witnessed in Ukraine post-2014 has created an important precedent in which political elites have come to accept that they cannot simply resort to autocratic measures in order to maintain power.

The analytical section comprises six essays illustrating the many challenges faced by independent Ukraine. Anna Chebotarova's analysis of the changes that followed the Maidan protests, and the subsequent annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas, detail the impact of a protracted and acute Russian military aggression against Ukrainian society. Volodymyr Kulyk traces the evolution in self-identifications among Russian-speaking Ukrainian citizens, showing how the experience of war contributed to a gradual shift in their sense of allegiance with the Ukrainian government in Kyiv, and identification with the Ukrainians as the country's dominant ethnic group. Oleksandr Zabirko focuses on Ukraine's most eastern industrial region known as Donbas, suggesting how international and domestic perceptions have been heavily influenced by the so-called "Donbas myth", constructed through local politics and literary works, and evaluates the role this region came to play within Ukrainian national politics and the country's future. Tamara Martsenyuk turns our attention to issues of gender equality in Ukraine, examining the origins and evolution of the feminist organisations and their role in ensuring visibility for Ukrainian women in the contemporary era, especially given the large number of female personnel serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the Russian invasion. Finally, Kateryna Botanova challenges the commonly held perspective that reconciliation represents the ultimate purpose of creative culture, unravelling the difficult position many Ukrainian artists and cultural managers found themselves during the 2022 aggression amidst growing pressure from Western observers for expressions of solidarity with their Russian counterparts.

The volume concludes with a historiographical essay by John Vsetecka, listing key works on Ukraine and by Ukrainian scholars which can help overcome the challenges underscored by Khromeychuk's opening discussion. Although his original essay's primary objective was to suggest ways for educators and teachers to make Ukraine more visible in their classrooms, these reading sug-

gestions could help anyone wishing to better understand Ukraine and its entangled history. We agree with Vsetecka that studying Ukraine is more important than ever. While the country's history remains hostage to Russia's ideologically-loaded official narratives, this volume privileges Ukrainian authors so they may be better heard and allowed to speak with their own voice.

## Notes

- 1 For instance, Al-Jazeera, in its report from February 22nd 2014, showed a map of Ukraine divided between a largely Ukrainian-speaking west and a predominantly Russian-speaking east. URL: [https://youtu.be/\\_ORNrZOx5Wc](https://youtu.be/_ORNrZOx5Wc) . Accessed on 02 December 2022. A similar image of "nationalist west" vs. "pro-Russian east" featured in the Guardian on 21 February 2014: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/ukraine-western-pro-european-cities-lviv>
- 2 For the transcript of Putin's address from February 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, see: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/67828>. Accessed on December 2nd 2022.
- 3 Olena Palko and Constantin Ardeleanu (eds.) *Making Ukraine: Negotiating, Contesting, and Drawing the Borders in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022).