

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

BROTHERLY FRIENDSHIP?
RUSSIAN – UKRAINIAN NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN THE SOVIET UNION

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By the early 1960s, Soviet leadership declared that the Communist Party had “solved one of the most complex problems...the problem of relations between nations.”¹ The Communist Party believed that national identity was only a temporary feature of Soviet society that would eventually be replaced by a class-based Soviet identity that would be shared by the population of every republic. These assertions were based on the equal and cooperative relationship of the nations within the Union that was put forth in both the Soviet Constitution and in official publications dealing with Soviet nationality policy. Theoretically, according to this policy, all republics would have equal rights and privileges regarding independence, linguistic freedom, political authority over their own region, and the right to secede from the Union. In fact, though, Russian language served as the lingua franca of the USSR, Russian language and culture enjoyed privileged positions, and the Russian republic dwarfed all the other republics in size and prominence. Nonetheless, Soviet nationality policy did promote the development of national and ethnic identities among many peoples of the Soviet Union, by fostering the development of written languages in some cases and by encouraging programs such as the collection of folk songs and tales, the construction of national histories and through other programs. This positive aspect of Soviet nationality policy was less evident among the urbanized peoples of the European portion of the USSR, which already possessed these elements of national identity.

Perhaps the most problematic relationship in all the complex mosaic of Soviet nationality issues involved the Ukrainians. Because Ukrainian national identity is closely related to Russian national identity and developed rather late and because of the large

¹ Nikita Khrushchev, “On the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no. 44 (October 1961): 4.

number of ethnic Russians in the Ukraine, the relationship between the dominant Russian nationality and the Ukrainian nation in regard to Soviet nationality policy was especially delicate. Both the pre-revolutionary Russian government and the Soviet Union treated Ukrainians as a sub-branch of the Russian nationality. By examining the discourse in the press between Soviet writers and ethnic Ukrainian nationalists in the 1960s, this essay will assess whether Soviet policy regarding the government and language of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine was consistent with the overall theory of Soviet nationality policy. Theoretically, Soviet nationality policy would eliminate the problems associated with a multinational state by forming a new Soviet identity from socialist values and the cultural traditions of all Soviet nationalities. Meanwhile, ethnic Ukrainian nationalists operated under their own primordialist assumptions about the distinctiveness of Ukraine that ran counter to Soviet nationalist rhetoric that assimilated Ukrainians as “Little Russians” into the Russian national grouping. This paper argues that Soviet policy regarding the government and language of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine was not consistent with the theory of Soviet nationality policy.

Due to the stability of the period, the discourse of the 1960s is especially important in an examination of Soviet nationality policy. This period, referred to as 'mature Socialism,' was an era of calm between the coercion of Stalinism and the economic decay and political uncertainty that characterized the 1970s and 1980s. The decade following Stalin's death was principally marked by deStalinization. This period created the relaxed atmosphere of the 1960s which was conducive to nationalist discourse.² In the 1960s, as

² Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, “Interviews,” Dissident Movement in Ukraine Virtual Museum, <http://khhpg.org/archive/en/index.php?r=17> (accessed April 8, 2010).

opposed to previous decades, Ukrainian nationalist dissidence took written form.³ As a result, there emerged in the press a dialogue between the Soviet government and ethnic Ukrainian authors, who had adopted some Ukrainian nationalist ideas, about the legitimacy of the Ukrainian language and an independent Ukrainian state.⁴ Furthermore, during this period, ethnic Ukrainian nationalists believed that the Soviet Union and its policies could be accepted as a form of government, whereas in other decades they rejected the system altogether.⁵ Ultimately, the atmosphere of the 1960s provided for the most amicable relationship possible between the nationalities.

Nationalism Theory

In order to comprehend the problems of the implementation of Soviet nationality policy in Ukraine, it is essential to have some understanding of nationalism theory. For the purposes of this paper, three main theories of nationalism will be utilized. The first of these theories, primordial nationalism, is the belief that a nation has an intrinsic identity that can be traced over a large period of time. Primordial nationalists argue that nationality and ethnicity are natural. The second theory, modern nationalism, has largely dispelled the theory of primordial nationalism. “Modernist nationalism” which emerged as a reaction to primordialism, is the theory that nations are forged out of the processes of modernization. According to this theory, both the principle of nationalism and the conception of the nation are a unique and inevitable part of the modern world.⁶

Modernists argue that prior to modernization the nation could not exist, because

³ This is due to greater leniency in censorship as well as a tamer group of nationalist dissidents.

⁴ The Soviet press often featured transcripts of speeches and party Congresses as well as articles that endorsed any policies put forth by the government. At the same time, it would feature articles that were marked by nationalist ideas.

⁵ Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, “Interviews,” Dissident Movement in Ukraine Virtual Museum, <http://khhpg.org/archive/en/index.php?r=17> (accessed April 8, 2010).

⁶ Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 86.

“nationalism comes before nations.” Rather than acting as an expression of pride in an existing nation, nationalism exists as a psychological adjustment to the changes brought by modernization. According to this theory, as opposed to the theory of primordialism, the nation is not an ethnic group one is born into; rather, it is a subconscious adaptation to urbanization, mass culture, and political developments.⁷ Hence, modernism views the nation as an inherently limited and sovereign imagined community.⁸ The third theory, “Ethno-symbolism,” rejects the idea that a nation can simply be invented without any historical basis. This theory argues that national identity must be contextualized within a pre-existing historical myth of common ancestry, shared memories, values, and traditions.⁹ Rather than emerging in the modern world, ethnic identity, though manipulated, has existed throughout history. The nation itself is defined as having a collective proper name, myth of a common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific homeland, and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.¹⁰

Theoretically, Soviet nationality policy would establish a single Soviet identity. This identity would be composed of national traditions from throughout the Soviet Union. While mostly based on the Russian tradition, it would promote socialist values above all else. In Ukraine, the development of this identity was problematic due to the historical relationship between Ukrainians and Russians. Ukrainian primordial nationalists asserted that the Ukrainian ethnicity was intrinsically Ukrainian and that

⁷ Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity* (London: Routledge Press, 1999), 24.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso: London, 1991), 6; Poole, *Nation and Identity*, 11; Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 144. The nation is imagined, because one cannot know every person in a society but imagines that they are all related. Furthermore, despite inequality, there is a sense of fraternal camaraderie. The nation is limited because it is bounded by other nations.

⁹ Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 168.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

while they were willing to work within the framework of the Soviet Union, no single Soviet identity could exist.

Historiography and the Development of Ukrainian Nationalism

Soviet nationality policy in Ukraine was closely related to Ukrainian history and historiography. Rather than existing as a Ukrainian state throughout a long period of history, the territory of Ukraine was often ruled by other ethnic groups. In particular, the “fraternal” relationship between Ukrainians and Russians prevented the development of a significant Ukrainian state. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, the most recognized historical works focused on the origins of the Ukrainian ethnicity and state within the context of the emerging Russian empire. Ukrainian history always included Russian history. There did, however, exist in the Soviet Union a counter-history, referred to by the Soviets as “ethnic histories,” in which historians argued that the Ukrainian ethnicity was entirely separate from the Russian ethnicity. Authors of both Soviet histories and “ethnic histories” focused on certain developments in the relationship between Ukraine and Russia, arguing either for Ukrainian independence and statehood or Russian “brotherhood” with Ukraine.¹¹

The most contested events in Ukrainian history were pivotal to the discussion of the legitimacy of a Ukrainian state. This trend in historiography was due to the ethnic Ukrainian nationalist desire to provide a legitimate historical basis for an independent Ukraine.¹² Nationalist history was written in direct response to the two predominant

¹¹ Anatol Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 13-37. Russians often referred to Ukrainians as their “Little Brothers” or as “Little Russians,” implying that Ukraine and Russia, while not ethnically identical, are closely related in history, culture, language, and ethnicity. Concurrently, they considered themselves to be “Great Russians.”

¹² Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 13-37. Because establishing such a foundation is essential to the ethnic Ukrainian claim of an independent nation, such histories are extremely biased towards presenting a separate ethnic Ukrainian identity and state.

schools of thought regarding Ukrainian history: the Russian and the Soviet. While differing in several areas, both Russian and Soviet histories agreed that Ukraine had never been a sovereign state independent of the Russian state. As a result, Ukrainian historians examined the events that supposedly bound the Ukrainians to the Russians and concluded that their “shared history” was, in fact, a result of Russian imperialism.

The argument over the historical legitimacy of a “Ukrainian state” was comprised of certain significant events from which both Russians and Ukrainians traced their historical, cultural, and religious origins. The inheritance of the legacy of Kievan Rus was a highly controversial topic over which both ethnic groups staked claims.¹³ Kievan Rus was a society that existed in contemporary Ukraine and Russia from 862 to 1240. It is often considered to be the first Russian society. It was during the era of Kievan Rus that the people who later became Ukrainians and Russians adopted Orthodox Christianity. It eventually fell to the Mongols in 1240. The discussion over its legacy centers on the ethnic identity of Kievan Rus. Russians have argued that ‘the Rus’ were a unified people, brought together by Orthodox Christianity, common architecture, and a shared language.¹⁴ According to this interpretation, following the Mongol invasion, the political and religious aspects of Kievan Rus were inherited by Moscow.¹⁵ Ukrainian nationalists, however, contend that not only did an ethnic difference exist in Kievan Rus, but that the modern Russian ethnicity exists as a descendant of Finno-Ugric origins rather than as the legitimate heir of Kievan Rus. The historical legacy of Kievan Rus presents nationalists

¹³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴ Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 6.

¹⁵ Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 13.

with a complicated problem of origins, and both Ukrainian and Soviet historians have laid claims to it.¹⁶

The Cossack myth is another aspect of Ukrainian history that is essential to ethnic Ukrainian identity as well as to the Ukrainian claim to independence. Ukrainian nationalists understand themselves to be the inheritors of the Cossacks, whom they perceive to have been members of an independent and republican Ukrainian society.¹⁷ The Cossacks, however, did not govern the territory of Ukraine, which the Poles ruled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ironically, this rule strengthened the relationship between the people living in the region of modern Ukraine and those living in the Russian empire, because the Poles, unlike the Russians, had very little in common with the Ukrainian people. Polish Catholicism was greatly resented in an Orthodox society. Therefore, Orthodox subjects and, in particular, priests looked to Moscow for religious guidance. This established the Moscow metropolitanate as a leader of Slavic Orthodoxy, and placed the Ukrainian church under greater Russian influence.¹⁸ Politically, the Poles faced great opposition from the Cossacks. In the mid-seventeenth century the Cossacks rebelled against the Poles several times. In 1654, they turned to Orthodox Russia for military assistance. The Pereiaslav Treaty guaranteed Cossack rights and nobility, military assistance, and civic democracy in return for Cossack allegiance to the Tsar. On

¹⁶ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 6. As will be discussed later, in the post Soviet era historians have interpreted the ethnicity of Kiev Rus in a less primordial way. They argue that although both ethnicities trace their heritage to Kiev Rus, it is not logical to say that 'the Rus' were either Russian or Ukrainian.

¹⁷ Plokhy, "The History of a 'Non-Historical' Nation," 711; Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 57; Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 18. It should be noted that the Cossacks were Ukrainian speaking frontiersmen who inhabited modern day Ukraine. They were in no way an ethnic group, but rather possessed a distinct culture defined by their Orthodoxy and a rough, military democracy. Although they were not an ethnic group, nor were they members of a modern state, Ukrainian identity came from the Cossacks.

¹⁸ Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 18. Although the difference in religion between Poles and Ukrainians drew the Ukrainians towards Russia, there remains today a very important Uniate Catholic minority in western Ukraine. Furthermore, there is a considerable amount of Polish influence on western Ukrainian language and culture.

the basis of a primordial conception of national identity and Slavic brotherhood, Russian historians have consistently argued that this represented the “reunification of the lands of Rus”¹⁹ and provided the legal basis for Russian and Soviet rule in Ukraine. Ukrainian historians, however, argue that the agreement was intended to be a personal union rather than the assimilation of Ukraine into the Russian empire. Of course, in the end, regardless of the signers’ intent, Ukraine was integrated into the empire.²⁰

While an ethnic Ukrainian nationalist movement developed under tsarist Russia, the movement remained small and relatively insignificant. During the Russian Civil War, Ukrainian nationalists attempted to gain independence. This movement failed largely due to lack of support. Modernists would argue that both the small number of the Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia and the low level of urbanization prevented the spread of nationalist sentiment and that the rural life of Ukrainian peasants prevented them from having anything more than only a minimal sense of national identity. During this period of time, Ukraine was largely a pre-national state. “Ukrainians” identified themselves as descendants of Kievan Rus, which had long before ceased to have any political or cultural significance. Ukrainian nationality was defined not in terms of a modern or even primordial nation, but rather as a group of “stoutly religious peasants who had their own language.”²¹ “Ukrainians,” therefore, were the rural, as opposed to urban, inhabitants of the region of Ukraine. Despite some notion of national identity that existed on a regional level, a collective sense of nationality did not exist. The lack of a widespread and well-

¹⁹ Graham Smith, ed. *The Nationalities Question in the Soviet Union*. (Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers, 1992), 85; Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 21.

²⁰ It should be noted that western Ukraine was not part of the Russian empire, but rather part of the Habsburg Empire.

²¹ George O. Liber. *Soviet Nationality, Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923-1934*. (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

developed sense of Ukrainian nationalism prevented the formation of an ethnic Ukrainian army that could challenge Red Army troops, preventing any possibility of victory.

However, despite its utter failure, the Ukrainian government that attempted to gain independence provided future ethnic Ukrainian nationalists with a claim to legitimacy.

Only during Soviet modernization did a strong nationalist movement develop in Ukraine. The Soviet government encouraged Ukrainianization in an attempt to moderate and control ethnic Ukrainian nationalism. This policy, known as *Korenizatsiia*, was implemented in 1923 as part of a party resolution, entitled “Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress.”²² These measures introduced and encouraged education and literacy in local languages, allowed for militias in Soviet Republics, created schools for elementary political education, and accelerated the formation of cadres of Soviet and Party workers from local people. By 1927, Ukrainian was used in 81.6% of schools, 55% of professional schools, 54% of technical schools, and in some universities.²³ The Twelfth Party Congress also believed that Ukraine would be less resistant to the Soviet government if the economy was modernized and the population underwent urbanization. The Soviets believed these measures would create an urban working class sympathetic to the Communist Party by reducing the element most hostile to Soviet power: peasants.²⁴ In theory, *Korenizatsiia* would encourage “national ethnics” to support the Soviet government.²⁵ But, in fact, modernization and urbanization strengthened the Ukrainian

²² *Korenizatsiia* is derived from the Russian term for “root population” of indigenous nationals.

²³ Yaroslav Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine After World War II* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 63.

²⁴ Liber, *Soviet Nationality, Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923-1934*, 35.

²⁵ The term “national ethnics” refers to the citizens of the Soviet republics and specifically to those with a national consciousness.

nationalist movement. Between 1861 and 1921 the urban population of Ukraine increased by 600%.²⁶ By the mid-1920s, Ukrainianization, urbanization, and modernization resulted in the emergence of an ethnic Ukrainian nationalist movement.²⁷ This movement changed the conception of Ukrainian national identity in that it emerged from urban centers and stressed the differences between the Ukrainian nationality and the Russian nationality. Stalin, fearing this and other nationalist movements, changed the Soviet policy of *Korenizatsiia* to the policy of “socialism in one state,” which restricted the use of local languages and national movements. The restrictions placed on the national movements eventually resulted in Stalinist purges.²⁸ Ethnic Ukrainians believed that a chief component of these purges was Collectivization and the man-made famine of 1933. The famine, in which millions of Ukrainians died, was deliberately created by Stalin because Ukrainian peasants staunchly resisted Collectivization. Nationalist Ukrainian historians argue that the famine was genocide, created to discredit the nationalist movement and weaken any attempt at forming a separate Ukrainian government.²⁹ Most historians, however, argue that the famine affected Russia, as well as Ukraine, and therefore was not a deliberate genocide of Ukrainians. Nonetheless, the famine is ultimately remembered by ethnic Ukrainians as a divisive event.

²⁶ Liber, *Soviet Nationality, Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923-1934*, 12.

²⁷ John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (Colorado: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990), 19. The movement consisted of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UNR), the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), and the Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO), all of which were integral nationalist groups modeled on the Russian terrorist groups of the 1800s. Most possessed fascist elements and favored complete independence from the Soviet Union.

²⁸ Liber, *Soviet Nationality, Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923-1934*, 150.

²⁹ Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic*, 7; Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 21. This version is not accepted by reputable Ukrainian historians, but is included in Ukrainian textbooks.

Because history has divided the Ukrainian ethnic group from the Russian ethnic group, only recently, in the post-Soviet era, have historians produced a history that seeks to transcend nationalist bias. The contemporary histories, written by neither Ukrainian nor Russian historians, come to the conclusion that Ukrainian history is incomplete due to the lack of continuity of an independent Ukrainian state. This discontinuity of Ukrainian history is due to the assimilation of the Ukrainian state and culture into Russia and Poland.³⁰ These historians maintain that modern histories must be distanced from primordial nationalism and should focus on the integration of Ukrainian historiography and diverse ethnicities.³¹

Soviet nationality policy and the Soviet Constitution

Much of Ukrainian nationalist dissidence was based on what they believed to be the unfulfilled promises of the theoretical basis of the Soviet nationality policy formed by Lenin. In 1917, the “Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia” ensured the equality, sovereignty, and self-determination of the peoples of Russia.³² The declaration argued on behalf of the cultural development of national minorities and urged the abolition of national privileges. The following year, Lenin drafted the “Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People.” It was adopted by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets, establishing a “federation of Soviet national republics” based on the “principle of a free union of free nations.”³³ The concept of a Soviet federation was adopted in the Constitution of the USSR.

³⁰ Von Hagen, “Does Ukraine Have a History?” 669.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 670; Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 38.

³² Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swaboda, *Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 21.

In theory, the 1936 Constitution of the USSR, written under Stalin's close supervision, adopted Lenin's main concepts in regards to nationality policy. The Constitution described the Union as a "federal state, formed on the basis of the voluntary association of Soviet Socialist Republics having equal rights."³⁴ These republics were defined as possessing "sovereignty" and having the right to "freely secede from the USSR" and "exercise state authority independently" within their own territory.³⁵ Furthermore, each republic had its own Constitution to "account [for] the specific features of the Republic."³⁶ Lenin's ideas were incorporated into the Constitution.

Although the Union Republics were given the right to govern independently, the Constitution severely limited any real power that the republics could exercise. The highest authoritative bodies of the USSR were given jurisdiction over a large section of political and economic life. The Constitutions of Union Republics had to conform to the Soviet Constitution and any conflict in the observance of a law would be settled by observing the All-Union law. The Union had control over the admission of new republics and the confirmation of changes in territorial boundaries. The organs of government of the USSR established economic plans for the Union and the "basic principles for the use of land...[and] spheres of education."³⁷ All foreign trade was to be conducted on the basis of "state monopoly."³⁸ The constitution declared that the central government would represent the Union in international relations, organize and control the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and "safeguard the security of the state." All citizens were defined as a

³⁴ Soviet Constitution, ch 2, art 13.

³⁵ Soviet Constitution, ch 2, art 14.

³⁶ Soviet Constitution, ch 2, art 14.

³⁷ Soviet Constitution, ch 2, art 14.

³⁸ Soviet Constitution, ch 2, art 14.

possessing “single Union citizenship,” and the Constitution specified that “every citizen of a Union Republic [was] a citizen of the USSR.”³⁹

These policies indicate that the Soviet leadership believed it was possible to develop a Soviet identity that accounted for the varying historical customs and cultures of different regions but accepted the Soviet Union as a collective unifying state. This definition of citizenship was in line with the Communist Party’s desired creation of a single Soviet identity that was based on a shared historical tradition but also on the collective state of the Soviet Union.

Ukraine, Russia, and the Soviet Union

During Stalin’s dictatorship, the governmental bodies of Ukraine were extremely limited. By the 1930s, Stalin began to fear that the obvious effects of Ukrainianization in the government, economy, and cultural life of Ukraine would be detrimental to the Soviet Union, and halted the policy of *Korenizatsiia*.⁴⁰ The Party became more centralized, restricting the authority of non-Russian nationalities and discouraging non-Russian nationalism.⁴¹ During this time, Stalin established the leadership role of the Russian people in the USSR, effectively rendering national governments useless.⁴² It was not until Stalin’s death that the nationalities problem could be adequately addressed.

³⁹ Soviet Constitution, ch 2, art 14.

⁴⁰ Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-stalinist Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 38. *Korenizatsiia* was particularly effective in Ukraine. By 1933, ethnic Ukrainians represented 87.6% of deputies in village soviets and 58.4% in city soviets.

⁴¹ Liber, *Soviet Nationality, Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923-1934*, 117.

⁴² Nahaylo, *Soviet Disunion*, 95. Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 85. This effectively enacted “Great Russian chauvinism,” which will be discussed later in the paper.

By the 1960s, following a decade of destalinization, the Soviet Republics had experienced a nearly unprecedented amount of power.⁴³ Destalinization was extremely relevant to the decentralization of the USSR and to the rehabilitation of nationalist dissidents. The Republics established national control over many of the formerly all-Union economic ministries.⁴⁴ Ukraine, in particular, benefited from Stalin's death. By 1956, seventy-six percent of the deputies in Ukraine's Supreme Soviet and eighty four percent of the deputies in local Soviets were ethnically Ukrainian.⁴⁵ This was a significant increase in the representation of ethnic Ukrainians in the Ukrainian government. Furthermore, by 1961, ethnic Ukrainians were over-represented in the central government, comprising only fifteen percent of the population of the Soviet Union but eighteen percent of the Soviet Central Committee.⁴⁶ Destalinization resulted in the increased representation of ethnic Ukrainian interests.

The privileged position of Ukraine's partnership with Russia in the Soviet Union, as well as the Soviet Ukrainian obligation to acknowledge their Slavic brotherhood with the Russian people, was cemented by the three-hundred-year anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslav in 1954. The Ukrainian people were praised as the second "great" people of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ The Russian Federation presented the territory of Crimea to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as a symbol of "the indestructible friendship of the Ukrainian and Russian people."⁴⁸ Ultimately, under Khrushchev, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic saw a great increase in prestige within the Soviet Union,

⁴³ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 231.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁴⁷ Nahaylo, *Soviet Disunion*, 114.

⁴⁸ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 233.

representation in the central government, and the power to govern themselves.⁴⁹ In return for the increased importance of Ukraine within the Soviet Union, Ukrainian writers and historians were expected to adopt the theory that Russians and Ukrainians were “blood brothers” and that Ukrainian patriotism was based on commitment to Russia.⁵⁰ Therefore, Soviet Ukrainians sacrificed the right to establish their own historical identity in order to achieve greater self governance.

The theory of the existence of an intrinsic relationship between the Russian and Ukrainian people persisted throughout the 1960s in the Soviet press. Principally, the belief in the “common origin of Russian and Ukrainian nations” was evident.⁵¹ Soviet Ukrainian culture was to be based on the Ukrainian “historical proximity” to its “sister Russian nation.”⁵² The shared history of the two nations impacted each other culturally, politically, and economically. Soviet authors believed that “political and economic ties had a growing effect on life in both countries.”⁵³ According to the discussions that occurred at the Twenty-First Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the “great Russian people were always a reliable ally and protector, friend and brother” of the Ukrainian people.⁵⁴ Soviet spokesmen argued that “the study of the historical ties and friendship between the brotherly Ukrainian and Russian people is one of the most

⁴⁹ Ibid., 233; Nahaylo, *Soviet Disunion*, 115; Alexander J. Motyl, ed. *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities: History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 171. Ukraine was given special attention following Stalin’s death due to its strategic importance to the Soviet Union.

⁵⁰ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 233; Nahaylo, *Soviet Disunion*, 115.

⁵¹ D. Vyrnik, “Lenin’s Way to Unification and Socialist Mutual Assistance,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 11, no. 9 (September 1967): 24.

⁵² V. Koretsky, “The Soviet Multi-national State- Personification and Friendship Among Sister Republics,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 12, no. 1 (January 1968): 18.

⁵³ Mykhailo Ivasiuta, “Friendship Between Two Peoples-Brothers,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 7 (April 1960): 22.

⁵⁴ M. Pidhorny, “The 21st Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 4 (April 1960): 8.

important and most current problems of Soviet historical science.”⁵⁵ This statement not only implied that such a “friendship” was accurate and natural, but concluded that the study of this topic was vastly more important than other political or nationality problems. Therefore, the Ukrainian and Russian nations were conceived as the two most important nations in the Soviet Union. Because the topic of “historical ties and friendship” required a great deal of attention, it is indicative of problematic relations between the Soviets and ethnic Ukrainian nationalists in regards to the interpretation of their “shared history.” The “brotherly friendship” of the Russian and Ukrainian states was an important topic in the Soviet press.

Not only did the Soviets believe that the relationship between the Russian and Ukrainian people was intrinsic, but they argued that the Ukrainian people desired this “friendship.” They argued that “Lenin’s nationality policy quickly captured the confidence of the Ukrainian people who, shoulder by shoulder with the Russian and other peoples, unselfishly fought against ‘their own’ [i.e., right-wing Ukrainian nationalists]...for the victory of the principles of the socialist revolution.”⁵⁶ The victory of the revolution “became the turning point in the historical fate of the Ukrainian people who had experienced cruel social and national oppression over a period of centuries.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, “the luckless Ukrainian people did not have statehood,” and to achieve statehood and independence, Ukraine needed the assistance of Russia and the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ Soviet authors argued that the “universal historical achievements of the

⁵⁵ Ivasiuta, “Friendship Between Two Peoples-Brothers,” 22.

⁵⁶ V. Zaichuk, “New Legislation in Practical Application,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 6 (April 1960): 18.

⁵⁷ V. Panybud’laska, “The Flowering of the Ukrainian SSR- Victory of the Leninist Nationality Policy,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no. 9 (September 1966): 19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

Ukrainian nation could have been attained only through Soviet social and government rule, and the Soviet economic system in an atmosphere of brotherly friendship.”⁵⁹ Hence, although the Ukrainian nation accomplished historical and economic successes, these achievements existed only within the realm of “brotherly friendship.” Ultimately, the Soviets believed that Ukraine was enriched by a union with Russia in the USSR.

The Question of Ukrainian Sovereignty

By the 1960s, the legality of Ukrainian sovereignty was the topic of a lengthy debate in the Soviet press. Soviet spokesmen argued that the Soviet Union provided Ukraine with independence, while Ukrainian nationalists asserted that the “independence” given to Ukraine did not give the Republic political sovereignty. Soviet party officials based their arguments on international law and other laws of the Soviet Union. Because Ukraine was declared sovereign on paper, Ukraine was, in fact, sovereign. Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists, however, argued that, in reality, Ukraine was not sovereign and had only limited governmental controls. Ultimately, despite the Soviet claim that the nationalities problem had been “solved,” the debate over Ukrainian sovereignty remained largely unresolved.

The Party Program of 1961 was published in the Soviet press in order to “proclaim the solution of the national question.”⁶⁰ Intended to be both the second phase of deStalinisation and part of a post-Stalinist “solution,” the Program was supposed to reverse Stalinist policies. It stated that the “October Revolution...ensured the right of nations to self-determination, even so far as to secede.”⁶¹ This statement established a

⁵⁹ D. Vyrnik “Lenin’s Way to Unification and Socialist Mutual Assistance,” 18.

⁶⁰ “Draft of the Party Program,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no. 28 (June 1961): 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

basis for the assertion that Republics of the Soviet Union enjoyed de facto independence. Soviet party officials asserted that de facto independence solved the “national question.”

The Soviet press argued that Ukraine was a sovereign republic that had entered into a voluntary union with the other nations of the USSR. In fact, Soviet authors argued that rather than losing their sovereignty by joining the Soviet Union, Ukrainian sovereignty had increased.⁶² “The Great October Socialist Revolution liquidated the national oppression of peoples and made possible the self-determination of formerly enslaved nations.”⁶³ These conclusions were defended by the fact that Ukraine had its own Constitution that was not ratified by the governmental organs of the USSR.⁶⁴ Theoretically, having a Constitution independent of the Soviet Union’s Constitution ensured the rights and authority of the Ukrainian government, limiting Soviet intervention in Ukrainian affairs. Also, since Ukraine had the right to confer citizenship, the people of Ukraine were citizens of a sovereign republic. Theoretically, governance over a distinct territory ensured Ukrainian sovereignty, and, according to the Constitution, the territory of Ukraine could not be altered without the consent of the Ukrainian government.⁶⁵ Ukraine could enter direct diplomatic relations with foreign countries, conclude treaties, and exchange representatives. Ukraine was a UN charter member and participated in the draft of the UN charter. At the Second Session of the UN General Assembly, Ukraine was elected a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council. Ukraine concluded treaties with Italy, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria at the

⁶² M. Lazaryev, “The First experience,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 8, no. 5 (May 1964): 2.

⁶³ “The Great October Socialist Revolution and the Establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist State,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 7, no. 1 (January 1963): 1. This article has no credited author.

⁶⁴ “In The Fraternal Friendship of Nations- To Communism,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no. 4 (April 1966), 13. This article has no credited author.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Paris Peace Conference of 1947 and signed and ratified one hundred international treaties and conventions.⁶⁶ Finally, Ukraine had a national flag, emblem, anthem, and capital.⁶⁷

Following the logic of Soviet authors, Ukraine constituted a sovereign state.

According to this argument, although a member of the Soviet Union, Ukraine did not lose its independence. Ukraine maintained its sovereignty because “its sovereignty and the right of the Ukrainian people to self determination were realized on the basis of a free agreement.”⁶⁸ Therefore, reasoned Soviet spokesmen, because the union was “voluntary,” the states that entered into it did not sacrifice independence. “According to a voluntary union in a single union state, the brotherly republics not only never lost their sovereignty, but greatly strengthened it...under conditions of capitalist encirclement.”⁶⁹ Therefore, “without the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics none of the union republics would [have been able to] defend its independence.”⁷⁰ Soviet authors argued that “a socialist nation that is sovereign but that lives in isolation from other peoples would find itself, in the face of imperialism, with the loss of independence and socialist achievements.”⁷¹ The ‘voluntary union’ of states theoretically enabled the union republics to maintain and strengthen sovereignty.

Soviet theorists declared that it was the job of nationalists to illustrate the sovereignty of Soviet Ukraine. This illustration of Ukrainian sovereignty and success

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ U Ryaboshapko, “The Ukrainian SSR- A Sovereign State,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 11, no. 3 (March 1967): 1.

⁶⁸ “The Great October Socialist Revolution and the Establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist State,” 1.

⁶⁹ “Under the Banner of Lenin,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 7, no. 2 (February 1963): 3. This article has no credited author.

⁷⁰ “The Great October Socialist Revolution and the Establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist State,” 1.

⁷¹ P. Rogachev and M. Sveredin, “The Soviet Nationalities: A New Historical Community,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 15, no. 32 (July 1963): 15.

within the Soviet Union was to include the “economic development of Soviet Ukraine and Ukraine’s achievements in the building of socialism and communism and growing prosperity of its people.”⁷² Nationalists were advised to demonstrate Ukraine’s part in the “solution of international problems...in economic and cultural relations of the Soviet Union with foreign countries.”⁷³ Ultimately, these arguments were intended to depict the “manifestation of the sovereign will of the Ukrainian people.”⁷⁴

Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists challenged the state of affairs more so than they challenged Leninist principles. In fact, they used Lenin’s speeches, letters, and instructions to support their claims. Nationalists argued that Lenin stressed the independence and sovereignty of the republics and their governing bodies before the centralization and unification of the Soviet Union.⁷⁵ Following Lenin’s death, they argued, the sovereignty of Ukraine was subordinated to the supposed economic and industrial needs of the Soviet Union.

Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists principally challenged the concept of Ukrainian sovereignty due to the absence of the legitimate power of the Ukrainian government to grant citizenship. They argued that in order to be sovereign, the boundaries of a nation must encompass its natural citizens: ethnic Ukrainians. Furthermore, a nation loses its sovereignty when it is unable to control its population. As a member of the Soviet Union, Ukraine could neither encompass nor control the population of Ukraine. Therefore, ethnic Ukrainians asserted, Ukraine lost its sovereignty. Specifically, this occurred with the

⁷² *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 9, no 1 (September 1965): 25.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?* (Great Britain: Camelot Press, 1968), 104.

mass resettlement of ethnic Ukrainians to Siberia, the North and other regions.⁷⁶ Furthermore, many ethnic Russians settled in the urban areas of Ukraine. The Soviets reasoned that resettlement was a necessary measure for economic progress within the Soviet Union, meaning that the citizens of Ukraine were displaced for the benefit of the central government. From the point of view of Ukrainian nationalists, however, this mass resettlement indicated that territorial boundaries existed only as a formality and that the Ukrainian government had little authority over the territory of Ukraine.⁷⁷ Without authority over resettlement, ethnic Ukrainians were either removed from their “homeland” or were unable to maintain a Ukrainian state. Because the Ukrainian government had little control over the inhabitants of Ukraine, ethnic Ukrainian nationalists argued that Ukraine could not possibly be sovereign.

Internationalism or Russification?

According to the Soviet spokesmen of the 1960s, the policy of internationalism guaranteed the application of the concept of “equal rights” among nations. While each nation was guaranteed “equal rights” both politically and culturally, these rights were not always protected. Because the term “equal rights” was broadly defined within the context of internationalism, it had very little actual substance. Within this political and cultural framework, “equal rights” only ensured the adoption of Soviet patriotism.

Internationalism was the Soviet “solution” to the nationalities question. Throughout the 1960s, the theoretical preservation of internationalism was highly important to the Soviet state.⁷⁸ “The leading and directing role of the Communist Party [was] a living

⁷⁶ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 14.

⁷⁷ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 14.

⁷⁸ The Soviets claimed internationalism was successful in creating a new Soviet identity and developed “the solution to the national question.” The “solution” of “the problem of relations between nations” was a

embodiment of internationalism.”⁷⁹ In theory, by adhering to this policy, the problems of nationalism associated with a multinational state would become moot. Internationalism involved the development of a single Soviet tradition and culture pervasive throughout the entire Soviet Union. Theoretically, the new Soviet tradition was “national in form and socialist in content,” and was developed from both historically inherited traditions and entirely new traditions, demonstrating the “organic unity of the national and the international in the life of [Soviet] society.”⁸⁰ By creating a single Soviet tradition, the Soviet government believed they had eliminated nationality concerns in the Soviet Union.

“Soviet identity” maintained certain aspects of national culture while amplifying the principles of socialism. Theoretically, “outdated [national culture] forms that [were] inconsistent with the tasks of communist construction [were] fading away while new ones [were] emerging.”⁸¹ The socialist traditions supposedly developed by the Soviets and adopted by all nationalities included selfless labor, collectivism, Soviet patriotism, friendliness, and mutual help.⁸² Of these socialist traditions, Soviet patriotism was the most significant in forming the Soviet people. It consisted of “love for the Socialist homeland” and “boundless devotion to the Communist Party and to the cause of communism.”⁸³ Soviet authors argued that not only did new traditions appear, but national cultural traditions were “augmented by works of an international character.”⁸⁴

general theme in many articles in the Soviet press and was repeatedly argued. This claim is clearly inaccurate.

⁷⁹ V. Orlov, “Wisdom, Honor, and Conscience of Our Epoch,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 2 (February 1960): 22

⁸⁰ N. Gadzhiyev, “A Feeling of One Family,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no 5 (January 1961): 33; “Draft of the Party Program,” 6.

⁸¹ Nikita Khrushchev, “We will Successfully Carry Out the Decisions of the January Plenary Session of the Party Central Committee,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no. 5 (January 1961): 19.

⁸² Gadzhiyev, “A Feeling of One Family,” 33.

⁸³ . Kratsev, “What is Patriotism?” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 4 (April 1960): 7.

⁸⁴ “Draft of the Party Program,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no. 30 (July 1961): 6.

These works created “an international culture common to all nations”⁸⁵ and “a new historical community of people who are of different nationalities but have characteristic features in common.”⁸⁶ The “Soviet people” were built from nationalities that had “many common traits in their spiritual makeup.”⁸⁷ Despite the theoretical change in the cultural identity of the Soviet people, nations maintained territory, native language, “peculiarities of the psychic composition of a nation,” and progressive democratic culture.⁸⁸ These peculiarities, however, were only tolerated when “[brought] together...in the building of communism.”⁸⁹ The Twenty-second Congress of the CPSU stated, “The Communists will not conserve and perpetuate national differences.”⁹⁰ However, concurrently, Soviet party officials did not desire to “artificially accelerate the obliteration of national differences,” because doing so would also be detrimental to the building of communism.⁹¹ Theoretically, national differences would gradually merge into a single Soviet identity. The ultimate idea of creating a Soviet people was that “the term homeland [would] not [be] confined to the borders of one’s own republic,” but rather would encompass the entire Soviet Union.⁹²

Theoretically, “the development of nations,” or the creation of a Soviet identity, proceeded along the lines of “fraternal mutual assistance and friendship.”⁹³ Also referred to as “cooperation among nations,” this aspect of internationalism was defined as a

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Nikita Khrushchev, “On the Party Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no 45 (March 1961): 4.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Kratsev, “What is Patriotism?” 7.

⁸⁹ Kratsev, “Drawing Together and Flourishing of Socialist Nations.” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 6, no 3 (June 1962): 11. This was specifically in regard to local nationalism, which will be discussed in further detail.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² F. Shevchenko, “Friendship of Nations of the USSR- Everlasting and Inviolable,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no. 3 (March 1966): 13.

⁹³ “Draft of the Party Program,” 5.

political, economic, and cultural relationship between the Soviet nations.⁹⁴ This relationship was intended to “unite the nations in a single socialist family.”⁹⁵ The concept of “fraternal mutual assistance” involved each nation adopting positive aspects of national culture and language from other nations. Soviet spokesmen argued that under previous political and economic systems, “national isolation” prevented the growth of nations.⁹⁶ This meant that the nations that were ruled by the Russian empire failed to modernize.⁹⁷ With the “brotherly friendship” that existed within the Soviet Union, nations began to “flourish.”⁹⁸ The “flourishing” of nations occurred against the backdrop of the “stormy development of the economy, science, national cultures and languages.”⁹⁹ Because “brotherly friendship” provided the conditions for modernization, “the drawing together of nationalities was a natural and objective process, convenient to all peoples and hence [proceeded] voluntarily.”¹⁰⁰ In addition to the benefits of “brotherly friendship,” the voluntary union of nations existed to ensure the “complete equality of rights [that] was mandatory for the formation of a single Soviet people.”¹⁰¹

One of the most significant debates that arose from the policy of internationalism and “brotherly friendship” centered on the problems associated with great power chauvinism and local nationalism. Great power chauvinism can be described as

⁹⁴ V. Orlov, “Wisdom, Honor, and Conscience of Our Epoch,” 22; *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 7, no 1 (January 1963): 2.

⁹⁵ “Information Report on The Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 7, no. 8 (August 1963): 2. This article has no credited author.

⁹⁶ Vasyl Kasiyan, “A Miserable Attempt. On the Occasion of an Exhibition in Detroit,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 5, no. 3 (March 1961): 20.

⁹⁷ Often, the Soviets would argue that the tsarist government was repressive, and because the Soviets liberated the different nationalities from the tsar, the Soviet Union was beneficial to the republics.

⁹⁸ Kasiyan, “A Miserable Attempt. On the Occasion of an Exhibition in Detroit,” 20.

⁹⁹ Kratsev, “Drawing Together and Flourishing of Socialist Nations,” 10; Petro Shelest, “Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Ukraine to the Twenty Third Communist Party of Ukraine,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no 4 (October 1966): 5.

¹⁰⁰ Kratsev, “Drawing Together and Flourishing of Socialist Nations,” 11.

¹⁰¹ Rogachev and Sveredin, “The Soviet Nationalities,” 15.

nationalism that imposes its culture, politics, and economics on other nations. In the press, it was described as “the [declared] right of one nation to scorn and hate others with a violent animal hatred, and the right to enslave and destroy whole nations.”¹⁰² Local nationalism was the result of local nationalist movements that advocated independence and the flourishing of national culture. Soviet authors wrote that “Reviving nationalist and chauvinist prejudices [would] undermine friendship among the nations.”¹⁰³ Therefore, both prejudices had to be eliminated. Great power chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism were both “trends hostile to the cause of socialism.”¹⁰⁴ Theoretically, the Soviet Union combated both ‘evils’ equally. “Nationalism and great power chauvinism have always constituted the two sides of bourgeois policy and ideology in the nationality problem. The dedicated and uncompromising struggle against them was precisely the source of all inviolate inter-national unity and fraternity of all socialist nations.”¹⁰⁵ In reality, local nationalism posed a much greater threat to the Soviet Union, and, as a result, was challenged with a much greater intensity.

Local nationalists were discredited in the press as traitors: “As we all know, nationalism is an ideology and policy which stands for the interests of the bourgeoisie of a certain nation under the cover of the deceitful motto of ‘general national’ interests.”¹⁰⁶

Soviet authors asserted that Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists were the “loyal servants” of

¹⁰² *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no 4 (April 1966): 24.

¹⁰³ Shelest, “Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Ukraine to the Twenty Third Communist Party of Ukraine,” 5.

¹⁰⁴ Vladimir Skorobogatov, “Friendship Among Peoples- Friendship of Cultures,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 10 (April 1960): 4.

¹⁰⁵ Shelest, “Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Ukraine to the Twenty Third Communist Party of Ukraine,” 5.

¹⁰⁶ B. Serhiyenko and F. Klymchuk, “Under the Black Flag of Anti-cmmunism,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no. 4 (April 1966): 24

the “ideologists of capitalism.”¹⁰⁷ They argued that “nationalism is the basic political and ideological weapon used by the international reaction and the remnants of the domestic reactionary forces against the unity of the socialist countries.”¹⁰⁸ The fact that the ‘Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists’ “cooperated with the tsar” and “served Hitler” provided the basis for the Soviet assertion that local nationalists were traitors.¹⁰⁹ Ultimately, the Soviet press sought to discredit local nationalism by portraying it as adverse to communism.

The Soviets used the relationship between the Russian and Ukrainian people as an attempt to challenge local nationalism and the Ukrainian bourgeoisie. Local nationalists were accused of attempting to break an intrinsic bond between the “Ukrainians” and the “Russians,” implying that such a break was unnatural and treasonous. “It is a known fact that the pre Revolution Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist historians...put a lot of effort into building a foundation for the treasonable program of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, aimed at separating the Ukrainian people from the Russian.”¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Soviet ideologists argued that this foundation was built on the fact that nationalists had “resorted to falsification of history, attempting to distort historical events and facts, incorrectly report about the struggle of our people for a socialist government and socialist state, and publish libels against the nationality policy of the Soviet Union.”¹¹¹ Only “bourgeois nationalist forgers of history...deliberately [attempted] to treat Ukraine in isolation from Russia.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Kratsev, “What is Patriotism?” 8.

¹⁰⁸ “Draft of the Party Program,” 4.

¹⁰⁹ B. Serhiyenko and F. Klymchuk, “Under the Black Flag of Anti-communism,” 24; Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 6, 32. Ukrainian nationalists cooperated with the Germans both in World War I and World War II.

¹¹⁰ *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 12 (April 1960), 12.

¹¹¹ “The Great October Socialist Revolution and the Establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist State,” 2.

¹¹² Ivasiuta, “Friendship Between Two Peoples-Brothers,” 22.

Not only did nationalists sever this relationship, but by doing so “contributed to the development of provincialism [and] impoverished the national culture and language” of their own nation.¹¹³ Local nationalism was criticized on the basis that it created division between “brotherly peoples.”

Despite the heavy criticism of local nationalism and great power chauvinism, policies that constituted de facto Russian chauvinism were generally supported by the Soviet media. Often, the word “great” would precede any mention of the Russian nationality.¹¹⁴ Also, the Russian people or the Russian nation would be designated separately from the rest of the Soviet Union. At the Twenty-first Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine, it was stated that “all means of ideological influence must be...in the spirit of love and respect for other nations and particularly for the Great Russian people.”¹¹⁵ While Great Russian Chauvinism was theoretically considered to be negative and detrimental to the Soviet Union, the “Great Russians” were generally portrayed in a positive light in the press.

Policies that can be associated with Great Russian Chauvinism were partly defended as being conducive to internationalism. While it was often argued that local nationalism was harmful to socialism, Russian nationalism was said to be beneficial. For example, “The feeling of national pride of the Great Russians does not negate proletarian internationalism, but on the contrary, it is organically united with it. It coincides with the socialist interests of the working class: both the Russian as well as other nations.”¹¹⁶

Theoretically, the Russian people ensured Soviet patriotism and among all nations

¹¹³ Kratsev, “Drawing Together and Flourishing of Socialist Nations,” 11.

¹¹⁴ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 233.

¹¹⁵ Kratsev, “What is Patriotism,” 8.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

contributed the most to developing the Soviet tradition. The 1961 Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stated that “Relying on mutual fraternal aid, and above all, aid from the Great Russian people, all the Soviet national republics have...developed cultures that are nationalist in form and socialist in content.”¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Soviet party officials argued that Russia encouraged the development of a modern economic system for previously underdeveloped countries. Khrushchev stated that “with the aid of the more highly developed nations, above all the Great Russian people, previously backward peoples...rose to the level of advanced nations.”¹¹⁸ Ultimately, Soviet spokesmen perceived the promotion of the “Great Russian people” as intrinsically related to the policy of internationalism.

Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists, led by Ivan Dzyuba, challenged the application and context of internationalism in the 1960s.¹¹⁹ They argued that the “popular conception of the essence and form of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has moved a long way from the idea of Lenin and the Party of his time, that is, from the idea of a free union of independent national states with a common social order.”¹²⁰ Rather than the original conception of the Soviet Union as a federation of small states, the Union became a highly centralized government, in which the remnants of “Great Russian imperialism and chauvinism” acted as the ruling class.¹²¹ As a result, nationalists argued, Ukraine became the victim of “Russian colonialism...in the form of ‘brotherhood.’”¹²² Ethnic Ukrainian

¹¹⁷ “Draft of the Party Program,” 6.

¹¹⁸ Khrushchev, “On the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” 4.

¹¹⁹ Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, “Interviews,” Dissident Movement in Ukraine Virtual Museum, <http://khp.org/archive/en/index.php?r=17> (accessed April 8, 2010). Dzyuba’s book *Internationalism or Russification?* was extremely influential in ethnic Ukrainian nationalist circles.

¹²⁰ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 56.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 95.

nationalists asserted that “not everything is internationalism that looks like internationalism,” meaning that although the “great Russians” claimed to be assisting Ukraine and other nations, they were, in fact, establishing political, economic, and cultural dominance in these regions.¹²³ Therefore, while Lenin worked to ensure equality among nations, in reality, Russia had a stronger position than other nations.¹²⁴ “Assertions (in textbooks, lectures, newspapers, books and on the radio) about the special, exclusive role of the great Russian people in the historical and present destiny of all other peoples of the USSR” permeated Soviet culture.¹²⁵ Ultimately, ethnic Ukrainian nationalists argued that “the ideological orders from the Kremlin to merge all nations into one Soviet (effectively Russian) was indeed carried out unceremoniously.”¹²⁶

Ethnic Ukrainian nationalists debunked the idea of “one single Soviet nation” as absurd. They argued that the concept of a single identity among several nations was anti-Marxist, because it had to be accomplished through colonialism.¹²⁷ A single identity could not be naturally formed from a multinational state due to differences in national culture. Only through one culture imposing its culture on another could a single identity be created. Therefore, according to ethnic Ukrainian nationalists, within the context of Soviet internationalism, the “Soviet nation” was simply intended to justify Russification.¹²⁸ Furthermore, they argued that the Soviet definition of internationalism as pertaining to the creation of a single Soviet people was an incorrect use of the term “internationalism.” Rather, internationalism required “the instilling of a genuine national-

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 115.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 173.

¹²⁶ Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, “Interviews,” Dissident Movement in Ukraine Virtual Museum, <http://khpg.org/archive/en/index.php?r=17> (accessed April 8, 2010).

¹²⁷ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 45.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 47.

internationalist feeling, of dedication to one's own nation, of love and esteem towards all other nations, of a desire to see your own nation contribute as much as possible to humanity, doing its utmost for it."¹²⁹ Therefore, internationalism could only be accomplished in a multinational state, rather than a "single Soviet nation." The ethnic Ukrainian nationalist perception of internationalism directly opposed great Russian chauvinism and the Soviet desire to create a "single Soviet people."

Despite their criticisms of the Soviet Union and opposition to "great Russian chauvinism," ethnic Ukrainian nationalists of the 1960s had only a limited desire to leave the Union.¹³⁰ The nationalist movement of the 1960s was "the child of...the shattered image of one single correct official doctrine" that followed "Khrushchev Spring" and the "denunciation of the cult of Stalin."¹³¹ This means that the activists of the 1960s were likely to work with the Soviet government. Furthermore, the movement consisted of "a certain kind of indulgence towards left-wing views, toward communism."¹³² Several nationalists believed that "Ukraine must become an 'independent state,' however that it needed to build a 'glorious future' – communism."¹³³ This statement, though completely in line with Soviet nationality policy, was never fully addressed by the Soviet government due to differing opinions of the definition of "independent."

Russian or Ukrainian: The Problem of Language

Within the territory of Ukraine, Soviet and ethnic Ukrainian discourse often centered on national language as a function of identity, practicality, and Russification. By

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ It should be noted that by the 1970s, ethnic Ukrainian nationalists wanted complete independence from the Soviet Union.

¹³¹ Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, "Interviews," Dissident Movement in Ukraine Virtual Museum, <http://khpg.org/archive/en/index.php?r=17> (accessed April 8, 2010).

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

the 1960s, Ukraine had witnessed periods of Russification and Ukrainianization. Following these periods, both the Soviets and the ethnic Ukrainian nationalists possessed a strong desire to develop the Ukrainian language. Concurrently, however, the Soviet government encouraged the use of Russian in business, government, and culture. The discourse that followed the developments of language in twentieth-century Ukraine consisted of a debate centered on the role of Russian and Ukrainian in public life.

Despite periods of Ukrainianization, the Ukrainian language did not hold a prominent position in 1960s Ukraine. From 1897 until 1959, while the population of Ukrainian citizens remained constant, the number of Ukrainians who considered Ukrainian to their native tongue decreased by six percent.¹³⁴ In 1959, over seventy-six percent of Ukrainian citizens considered themselves ethnically Ukrainian, but only about eighty-seven percent of that group considered Ukrainian to be their native tongue.¹³⁵ In addition, by the 1960s, the use of the Ukrainian language had decreased in several aspects of civic life. Ukrainian education was often conducted by Russian language speakers. In 1958, an incredibly low twenty-one percent of children in Ukraine attended Ukrainian language schools.¹³⁶ Although by 1965 there were 33,000 Ukrainian language schools, due to the predominance of the Russian language these schools were arguably unprepared to sufficiently conduct classes in the Ukrainian language.¹³⁷ The Soviet press conceded that Ukrainian textbooks were both inadequate and not age appropriate.¹³⁸ Several

¹³⁴ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 188. This source is referencing the 1959 census.

¹³⁵ USSR Council of Ministers Central Statistical Administration, "1959 Census Figures on Education, Nationalities, and Age," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 12, no. 50 (February 1960): 5.

¹³⁶ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 157.

¹³⁷ V. Panybud'laska, "Book of Knowledge," *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 9, no. 10 (October 1965): 23.; Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 156 .

¹³⁸ Petro Masokha, "After the Show," *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 9, no. 7 (July 1965): 22.

primers and textbooks even used “Russified” Ukrainian.¹³⁹ Furthermore, along with the lack of textbooks, several teachers of the Ukrainian language had never studied the language.¹⁴⁰ Education in Ukrainian was so inadequate that it was described as the teaching of a “mutilated” language.¹⁴¹ Not only was Soviet Ukrainian education largely conducted in Russian throughout the 1960s, but the education of the Ukrainian language was grossly inadequate.

Despite the large percentage of native Ukrainian speakers, business, government, journalism and other official matters were generally conducted in Russian.¹⁴² It was arguable that the Communist Party, the Communist Youth League, the army, higher education, secondary education, libraries and cultural education centers, and the press were organs of Russification.¹⁴³ This linguistic trend was particularly prevalent in the publication of journals, periodicals, newspapers, and books. Fewer than half of the titles published in Ukraine from 1960 to 1962 were Ukrainian. Of all the copies published by Ukrainian publishing houses in 1963, only sixty-six percent were written in the Ukrainian language.¹⁴⁴ Only 6.5 percent of periodicals in the Soviet Union in 1963 were published in Ukraine, and only half of these publications were in Ukrainian.¹⁴⁵ Less than one third of newspapers that circulated in Ukraine were published in the Ukrainian language.¹⁴⁶ All

¹³⁹ Mikhailo Zozulyn, “Old and productive traditions,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no. 9 (September 1966): 13.

¹⁴⁰ Yevsyeyev, “Native language subject of Education,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 12, no. 4 (April 1968): 19

¹⁴¹ “A First Grader’s Troubles,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 11, no. 12 (December 1967): 19. This article has no credited author.

¹⁴² *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 9, no 1 (January 1965): 24; Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 135, 156.

¹⁴³ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 156, 157, 161, 162, 163.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 118. These figures are taken from *Narodnoye khozyaystvo SSSR v 1963 godu*.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* This is contrasted with the Ukrainian population, which was 17% of the population of the USSR.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

international and inter-republic relations and publications were intended to occur in the Russian language, limiting the number of Ukrainian publications.

Due to the restrictions placed on the Ukrainian language and on Ukrainianization, ethnic Ukrainian nationalists interpreted certain aspects of internationalism as taking the form of the linguistic Russification of Ukraine. Russification was even evident in the articles written by the Soviet press. Soviet authors argued that the Russian language had become the “second native language” of Ukraine.¹⁴⁷ Knowledge of the Russian language was “necessary...for active participation in the creative state, industrial, civic, political, and cultural life...of the Ukrainian people.”¹⁴⁸ Although the presence of Russification was denied by Soviet authors, linguistic policies that could be considered Russification were recognized by both ethnic Ukrainian nationalists and the Soviet press.

Soviet spokesmen argued that the prevalence of Russian in Soviet society was not Russification, but rather a necessary element of inter-republic communication. Theoretically, without a common language, the socialist progress of the republics of the Soviet Union would be retarded. Soviet authors claimed that “the lack of a common international language would cause serious difficulties in daily contacts among representatives of the different nationalities in their cooperation in the various spheres of activity.”¹⁴⁹ Not only did the Russian language prevent a lack of cooperation among nations, but it encouraged the development of a Soviet state. “The dissemination of an international language [played] a great role in the spiritual rapprochement of the nations.”¹⁵⁰ Russian

¹⁴⁷ I. Bilodid, “Toward the Heights of Language Culture,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 7, no. 10 (October 1963): 17.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Yu. Desherieyev, N. Kammari, and M. Melikayan, “Development and Mutual Enrichment of Languages and Nations of the USSR,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 10, no. 2 (February 1966): 24.

¹⁵⁰ P. Rogachev and M. Sveredin, “The Soviet Nationalities: A New Historical Community,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 15, no. 32 (July 1963): 15.

was the logical language to use for international communication, and “the functions of a common language of inter-national contact under conditions of Soviet reality could not be successfully fulfilled by any other language except Russian.”¹⁵¹ Soviets authors argued that Russian was the most developed Slavic language. As a result, Russian was the most logical language to use for inter-national communication because not only was it closely related to the languages and dialects of several republics, it was also the most practical language for business, industry science, and politics.¹⁵² The Soviet press argued that Russian was the native language of over half the population of the USSR and that roughly three quarters of people living in the Soviet Union had some understanding of the language.¹⁵³ Ultimately, according to the Soviet press, the Russian language was a necessary aspect of internationalism and building communism.

Although Russian was the language of inter-national communication, all languages supposedly had status and developed along the basis of “equal rights”.¹⁵⁴ Soviet spokesmen argued that “the Russian language, although it is the common language of inter-national contacts among nations, occupies an equal, not privileged position in the political and legal aspect among the languages of our country.”¹⁵⁵ This meant that the speaking of Ukrainian was “optional” and “encouraged.”¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, Khrushchev assured the different nations that “the Party will continue to make sure that the languages of the peoples of the USSR develop freely and will prevent any restriction, privilege, or

¹⁵¹ Desherieyev, “Development and Mutual Enrichment of Languages and Nations of the USSR,” 24.

¹⁵² Bilodid, “Toward the Heights of Language Culture,” 14; Rogachev and Sveredin, “The Soviet Nationalities,” 15.

¹⁵³ Desherieyev, “Development and Mutual Enrichment of Languages and Nations of the USSR,” 24.

¹⁵⁴ Rogachev and Sveredin, “The Soviet Nationalities,” 15.

¹⁵⁵ Desherieyev, “Development and Mutual Enrichment of Languages and Nations of the USSR,” 24.

¹⁵⁶ Kravtsev, “VI Lenin on the Russian Language and the National Languages of Our Country,” 7.

compulsion in the use of any particular language.”¹⁵⁷ Theoretically, all languages of the Soviet Union were considered to be equal.

Although the languages of the Soviet Union were free to develop without restriction, they were supposed to experience “mutual enrichment.”¹⁵⁸ This mostly occurred under the “positive influence of the Russian language.”¹⁵⁹ Theoretically, by exposing the speakers of other Slavic languages to the Russian language, each language would experience “stylistic improvement” and literary development.¹⁶⁰ The Soviet spokesmen argued that by studying and mastering the Russian language, “the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture becomes immensely enriched.”¹⁶¹ Furthermore, each literary language would benefit from the direct assistance of Russian authors. Soviet authors asserted that “the great masters of Russian literature and art also gave a lot to help the ideological and artistic development of Ukrainian socialist literature and art.”¹⁶² Not only did the languages supposedly enrich each other, but only “bourgeois nationalists” would reject this process and “impose on the Ukrainian language a status of isolation, linguistic archaism, artificiality, provincial limitation and separation from the brotherly Russian language.”¹⁶³ Theoretically, the development of the Ukrainian language was enhanced by the Russian language.

The prevalence of Russification in Ukraine led both ethnic Ukrainian nationalists, some of which wrote in the Soviet Ukrainian press, to call for the development and

¹⁵⁷ Nikita Khrushchev, “On the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 13, no 45 (1961): 20.

¹⁵⁸ Rogachev and Sveredin, “The Soviet Nationalities,” 15.

¹⁵⁹ Bilodid, “Toward the Heights of Language Culture,” 14.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Kravtsev, “VI Lenin on the Russian Language and the National Languages of Our Country,” 7.

¹⁶² Skorobogatov, “Friendship Among Peoples- Friendship of Cultures,” 4.

¹⁶³ I. Bilodid, “The Ukrainian Language Among the Socialist Nations of the USSR,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 6, no. 4 (April 1962): 4.

expansion of the Ukrainian language.¹⁶⁴ Much of this concern stemmed from the belief that “the language of a people is the best, unfading and eternally renewed flower of its whole spiritual life,”¹⁶⁵ that “a people lives through its language,”¹⁶⁶ and that “language is a valuable heritage from the ancestors which transmits national tradition and peculiarities of perceiving the outside world which is characteristic of a given nation’s thinking and feeling.”¹⁶⁷ As a result, both ethnic Ukrainians and Soviet Ukrainians argued that the Ukrainian language was “the greatest national treasure,”¹⁶⁸ and should be treated with “great care and respect”¹⁶⁹ “even if it [required] authoritative state measures.”¹⁷⁰ Principally, they called for the improvement of Ukrainian textbooks and schools. Among Ukrainians, there emerged a backlash against Russification that stressed that necessity of possessing a national language.

Conclusion

In 1960s Ukraine there emerged in the Soviet press and among nationalist circles a lively debate about the nationality and identity of the people of the Soviet Union. The Soviet identity that supporters of Soviet nationality policy wished to achieve was blurred with the Russian national identity. The high levels of Russian influence on Soviet identity were especially problematic in Ukraine. Soviet sources sought to demonstrate that Ukraine had been able to develop its national culture and identity only with the

¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that while the Soviet press contained articles that were positive towards the expansion of the Ukrainian language, these articles were generally written by ethnic Ukrainians and are inconsistent with other articles that advocate the Russification of the language.

¹⁶⁵ Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, 153.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, “On Guard of Courage,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 4, no 10 (October 1960): 7.

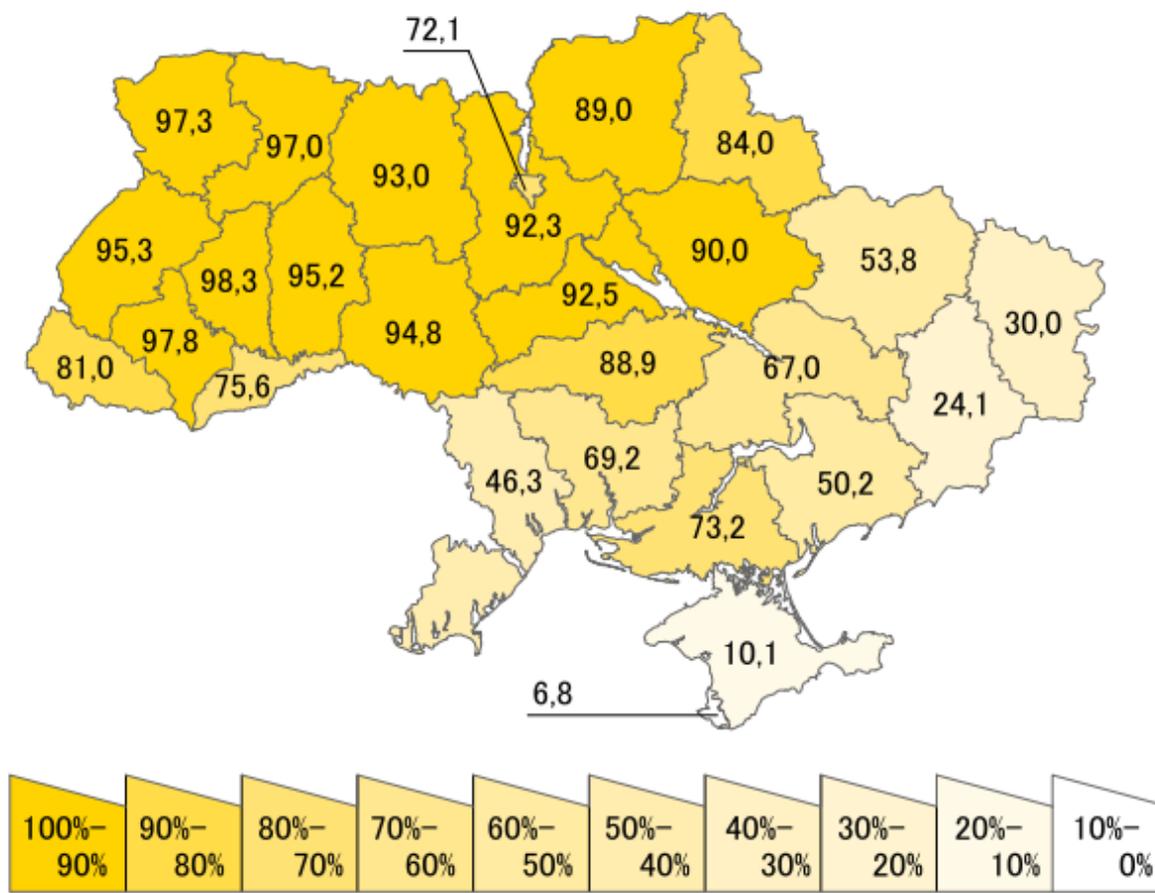
¹⁶⁸ Olas Honchar, “Fifth Congress of the Writers of Ukraine,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 11, no 1 (January 1967): 4.

¹⁶⁹ Petro Shelest, “Fifth Congress of the Writers of Ukraine,” *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press* 11, no 1 (January 1967): 2.

¹⁷⁰ Honchar, “Fifth Congress of the Writers of Ukraine,” 4

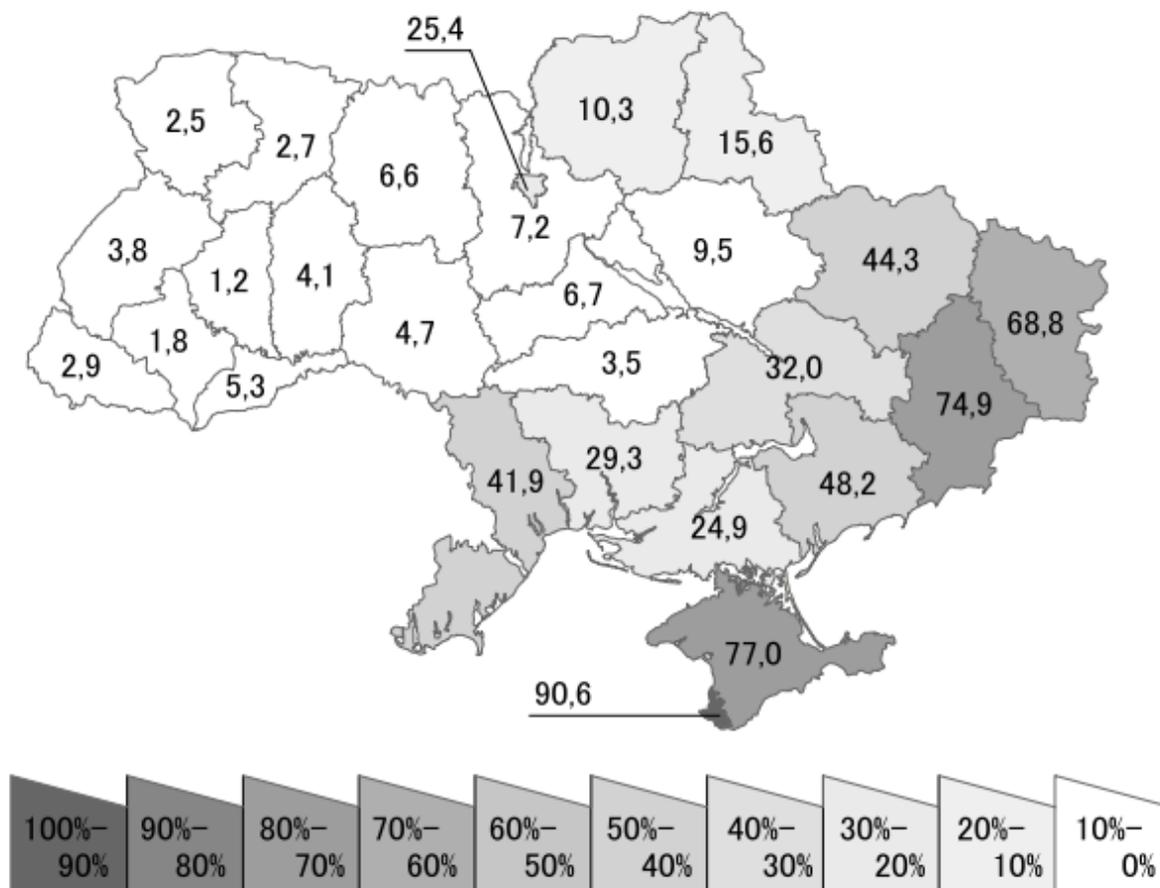
benevolent support of Russia and the Russians, at the same time that they argued that Ukrainians should recognize the preeminence of Russian nationality and culture and the benefits of assimilating with them. The Ukrainian dissidents for their part were also of two minds. They aggressively asserted in primordialist terms the existence of Ukrainian nationalism and Ukrainian rights to national cultural and political sovereignty. At the same time, they were willing to co-exist in the USSR and with the Russians. Ultimately, neither approach to nationalism in Ukraine was consistent with the official Soviet nationality policy.

Appendix 1



Percentage of native Ukrainian speakers, 2001

Appendix 2



Percentage of native Russian speakers, 2001

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