

SUPPRESSION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES: UKRAINIAN AND BALTIC
CULTURES IN THE SOVIET UNION

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ABSTRACT

Suppression of National Identities: Ukrainian and Baltic Cultures in the Soviet Union

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This thesis defines the formation and consummation of Soviet Bolshevism as another imperialist force rather than its stated objective of freeing the people of the United Soviet Socialist Republics from the clutches of an inequitable elite. Through the policies and objectives of the Soviet government the workers and citizens of Ukraine and the Baltic republics were not liberated or given autonomy over their lives and labor, as Marxist-Leninism would have them believe. I review the Russification efforts found first in the Tsarist Russian Empire and then continued by Soviets in the nature of pursuing or denying cultural, political, and economic self-sufficiency.

Keywords: Ukraine, Baltic States, Soviet Union, Ethnic Suppression, National
Suppression, Bolshevism

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has made expansionist comments or taken illicit actions against various former member-states of the Soviet Union. From the Russian-Chechen Wars, the Russo-Georgian War, and most recently the Russo-Ukrainian War, now as much as ever remains to be a pertinent time to document and understand the underlying histories of *Great Russian chauvinism*. Russia has never relinquished its claims to what it perceives as its historic lands, and until sweeping changes are undertaken by the Duma, various ministries, and executive branches, aspects of imperialistic restorative expansion will be part of the nation's international appetite.

The former Soviet Union occupies the minds of contemporary audiences in an innumerable variety of forms. As the first longstanding sovereign manifestation of a communist state, a status hard won in a civil war costing around 10 million lives, it often becomes the foci of dyadic optimisms and pessimisms. Through the nearly 70 years of the Soviet Union's existence its zealous fervor to Bolshevism waxed and waned, especially in the latter decades. The particularities of governmental policy were a unique stamp to each administration and personal interpretations of the correct path to follow were as numerous as the number of general secretaries, members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Council of People's Commissars; and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was not the last to venture to turn his theories into reality. After Stalin's ascension to general secretary his views on party

labeled *bourgeois nationalism* hardened, and he began to alter the ideology's approach from centralized government to increasing totalitarianism.

During this transition, non-Russian peoples of separate Soviet republics, and in particular to this work, 1920s to the 1960s Ukrainians and peoples of the Baltic Soviet Republics, were suppressed and their histories treated as *tabula rasa* slates to be rewritten.¹ Many of Lenin's close associates among early Bolsheviks propagated a form of communism that privileged national sovereignty of minority ethnicities as a check against past causes of insensitive *Great Russian chauvinism*, but these regulations were not fated to last through the tumultuous 1930s and transition to war communism as described below on the chapter on Soviet political policy. Indeed, this thesis contends that via the construction and propagation of a raceless, nationless, and classless proletariat, the party sought to replace and subjugate national culture, politics, and economy to their own means while maintaining ideological orthodoxy.

Noam Chomsky has argued that according to intrinsic matter-of-fact terms the Soviet Union was not a socialist country, but was instead an authoritarian state that cloaked itself as one for public perception. In a lecture that he gave on his book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* on the Madison Campus of the University of Wisconsin in 1985, he substantiates his point that for all the bluster of ushering in the international socialist revolution he was primarily interested in propagating his own rightwing deviation of Marxist policies.² Lenin disregarded

¹ Robert S. Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine, 1917-1957* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 5.

² Noam Chomsky, *What is Leninism?, Lecture on Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Wisconsin Union Theatre on the Madison Campus of the University of Wisconsin, 1985, pdxjustice Media Productions, 2020, <https://www.pdxjustice.org>.

mainstream international communists such as Antonie Pannekoek and Rosa Luxemburg as *infantile leftists* after 1917 because they were critical of what they regarded as his opportunistic reliance on ideological vanguardism to seize state power that Stephen Cohen discusses later in this thesis. The trajectory of the Bolshevik revolution was subtly redirected, away from the public eye or anyone not privy to unleased Soviet documents, to subvert the socialist ideal to give workers autonomy over their own labor and instead to consolidate authority behind a select few.

In 1918 Lenin, alongside Trotsky before his looming disavowal and break with Stalin, advocated for a labor army that, for the sake of efficiency, would answer to one leader. Modern progress, the drive to socialism, and national development required that the masses be overseen by a committed few who could better direct their labor. In fact, in a March 1920 publication of *Pravda* Trotsky wrote on the labor army's lackluster demobilization numbers and contribution to noncombat production:

Some comrades have concluded, on the basis of the labour reports, that the productivity of the Red Army man's labour is low, and some idle-minded statisticians and philosophers have argued, in this connection, that 'compulsory' labour in general has a low level of productivity. This is nothing but a liberal smear. If compulsory labour is unproductive (regardless of social conditions), this condemns not just the Labour Army but universal labour service as such, and along with it the entire Soviet order, the further development of which is conceivable only on the basis of universal labour service.³

Believing in one of the first tenets of Marxist historicism, Trotsky and Lenin both denied the early twentieth century Russia was suitable for communism to be born and nurtured to maturity. They prophesied that the revolution would rise from the workers

³ Leon Trotsky, *On the Labour Army: the Percentage of Workers and the Productivity of Labour, The Military Writings of Leon Trotsky, vol 3*, 1920, Marxists.org, last updated December 26, 2006, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1920/military/ch16.htm>.

overturning an already industrialized nation that had experienced and grown tired of the unequitable capitalist mode of production found in democracies with Germany being the prime example.⁴ Finding themselves in what they referred to as the backwards institutions and practices that inhabited the newly remade Russia, Lenin and Trotsky believed it was in their interest to cut corners to spur their nation to spread their struggle westward, and in doing so using holdover traditions in the serf-owning and petty-bourgeois economy such as compulsory labor. Trotsky excuses these ideals explaining the legal nature of the work does not matter to the oppressed worker, only the share of their labor that they are able to benefit from.⁵ He argues since the Soviet state organizes the method of work, forced labor not only advantages the socialist worker but also coincides with the ideology of Bolshevism.

Chomsky argues that these claims run absolutely counterintuitive to the true pillars of Marxist socialism and the primary reason why the Soviet Union was upheld as a socialist nation are namely because it profited Western and Russian political ambitions. As the two most powerful mass media systems in the twentieth century, the capitalist nations of the West had a vested interest in denouncing the allure of worker friendly communism just as the Kremlin and those residing within it could exploit the moral imperative and imagery of a working-class positive state.⁶ For whichever reason the international polity was conditioned to accept the USSR, and by extension the Bolshevik movement, as proponents of Marxist ideology and not the totalitarian construct that it was constructed to be. In his book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass*

⁴ Karl Marx, *The Essential Marx*, edited by Leon Trotsky (New York: Dover Publications, 2006), 157.

⁵ Trotsky, *On the Labour Army*.

⁶ Chomsky, *What is Leninism?*

Media, Chomsky devotes much of his energy to accentuating how powerful states particularly the United States and the Soviet Union are able to take advantage of their powerful *propaganda models* to maintain the public's ignorance or perception of globally impactful events.⁷ The structure and performance of this model can be employed to skew the emotions and understanding of the polity on the outrage or legitimacy of things ranging from wars to elections at home or abroad by the nature of the dialogue and repetition of talking points.

The objective of mass media systems in countries that have bureaucratic and monopolistic structures is to propagate messages and symbols that the people can easily and thoughtlessly metabolize and accept as either their own original opinion or thought that they reached without the incursion of such systems. Such nations utilize the vast powers of state censorship, the commercialized elite-owned media, and state affirming institutions such as education to gain and hold the attentions and trust of the public to endear them to certain constructed realities that benefit the government, elites, and those in power.⁸ In this regard, the Bolshevik movement manufactured the narrative that the Soviet Union governed under the tenets of socialism and that the dictatorship of the proletariat was enforced to empower the people. The USSR used its aesthetic of communism and its engrossing literature to beguile its constituents with the falsehood that its new system of top-down governing and domination was anything but those that it rose to oppose and free the people from.

⁷ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), xi, 87-88.

⁸ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1-3.

Edward Said posits that the nation-building institutions of media, academia, and government cooperate with each other to reinforce a single telling of history that the public are incentivized to retell and believe; the Bolshevik ideological defense of historicism and the imposition of national policies in the case of this thesis. Said has iterated, "... imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible to read one without in some way dealing with the other."⁹ He has compared this telling and reciprocation of history to a national melody that the public must symphonically recite in unison or be considered a political outsider. This historiographic harmony must be produced without dissonance or atonal disruption to achieve the proper interpretation of events and knowledge to buoy the ship of state and sustain the unity of the nation. Said refers to this as a heterophonic rather than contrapuntal, or counterpoint, analysis of the effects of imperialism.¹⁰

In his widely influential book, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*, Richard Pipes examines the impetus behind the tidal wave of communism in Eastern Europe and the preexisting forces that it was able to harness to compel mass public support. He states that the average villager who supported the revolution did not wage it explicitly against the Russian landlord class, but instead the Russian colonist.¹¹ This group, employing the extrajudicial qualities of Russian army garrisons or roving Cossack mounted regiments, robbed the people of Russian

⁹ Bruce Robins, Mary Louise Pratt, Jonathan Arac, R. Radharkrishanan, and Edward Said, *Edward Said's Culture and Imperialism: A Symposium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁰ Wouter Capitain, *From Counterpoint to Heterophony and Back Again: Reading Edward Said's Drafts for Culture and Imperialism*, *Journal of Musicological Research*, 41:1, 2022, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411896.2020.1787793/>.

¹¹ Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923: with a New Preface*. Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), 51-53.

borderlands of the natural bounty and independence that they yearned for since being enveloped by the auspices of the *Great Russians*. In many cases such as the people under this work's purview, this treatment of hard rule lasted for centuries. The abdication of Tsar Nicholas II after the ill-fated participation during the First World War provided Russian and minority group solidarity to consolidate their regional ambitions at the end of the *ancient régime* and establish local self-rule governments at home, as in the case of the Soviet regime in Russia and the Central Rada Congresses in Ukraine and Belarus, though the former would soon usurp these national polities by the closure of the 1910s. Pipes states that this triumph of Bolshevism spreading outwards from the Russian center represents the Russian colonists' reassumption of control over the Russian and non-Russian peasant class alike for much of the remainder of the twentieth century.

This thesis examines the Soviet Union's policies that suppressed ethnic minorities in Ukraine and the Baltic states as well as exploring how they generated forms of resistance. In this work I examine Cold War international policy and theory, Russian narrative literature, sociology, psychoanalysis and psychology, among other sources spanning from the times of Imperial Russia such as Dostoevsky to contemporary authors such as Noam Chomsky to argue that counterintuitive to the Marxist syntax of Bolshevism, it fell to the same fatal symptoms of *Great Russian chauvinism* and labor exploiting imperial expansionism that spelled the downfall of the tsarist Russian Empire. The intended benefit to Soviet historiography from this work is to offer a humanizing and sociological efface to the calculating and often dry edifice of Cold War theoretical methodology often generated by the works that were produced in the 1960s to 1980s. Much of this work was created by historians and other such Kremlinologists who go their

start working for the United States State Department and therefore wrote for an audience that was more interested in policy than culture where it is the intention of this work to merge the two.

In summary, in Chapter 2 the *Statement of Purpose* will outline the Soviet Union, not as the communist nation that it has been made up to be in modern media, but as a successor state to the Russian Empire. The Bolshevik regime and its proponents utilized Marxist motifs and ideology for domestic and international gains to build an *imago*, or likeness to an ancestral past, for itself as a socialist nation. As Chomsky, Pipes, and others articulate, this could not be farther from the truth and is mere window dressing to appeal to its polity of peasants and workers. Chapter 3, entitled *Reapplied Imperialism, Soviet National Policy, and the Nature of Bolshevism*, is an ambitious section of the thesis meant to provide background information on how the Soviet Union has come to see itself as the claimant of entire portions of Eastern Europe as its ancestral lands. Ukraine and the Baltic regions both came under the sway of Imperial Russia in the 18th century and ever since have been imagined as beneficiaries of Russian culture and development. The aim of this segment is to show that this could not be future from the truth as while both have a storied relationship with its expansionist metropole, their original histories and cultures have traditionally been othered and belittled to the benefit of their tsarist and then Bolshevik rulers.

Chapter 4, *An Investigation of the Russian Spirit Through Literature and Minority Cultural Identity*, attempts to provide insight to a segment of the Russian heart with insight into life under repressivist monarchies and authoritarian regimes. Several stories by Dostoevsky including *Crime and Punishment*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *Notes*

from the Underground are highlighted to accentuate the nihilist and melancholic existentialism that has rooted itself into Russian literature and provides a backdrop for minority counterculture forms of resistance in writing. Chapter 5, *Ukrainian and Baltic Bonds to the Soviet Union Through Language and Forced Cultural Assimilation* investigates the Russification of Ukrainian and Baltic language doctrines that affected major aspects of civil life and social ordering into the Soviet superstructure bureaucracy of internal passports and ethno-states. Education, employment, and communist party membership were the three primary engines of upward social mobility, and at the highest levels they all bonded together by the requirement for the individual to be proficient in Russian language skills.

Chapter 6, *Economic Suppression*, showcases forms of financial coercion that the Soviet used to retain and manipulate the member-states of the USSR. Organizations such as COMECON and policies such as the convertible ruble transfixed the union together and forced Ukraine and the Baltic States to develop according to the needs of the Russian Socialist Republic. Through the tenets of systematic interdependence and imposing bans on trading with the West, the various nations that made up the Soviet Union were held together by the commodity necessities made up by their integrated military and civilian commercial markets.

Chapter 2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Stalin era changed not only the spirit of Bolshevism but the face of the Soviet Union into an authoritarian and paranoid pattern in his own image. With Lenin and the original party cadre allowances such as nationalization efforts eliminated by the end of his administration, the Central Committee and the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, or SSR, generally resumed their imperialistic assimilation of other member states under the dialectical guise of the international revolution. In sad betrayal of the ideological bedrock of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian, and Baltic populations suffered in several critical aspects of life and personal freedom. This thesis sets out to prove that the Soviet regime consciously meddled in these nations' cultural, economic, and political realms to its benefit and worked to eliminate local systems of identity and agency and replace them with those with Russia as domineering hegemon. This thesis aims to provide insights on how these three metrics were intrinsically and purposefully targeted and limited by controls by the Moscow kremlin and the various courageous actions taken by national parties to combat these imperialistic attempts at forceable assimilation.

Soviet leadership suppressed Ukrainian as well as other national identity in three particular ways, through the siphoning of their economy and productive output, diminishment of the Ukrainian language, and through centralization of national politics. Robert Sullivant notes in his book, *Soviet Politics and Ukraine, 1917-1957*, that Ukrainians were set apart from their Russian neighbors not only by cultural markers such as language, traditions, social dynamics, religion, but also economic development.¹²

¹² Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 6.

Though Ukraine had a seat at the United Nations, that did not mean that it had sovereignty. This historiography will serve to document the ways in which their autonomy and perceptions of identity were put under siege by Bolshevik machinations. In 1953, the Party Central Committee stated its mission to bond and ingratiate Ukraine to Russia:

The Ukrainian people, who have sprung from a single root of the ancient Russian people, are bound with the Russian people by unity of origin, geographical proximity and a common historical development and have constantly struggled for unification with the fraternal Russian people... The Ukrainian people, threatened with annihilation, struggled constantly against the oppression of foreign enslavers.... The inviolable and eternal friendship of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples and of all peoples of the Soviet Union is a guarantee of national independence and freedom and of the flowering of the Ukrainian people's national culture and prosperity, as well as of other peoples of the Soviet Union.¹³

American policy analyst Joseph Overton at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy defined the spectrum of public responsiveness and tolerability to their respective government's actions and behavior the *Overton Window*.¹⁴ Introduced in the 1990s, this proverbial window signified practices that polled safely and were sufficiently innocuous to the people at large and would not instigate a counter movement against those in authority. This was made as a warning scale to politicians who ought to remain wary of their constituents' acceptability of the social contract and their willingness to condone the ongoing status quo. In the case of the Soviet Union transitioning from previous tsarist modes of capitalist oppression, it was essential to keep on pace with the national litmus

¹³ Party Central Committee, USSR Council of Ministers and Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, On the 300th Anniversary of Ukraine's Unification with Russia. December 9, 1953. Current Digest of the Soviet Press. Vol. V, No. 49 (1954), p. 10.

¹⁴ Maggie Astor, *How the Politically Unthinkable Can Become the Mainstream, Politics, The New York Times*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/26/us/politics/overton-window-democrats.html>.

test of perceived financial and moral responsibilities in the wake of such redefining actions.

To this same point, Alexis de Tocqueville surmised, “The most perilous moment for the bad government comes when it tries to mend its ways,” so too did the Soviets need to consider any possible revolts or complications arising from its various subjected member states should they implement reforms.¹⁵ This case for governments draws important boundaries for self-conceptualization of the individual. Jung theorized that the impetus of individualism and personal growth followed what they feared the most, driving the psyche to alleviate ongoing and future conflict. The psychological *anima* acts as a soul guide presenting itself, for example, as Beatrice chaperoning Dante upwards to Paradise after his prerequisite sojourning in Hell in *Dante’s Inferno*.¹⁶

Warning signs that the Soviet Union was in a legitimacy crisis came in several forms after the closure of the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany and the beginning of the Cold War. The succession crisis that faced many Eastern European satellite nations signifies two undeniable aspects of civil life after World War II. First, that the Soviet Union was the dominant power in the region and was unable to calm tensions and provide solutions to various ethnic, class, and social problems which plagued the countries now under their control. Then secondly, that when the once sovereign peoples realized that the new hegemon was unwilling to grant them the level of autonomy and freedom they aspired to, would resort to force and power dynamics to see its vital

¹⁵ Georgiy Mirsky, *On Ruins of Empire: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Former Soviet Union* (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 7.

¹⁶ Robert A. Smith, *Owning Your Own Shadow: Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 93-94.

interests safeguarded. The countries of the Eastern Bloc were considered assets and would be suppressed to never become vulnerabilities of the broader Soviet government. As a matter of discourse, by the time military intervention was necessitated to prevent the fomentation of separatist movements, Soviet policy had already failed to create a cohesive and equitable polity from the top levels to the lesser incorporated and local communist councils which ultimately had the most impact in daily life.¹⁷

Providing solutions to these impacts on the village, provincial, national, and federal levels of bureaucracy is rarely as simple as listening to the people and instituting reforms, as Tocqueville had warned. John C. Campbell illustrates in his introduction to Sarah Meiklejohn Terry's book *Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, that to heed the suppressed groups' calls to action for greater national sovereignty or individual agency was to potentially invite the figurative wolf at the door of every authoritarian government into the home and threaten their maintenance of control.¹⁸ This path runs the gambit of agitating several specters which came to haunt the Soviet Union such as economic stagnation, civil passive resistance, as well as outright violence from organized and irregular partisan groups.

Despite the party brass's reassurances in the thousands of official proclamations and many party congresses, no leader outside of brief soothing moments of clarity during the crises constituted of the 1956 death of Stalin and 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had provided more transparency in their policies of *glasnost* than their mere commitment to building toward *scientific socialism*. As seen throughout the long

¹⁷ Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, *Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 1.

¹⁸ John C. Campbell, *An Overview*, in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, *Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 2-3, 14.

history of Kremlinology, or the study and observations of the Kremlin and broader Soviet leadership, directing a nation or group of nations as large, diverse, and often misaligned as the Soviet Union often had general secretaries and other party officers steering and then subsequently reversing the ship of state. Mikhail Suslov proclaimed there to be several *universal laws of socialism* but really orthodoxy to Marxist-Leninism often took various forms depending on the nation in question. He asserts that the primary bond that united the various nations of the union together following their integration in the aftermath of the Second World War is not enlightened judgement or rational practicality but power, as asserted through the strength of arms found in the Red Army and fear of detention by security forces.¹⁹

¹⁹ Campbell, *An Overview*, in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, *Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 14-18.

Chapter 3
REAPPLIED IMPERIALISM, SOVIET NATIONAL POLICY, AND THE NATURE
OF BOLSHEVISM

Seventeenth Century Polish political philosopher Frycz Modrzewski wrote that the power bestowed unto kings was established so they may better protect the happiness of the people and that they, in equal measure to peasants, are beholden unto the law which is just and fair.²⁰ This idea formed the social contract of monarchies around Central, Western, and Northern Europe in a fashion that did not latch hold in its Eastern regions. Russia, as the self-ordained protector of Orthodoxy and the Soviet Union as the champion of international communism, considered itself exempt from needing to concede such restrictions as the absolutist leader or party's welfare was the same as the welfare of the state. Both entrusted themselves, one through divine monarchism and the other through Marxist historicism, as the manifestation of the notion of common utility; the force through which gave them the imperative to pursue the interests of the common good of the state even by force if need be. This discourse was falling out of vogue in Europe by the dawn of the Enlightenment but continued to draw breath through its world systems theory Wallersteinian model of the semi-periphery east.²¹

The Russian Empire, which was the spiritual precursor to the Soviet Union's expansionist ambitions, drew its lifeblood and glory years from the Tsardom under Peter the Great in his years after the battle of Poltava in 1709 when his armies routed the rising power of Sweden's Charles XII and marked the moment that the Russian banner firmly

²⁰ Francis Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1962), 536-537.

²¹ Thomas Richard Shannon, *An Introduction to the World-System Perspective* (New York: Perseus Publishing, 1996), 7, 15-17, 33.

spread into Northern Europe. This victory was a vital component of the empire ending its era of *splendid isolation* from the rest of the European world with immediate implications for the peoples living by the Baltic Sea and signal a renewed push to the Black Sea.²² Heralded by the westernization reforms began by his father Alexis and his own brother Fedor along with the Ivan IV's dream of empire, he pursued international Anti-Swedish alliances such as those with his supplicant state of Poland, Denmark, Holland, and Brandenburg where they serviced his interests and tempered peace with the Ottoman Empire securing Taganrog and Azov both on the Black Sea coast in 1700. Successively during his reign, Peter I would take Livonia, Estonia and Finland, thus securing the Baltic Sea and the Bay of Riga which allowed Russian ships to traverse the northern expanse for the first time and safeguarded St. Petersburg, an enshrined naval policy that would live on in the defensive planning of the Red Fleet. By the 1720s Peter returned his gaze to the Caucasus, a region that had undergone innumerable Russification efforts. These practices, termed *obrusenie* in Russian, were utilized numerous times through history such as the nineteenth century policy to *feed the Caucasus* by funding and encouraging Russian immigration to the *near abroad*. Georgia, Armenia, and the Khanate of Baku making up modern day Azerbaijan were claimed by the newly crowned emperor guaranteeing control of the Caspian Sea and with this his successors, including his Lithuanian born wife Catherine I and eventual benefactor Catherine II, inherited an empire poised to turn its attentions to Ukraine and the interior of Eastern Europe.²³

²² Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization*, 525, 529, 531.

²³ Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization*, 533.

Francis Dvornik places the Ukraine that modern historians would begin to recognize in the middle of the 1600s. For much of its history Ukraine had been a borderland region between the Polish-Lithuanian and Russian Empires, experiencing demographic transitions over time from periodic imperial expansions. The Cossacks, an ethnically diverse group speaking a Turko-Tartar language, populated the areas around the steppes and Crimea as well as around the Don, Dnieper, Oka, and Volga riverways. They were hired out as small regiments by local Ukrainian warlords in Kiev and Cerkasy to patrol and serve as border guards, but also by Polish-Lithuanian and Russian nobles to supplement their own armies and became known as *registered Cossacks* enjoying many privileges in the military and subject status.²⁴ By the seventeenth century, they became increasingly entreated by the emissaries of the Greek Phanar and became staunch supporters of Orthodox Christianity and the regional Ukrainian lords known as *voivodes*, and helped to fend off the *Polish enslavement* in the conflicts against Polish Catholicism.

By 1654, Muscovy reached a pact with the hetman of the Central Ukrainian Dnepr Cossacks known as the agreement of Pereiaslav which saw the majority of their number swear loyalty to the Tsar of Russia. This alliance greatly facilitated Russia's push into Ukraine and began the long line of Russification campaigns to hold onto the region which held major economic and strategic importance for the empire. This expansion came against the Polish who claimed possession of the territory after the Union of Lublin in 1569 and planted many uniquely cultural and political distinctions there as consequence of the republic's governorship of the ethnic Slavs, Jews, and Poles which

²⁴ Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization*, 470-473, 476.

called this place home.²⁵ By the middle of the eighteenth century, Cossack and Ukrainian elites were becoming increasingly admitted to the circle of Russian nobility and Little Russian College to train as administrators and officers. The autonomy and small liberties enjoyed by the Cossacks and other *Little Russians* came to an end when Catherine II reached the throne in 1762. By 1775, the Cossack military hosts were formally integrated into the Russian army and by 1785 the registered Cossacks were transformed into state owned peasants. Ukrainian peasants were reduced to serfs to make profits for the lords who owned their title and the Ukrainian clergy were incorporated into the broader scheme of Russian Orthodoxy.

The Soviet Union, through the language of Marxist international relations theory, applied a similar claim upon its closest neighbors as its tsarist predecessor did before it. This methodology, rooted in the denial of realist or liberal policies of state conflict or cooperation through international agencies, and conflicts with the Weberian world view by placing social and economic factors paramount in the development of global politics.²⁶ The Marxist theory of international relations strives to emancipate global workers from ties to capitalist states that would otherwise work within the theory of wealth and resource accumulation to deprive weaker nations within the global mechanism of historical sociology.

The role of Soviet ideology since its coalescing under Stalin was to create a façade of national equality and socialist solidarity under a common form of government

²⁵ Andreas Kappeler and Alfred Clayton, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 61-68.

²⁶ Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson, *Historical Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 230-231.

and messaging even if tensions and differences of opinion were rippling under the surface. In doing so it was a matter of national interest to ensure a level of satisfactory minimum decorum of cooperation and a maximum level of opposition that could be witnessed by the public. This palatable aesthetic of intermutually beneficial collaboration was not without its successes. The same hand that bound the Eastern Bloc together in the form of the military industrial complexes in the eastern member countries, besides enhancing the military position of the greater whole, it provided a destination for commodities generated from its western states. Though given direction from Moscow the partner-nations within the Soviet Union largely spoke in one coherent voice during votes at the United Nations, and perhaps most importantly grain, steel, and coal and gasoline producing compacts that increasingly exported to the West had a diplomatic line of credit to offload debt onto, ensuring first and second world interdependence.²⁷

Jeffrey Mankoff of the U.S. National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies, while touring to promote his book, *Empires of Eurasia: How Imperial Legacies Shape International Security*, set a clear definition between his study of land and sea-based empires. He touted that among the pivotal declinations between the inheritors of vast Eurasian imperialistic terrestrial empires including Russia, without access to colonial settlements alleviated their needs of acquiring supplicant peoples and additional aggregate labor by means of *internal colonization*.²⁸ This was practiced by Tsarist Russia stretching westward and with the second Serfdom starting in the 16th century, where large portions of those under their yoke were reduced to near property

²⁷ Campbell, *An Overview in Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 23-24.

²⁸ Jeffrey Mankoff, interview by Brian Whitmore, May 4, 2022, *The Power Vertical*, Charles T. McDowell Center for Global Studies, Arlington, TX.

status to be directed by nobles. The Russian Soviet Republic, carrying the baggage of the old regime, was a revisionist state which cast its regional hegemonic influence over swaths of peoples with the claim of being successors to a greater and golden historical culture to justify and unify a multiethnic conglomerate. Additionally in this thread, Russia in what Immanuel Wallerstein called the semi-periphery, did this with their ethnic groups cast as the *great Russians*, Ukrainian *Malorosy little Russians*, and Belarusian white Russians. For centuries, it has been commonplace for the Kremlin to proclaim Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians as, “... one people- a single whole.”²⁹

This culturally defining view lends itself to the cultivation of Eurasianist schools of thought led by Petr Savitsky and Nikolay Trubetskoy in the early 20th century who believed that Russia had a special path, an Eastern European model not unlike the German Sonderweg, that propelled it to meet its multiethnic and multiconfessional nature.³⁰ These thoughts resurfaced again under Lev Gumilev in the Khrushchev years in which he argued that ethnic Russians and other peoples of the Soviet Union shared a, “common spirituality, psychological identity, and mutual sympathy” that distinguished it from the West and Jews alike. These ideas have given rise to neo-Eurasianists like Aleksandr Dugin, who in the 1980s wrote on the conception of *compatriots with a common fatherland*, where Russia maintains an organic link to such populations even from outside the borders of a traditional state-nation. Further, the confines of the Russian world are not contained by simple cartography or self-identification of the people, but by broad culture and political orientation to encompass, “not only ethnic Russians [russkie],

²⁹ Jeffrey Mankoff, *Empires of Eurasia: How Imperial Legacies Shape International Security* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 30.

³⁰ Mankoff, *Empires of Eurasia*, 39.

not only Russian citizens [rossiyane], not only our compatriots [sootechestvenniki]... [but also] émigrés from Russia and their descendants. It is also foreign citizens who speak Russian, study or teach it, [and] all those who are sincerely interested in Russia and care about its future.”³¹

In K. Tobolov’s comments in 1933, *On National Cadres*, he details the Soviet Leadership’s experience and confusion toward the stubborn persistence of nationalism in the United Union of Socialist Republics. He shows hesitation concerning the repatriation of portions of class-alien holdovers from the old regime such as national bourgeoisie, clergy, and intelligentsia. Of particular interest to this historiography of Ukrainian national suppression is Tobolov’s pronouncement that, “The thing to do is to wage a resolute struggle against the ideologically alien elements among the old national cadres and simultaneously to persist in the work of reeducating (under the fire of proletarian criticism) their more progressive and better section.”³² Bluntly stating the Bolshevik adherence to Marxist orthodoxy, this commitment against disunity and in flagrant opposition to the national intelligentsias from Ukraine and other neighboring countries, foreshadows treatment of future dissenters.

Tobolov’s decree echoes the opinions of Stalin and other party ranking members and claims the Revolution had to use bourgeois specialties in the foundation of the early economy and state apparatus. National cadres were particularly afflicted as they had no reliable proletariat centers to populate the party’s ranks, and the regions’ old guard Bolsheviks were seldom popular figures for their tendencies toward *Russian chauvinism*.

³¹ Mankoff, *Empires of Eurasia*, 40.

³² Rudolf Schlesinger, *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia: The Nationalities Problem and Soviet Administration* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1956), 212-222.

Robert Sullivant and Yaroslav Bilinsky collaborate Tobolov's statement that Bolsheviks had a difficult time popularizing themselves with non-urban Russian working masses. However these nationalist remnants of the tsarist regime were littered with non-working-class members of the intelligentsia, clergy, and other fixtures of the former regime that were now employed until a properly indoctrinated labor force could be cultivated.³³ Tobolov likened many of these *national-bourgeoise* figures as *fellow-travelers*, national-democratic sympathizers who got swept up in the fervor of the turbulent years of post-civil war Russian Empire, but few were certified party members and were mostly seen as temporary stopgaps by leaders in the political bureaucracy.

For the purpose of national preparedness, Soviet doctrine was that it needed to make leaps and bounds to catch up to the West before it was trounced by the capitalist war machine. Ostentatiously political and social decisions were made on the basis of national and socially equitable competition and survival but in practice imposed authoritarian controls to every part of life. At its heart, the strength of Soviet political power comes from the ability to influence and control society. Sullivant considers the maturing relationship between Soviet national policy from a system of national cooperation to one of a centralized superstructure with power over nearly every aspect of public life.³⁴ An example of Lenin's distrust of common citizens' judgement of who had not been educated on party rhetoric, Tobolov surmises that the national cadres should be retained until the working-class groups could be brought into the Bolshevik fold. These *fellow-travelers* occupied central positions of industrialization, collectivization, as well as

³³Schlesinger, *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia; the nationalities problem and Soviet Administration*, 212-222.

³⁴ Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 1, 6, 65.

cultural mechanisms across the Soviet Union, but if these national cadres were ever to buildup to communism they would first need to be expended and their positions given over to loyalists. These signs of national and cultural backwardness such as class disunity, village mentality, resistance to early Bolshevik imposition of the temperance movement, as well as others could be amended but only through efforts such as those preached by the Communist Party.

In 1917 Lenin wrote two of his most formative works that would shape the development of the revolution and the power structure of the nation born from it. In *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power* and *State and Revolution*, he made his stance objectively clear: for the *dictatorship of the proletariat* to succeed it would need to entrench itself and act by the homogeneity of any other dictatorship.³⁵ The proletarian dictatorship would not be a relaxation of power, but rather state consolidation of power away from other institutions. Only the socialist organs of the state could be entrusted to hold the reins of power and therefore its capabilities of coercion needed to be centralized. Lenin regarded the focus of Soviet democracy to be, for an undetermined length of time, socially engineering the people in the practice of absolute democracy while the dictatorship ran the state and made the pivotal decisions as the Hobbesian national sovereign. These lessons came at a time immediately after the people of the Russian Empire had suffered a gauntlet of war losses ranging from their unsuccessful participation in the First World War to the Russian Civil War. Soviet demographer Boris Ulanis estimated the former to have incurred three million casualties mixed between

³⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Civil War as a Formative Experience*, in Gleason, Abbott., Peter. Kenez, and Richard Stites, *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 57, 62.

military and civilian losses and the latter to have cost seven to twelve million, mostly distributed among civilians.³⁶ After these numbers it becomes abundantly apparent how the revolutionary Bolsheviks were able to appeal to the deep trauma on the Russian mass psyche with their promises of peace and bread to garner public favor.

Historian Stephen Cohen wrote the Bolsheviks, unlike their moderate socialist counterpart the Mensheviks, did not have the numbers or support among non-Russians or agricultural rural villagers to independently control socialist doctrine. In reaction, Lenin steeled himself with the determination that should he take power the party needed to retain it until the work was done. This self-conscious nature as an embattled vanguard of true socialism became a mainstay of the Soviet regime for decades and was returned to when the party's grasp on power was second guessed as tentative, giving rise to the military-soviet culture that Stalin rode on the winter coattails of.³⁷

The Cheka secrete police and their successors the NKVD after 1922 and the KGB after 1956 to the collapse of the Soviet Union upheld a mechanism of terror and intimidation to strip unsympathetic public elements of their autonomy and agency. Armenian Bolshevik Stepan Staumian considered that before the revolution could be complete, the party would first need to instigate tallying and liquidating of those who could be afforded a future in the new republics and that civil war to be the same as class war. Nickolai Bukharin supported this sentiment levying, "Proletarian coercion in all its forms, beginning with shooting and ending with labor conscription, is... a method of

³⁶ Fitzpatrick, *The Civil War as a Formative Experience*, in Gleason, Abbott., Peter. Kenez, and Richard Stites, *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, 62-64.

³⁷ Fitzpatrick, *The Civil War as a Formative Experience*, in Gleason, Abbott., Peter. Kenez, and Richard Stites, *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, 64.

creating [a] communist mankind out of the materials of the capitalist epoch.”³⁸ This militarist approach that many of the formative revolutionaries held dear in the 1910s to until they themselves were largely purged by Stalin in the 1930s was a weight bearing tenet of the conversion from *korenizatsiia* styled inclusionism and the rise of war communism.

Korenizatsiia, a Russian word meaning indigenization or nativization, was utilized by Lenin as his policy of placing ethnic non-Russians in charge of their republics where once they were traditionally dominated by Russian imperialists. The Soviet Union has the distinction of being amongst the largest multiethnic empires to have ever existed, and in its prewar years it took careful precautions to spread the power of leadership amid the multitudes of peoples given they obeyed the dictations of the communist party. After 1950, a majority of indigenous populations in an administrative capacity for the national government became the standard over non-native peoples. In 1989 79% of Ukrainians played a role in their state and local governments, as well as 67.6% of Uzbekistanis, 89.3% of Georgians, 93.8% of Azerbaijanis, 50% of Kazakhstanis, and more than 50% of Moldavians.³⁹

Peter Holquist, a Cornell University history professor, took particular interest in the intentions of Soviet surveillance and state terror as a tool of suppression to override individual agency. In his work *Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work: Bolshevik Surveillance and its Pan-European Context* he delves deeply into the newly unsealed Russian archives, freshly opened to outside eyes. He cites Robert Gellately and

³⁸ Fitzpatrick, *The Civil War as a Formative Experience*, 59, 66.

³⁹ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 4-6.

Zygmunt Bauman who wrote that rather than using the broad powers of the burgeoning domestic monitoring agencies such as the NKVD, or the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, to discover the roots of popular sentiment to better satisfy the population or keep the people under control, but instead to cultivate a mode of behavior through this harsh form of Foucauldian biopower. To this extent Gellately and Bauman state, "Surveillance [is] not intended to garner public opinion or popular data, but to sculpt and 'garden' society's human material into a more emancipated, conscious, and superior individual- the New Man."⁴⁰ Holquist sees surveillance as a larger part of the apparatus the Soviets used to dominate and rule the people as the government sought to control new populations that the political elite manifested into being, not merely control territory.

Russian stately entities were unlike any other of their age in the collection and utilization of public mood data. Holquist holds Bolshevik Russia in this esteem for their labored institutionalization of such varied and powerful surveillance agencies. By the 19th century, the Tsarist army was the largest magpie of public sentiment in the world, intercepting soldiers' mail by 1915 they sorted through over thirteen thousand letters through the field postal censorship office and categorized through the French Bertillon system of filing every two weeks until the revolution in 1917. The early Soviet Cheka monitored counter revolutionary activities and the NKVD after them expanded to accumulate interviews with members of the public on individual political leanings and neighborly reports. Under this system, information passed through the public and stately

⁴⁰ Peter Holquist, *Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work: Bolshevik Surveillance and its Pan-European Context*, *The Journal of Modern History* no. 69 (1997): 417, 419-421.

membrane in two clearly defined and protected directions, from the authorities to the people and from the people to the appropriate division of the authorities.⁴¹

Workers, celebrated through proclamations of their contributions to production quotas and symbolized in the quintessential agricultural and industrial aspects of the hammer and sickle itself, seldomly attained the class power that they were promised during the revolution. Increasingly they were reduced to rigid and replaceable *robotniks*, derived from the Russian root word for work *rabotat'*, and treated as biomechanical laborers whose toil was meant to be expended by those entrusted with political powers. Workers were molded through the prism of Soviet constructivist ideology throughout their upbringing or indoctrination in the education system, military service, or community lectures and promised that the fruits of their labor would go to create *socialist realism*. Hegel taught through his *Master-Slave Dialectic* that by the slaves' or workers' necessity to survive they needed to recognize not only their own anthropologic role in society but also that of their oppressors. Through this, in a sense, he believed that they are even more liberated than the masters.⁴²

The glorious celebration of labor took on a new form in 1929 with the Soviet first Five-Year Plan and the introduction of the highly regarded class of worker called shock workers, or *udarniki*. During the Russian Civil War, they were workers who performed particularly dangerous or essential tasks but were later reshaped to be people who went above and beyond to complete and surpass their production quotas. By 1929 twenty-nine

⁴¹ Holquist, *Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work: Bolshevik Surveillance and its Pan-European Context*, 426, 435, 438.

⁴² J.D. Feilmeier, *Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic: the Search for Self-Consciousness*, *Writing Anthropology*, Central College, 1992, <https://central.edu/writing-anthology/2019/07/08/hegels-master-slave-dialectic-the-search-for-self-consciousness/>.

percent of laborers qualified for this onerous recognition, but with constant honorific media campaigns and social shaming for those who did not meet demand, by 1930 the proportion rose to sixty-five percent.⁴³ These workers often were rewarded with cash prizes, vacation time off and travel permits, increased commodity stipends and allotments, and other desirable commodities and advantages. Later by the second five-year plan production push of 1935, the Stakhanovite movement again purportedly rocketed socialist labor to greater heights for their contributions to the state. Named for Alexei Stakhanov, an ethnic Russian miner working in Kadiivka located in eastern region of Ukraine, he was mythicized for his background as well as time and cost-efficient tendency to exceed his work quotas and those who carried this title enjoyed many of the same benefits as shock workers including greater social status, barracks housing, and privileges along with recognition from the communist party.⁴⁴

In his book, *Magnetic Mountain*, Stephen Kotkin refutes a number of revisionist Marxist historians who lauded the USSR as an affirmative action empire whose Soviet ideology fell to totalitarian interpretations. Focused around the steel and iron works located at Magnitogorsk, Russian for iron mountain, Kotkin fascinatingly explores the role of the workers as subjects thrown into the carnal house and hall of mirrors that is social engineering through Soviet policy through the lens of language and discourse. These titles were desirable ways for ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union to achieve great heights that they would not have possibly enjoyed during life in tsarist Russia. This *peasantization of the workforce* brought millions of once disenfranchised land-locked

⁴³ Lewis Siegelbaum, *Shock Workers*, Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, Michigan State University, <https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1929-2/shock-workers/>.

⁴⁴ Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 198-199.

peasants into the labor pool of state businesses and industries, giving them an opportunity to participate in local politics, managing practices, but most of all earn a consistent wage.⁴⁵ Though this process was seen by many revisionists as proof of Soviet uplifting the peasants from their toil in the dirt as serfs to members of a new prejudice-free Soviet aggregate workforce, Kotkin accentuates that what they miss is how in twenty years of Bolshevik rule the finally class-conscious Soviet worker was molded into some of the most domicile laborers in the world. Their social identity was transformed against their interest through Stalinist discourse rather than repressed under Stalinism.

Kotkin provides the example of Gubaiduli, a Tartar elected to chairman of the Soviet in the Tartar republic, whose newfound freedoms and rights came at a personal and political cost. Through words that may not be entirely his own but the sponsored words of a media spokesperson, Gudbaiduli says:

I am a Tartar. Before October, in old tsarist Russia, we weren't even considered people. We couldn't even dream about education, or getting a job in a state enterprise. And now I'm a citizen of the USSR. Like all citizens, I have the right to a job, to education, to leisure. I can elect and be elected to the soviet. Is this not an indication of the supreme achievements of our country?... In 1931 I came to Magnitogorsk. From a common laborer I have turned into a skilled worker. I was elected a member of the city soviet... I live in a country where one feels like living and learning.⁴⁶

Kotkin emphasizes that besides Gudbaiduli's ability to speak satisfactory Russian to communicate with party bosses and receive his education from if he attended a graduate level program, what truly propelled him socially upward was his willingness to *speak Bolshevik* or use the dialectic words that would be expected of a self-actualized,

⁴⁵ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 199-200.

⁴⁶ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 221-222.

well behaving socialist. By showing his willingness to publicly broadcast the Soviet identity game, he is a model citizen to his community and deserving of his leadership position. Speaking Bolshevik became nearly second nature to nearly the entire population for everyone at Magnitogorsk because they were reliant on the state for the core pillars that supported their livelihood, namely services, employment, and protection, the cost of which was ideological loyalty.⁴⁷ The party became their life as much outside of normal working hours, from an expectation to volunteer for extra shifts or participation in *mitingovschina*, or a meeting fetish where they were able to be monitored and exert a mandated enthusiasm for their work.

Perhaps one of Kotkin's most impactful passages on pressures put onto workers is found in a letter between Anna Kovaleva, the wife of the leading locomotive driver in the municipal factories, to Marfa Gudzia, the wife of one of the least well performing train drivers. In its contents Anna chastises Marfa openly for the community to witness and implores her to find a way to make her husband put forth a better effort and meet the Stalinist identity blueprint and become a shock worker. Whether Anna did this for genuine care of Marfa's situation or because it was allowed in the public sphere is of no importance, Kotkin says, "what was necessary was that she recognize... how to think and behave as the wife of a Soviet locomotive driver should."⁴⁸

According to Michel Foucault the powers and privileges that a subject can yield in society are a direct relation to the force and rights that they may exercise in the political system. By this metric essentially all actions can be interpreted as gestures of

⁴⁷ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 222.

⁴⁸ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 220.

power relations, and their potency and or reliability may serve as a guide to measure the subject or the group the subject belongs to standing in such a society.⁴⁹ Shock workers and Stakhanovites represented a public symbol of the Soviet worker within the union countries, and as such were compensated with additional benefits that other more average citizens did not receive. Anna Kovaleva's letter to Marfa Gudzia was both an act of power that her husband's position as a shock worker afforded her but perhaps most important to her social standing, a display of her *speaking Bolshevik* to safeguard her family's position in the order of things in the public landscape were everything is remembered.

Though highly scrutinized and distrusted, Ukrainian nationalism and other nationalisms continued to exist through civil and political means after consolidation with the Bolsheviks. From this position, in the 1920s to the mid-1930s decrees were issued to not only relax but reverse Russification efforts enacted under the Tzar in favor of *korenizatsiia* local nativism efforts. However, concurrently in the late 1920s Stalin increasingly became apprehensive of approving Ukrainian Communists to high party or government positions in the Ukrainian SSR.⁵⁰ Through the centuries, Russians were encouraged to immigrate to Ukraine and to other peripheries of the former Russian and now Soviet Empire by the thousands for economic and social benefits. Termed as living *near abroad*, these Russians served to interject Russian culture and influence into Ukrainian demographics and to fill skilled positions.⁵¹

⁴⁹ James Henry Harris, *Black Suffering* (Minneapolis: 1517 Media Fortress Press, 2020), 74.

⁵⁰ Roman Szporluk, *Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union*. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), 9.

⁵¹ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 145.

Through the exertion of Russian demands over the Soviet Union, Ukrainian politics became an extension of the Central Committee's power. The concept of nationhood continued to perplex and dissatisfy Soviet leadership for decades with little progress made one way or the other. Believed to be a vestigial remnant of the bourgeois system that came before, it faced wary gazes after the cessation of *korenizatsiia*. Sullivant remarks that this sentiment was simply stated in Stalin's speech at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1921, that "the isolated existence of separate Soviet republics is unstable and impermanent in the view of the threats to their existence presented by capitalist states... [and his espousal of an *intimate state union was*] the sole road of salvation from imperialist serfdom and national oppression."⁵² The soviet socialist republics would interweave their economies similarly as they have their politics and those given over to grain production such as Ukraine would support and be supported by another specializing in railcar or aviation production such as in Latvia. In an effort to ensure the loyalty of Ukrainians as other periphery nations, Stalin was apprehensive approving ethnic Ukrainians to positions of authority in the national Communist Party or other government positions.⁵³

The year 1933 marked a turning point for nationalist movements in the periphery Soviet Republics at the federal and oblast levels though there were resurgences in 1934 and 1937. The Stalinist Party purges of 1934 to 1938 left an indelible mark on the development and maturation of the international Bolshevik apparatus. Ukraine's nativization programs were left stunted until after the death of Stalin in 1953 and did not

⁵² Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 66.

⁵³ Roman Szporluk, *Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union*, 9.

find another centralizing figure after Skrypnyk until the appointment of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine Petro Shelest in 1963. Azrael illustrates how important this figure, who had been politically active and reliable since 1918, was to Ukrainian identity since the reconsolidation performed by Khrushchev from 1953 to 1958. He successfully combated dips in domestic representation in the national communist party, reaching a 65.1 percent majority while making up 74.9 percent of the population compared to the overrepresentation of 26.6 percent Russian party minority despite maintaining only 19.4 percent of the population in 1968.⁵⁴

Shelest often remarked that the Ukrainian Social Democratic organizations had played a pivotal role in the formation of the Bolsheviks and used it to remind Moscow that Kiev was, “a charter member of the organization, not simply a passive recipient of party-political status.”⁵⁵ He combated the deprioritization of Ukrainian political development in favor of the All-Union agenda.⁵⁶ Representative of his internal work to promote Ukrainianization from within the establishment, Shelest approved the publication of several volumes of *Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedias* until his dismissal in 1970 which helped shape the historical memory of his nation. In 1962 as well as subsequent editions, he rehabilitated the posthumously slandered Skrypnyk as well as other Ukrainian cultural artists and members of intelligentsia.

The Ukrainian Central Council, or Rada, governments inception after the dissolution of the Russian Empire was the largest step forward for Ukrainian

⁵⁴ Jeremy R. Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), 120-121.

⁵⁵ Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, 123.

⁵⁶ Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 216.

independence since their inception into the Russian sphere of Influence.⁵⁷ By June 1917, the leadership of this institution became increasingly stocked with WWI war veterans and those returning from exile gravitating toward more radical elements willing to risk more to secure national autonomy, steering away from compromise with the Russian Provisional Government and vying for territorial independence. By the time the February Revolution migrated across Russia's western borders, Ukrainian army groups once wholly integrated into the Russian army, became emboldened to for the first-time issue widespread communication in their native language and have a present hope for *zemliachestv* principle of territorial origin independence, even if under partnership with the Petrograd Soviet based in Saint Petersburg as a separate and unique faction.

An overwhelming feature of the Interwar Estonian State Assembly, known locally as the Riigikogu, was the largely divided nature in which it functioned until it received a centralizing cause in 1924. By order of the first Estonian constitution, for an act to pass to become law it required approval from the prime minister and all branches of his government which was a tricky feat considering that during these years it was constituted by a near even split between leftist and rightwing parties.⁵⁸ Between 1918 and 1933, an astounding total of twenty-three different administrations held office. On December 1st, 1924, at the behest of the USSR, communist members of the Estonian Communist Party instigated a coup to overtake key government buildings around the capital of Tallin expecting a resurgent reinforcement from the urban workers of the city. This however did not materialize and in recourse, the leftist parties lost the broad support of the polity and

⁵⁷ Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923*, 53-56.

⁵⁸ Walter R. Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 1st ed. (Washington D.C: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996), 17.

international relations with the Soviet Union were severely dampened until the early 1930s when instabilities present in the government structure again left the nation paralyzed between supporters advocating for deeper relations between the emboldening clamor of the USSR and Nazi Germany. For fear of rising protofascist parties such as the League of Independence War Veterans which were expected to win the presidency in 1934, the caretaker prime minister Konstantin Päts instigated a preemptive coup d'état to rest power between his office, the National Front party which he led, and the army which lasted until the Soviet occupation of Estonia in 1940. Between 1939 and 1945, Estonia would lose approximately 20 percent of its population to war, forced deportation by the Soviets who targeted the intelligentsia and political activists and Nazis who particularly targeted the nation's Jewish residents, or war losses drafted to supplement the Axis powers in the form of the Baltic SS Legions or army detachments.

In a classic case of *zugzwang*, a chess term for a situation when a player is obligated to make a move during their turn even if it puts them at a decisive disadvantage, Päts wrestled with decisions throughout the 1930s that put him and his nation in the sights of the USSR, which was ousted by Germany in 1941 before being retaken for nearly fifty years in 1944. In 1940 the Soviet Union pressured the Baltic States into signing the Pact of Defense and Mutual Assistance which allowed the Red Army to garrison soldiers throughout the region, with 25,000 troops being placed in Estonia. In declining health, Päts acquiesced to every Soviet demand but was still accused by Stalin of breaking the pact, leading to the installment of a pro-Soviet government later that year. The reemerging Estonian Communist Party, with only 150 registered members, took the state positions of power and quietly deported Päts along

with other leaders being sent throughout the Soviet Union or killed.⁵⁹ Päts would not recognize his unlawful removal from office and as a warning to others would fruitlessly see his final years after imprisonment in a Soviet sanitarium, his listed psychiatric illness being the illusion of being the president of Estonia.

As was the case for other Baltic States, the majority of those who made up the International Movement of Workers in the new Estonian Soviet Republic were ethnic Russians, and new Russian language requirements were instituted for all national service workers. The country would remain firmly under Soviet control until 1991, though there was constant agitation for independence such as the 1989 movement made by the Estonian Citizens Committees which registered 700,000 members demanding that only pre-war citizens could make laws for the country to wrangle power away from the growing Russian émigrés.⁶⁰

The rest of this chapter takes aim at the distinctive qualities of Bolshevik communism and how it functioned in order to maintain the order required to operate the USSR. It was born of the peasantry's hardships shouldered during the First World War, the Russian Civil War, and the bondage of serfdom before it. The masses who emerged from these events desired a government, even one in the format of the Hobbesian Leviathan, that would look to their needs and not those of their spoilt noble classes who did not represent their values and looked upon them as sources of labor and income. Lenin and his circle of trusted revolutionaries became the loudest voice, rising over those of the liberal democrats and the Menshevik socialist faction who drew their power in the

⁵⁹ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 18.

⁶⁰ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 22.

Transcaucasus regions, through their appeal to immediate and violent revolution.⁶¹ These epicurean appetites were satisfied by the aesthetically rich and sensationally feverous dogma of Russian futurism.

An excellent methodology to study Marxist-Leninism as well as the ideologies that formed in its wake is through the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. Bolsheviks used mass media propaganda, first in the public spaces where they gathered and orated as revolutionaries and later the massive media and cultural organs of the state, to sway swaths of the people to their side and cultivate a legitimate aura of leadership about themselves.⁶² This school of thought was developed because of the rise of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany, but it equally applies to the rise of other such forms of government that have matured since the technology of the twentieth century have allowed them such ease to peddle their doctrines. The Bolsheviks expertly utilized the public sphere to preach their professed ideology and promises of systematic labor and wealth reform to a polity that was addiment for any sort of alleviation to their plethora of national problems, but much of the intention behind their rise was to turn state industries and institutions to their own aims. The censorship and publication houses, the military, the judicial system, as well as education curriculums and domestic policy were appropriated by the party to garner increasing shares of political and public opinion. The private and public roles of individuals such as Lenin and Stalin and the apparatchiks that came after them corrupted their uses of power and placed too much unbridled influence away from the public,

⁶¹ Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, 30, 71, 75.

⁶² Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 54, 56, 58, 158, 246.

regressing the country back into feudal constructs and away from horizontal models of checks and balances with the leadership and people.⁶³

Lenin encouraged class unity over nationalistic, ethnic, or religious ties to unite the proletarian revolution considering anything less from the Russian liberal parties nothing more than bandages upon a broken system. His post-1914 speech on the *Question of National Policy*, proclaimed that the country was already in a “scarcely concealed state of civil war.”⁶⁴ The government and elites were guilty of using *pogrom methods* of warfare to divide and collectively rule the diverse peoples of the Russian Empire through fear and chauvinism to the Russian majority. The established monarchist landed elites such as like Prince Vladimir Meshcherksy and Russian ultranationalists like Vladimir Purishkevich used their publishing houses to great effect setting the working people upon one another because they had no real intention of solving their problems. Lenin prompted that the aggregate numbers of the *subject peoples* of the Russian Empire made up fifty-seven percent of its total population, questioning the validity of Russian hegemony and the topical differences between average citizens. Through his speeches, he denounced Russia as a *prison of nations*, seeking to hold its constituents together through bondage rather than enlighten them through empowerment.⁶⁵

The maligned bond of peoples that Lenin termed the *prison of nations* was described as a gestalt grotesque of nations enslaved to the Tsar and his highborn ilk who brought only greater woes through their hallow promise of enlightenment and

⁶³ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 85, 90-91, 142, 156-158, 238.

⁶⁴ *Lenin's Collected Works: On the Question of National Policy*, volume 20, pages 217-225, 1972, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Russia, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/apr/06b.htm>, 2.

⁶⁵ *Lenin's Collected Works: On the Question of National Policy*, 2.

utilitarianism. It carved away at the national integrities of the countries that it brought under its throes and carved away slivers of their integral cohesion through Russification of its language and institutions until it no longer possessed the strength to resist. These actions created tighter relations between the *Great Russians* and those who found themselves under its *internal colonization* efforts. When considering the truth represented in this term I am reminded by the classical Roman idiom *corruptio optimi pessima est*, or corruption of the best is the worst.⁶⁶ Simply put, this phrase is a conceit that when the most powerful in society, those who have the obligation through their Hobbesian social contract to be the most just and deserving of the literal and metaphorical crown that they wear, fall to corruption or self-interest the society that they govern falls under serious straits.

The Tsars of the Russian Empire fit this crime, as their extravagant luxuries were that of legend even among other European monarchies, but Lenin and his cadre of revolutionaries did as well through their false-hearted promise of equitability and liberty in a worker-run socialist state where instead one form of repressive saturnine state replaced another. They are repeated through John Quinn, a seventeenth-century English writer's proclamation, "If we will not be governed my God, we must be governed by tyrants", which were shaped by his Quacker upbringing.⁶⁷ This syntax inspires a view of Soviet history through the prism of a sort of Hobbesian *Leviathan*. Penning this world-famous book during the English Civil War of 1642 through 1652, Thomas Hobbes

⁶⁶ John Barczynski, *PAS# 8: Corruptio Optimi Pessima Est*, John Barczynski's RCL Site, Sites at Penn State University, October 22, 2014, <https://sites.psu.edu/johnrcl1415/2014/10/22/corruptio-optimi-pessima-est/>.

⁶⁷ John Quinn, *Quotations by William Penn*, Independence Hall Association, ushistory.org July 4, 1995, [https://www.ushistory.org/penn/quotes.htm#:~:text="If%20we%20will%20not%20be,must%20be%20governed%20by%20tyrants."/](https://www.ushistory.org/penn/quotes.htm#:~:text=).

believed that the normative state of nature of man is war and anarchy and the only alleviation to such treachery was the implementation of a sovereign whose primary responsibilities was guaranteeing social order to ensure internal and external defense as well as safety to its subjects. Guarantees of such a defense that provided for a status quo to pursue industrious and commercial opportunity and alleviation of natural state of war between every man and his neighbor through the leader's peace would have been an attractive promise to war-torn Eastern Europe.⁶⁸ The Soviet construct of the leviathan aspect of the sovereign has several carryovers as represented in chapter eighteen, *Of the Rights of Sovereigns by Institution*, which outlay twelve indivisible privileges the leader holds to ensure their power.

Through Bolshevik convalescence this paradigm would be conceived of the assembly of people making up the governing body of the commonwealth, or Council of Soviets, as charged with supporting the leader in his duty to enact laws and safeguard the constituents against themselves. The first right of the sovereign is to hold that no future covenants replace the one that elevated the leader to his or her position of power as that would break the will of the people.⁶⁹ In this mirror the dictatorship of the proletariat was firm and the establishment of the directorship of the party was protected by the commissariat and other state-affirming institutions such as the defense services. The fourth and fifth rights of the sovereign behold the leader to be above reproach of the polity because the power of the crown comes from elected law and if the order of the law is upheld there can be no injustice against the leader for doing his duty. By this same

⁶⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Las Vegas: Independently Published, 2020), 50.

⁶⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan* 74-75.

statute, the fifth right iterates that the sovereign can punish the subject but not be punished himself as the citizen forces the hand of state that the sovereign is the main motive force of.⁷⁰

Rights six and seven outline that the leader is charged with the ultimate instruction of protecting the peace, judging the legitimacy of doctrines, and making the rules that govern and set boundaries onto the subject.⁷¹ The leader may appoint magistrates or other government officers to assist the office of the executive with the functioning of the state, and through these powers be granted vast controls over the people. Through the ability to enact rules onto citizens, the sovereign is sanctioned with informing the public about what rights they themselves may enjoy along with the Foucauldian actions that they may perform to exercise their autonomous power relations in society. The boundaries of power bestowed unto the Soviet leviathan were vast and encompassed all aspects of civil life, however being laden with responsibilities of enlightened absolutism only allowed the Bolshevik regime to better provide for their own interests under the guise of serving the people.⁷²

Lenin stated that Russian liberal parties such as the Constitutional Democratic Party Cadets and democratic-republican nationalists like Purishkevich shared common ground on the fundamental questions of national policy, even though they professed alignment to opposing ends of the political spectrum. The liberal parties, by failing to realize that the state was structurally irreparable whether the power rested on the throne or in the current Duma, could not be trusted to serve its constituents because it was not

⁷⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 75.

⁷¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 76-77.

⁷² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 77.

willing to dismantle the established systems of oppression which corrupted all it touched.⁷³ Fyodor Kokoshkin, key founder of the Cadets and elected the controller general of the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, drew the increasing ire of Lenin upon obtaining power for siding with the policies of the tsarist Ministry of the Interior which he had previously agreed committed unsanctionable offenses against the empire's populace. Until the average Pole, Balt, or Ukrainian advocated for the equal rights of Jews throughout the territories and vice versa, Russia had nothing more holding its distant extremities of its core and periphery together other than the cruel chains of state and inertia.⁷⁴

Kokoshkin and the Cadets had a more traditional rational of liberal government than Lenin, and more in line with the Tsarist Ministry of the Interior. He believed that, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," meaning that the state was created for the utility and protection of the people and not the people for the state. Lenin and the succeeding Bolsheviks aimed to demonize the more liberal parties, and in doing to, destroy any competition that might challenge their interpretation of the intent of government.⁷⁵ In his articulation the Russian and fomenting Soviet leviathan needed to be wary of elastic formulas based on the authorization of self-determination for nationalities in the former Russian Empire and to allow the people too much insight into the operation of government could lead to the disintegration of the state when it was not held together by *Great-Russian liberal-bourgeois* nationalism.⁷⁶

⁷³ *Lenin's Collected Works: On the Question of National Policy*, 4-5.

⁷⁴ *Lenin's Collected Works: On the Question of National Policy*, 5.

⁷⁵ Schlesinger, *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia; the nationalities problem and Soviet Administration*, 212-222.

⁷⁶ Schlesinger, *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia; the nationalities problem and Soviet Administration*, 215-220.

The Bolsheviks, namely Lenin, Nikolai Bukharin, and Georgii Piatakov, posited the capitalist's feudal state existed to subvert the will of the people, and only their futurist utopian model could only be trusted to be explored with their reeducated hands at the tiller. Piaktakov believed that once the proletariat had risen to the fore and seized power, national self-determination became an irrelevant factor of the "fictitious national will" created under modern capitalist and early socialist society.⁷⁷ Lenin, still in the early days of fomenting *korenizatsiia*, used the public support for nationalism as a *masking ideology* to unite the people in a way that party rhetoric had thus far had issues accomplishing. However, unlike for example the relationship between one of Russia's historic rivals Sweden and its amicable relations with Norway after the dissolution of the Swedish Empire, the relationships fostered by Russia were largely compulsory in nature and thus stymied the growth of intermingled common interests by voluntary ties. This sort of control seeped into social, economic, and legal aspects of common day-to-day life.⁷⁸ Soviet leaders had no intention of allowing regional and national leaders an opportunity to create their own individual interpretations of communism and instead promoted reformed Bolshevik ethnic party cadres, trained in the way of the soviet state administration to promote what Stalin deemed, "national in form [but] Soviet in content".⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2001), 2-5, 9, 13.

⁷⁸ *Lenin's Collected Works: On the Question of National Policy*, 5-6.

⁷⁹ Ulia Popova Gosart, *Soviet Affirmative Action and Contemporary Inclusion of Minorities*, Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, November 7, 2017, <https://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/rightsviews/2017/11/07/soviet-affirmative-action-and-contemporary-inclusion-of-minorities/>.

Russian futurism, shaped by Italian and German futurists, rejected traditional liberal forms of government and aimed to free the people of Europe from what it perceived as overlaid systems of the past in favor of a violent push towards an artistically modern constructivist future. This concept was a precursor to German national socialism and Russian Bolshevism in that all wished to remold society in the model of the machine, which after the planned overthrow of the old way of life, would center around a collective society that serviced the state. They often symbolized the automobile or aeroplane as the epitome of scientific promise and a representation of a multitude of parts servicing the whole to achieve something previously thought as unattainable, such as manned flight. Italian futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti who in 1909 urged:

Let us leave good sense behind like a hideous husk and let us hurl ourselves, like fruit spiced with pride, into the immense mouth and breast of the world! Let us feed the unknown, not from despair, but simply to enrich the unfathomable reservoirs of the Absurd!.... We wish to affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed... [such as with a sophisticated well-built car] We wish to hymn the man at the wheel, who hurls the lance of his spirit across the earth, along the circle of its orbit... Except in struggle there can be no more beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece... We will glorify war- the world's only hygiene- militarism, patriotism, the destructive nature of freedom...⁸⁰

Marinetti rallied against moralism as well as traditional cultural and family dynamics that held back the powerful, if dangerous, unrelenting progress of humankind. Nothing was above sacrifice upon the altar of this progress, not the familial nuclei unit in favor of the collectivist structure, religion, or the sanctity of life itself. Many Bolsheviks in the 1920s to 1930s saw the allure of Futurism to be the replacement of existing bonds that held so many in economic destitution, ethnic oppression, or other means of

⁸⁰ F.T. Marinetti, *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism* and *The Variety of Theater*, in Umberto Apollonio, *Futurist Manifestos* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 19-23, 126-131.

dispossession with the promise of *korenizatsiia* to alleviate their problems through common cause, but Marinetti's metaphorical *man at the wheel* left the movement open to strong man politics and the rule of the few. During World War I, socialist movements across Europe and North America relied heavily on war veteran armistice movements, but this is merely another example of how Leninist Bolshevism guised itself in populist tropes to appeal to the masses without care of the desires of the people. If an expectation of the Soviet Leviathan was to secure peace and the defense of the nation after the conclusion of the war through peace and bread, given the events that followed, it was an unkept lie.

The Soviet Union's ruling elite had always been governed by their own version of communist political ideology to guide their thoughts and hands, however policies created under this school of thought evolved overtime and in response to the leader at the helm of state. Stalin never acknowledged the acute existence or delineation of *Stalinism* from the works of his predecessors. Robert Tucker cautions in his book, *The Soviet Political Mind: Stalinism and Post Stalin Change*, against the idea that Soviet doctrines were simply applied Marxist-Leninism. If ideology can influence policy then likewise policy can influence ideology, and in the case of the Soviet Union the demands of Bolshevik neo-imperialist policy were fashioned to resemble ideology. Stalinization is defined and mirrored by its correlating de-Stalinization after his death in 1953.⁸¹

Totalitarianism was a phenomenon that many Russian experts level against the era of Stalin and those of its other leaders. Bertram Wolfe wrote, "the Soviet government

⁸¹ Robert C. Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind, Stalinism and Post Stalin Change* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1971), x-xi.

had been established for more than a decade before Stalin... began to impose totalitarian controls upon it.” Hannah Ardent agrees and adds, “To change Lenin’s revolutionary dictatorship into a full totalitarian rule, Stalin had first to create artificially [sic] that atomized society which had been prepared for the Nazis in Germany by historical circumstances.” Indeed, the system of terror installed by and active within the Soviet regime was not the act of one man upon a living political structure, but instead was the combination group efforts of many apparatchiks within the party vying for control and cannibalizing the power of other assemblies and individuals.⁸² The revolutionary dictatorship and vanguardism of Lenin was replaced by the authoritarianism of Stalin and the replacement of true-blood Bolsheviks with Stalin’s appointees.⁸³ In fact, after Stalin learned that a sizable number of the original delegates from the 17th Party Congress voted against him in a secret ballot in 1934, within the next 3 years, 90% of them would be dead or in Gulag labor camps.⁸⁴

Over time and to vent the citizenry’s concern of losing the inalienable rights promised and sacrificed for during the revolution, Stalin made similar compromises akin to other steely leaders who practiced alternate versions of saturnine authoritarianism. He introduced policies to encourage democracy, *in the new way*, consisting of an admixture of dictatorship and democracy that stripped the political autonomy of the ruling elite while allowing for prima facia mass movements of national objectives.⁸⁵ To name a few of these new trials of democracy would be allowing workhouses to elect their leaders and

⁸² J. Arch Getty, Oleg Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1999), xiv.

⁸³ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 5-6.

⁸⁴ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 4.

⁸⁵ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 11-12, 152.

supervisors, even if only from a preapproved pool, or new systems of mobility between the socialist republics as will be discussed later. This constituted the basis of Lenin's *guided democracy* and *dictatorship of the proletariat*, which allowed for nonparty entities such as trade unions, youths, professionals, and other members of the public to practice under their own auspices while still directed by the guidelines of Bolshevism. Lenin termed these planned developments *transmission belts*, as they would eventually be used to shape nonpolitical groups, the largest of which being local councils and pre-October Revolutionary Soviets. These assemblages would eventually be molded into ordained mechanisms of the Kremlin. However, regardless of mass media and education campaigns, these local and municipal village governments remained one of the largest bulwarks in the Russian SSR as well as in its satellites to adopt policies that heavily favored urban and industrial workers.

Furthermore, the state and its approved revision of teleological history have long shared an adjoining stem that irreparably ties one to the other. If one were to fail, the other is structurally weakened without its most adherent defender.⁸⁶ Stalinism was defined by a revival in Pavlovian theoretical concepts meant to shape the practical application of soviet realism into society. In a rejection of positivism, until the middle of the 20th century, the Soviet regime under the Michurin-Lysenko metaphysical doctrines for the transformation of nature deemed that all drive for change came from the pressure of applied external forces. In this thread, for the backward villagers and nonpolitical citizens to change into ideal people of the Soviet Union, they would have to be directed

⁸⁶ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 49.

and acted upon by the benevolent powers of the state.⁸⁷ Therefore, this era became defined by the *denial of accidents* as each occurrence was not an instance of *partial unpredictability* but rather the outcome of outdated bourgeois policy by 1948. Lysenko, contemporarily known for his failed experiments into the Lamarckist method of breeding cold-resistant grain which led to the Holodomor as part of the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 claimed, “chance is the enemy of science,” in that every problem has an indivisible solution should the right practice be invoked.⁸⁸

Stalin’s last published work, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, remained close to preexisting formations of economic laws and policies, not desiring to rely on new adventurist tactics. His own externalized need to conform policy to objective processes independent of human will to eliminate choice and spontaneity was an attempt to create laws that he could control and use to behold onto others.⁸⁹ Engels, and through him Hegel, proposed that the enlightened political class would understand and advocate for this type of laws’ necessity in faster acting governments. This rationale sparked Stalin to strip governmental policies that saddled the people with if-this-then-that regulatory answers in response to of its ailments. Issues such as urban or rural lack of commodities necessitated more productive output or better logistical systems and did not represent a fault in the broader socialist system, but an apparatchik’s misappropriation of resources or duty. Stalin’s role as the Supreme Architect of Communism was to discover laws to attain mastery over objectively scientific laws and the independence of human will, to ford the historicism of nature and society.

⁸⁷ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 143-145, 147.

⁸⁸ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 147-149.

⁸⁹ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 148-149, 151.

There is a contradiction in Stalin's interpretation of scientific laws. On one hand, he insisted that technical processes were emulations of objective developments in nature and society completely independent of human will, but on the other detested any methodology that could be considered above his own. He wrote, "It is said that economic laws bare an elemental character, that the effects of these laws are inexorable, that society is powerless before them. This is untrue. This is a fetishizing of laws, the surrender of oneself into the slavery of laws."⁹⁰ He detested the notion of *slavery to laws* because he regarded his regime and himself as superior to such binaric Boolean interpretations of such codices, and able to peer into them and extrapolate their logic, subdue them, or attain mastery over them. The fetishization of laws eliminates the choice of spontaneity from Soviet economic development, which he deemed should be completely subordinated to the dictates of economic necessity.

The same intensity by which how Russian and Soviet imperialism clung to power is how these systems throttled the stability that supported their rule. By acting upon these tenets Russia afforded itself to primarily behave domestically and internationally through the political policy of hard power, forcing those in its circle to act according to its desires through the overt threat of force. The West inversely achieved its greatest aims in the modern era when it operated by soft power, or when it utilized its capacity to levy support and ply its citizens and other state actors in ways they would not have otherwise willingly condoned through the application of economic, political, social, or other means of persuasion. Max Brooks of the Modern War Institute at West Point exemplified this point through his statement that since World War II, the United States armed forces has

⁹⁰ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 148.

had two different forward-facing aspects. The first is the standard military with armaments and hitting power, but most importantly this is followed by the rear echelon divisions with medical supplies and food stuffs for cooperating and surrendering formerly hostile civilians and combatants.⁹¹ As in the case with Germany and Japan after the Marshall Plan, America has achieved its war aims by turning foes into friends and rebuilding their nations with liberalized governments that objectively worked with its broader neo-liberal international coalitions and organizations to win over hearts and minds.

On the other side, the Soviet Union only found success facilitating any coordination with other European communist nations that it puppeteered for the *common utility* after using the brute force of the Red Army in the aftermath of the Great Patriotic War. Chairman Mao Tse-Tung of the People's Republic of China, which after the conclusion of the long Chinese Civil War ceased being a straight up-and-down reliable partner to the Soviet Union, wrote in his *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* that without the People's Army the people intrinsically have nothing. This approximates the level to which hard power and stripping individual agency played into safeguarding the doctrines and structure that such institutions built their relationships upon. The same thought can be applied to the Soviet condonements of freedom of speech and journalism. One of the most pervasive strikes that the West took into the Soviet Union was not made by rockets but by Radio Free Europe in 1979. This made traditional totalitarian regime grand scale information lockdowns impossible for anyone in Eastern Europe who owned or knew someone with access to a civilian radio set, in a region quickly filling with

⁹¹ Max Brooks, Interview with Dan Carlin, February 5, 2022, *Hardcore History: Addendum Podcast*.

educated and self-taught MacGyver engineers and a traditional proponent of such communal-styled media contraptions. Such information blockages made coercing its people easier in the short term but also hamstrung them in the long term by taking away the civil capacity to self-correct the ship of state through peaceful means, only putting more weight onto the haystack of the before mentioned Overton Window.⁹²

In her book *The Human Condition*, Hannah Ardent shrouded her premise around the *vita activa*, which is a term she coined for the combination of the active life of labor, work, and action. She agrees with Foucault that without the subject's capacity for political action, life carried very little potential for dignity. Furthermore she argued that the need for labor is a constant necessity for human life, as it did not create anything permanent but rather commodities such as food and steel which could be expended and exhausted. By confining human existence to the role of biomechanical workers, the Bolsheviks' argument for control is ultimately revealed as empty, gradually leading to the rise of movements advocating for national independence.⁹³

Once a minority group has been *othered* they no longer feel like a part of the political community that would otherwise keep them acting as part of the socio-economical Saidian symphonic narrative harmony that the state draws on to maintain its power. The bonds that hold other groups from resorting to resistance no longer hold them and the basis of their law-abidingness is compromised.⁹⁴ Marcus Aurelius similarly emphasized the importance of understanding the intrinsic nature of things.⁹⁵ By limiting

⁹² Max Brooks, Interview with Dan Carlin, *Hardcore History: Addendum Podcast*.

⁹³ Hannah Ardent, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 8, 179, 241.

⁹⁴ Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and Ukraine*, 2.

⁹⁵ Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, vol 1*. Translated by A.S.L. Farquharson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), 25.

the human experience to labor alone, workers who were largely excluded from the political class could only transcend their circumstances through acts of defiance, just as much as their oppressors were limited to being authoritarian brutes—a contradiction that undermines their overarching narrative. In addition to the abhorrence of work-slavery, Ardent argued that confining laborers within this never-ending cycle of survival and depriving them of agency was equally significant, akin to imposing chains on their very essence.

Chapter 4
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RUSSIAN SPIRIT THROUGH LITERATURE AND
MINORITY IDENTITY

Nineteenth-century French sociologist Émile Durkheim suggested that societies tended to recreate the spirit of their constituents as a manifestation and reproduction of themselves, uniquely taking form as government and culture. Through his term *Sui Generis reality*, which he coined as a reality particular to the mind of its subject, he postulated that it was given form by the coalescence of the public's consciences into a synthetic reality that is formed from the sum of its parts like a cultural ship of Theseus. No individual subject acts apart from the others and there is no group-mind or circuit complex, only the broad recreation of the Overton Window, accepted traditions, and systemic dialogues of the subject.⁹⁶ This chapter is intended to demonstrate the inward retreat that many widely taught Russian literary classics encouraged as an escape to the repressed lives of commoners and why Russian citizens have abided governments that stifled their liberties and pushed top-down views onto the people of the Russian and Soviet empires.

Many renowned Russian writers from the 19th Century icon Fyodor Dostoevsky to Soviet author Boris Pasternak set their stories around a unique word in the Russian language, *toska*. Meaning a complex flux of emotions drawing upon the roots of spiritual or emotional longing or melancholia from which the subject is not directly able to divine the source, *toska* conveys a sense of singular aching loneliness, existential turmoil, or feeling of missing something which the individual strives to but cannot obtain. It is vastly explored through a diverse ensemble of mediums ranging from art, music, and literature,

⁹⁶ Paul Carls, *Émile Durkheim: 1858-1917*, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://iep.utm.edu/emile-durkheim/>.

and its depths are investigated as a touchstone to understanding the human experience for traditional Slavic culture. Many influential works of Soviet literature took the form of self-published and unapproved *samizdat* that had to be produced and read in secret, internally banned and foreign published *tamizdat*, and state-published and circulated *gosizdat*.

Though Yevgeny Zamyatin's book *We* was banned in the Soviet Union when it was first penned in the 1920s, he was able to publish it when he fled to Paris in 1931. He remarked it was because it held that the most critical problem that faced rational societies in the modern world was the ability to reliably retain an individual's original creative personality.⁹⁷ *We* illustriously tells the story of bland conformity under a totalitarian government where most life's decisions are made for the people by the government that limited their daily liberties, and had to be smuggled into the country if people wanted to read it. Inversely, Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* was written in but banned throughout the Soviet Union where the author continued to live for the rest of his life. It was only published outside the USSR, marking it as a prime example of *tamizdat*.

The Bolshevik perception of history was the ideological antithesis of Leo Tolstoy's, who recounted his views on history among his touchstone attributions to Russian identity since the nineteenth century. Where he proposed that history was simply the approved, biased vantage points of power relations and events by influential authorities documented by historians, Soviets internalized Marx's temporal pendulum structure with Lenin's exclamations of imminent international apocalyptic or blissful revolution. Those of Tolstoy's flock believed history was not the end result of strong

⁹⁷ Eugene Zamyatin, *We*, Translated by Gregory Zilboorg (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1924), vii.

figures or creeds, but rather the unpredictable results predicated on the innumerably varied results and powers held by those who could wield control and justify its basis.⁹⁸

The old guard Bolsheviks held that history, previously written by those promoting bourgeois interests, was more properly an analytical affair made of the telling of social and class relations. If the working class desired the perpetual peace that would follow the last capitalist derived war, then it had to collectively empower the Soviet peripheries and core. Isaiah Berlin understands Tolstoy, as touched by his Hegelian upbringing and anti-transcendentalism, and proposed his self-determinism along with the dour falseness of history thusly:

Historicism of his time doubtless influenced the young Tolstoy as it did all inquiring persons of his time; but the metaphysical content he rejected instinctively, and in one of his letters he described Hegel's writings as unintelligible gibberish interspersed with platitudes. History alone – the sum of empirically discoverable data – held the key to the mystery of why what happened happened as a deed and not otherwise; the other history, consequently, could throw light on the fundamental ethical problems which upsets him as they did every Russian thinker in the 19th century.⁹⁹

In comparison, the works of Dostoevsky were held in higher esteem by the standardized Soviet educational system. Writing a few years before Tolstoy in his novel, *Notes from Underground*, he critiques the Russian Nihilist movement for their shortsighted willingness to condemn and isolate themselves from society to pursue an existence of *rational egoism*. Nihilists such as Nikolay Chernyshevsky, one of the most frequent targets of Dostoevsky's ire, wrote that the only genuinely normative trait of rational human beings was to focus one's energies and attention onto themselves. In a narrative directly in contrast with that of Bolshevism, he

⁹⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (New York, Viking Press, 1978), 39-40.

⁹⁹ Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, 29-30.

proposed forsaking the community at large as incapable of providing the life satisfaction that individualist freedom promised over one spent serving and attending others. In this work, Dostoevsky's main character known as the Underground Man is written with hyperbolic characteristics of his own Jungian persona, imagining a retired and secluded civil servant, combating the outside world and the dysfunctional people that populate it. Joseph Frank postulated that this fictional crass and unfavorable hermit both accepted the nihilistic dismissal of free will, but rejected their amoral handwashing of personal and communal responsibility for the flaws that go unabated.¹⁰⁰

The Underground man proposes that people think that what they want out of life is happiness, but this is not true. People want themselves to believe that they are individually unique characters full of free will, but this in fact leads to many of society's problems. By example of his own seclusion, he argues "the best thing one can be, is true to thine own self. Whether on opinions of villainy like Lefitte, or in creating 'sublime' works of material art."¹⁰¹ He himself is not truly happy but he is content with his personal freedom given to him by the luxury of rarely leaving his home. He was a minor government administrator and has seen the variety of people in civil service as well as in the general population, and he has found the only way to live is by disregarding the constraints of civility in social life and only reflecting inward.

¹⁰⁰ James Scanlan, *The Case against Rational Egoism in Dostoevsky's "Notes from Underground,"* Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. 60 no. 3 (July 1999): 549-550.

¹⁰¹ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, translated by Constance Garnett (Las Vegas: Rusalka Books, 2020), 20.

Many of Dostoevsky's narratives contain motifs of a degrading and unjust society where the people in them represent allegories of moral decisions and psychological ideas ranging across European and Christian thinkers as diverse as Frederick Nietzsche or the biblical Epistle of James.¹⁰² Themes of Russian Orthodoxy played a commanding role in many of Dostoevsky's novels, and no less so in book two of his collection of stories, *The Brothers Karamazov*. In Chapter 4 titled, *A Lady of Little Faith*, he introduces a frightened elderly woman who has lost her faith in God. Katerina Khokhlakova, an overall minor character in the narrative who plays the role of an unsympathetically cold and light comic relief character with a marginally emphasized Ukrainian name, visits Father Zossima who is a leading elder in a village monastery. She laments that she has come to question the canonical belief of life after death but exclaims to not go as far as to say that she doubts the existence of God. She claims that she is a transactional believer, and that she would perform any duty of self-devotion no matter how difficult for firm proof in an afterlife, though she has not exercised this practice for fear of rejection and ingratitude from those she helps. This committal is read as bluster on her part to gain the attentions of the priest and persuade him to assist her.¹⁰³

Father Zossima, Alexei "Alyosha" Karamazov's teacher, advocates that the madame can regain her confidence through charitable actions, loving her neighbor and

¹⁰² Nicholas Notabene, *Dostoevsky's Lady of Little Faith: A Kierkegaardian Interpretation*, Nicholas Notabene: *Some Thoughts on Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky*, November 24, 2013, <http://nicholasnotabene.blogspot.com/2013/11/dostoevskys-lady-of-little-faith.html/>.

¹⁰³ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Project Gutenberg EBook of The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Feb 12, 2009, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/28054/old/28054-pdf.pdf/>. p.62-65.

looking after humanity as much as she does herself. For the Epistle of James as well as Zossima, the emphasis of a righteous life is on consistent action. Zossima tells her that it is better to accomplish many small acts that would help her community than it is to wish to do a major feat that she may not bring herself to truly do, if something as peevish and independent as ingratitude can turn her away from her goal. Ambitious plans larger than our ability to fulfill them hold societies back from accomplishing the attainable achievements that we can do to make every day better, and it is through a lifetime of these actions that would regain her faith in God.¹⁰⁴

Similarly in conception to the previous example of Madame Khokhlakova, Dostoevsky's book *Crime and Punishment* centers on an impoverished student in Saint Petersburg named Rodion Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky suggests that Raskolnikov's story instigating crime, to murder an elderly woman and steal valuables from her apartment pawnbroker business, is a symptom of a broader condition. In contrast to a utopian equitable society, the setting where *Crime and Punishment* takes place is festooned with cases of misery and people needing to support themselves or their families through proceeds gained by unlawful, immoral, or at the very least scandalous acts of crime and desperation. Raskolnikov has allusions of what fellow nihilist Nietzsche would in later years deem his *great man theory*, where leaders come forward when they are most needed and that these extraordinary men have the right to transgress against their ordinary contemporaries because by nature of their greatness, they are not held back by submitting to the rule of law.¹⁰⁵ Though this plot is met by dire mishaps and begins his

¹⁰⁴ Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 63-65.

¹⁰⁵ Christoph Schuringa, Review of *Nietzsche and Dostoevsky: On the Verge of Nihilism* by Paolo Stellino, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 48, no.2 (2017): 308-313. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jnietstud.48.2.0308/>, 310-311.

epic spiral downwards, through the profits gained from this murder of Alyona Ivanovna he planned he would only have eliminated an *insignificant person* and may now go on to live his life and support his friends and family as he was always meant to.

Raskolnikov reflects on the society that he finds himself a part of and ponders why so many people have metaphorically fallen through the gaps as are doomed to an existence of mere substance living. Crime is a manifestation of the turmoil and inadequacies in an unjust community, but for most unfortunates changing one's surroundings is an untenable desire. Through Durkheim's *Sui Generis*, since societies recreate themselves and even influential leaders are incapable or unwilling to form a government that properly accounts for the needs of the people, he proposes:

Human nature is not taken into account, it is excluded, it is not supposed to exist! They don't recognize that humanity, developing by a historical living process will become at last a normal society, but they believe that a social system that has come out of some mathematical brain is going to organize all humanity at once and make it just and sinless in an instant, quicker than any living process! That's why they instinctively dislike history... The living soul demands life, the soul won't obey the rules of mechanics, the soul in an object of suspicion, the soul is backward! But what they want, though it smells of death and can be made of rubber, is at least not alive, has no will, is servile and won't revolt.¹⁰⁶

This heavy-handed constructivist interpretation of the role of government and its polity led to perceptions of endless, vain, and difficult deprivations of Soviet life. Apathy fomented resignation in the Soviet spirit due to fatigue of ceaseless worker mobilizations and glacial civilian quality of life improvements left most with unfulfilled portions of their lives in a hollow attempt to remedy it through Zhdanovism. The brainchild of Andrey Aleksandrovich Zhdanov who sat as the Second Secretary of the Communist

¹⁰⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (Las Vegas: Independently Published, 2019), 141.

Party of the Soviet Union until his death in 1948, the Zhdanov Doctrine was the cultural policy argument that life under the Soviet system was to experience true democracy free of Western imperialism. A prime example of *gosizdat*, *Kultura i zhizn*, meaning *Culture and Life* magazine, was first published in 1946 with Zhdanov as the founding editor-in-chief. Remaining in effect until 1953 with the death of Stalin, this push to revitalize the new *Soviet Man* was a reaction to address certain leading factors of resistance against Stalin's externalization policies to explore new formulas and certainly not a reexamination of its goals. Searching for the illusive *formula for man*, Andrei Zhdanov became a figurehead for nationwide conditioning and pacification campaigns that swept the accessible public.¹⁰⁷

If rural peasants, non-Russian citizens, or the people of the Soviet Union at large did not respond well to Soviet policy, then it was perceived there was an inherent issue in the people with a corresponding need of political education. Besides using the magazine to square off against his political opponents such as Georgy Malenkov, Zhdanov first targeted Ukrainian historians and intellectuals who resisted Russification attempts to censor their national publications.¹⁰⁸ Under this doctrine any ideologies, histories, sciences, or most other things of note were limited or rewritten to cut cultural ties with the West. To raise morale, the only debates encouraged in the Soviet Union were between socialist systems and practices framed to range between good and best in the world.

This selective and politicized upbringing has left its mark in Russia as a collective nostalgia for the Soviet age when the country had an undeniable claim as a world and

¹⁰⁷ Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind*, 151-152.

¹⁰⁸ Hahn, Werner G. *Postwar Soviet Politics: the Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation, 1946-53* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 47-48.

civilizational leader. The future was unabashedly clear and if not at least bright, then progressively better. John Koenig terms this nostalgia *anemoia*: a sensation of inaccurate remembrance that is embellished through the years and generations until the truth is unrecognizable from perception. In Imperial Russia freedom of the press was strictly not permitted and publications such as the St. Petersburg based *Northern Bee*, the first Russian private daily newspaper, was heavily edited to get by the government censors and which earned it the ire of higher-minded thinkers such as Alexander Pushkin. This mode of politically driven and biased mass media system was continued by the Soviet *Pravda* or *Iskra* publications. These newspapers, meaning truth and spark respectively, tell the story how swaths of people, collectively known as *vatniks*, were manipulated to believe a false truth or act against their own interests given centuries of controlling the narrative. Oscar Wilde prominently said of the conflict in Northern Ireland that, “the problem is the English can’t remember history, while the Irish never forget it”, but similar dogmatism can be said about Russians and those who came under the shadow of the great European eastern bear.¹⁰⁹

Thomas Hobbes considered memory and imagination to be interconnected and stem from the same source. He relates that just as the sun eclipses the stars, we still remember what they were even though the former has removed the latter from our vision. We are still able to imagine the stars, though perhaps long spans of time may have passed since we have seen them and our imagination of them may ebb, the place where their qualities are stored in our minds is what he considers to be the basis of memory. From

¹⁰⁹ Allison Morris, *Words Matter in this Place, as does the Need to be Diplomatic*, Opinion, The Belfast Telegraph (May 2022): <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/allison-morris/words-matter-in-this-place-as-does-the-need-to-be-diplomatic/41701248.html/>.

this when we compile several memories onto one another we begin to form an experience, and from this logic historical memory and cultural identity may grow.¹¹⁰

In his book, *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said advances the concept that oppressed people need two simultaneous identities, one private-facing and the other visible to the public to survive in an imperially subjugated country. The former displays the subject's repressed identity in the colony and the latter as their perception of their native selves. He refers to these *discrepant experiences* throughout this work, but of particular importance to this thesis's motif comes from Chapter 3 in which he reminds the reader, "imperialism and its opponents fought over the same terrain, contested the same history."¹¹¹ The imperial force, in this case the Soviet Union, had a special interest in subverting national identities throughout the union to create a broader Soviet polity that through the taxonomy of Bolshevik dogma attempted to dissuade counterrevolution by arguing against its nature as a refurbished colonizing empire. Said makes note of this modern shift from an emphasis of colonialism to nationalism which reduces the aforementioned hybridized nature identity but still imitates the purpose of imperialism while replacing it with the verbiage of enlightened liberation. He writes, "This movement [away from the history of domination toward the actuality of liberation] resists the already charted and controlled narrative lanes and skirts the systems of theory, doctrine, and orthodoxy."¹¹² Through this effort, the Bolshevik party was able to strip cultural identity away from its non-Russian member states while still draping itself under the laurels of communism.

¹¹⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 2.

¹¹¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 199.

¹¹² Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 281.

Rashma Karklins confirms that life for non-ethnic Russians in the Soviet Union and its allied socialist republics was a contentious condition that required them to wear many layers of masks to have a hope of living in relative comfort. Her subaltern perspective provides an excellent counterpoint to the works of Petr Savitsky and Nikolay Trubetskoy with that from members of other national cadres.¹¹³ As stated before, given its grandiose size and breadth, the broader Soviet Union possessed among the, if not the quintessential, most ethnically varied empire of the modern age, but this does not mean that all people saw themselves first as Soviets. National and cultural identity provided the bedrock of individual civil preconditions and therein differentiated treatment and patterns of interaction in daily life. Though ethnic consciousness is often more difficult to quantify and is more subjectable than that of the national sort, citizens are nonetheless bureaucratically categorized in government survey and recordkeeping rosters for use in understanding represented demographics.

Karklins writes that outside of her work and that of Victor Zaslavsky, the topic of legal ethnic assimilation had not been investigated in the West or among Soviet analysts. The official documentation of the internal passport manifests a political promise left unfulfilled, as the bedrock of protecting ethnic identities within heritage national borders and the shining beacon of an *affirmative action empire* but also the bedrock on which inequity was built in the form of a hierarchy amongst member states and *Russian chauvinism*.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Rasma Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR: The Perspective from Below* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 22-23.

¹¹⁴ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 344-350.

Though nationality may seem a simple datapoint in most personal identification cards, application forms, familial histories, and job records, it also served a vital contingent of Soviet national policy or *natsional'nost*.¹¹⁵ National policy applied to rights of non-Russian minority groups and linked an ethnicity to the predisposed borders of their redefined homeland under Soviet interpretation. The corresponding impact ranged from the innocuous such as the government knowing which library books to order to which regions to deciding if an individual would be approved for residency outside of their country. Beside use for personal identification to authorities and tracking citizen whereabouts and movements, the Soviet internal passport was required for applications to educational institutions, jobs, marriage licenses, to request money orders from post offices, or even to receive pension payments and telegrams by general delivery, purchase a vehicle or tickets for transportation on credit, and many other occurrences found in daily life. Such checks and limitations on their freedoms acted as a soft power form of suppression in the public mind and demonstrated the broad power of the state as a regulatory device.

The internal passport, first applicable when the subject reaches the age of 16, was first instituted in 1932 and lasted until 1974 undergoing several rounds of revisions such as the eventual omission of social class, but the general idea of its construct remained the same. In the Soviet Union, the nationality assigned at birth is determined by that of their parents unless said parents are of different ethnic and national groups. In this case the individual may choose amongst his or her parents to decide what their identification would be, with their fate tied to this choice. Once a judgement has been reached it

¹¹⁵ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR: The Perspective from Below*, 31.

becomes impossible to change at a later date, thus in legal terms, nationality is absolute and an indelible characteristic of each citizen. Census data shows that, if at all possible, many individuals and parents would attempt to identify with a majority or dominant group because it would provide greater opportunities throughout the bearer's lifetime as was common in other multiethnic countries.¹¹⁶ Karklins notes and tracks the socioeconomic advantages presented to mixed children claiming Russian nationality ascribing a marked rise in Russian ethnic self-conception throughout the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic including Ukraine and Belarus but also having an inverse effect in the Baltics amongst non-Slavs.

¹¹⁶ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 32, 40-43.

Chapter 5

UKRAINIAN AND BALTIC BONDS TO THE SOVIET UNION THROUGH LANGUAGE AND FORCED CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Rasma Karklins follows the aforementioned benefits of claiming Russian ethnicity and national ties in the children of mixed families as datapoints to analyze determinants of self-identification. Documents from the Soviet Registry Office indicate that despite the aim of creating a broader community of Soviet people, claiming *Soviet* as a designated ethnicity was not possible. In response, many children were advised by parents to record themselves as Russian even if neither guardian claimed to be on their internal passports.¹¹⁷ One Polish girl in the 1950s or 1960s recalled being instructed by her grandparents to limit use of the Polish language outside of the home and to, “Forget our past, forget our relatives. It’s not safe. We’re Soviet, only Soviet,” in an attempt of Russification.¹¹⁸ This trend was more frequent than others for second generation children from the capital cities of Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova: Kiev, Minsk, and Kishinev. Studying this phenomenon, L.N. Terent’eva agreed stating, “the ratios in the choice of nationality in the capitals of the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSR are evidently influenced by ethnic kinship of the three Slav peoples together with the predominant role of the Russian language as the basic language of communication.”

These words are not to advance the argument that acts of resistance did not occur. In cases of one Russian parent and one territorial Ukrainian, the likelihood of children distinguishing themselves as the minority was lower than many other nations outside of Central Asia, but still in the 64 to 90 percent range of being pro-Russian. Estonia stands

¹¹⁷ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 36-37, 39-40.

¹¹⁸ Robert Gillette, *KGB Stifles Even Poetic Dissent*, *The Journal Herald*, 25 January 1983.

out as a nation with a high percentage of Russian speakers where citizens would make the political point of not speaking Russian and one Balt respondent to a survey on Russian aptitude remarked in 1979, “according to their character and views; the Lithuanians are for their independence and freedom [against the pressures of *Russian chauvinism*].”¹¹⁹

According to the 1979 census, ethnic Russians made up the largest portion of Soviet citizenry with 137 million people or 52 percent of the population. Ukrainians made up the next highest percentage with 42 million and Belarusians the fourth highest after Uzbeks. Though the majority of Ukrainians identify with the Eastern Orthodox Church, the majority of Western Ukrainians practiced Uniate Catholicism before forced unification of the two sects after World War II, representing one of the many schisms between the *Great Russians* and the *Malorosy*. Western Ukraine, including reconstituted regions seized from eastern Poland, was solidified after the Great Patriotic War against the Third Reich and was a center of anti-Russian separatist sentiment for generations waxing and ebbing as its borders shifted.¹²⁰

Belarus is perhaps the most sympathetic Slavic nation to the Russian SSR, aligning most heavily with the tabula rasa view of Eurasianism. The predominance of Eastern Orthodoxy, linguistic similarity, similarly aligned governmentality, along with their geographical and cultural proximity lent this nation most susceptible to assimilation as a junior relative.¹²¹ In most historical circumstances of the construction of the nation-state, such traditional approaches to conceptualizing identity have been the most defining characteristic of borders and sovereignty. The Soviet Union is among the few in history

¹¹⁹ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 29, 37.

¹²⁰ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 24-25.

¹²¹ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 41-42.

such as the Habsburg Empire and land empires of the Middle East where there is also a strong administrative contingent. The USSR operated on a system of differentiating citizenship from ethnicity and nationality in a political manner that flew counteractively in the face of the ideological new historical community of the *Soviet People* under the red banner. When it comes to categorizing nationality in surveys or in records there is a breakdown between two types of groupings: the first is ethnic self-identification whereas the second, important to nationality and documents such as the internal passport, is legal nationality. In cases of ambiguity both become relatively fluid concepts left to the individual when declaring to census takers, for birth certificates and interpreted culturally through the progression or adoptive family dynamics, consequences of war, attempts to shield oneself from targeted ethnic persecution, socioeconomic reasonings, or causes. Karklins states that approximately 90 percent of polled peoples accurately gave descriptions of their self-identity and nationality quoting the case of an Estonian citizen declaring, “the Estonians do not turn themselves [or their children] into Russians, they stick firmly to their own [nationality].”¹²²

Amongst the non-Slavic Christian peoples, most of whom are situated in the western regions of the Soviet Union, the Baltic peoples make up a key demographic. Possessing a long history of resistance to Russian rule since the time of Peter the Great, they have retained many significant cultural distinctions to remain from being drawn into Russification. They rebuilt their individual senses of national pride in the Baltic Entente from their years of independence spanning from 1918 to 1940 before falling victim to either incrementalist Soviet expansion in the form of falsified crimes against the USSR or

¹²² Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 35.

assurances from Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov in hosting Russian soldiers for *mutual assistance* in 1939. They have preserved use of a Latin alphabet in their native language with Estonian descending from Finno-Ugric root system with Latvian and Lithuanian traceable to Indo-European. Likewise, the larger margin of Estonians and Latvians are Lutheran while Lithuanians predominantly practice Roman Catholicism.¹²³

In Stepan Khmara's book, *Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R.*, he documents Russian Bolshevism's targeted attempts to Russify Ukraine's population centers and remove Ukrainian historical and cultural monuments during its time as an elevated Soviet Republic. In his discussion on ethnocide, he illustrates the domestic political relationship with Moscow as heavy handed in its policies and symptomatically unresponsive to criticism and reform. He provocatively makes note of an unaccounted-for discrepancy in the documented population of ethnic Ukrainians in its western provinces from the 1930s to the 1970s. The regime sought to shift the blame for the deaths suffered at their hand to the harrowing sum of tens of thousands, onto other causes. Soviet demographers claim the losses were suffered during and resulting from World War II, but Khmara demarks this region as being the center of several dispersed atrocities stemming from the Kremlin as well.¹²⁴ Famines struck this region twice, first in the Holodomor in 1933 then again between 1946 and 1947 costing millions of lives, and additionally 2 million ethnic Ukrainians were deported from Western Ukraine and resettled in Siberia between the years 1947 and 1951 where inhospitable conditions took its toll upon the young and frail. Perhaps most caustically he cites speeches given by *Kremlin Tyrants* at the Twentieth

¹²³ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR*, 25.

¹²⁴ Stepan Khmara, *Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R., Spring 1974: an Underground Journal from Soviet Ukraine* (Baltimore: Smoloskyp Publishers, 1976), 61-62.

Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that called for the *en masse* removal of Ukrainians from the USSR for similar dispersal in the Russian East by the “endeavors of the older brother”, had it not been for the fateful death of Stalin in 1953.¹²⁵

Between the years of 1945 and 1956, roughly 50% of all political prisoners in concentration camps across the Soviet Union were ethnic Ukrainians. An accurate litmus test for regional conditions and optimism for the future is birthrates, of which Ukraine suffered a one-third freefall from 1950 and 1969.¹²⁶ Khmara asserts that these attacks on cultural heritage represent the Soviet Union’s attempt to dissuade and remove the cornerstones of potential national rallying symbols.¹²⁷ Among the least trusted for their natural foreign influence or *othered* interpretations were Ukrainian Catholics and Jews. He evidences an anonymous letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations Kurt Waldheim to appeal the investigation of Soviet-Russian colonialism and ill-treatment at the next session of the General Assembly in 1973.

Similar suppression of identity was invoked in the Baltics. Latvia, a relatively small North European country with only 1,940,000 citizens in 1940, experienced 55,000 deportations between the years of 1941 and 1945 totaling nearly 35% of its population. 35,000 expulsions occurred in the first year alone making up this *year of terror*, many of which were constituted of the nation’s intelligentsia and other groups that the Bolsheviks deemed as provocateurs and undesirables. Many ended up in the countryside and other regions throughout the Soviet Union with many going as far as Siberia with the stated intention of demotivating local resistance to Soviet control as symbolized by the partisan

¹²⁵ Khmara, *Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R., Spring 1974*, 61-64.

¹²⁶ Khmara, *Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R., Spring 1974*, 64.

¹²⁷ Khmara, *Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R., Spring 1974*, 151-153, 160.

group the *Forrest Brothers* who camped throughout the many wooded areas, but also served to weaken national resolve and provide manpower to underdeveloped portions of the empire, it was also to clear room for immigrating Russians who settled into the Russian Socialist Republic bordering nation. During the roughly 50 years of Soviet occupation, with several interrupted years owing to loss of land to German forces during World War II, roughly 2.2 million Russian migrants moved to and found work in the Latvian SSR and drastically changed the demographics in an attempt to Russify the national culture. The affects and aftershocks of these intentions are venerated by the Occupation of Latvia Museum in the capital Riga:

As long as the roots of Latvian language and culture survive, there is hope that the nation will rise to re-establish its state. It is, therefore, important to understand that flooding the native population with foreigners dilutes the Latvian cultural environment, destroys the collective memory, individual self-confidence, and moral strength to resist. The Soviet regime tolerates only superficial elements of Latvian culture and traditions. People have to celebrate Soviet holidays [often overlapping with other important dates] and accept alien customs. Latvians must recognize the singular status of Russian language and deny religion. The younger generations must grow up in the spirit of communism. The Soviet regime condemns Latvian patriotism, like calling it *Bourgeois nationalism*. But ethnic Latvians do not yield, even when feeling like strangers in their own country.¹²⁸

Between 1935 and 1989, signifying several years before the looming invasion and false promises made unto the country and the years preceding independence, census data shows that the percentage of ethnic Latvians lowered from 75.5% to a paltry 52%.¹²⁹ This data also represents the Soviet forced deportation of several thousand Jews who historically resided in the country as an estimated 75,000 who were taken and murdered by the Nazis during the Baltics brief Axis pact during the war. Soviet army troops and their families constituted a large number of importees due to their previous indoctrination

¹²⁸ Wall Text, Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, Riga, Latvia.

¹²⁹ Wall Text, Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, Riga, Latvia.

into the tenets of Bolshevism, and over 20,000 would stay behind after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

To study how national policy was disseminated to the people, investigating official statements and practices within the non-Russian union school system until 1959 and all-union military structure since the end of World War II provides excellent examples. In general education and training with the level of instruction, classrooms in the Soviet Union were taught using regional languages in contrast to the armed forces in which Russian was the only official language used in commands and dispatches. Contemporary sociologists view the unitarian use of one dominant language over those of national languages as a symptom of modernization while language pluralists contend that safeguarding the use of domestic languages integral to state integration as well as positive relations between the various nations of the USSR.¹³⁰

August 1, 1923, the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee passed a resolution to enshrine domestic language into school curriculum and the state strata to elevate it from a tributary role within its own native borders. Nikolai Skrypnyk, the Commissar of Justice and Prosecutor for the Ukraine, denounced this manufactured national dependency on Russia as at the Eleventh and Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1922 and 1923 respectively, calling the republics' government administrations intrinsically poisoned and the groundwork for ultimate liquidation.¹³¹ He denounced the Russification in Ukrainian institutions through the appointment of ethnic Russians, especially present in practices of standardization for the Red Army. The cultural program passed by the Skrypnyk led Ukrainianization efforts

¹³⁰ Karklins, *Ethnic Relationships in the USSR: The Perspective from Below*, 101-102.

¹³¹ Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 67-68, 107.

saw the military replace all instruction in Russian with Ukrainian options including media publications such as the *Red Army* and *Red Fleet*. Unfortunately for nationalists and independent party members by 1933, after Skrypnyk was removed from office and purged for counterrevolutionary sentiment, they were denounced for aiding foreign enemies, supporting Kulak sentiments, and resisting Soviet culture in Ukraine and many of his actions were reversed.¹³² It became abundantly clear that any attempt for a republic to go down the path of national communism was to be deemed as akin to nationalist defection.¹³³

By 1938, the Cyrillization of national writing systems besides a select few culturally significant scripts was completed and Russian was once more made predominant over local languages. Jeremy R. Azrael in his book, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, takes a Russian sympathetic approach to looking at the growth of Russian language amongst Soviet Republics. He ascribes mixing demographics factors such as urbanization of the traditionally rural Ukrainian peasant class, geographic mobility, and interethnic group contact with political factors such as institutional requirements and job benefits. In fact, in 1970 the urban and rural distinction represented a nearly fourteen-point difference in Russian fluency as a second language.¹³⁴ He represents the progressive creep of linguistic Russification as an eventuality amongst the Republics west of Moscow as the Russians documented their language successes. The

¹³² Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 212.

¹³³ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 349, 353.

¹³⁴ Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, 250-251, 283.

people of Ukraine were susceptible to Russification through the state cooption of sermons and prayers given by the Russian Orthodox Church.¹³⁵

Russian language enjoyed preferential treatment in Ukraine through governmentality because of its availability of native language schools, publication policy, and benefitting from official status of cultural princeps.¹³⁶ By the postwar period the average internalization of self-worth became increasingly tied to fitting the *modern* standard where urbanites distanced themselves from the nonpolitical people in the country sides by practicing perfect Russian and could be seen following party doctrines. The late Academician Marr proposed, “There are no national languages; only class languages” and most families worked unceasingly to improve their lives by fitting into proper molds.¹³⁷ Indeed, throughout the republics including Ukraine, many degrees in higher sciences and technological subjects were offered only in Russian. Bilinsky writes that language is a tool of everyday discourse and a bearer of cultural importance, and an obvious target for tsarist and Soviet Russification campaigns. He posits the adoption and standardization of language despite spatial distances binds peoples equally to one another as it differentiates them from the rest of the world.¹³⁸

Ukrainian language and culture were attacked in a variety of ways both above the surface and below the perception of uncritical observers. Perhaps most impactful to the average citizen’s daily life was the Russian language’s placement above Ukrainian for approval for joining the work force, linked synonymously with prestigious cultural

¹³⁵ Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, 269.

¹³⁶ Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, 288, 293, 296.

¹³⁷ Yaroslav Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine After World War II* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 144.

¹³⁸ Bilinsky, *The Second Soviet Republic: Ukraine After World War II*, 141, 143, 158.

works, and increasingly tied to upward socioeconomic progression.¹³⁹ In an effort to subordinate the *Malorosy*, or “little Russians”, a national inferiority complex was conditioned over centuries into Ukraine.¹⁴⁰ Szporluk agrees with Sullivant’s sentiment, inputting that even Russian dialectics recognized the difference between proper Russians, or *Russkii*, and those *Rossiiskii* of All-the-Russias.¹⁴¹ A soft power method to restrain nationalist movements, the whitewashing of Ukrainian served to pull them closer into the Russian sphere of control and governmentality. The Ukrainian Republic was operated through leaders who were brought up through the party bureaucracy, many of which furthered the goals of the state against the benefit of their own people either because of ideological sycophancy or Dr. Freud’s *combined faulty acts fallacy*.¹⁴² The Fallacy would entail apparatchiks in the Bolshevik *systema* or systematic bureaucracy, committing actions ostentatiously for the party but were really for improving their personal standing, and continuing to do so even when knowing that it is wrong through unconscious means and targeted blindness. All the Supreme Commanders of the United Armed Forces of the Warsaw Treaty Organization hailed from Russian territories in the Russian Empire or Russian SSR except for Ivan Yakubovsky, who was born to an ethnic Belarusian family of peasants in the adjacent eastern oblasts, none came from the seven satellite states of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, with the USSR serving as a unifying party.

¹³⁹ Kenneth Farmer, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth, Symbols, and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1980), 152.

¹⁴⁰ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 122.

¹⁴¹ Szporluk, Russia, *Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union*, 230-231.

¹⁴² Abraham Arden Brill, *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1995), 115-117.

Georgiy Mirsky, a prolific Russian historian, wrote of his travels around the various republics and his polite but revealing conversations with periphery party members and leaders of local governments. As is the case with many of these matters, much of the details can be deduced between the lines of what is said or implied against typical party standards. He once wrote upon meeting the third secretary of the Azerbaijan Socialist Republic in Kirovabad oblast, the country's second largest city, and marveling at her proficiency in language skills to perform her duties. As was tradition until Brezhnev abolished the practice in the 1970s, of her immediate bosses, the first secretary was a native to the country he was responsible for and the second secretary was an ethnic Russian.¹⁴³ This Russian was stationed to serve as Moscow's regional eyes and ears and was responsible for the country's industry and agriculture outputs, alongside ideology control, and rubberstamp approval over the first secretary's decisions; who due to the Kremlin needing to maintain affiliations, held the majority of the power in the relationship balance. The third secretary, as was the case with the person Mirsky met with, was predominantly a woman and was put in charge of education and culture, health care, and organization of political propaganda amongst other tasks.

Mirsky does not provide a name or date of their conversation, but he notes that she is of Armenian heritage, and he is impressed with the ecumenical nature of cultures, religions, and languages represented within the party offices. Telling of the *super-ethnos* role that the big brother Russians maintained in the republics, when he asked between the languages she had to know which did she think in, she was reluctant to answer.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 5-6.

Coming away from the encounter, he realized the position that such a personal and political question could potentially have put her in, as it could be perceived as asking her to pick between her Soviet nation, her country of Azerbaijan, and her Armenian roots.

In Estonia, by the 1990s there were 70,000 Russian-language schools which received funding for eleven years compared to the 120,000 Estonian schools which received twelve years' worth.¹⁴⁵ Primary schooling and higher education was centered around the Soviet model with similar curriculum with standardized practices. Only during this time, near the end of Soviet occupation did Estonian schools and heritage groups publicly revitalize education in figures such as Fredrick Kreutzwald and his national epic, *Kalevipoeg*, or the *Son of Kalev*, and other articles of national awakening stemming from the 1850s and later. By 1986 with the thawing that accompanied Gorbachev's *Glasnost* policy permitted Estonian societies such as the Estonian Heritage Society to combat Soviet censorship of other cultural elites and push back against the Russification of the previous decades.

Latvian language, unlike Lithuanian for example, stems from the Baltic branch of Indo-European languages. Since World War II, Latvia has experienced such an influx of western Slavs that nearly half of its permanent population does not speak the national language while most ethnic Latvians can speak Russian, though there is also a high propensity for German as well. During the Soviet years curriculum surrounding modern national literature was heavily curtailed, but since *perestroika* cultural centerpieces such

¹⁴⁵ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 33, 36-38.

as Andrejs Pumpurs's 1888 classic, *Lacplecis*, or Bear Slayer, have enjoyed a resurgence.¹⁴⁶

The Baltics drew their cultural inspirations from many sources. Unlike Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania's cultural development from Poland rather than Germany. Though it took in great stores of customs and arts from imperial Russia between 1795 and 1915, its deeply rooted contact with western Europe had an enormous impact on its development since the sixteenth century. In fact, even during its years under occupation, its connections to the West had the renown of giving Russian tourists the impression that they had left the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ Folk music and crafts have remained a mainstay of Lithuanian culture, but arguably its most prolific artist was Mikalojus Ciurlionis, a late nineteenth century originator of abstract painting.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 129.

¹⁴⁷ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 202.

¹⁴⁸ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 204.

Chapter 6 ECONOMIC SUPPRESSION

Until the 1950s, the goal of Soviet economic policy was a means to upkeep and modernize the eastern states' military in a manner that ensured political and security subordination. After the Second World War it became practice to reappropriate Eastern and Soviet controlled Central European assets as a means to war reparations to buildup naval yards and dry docks, aircraft manufactories, and industrial army depots in Russia and eastern Ukraine to implement a level of reliance on the union's interior.¹⁴⁹ These centrally planned reorganizations of resources constituted in the nationalization of industry, collectivization of agriculture, and integration of its member-states created further dependence on Russia as the hegemon of the recreated *prison of nations* and discouraged individual economic and political ties with the West. By the Brezhnev administration and its system of *Developed Socialism*, the Kremlin had ceased using the equitable phrase *socialist commonwealth* to regard the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics and fallen into using the qualifier *socialist community* instead. Petr Fedoseev termed a qualitative distinction in the new *long road* versus the abandoned *short road* to *socialist realism* and a means of dialectically differentiating the primogeniture of Russia above the other socialist member states.¹⁵⁰ This was in response to an erosion of ideological and social authority once eminent in Nikita Khrushchev's attempt at polycentrism and Yuri Andropov's sojourning to identity and remedy the covert as well as overt issues present in the implementation of the existing system of government.

¹⁴⁹ Campbell, *An Overview in Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 14-15, 17.

¹⁵⁰ Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (Basingstoke: Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 166, 172-173.

A rueful example of the Soviet historical persuasion was the inevitability of communism as the apocalyptic war that would be the precursor before its arrival. This war was necessary to eradicate all capitalist power over the colonized world and there was to be no political rapprochement in relations. This manifested in the near fatal decision in 1929 to order German Communist Party members to not ally with the Reichstag's left-wing factions to arrest the rise of the National Socialists and Hitler's European war aims.¹⁵¹ Under Bolshevism as well as German futurist interpretations, Hitler and his party were seen to be symptomatic of the West and would arise again in another form if communism did not immediately begin centralization and modernization programs to defend itself and project the revolution. Bolshevik futurists concentrated their efforts to create a society that was focused around Stalin's *cult of the machine* from the ashes of Imperial Russia. This new civilization would prioritize efficiency, manufacturing, and propaganda, but often had the detriment to overshadow human welfare, environmentalism, and working conditions in its pursuit of power and progress.

Stalin echoed this need for "socialism in one country" and tied it to the quintessential defense of the fatherland. All of Eastern Europe would need to acquiesce with *Russian patriotism* to consolidate power to make up the 50 to 100 years difference in industrialization between the western powers and the Soviet Union or be crushed and beaten again for regional backwardness. Should communism succeed in this swing of time's pendulum the party convinced itself that it would need to fight through fire in foreign and domestic policy to achieve its ends.

¹⁵¹ Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 159, 168.

Paul Marer brings to light the issues presented in the Stalin era economic planning in Eastern Europe. By 1950 there is a marked rise in political unrest resulting from poor resource allocation, residents across the union faced declining living standards and growing resentment toward the state's Overton Window, prompting future leaders and thinktanks to reprioritize their goals under scientific socialism.¹⁵² In 1956 they instituted a system of credits and foreign aid to be granted to cooperating nations under the auspices of Comecon also known by CMEA, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance founded in 1949 by Stalin to act as a counterpart of the western Marshall Plan, to revitalize commercial industries outside of Russia exemplified by railcar and aviation engineering in Latvia and easing of the developed division of labor within the Soviet Union. To reinforce the leading position of the Russian SSR and a recommittal to socialist orthodoxy, the Brezhnev administration also refocused their structurization of the Warsaw Pact military assembly, the Political Consultative Committee, as well as the CMEA.

The Kremlin repeatedly pressured its subordinate member states to increase armament funding, along with technological and organizational modernization efforts to compete with NATO and present a unified strong face to the deviationism practiced by the Chinese People's Republic.¹⁵³ These efforts, as encouraged by Romanian ambassador Vasily Sandru at the 1978 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member countries, were also to forward the de jure mission statement that

¹⁵² Campbell, *An Overview in Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 15, 17.

¹⁵³ Vasile Sandru, *The meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member countries, Moscow, 22-23 November 1978*, Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), by permission of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/meeting-political-consultative-committee-warsaw-treaty-member-countries/>. p.1-2.

only together were socialist countries strong enough to counter Western imperialism and support a détente of peaceful coexistence. He proposed that it was the intention of the western nations to spread division within the Eastern Bloc by sowing debts and dependency upon the more technologically advanced nations of the first world. Since late 1950s and the crowing of the Khrushchev government, these capitalist infiltrations were addressed by targeted five-year plans and the introduction of the *convertible rouble* amongst the members of Comecon to increase economic growth and integration and facilitate trade. A major outcome of these efforts was the Soviet Union exchanging oil from the Caucuses for Eastern Bloc specialized manufactured goods.¹⁵⁴ These agendas were met with ill-fated results due to national uprisings, discontent in central planning, and failed social policy. Eastern European countries were tasked with producing higher quality goods for the Soviet marketplace at ever-snowballing rates and returns to facilitate the development of Soviet raw material production plants that were needed to keep the union afloat in world of internationally competing exports and imports.¹⁵⁵ Ultimately, questions of security and economic interest between the socialist nations of the bloc and the USSR were meant to alleviate tensions and provide flexibility to the rigid system of senior and junior partners in their syndication of economic forums against the West.

Marer continues his evaluation of the asymmetrical interbloc relations between the USSR and its smaller client states as one defined by power relations levied against the massive disparities of population, territory, resource endowment, industrialization, and

¹⁵⁴ Robert Bideleux and Ian Jefferies, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1998), 536.

¹⁵⁵ Campbell, *An Overview in Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 19, 31.

military strength. After the cessation of hostilities in World War II, much of what remained of the harrowed manufacturing potential of the new socialist republics in Central and Eastern Europe was dismantled and shipped to the USSR.¹⁵⁶ He estimates that the total value of such seized productive output, in the form of lower than market pricing of mined, metallurgical, and machined goods and heavy equipment taken by joint stock companies as part of war reparations, from Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union to be around 40.5 billion dollars in modern currency calculated for inflation. During these years, as would be direct policy for the duration of the Stalin era, was to decrease these newly acquired lands alignment with the west and further incorporate them into the Soviet sphere of influence. This form of import-substitution industrialization was meant to act as a stimulant to eastern infrastructures caught in a permanent state of catchup with the West and the demands of Soviet consumers often predicated what nations or regions would specialize in producing as dictated under central planning. This method of industrialization left the majority of member-nations underdeveloped in one or more aspects of their economy and interdependent on the union to satisfy consumer and military needs.

The mechanism that the Soviet regime dictated such terms to their compatriots was the *Soviet embassy system* of plan coordination in which, “all high economic functionaries had their ‘partner’ in the Soviet embassy whom they consulted for every important move”, regarding articles of manufacture and directed production.¹⁵⁷ Comecon served as an organizational construct to align Eastern European interests for trade with

¹⁵⁶ Paul Marer, *The Political Economy of Soviet Relations with Eastern Europe*, in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, *Soviet Policies in Eastern Europe*, 155-157.

¹⁵⁷ Frederic L. Pryor, *The Communist Foreign Trade System* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963), 200-201.

the Soviet Union, while at the same time overriding their autonomy and placing development work quotas that increased dependence on the Soviet market and raw materials base.

Though only making up 2.7% of the USSR by size, Ukraine did much to earn its moniker as the *second Soviet republic*. In terms of many economic outlooks, Ukraine was only behind Russia in production standards. It provided 16.5% of the union's net material product, 20% of agricultural output, and 40% of all iron ore.¹⁵⁸ After the establishment of party members to positions of power in the trade unions and the centralization of those unions to the will of Moscow, a considerable amount of manpower and material resources were produced in the Russian periphery to develop the metropole. Proclaimed under the auspices of All-Union politics and representation, these collective resources were directed ultimately by the Central Committee and its subcommittees, but the former economic administrator Petro Shelest and an assembled team of economists were able to wrangle the flow of Ukrainian capital generated from oil from being invested in the development of non-Ukrainian interests in Siberia.¹⁵⁹ Then again in 1971 Shelest chastised V. V. Shcherbitsky in his support of Brezhnev's order to allocate capital investment from the Donbas coal mines again to Siberia at the Twenty-Third Communist Party of the Soviet Union Congress.¹⁶⁰

The Baltics became a center for heavy industry in its years as part of the Soviet Union. Most of the non-civilian manufacturing in Estonia was controlled directly by those in Moscow with largely imported Russian labor. Under direction of the Kremlin's

¹⁵⁸ Mirsky, *On the Ruins of Empire*, 121-123, 124.

¹⁵⁹ Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, 123.

¹⁶⁰ Azrael, *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, 122-124.

defense-planners, as late as 1990, the Russian SSR controlled 204 of the total of the 265 country's industrial enterprises.¹⁶¹

Similarly, this was the case in Latvia as well. After World War II Russia liquidated almost all factory equipment, railroad supplies, raw materials, bank savings, as well as personal valuables appropriated during the rollback into the nation and used it to fund their own projects.¹⁶² After more than 40,000 Latvian nationals were deported throughout the Soviet Union in 1949, the nation's labor force came under heavy stress, but it continued to become one of the most industrialized republics in the union. In the wake of agricultural collectivization, industry supplanted farm cultivation as its primary economic sector. By 1990, industrial manufacturing made up 43 percent of the nation's gross domestic product whereas before agriculture had made up 66 percent in 1930. Lithuania faced equal centralization of their economy during their years of occupation. From 1947 to 1951 the Bolsheviks collectivized agriculture, and though the Soviets pushed to increase oil extraction from the Baltic Sea shelf off of the republic's coast, it only reached enough to satisfy 20 percent of the nation's annual need for petroleum products.¹⁶³

By the 1930s and through the 1950s the Soviet Union had begun rewarding labor heroes and those essential to critical running of the state and its extremital apparatuses with middle class comfortability and status. The young and trained in skilled labor, those necessary for the perpetuation of the revolution were incentivized to participate in urban

¹⁶¹ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 56-57.

¹⁶² Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 130-133.

¹⁶³ Iwaskiw, *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Country Studies*, 184-189, 206-208.

industrialization drives with incentives in patriotism and upward mobility.¹⁶⁴ Young adults who returned to college during Stalin's first Five Year Plan came to prominence in the political-administrative elite of the 1940s to 1970s with striking regularity. Nikita Khrushchev who attended Moscow's Industrial Academy and Leonid Brezhnev's appointment to the Ukrainian Dneprodzerzhinsk metallurgical Institute in 1931.

Perhaps the top economist in the Soviet Union Ye. S. Varga, director of the Institute of World Economics and World Politics and member of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences wrote in his 1946 book, *Changes in the Economy of Capitalism as a Result of the Second World War*, that Western nations had strengthened their holds on the productive and banking potentials of their nations by seizing them under wartime consolidation efforts which proved them on the correct path.¹⁶⁵ Though he was attacked as a reformist for his views, Varga argued that Western nations had seized the authority over monopolies which would allow them to similarly centrally plan their economies. The 1940s Zhdanov Doctrine of communism being presented between debates of *good and best* expanded across source material and interspersed itself lastingly into everyday life. This idea unresisted acceptance was facilitated in the critical departure of Lenin from Marx in that the proletariat could never truly grasp true revolutionary consciousness, giving rise to a strict leader-follower dichotomy and the need for political guidance.¹⁶⁶ This meant that the functioning of power was largely kept from the eyes of the common masses and interpreted by those who had the approval of the party who were imbued as

¹⁶⁴ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). 168-169.

¹⁶⁵ Hans Warner, *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation 1946-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 84-85, 88.

¹⁶⁶ Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine*, 6.

those with culture, or *kul'turnyi*.¹⁶⁷ This was a central tenant of Lenin's speech, *On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in our Party*, where he stresses the importance of *direct economic management* and for, "indissoluble ties between the central state administration, the national economy, and the broad masses of working people."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, 163.

¹⁶⁸ V.I. Lenin, *On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in our Party* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964).

CONCLUSION

In a Greek tragedy, the main character undergoes a journey where through their strenuous effort and suffering, they ultimately come to realize the consequences of their actions. The Soviet understanding of *anagnorisis*, meaning the act of discovery, was structured upon a volatile situation that required a strong and consistent vertical model of force for it to maintain stability. Similarly, the Soviet Union's national policies and attempts at Russification confronted many of the same realities as the preceding Russian Empire. However, the reciprocating sudden realization, referred to as the *peripetia*, of the Bolshevik's inability to maintain the union was burdened by the inflexibility of its governing institutions, the control exerted by censorship in the media, as well as the authoritative power of security services.

The Soviet Union, despite its self-acclaim of being anathema to Western Imperialism, was similarly labor hungry and averse to egalitarian power sharing to other authoritarian states that encapsulated the modern age in Europe and Asia. In 1825 French integrative nutritionist Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote in his book, *Physiology of Taste*, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are."¹⁶⁹ It is the argument of this thesis to bring to light that the Soviet Union sustained itself on the free labor and sacrifice of hundreds of millions of individuals, all directed by the party and its state organs to comply with their demands or face harsh repercussions. Under the Bolshevik regime, cultural identities were examined and painstakingly stripped away for the reason of ostentatiously propagating a new credo of nationless *Soviet Men* for the heralding in of

¹⁶⁹ Mary Brighton, *Tell Me What You Eat and I Will Tell You What You Are*, HealthU, Hackensack Meridian Health, February 2018, <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/healthu/2018/02/07/tell-me-what-you-eat-and-i-will-tell/>.

socialist realism, but this age never came. What I find that happened was a new drive for Russification measures aimed against the people of Ukrainian and other member states of the USSR.

Through the nearly eighty years that the USSR operated in Eastern Europe, they conducted domestic and internal political policies to create stronger ties between the union member nations through incentivized and coerced means. Ukrainian national cadres and autonomous political movements were squashed or relegated to background obscurity. In the 1920s following the revolution, the Ukrainian Central Council, or Rada, was made subservient to the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets and in the later years of the mid-twentieth century figures such as Petro Shelest were tolerated to maintain the greater unity of Russia and one of its oldest imperialist expansion colonies. In fact, in a paradoxical and little recognized way, Ukrainians had a fundamental hand in leading the Soviet Union though it afforded few liberties to their compatriots. Several General Secretaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had either mixed Russian-Ukrainian heritage or spent their formative years in Ukraine.¹⁷⁰

A juxtaposition that I find particularly interesting is between the subject and public promotion of national patriotism between the United States and the USSR. John F. Kennedy said in his 1963 remarks at Amherst College, “A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers”, but what is found predominantly in those who rose through the ranks of the Politburo were men who were willing to toe the party line for self-advancement or to continue the clockwork of

¹⁷⁰ *How Ukrainian-origin Leaders Dominated the Soviet Union*, Magazine, TRT World, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/how-ukrainian-origin-leaders-dominated-the-soviet-union-53932/>.

the apparatus of state.¹⁷¹ The most favorably listed U.S. presidents and cultural leaders tend to be either outside-the-box thinkers or people who challenged the polity to seize upon the fruits of the country to challenge the status-quo and rework the governmentality of the system, but as stated previously in Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod in their book *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, in the Soviet Union the greatest indicator of patriotism and social mobility was found in attaching oneself and remaining in good standing with the communist party.¹⁷²

Nikita Khrushchev, ethnically Russian, was born in a Russian village but was raised in Eastern Ukraine before consolidating power as the head of the Ukrainian Socialist Republic in 1937. Leonid Brezhnev listed his nationality as Ukrainian in his 1947 passport and rose through the party leadership as one of Khrushchev's protégés.¹⁷³ Under his time as General Secretary, from 1964 to 1982, the ceiling of non-Russians holding clear reign in offices of power were dashed as he appointed several other notable Ukrainians held high positions from the defense ministry to the KGB. Konstantin Chernenko was born of a Ukrainian miner father and a Siberian mother and listed his nationality as Ukrainian on his internal passport, and Mikhail Gorbachev was born in a Russian village to a Ukrainian mother.

The Soviet leadership used Russian language as a lingua franca to bond the people of Russia with the citizens of the other nations through education, employment

¹⁷¹ John F. Kennedy, *Remarks at Amherst College*, JFK Speeches, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, October 26, 1963, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/amherst-college-19631026/>.

¹⁷² Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed*, 168-169.

¹⁷³ Laski Diffusion, *Leonid Brezhnev's Passport*, Digital Image, Hulton Archive, Getty Images, June 11, 1947, <https://www.gettyimages.co.nz/detail/news-photo/passport-of-leonid-brezhnev-leader-of-the-soviet-union-news-photo/604159919/>.

opportunities, political party membership, conscripted military service, among other modes of civil duty or social advancement to support ties that make breaking away from the Russian socialist republic more difficult. Through the 1930s and onwards, the Soviet Union instituted deportation and regional ethnic suppression programs while simultaneously encouraging the mass immigration and entrenchment of ethnic Russians across the union, but especially in its neighbor state Ukraine. Economic coalitions such as COMECON as well as regional specialization initiatives when combined with embargoes and targeted trade sanctions with the West had the effect of driving inter-union nations closer together. In order to meet the demands of their internal markets as well as external export production quotas, nations like Ukraine needed to trade coal and grain for other commodities found in other allied nations.

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