

Operation Barbarossa, the Dissolution of the USSR and the Russo-Ukrainian War: 1917-2023

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ABSTRACT

After World War One and the fractionation of the empires of central Europe, Ukraine, the nascent USSR, created the Soviet Republic of Ukraine, which became a political unit with a state apparatus for the first time. The USSR invested heavily in making Ukraine an industrial country producing minerals and electricity. The collectivization of agriculture resulted in great famine, and brutal repression marked the Ukrainian imagination. The German invasion of the USSR aimed to explore the East and colonize it with the Aryans. During Barbarossa, right-wing Ukrainian nationalist groups welcomed the Nazis, who repelled Ukrainian independence by narrowing collaborationism and practicing the Holocaust. After the defeat of the Third Reich, the USSR retook Ukraine, repressing Nazi collaborators and opponents and reintegrating the republic into the Soviet economy. With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine became independent and, under the Yushchenko government (2005–2010), government organizations supported by the diaspora built a new national identity, distancing itself from communism and Russian influence, rehabilitating heroes and nationalist-fascist organizations. The Ukrainian government allying itself with the West and NATO sees the fight against the invasion of the USSR in 2023 as a war of independence consolidating nationality.

Keywords: European Nationalism, Collectivized Economy, Operation Barbarossa, Collaboration, Fascism.

INTRODUCTION

On January 26, 2023, CNN aired a new special hosted by Ward, "who crisscrosses the country to explore the extraordinary resilience and unwavering will to win of ordinary Ukrainians." (1) Who are these remarkable beings despite ordinary people? What country is this so-called Ukraine capable of generating such determined islanders? Ukraine, until 1919, was a region without political unity divided between more powerful countries. At the end of the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, ending the turmoil of the civil war, proclaimed, in 1922, the Ukrainian SSR. It acquired the cohesion of a state administrative framework based on Soviet, proletarian, and internationalist Marxist Leninist doctrine. The USSR developed the Republic industries, mining, energy, steel, and urbanism, practicing forced agricultural collectivization resulting in famine, carrying out deportations, and fierce religious and police repression.

Ukrainian nationalist movements organized clandestine ideological bases opposing the Soviet system and the Polish occupation. For Rossolinski-Liebe, "Only the experience of the First World War, the failure to establish a state, and the reception of racist, fascist, and antisemitic

discourses transformed this nationalism into a rather typical East Central European fascist movement." (2) The invasion of the USSR and Ukraine by the Third Reich in 1941 led Ukrainian nationalist sectors, ideologically identified with the invader, to proclaim their independence, promptly repelled by the Nazis. The East was a colonization space for them, and the Slavs would eliminate it.

Ukrainian movements such as the OUN and its armed wing, the UPA, practiced ethnic cleansing in many cases associated with the Holocaust. Since 1943, like wild Berserker warriors, they have fought Soviets, Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and Germans.

The essay analyzes Ukrainian nationalism as a contemporary problem since, according to Greenfeld, we have come to a "phase of neo-nationalism. At no other time has this been demonstrated more clearly than during these very days when regimes and ideologies crumble around us, and nationalism everywhere raises its head amid the rubble and confusion, as full of energy as ever." (3) Given the exclusive character of this German and Eastern European nationalism, we discuss Renan's classic text, which points to the inclusive construction of many Western nations. In them, extreme nationalisms flirting with fascism were the exception rather than the rule. Paradigms of the nation in Renan, such as oblivion and the daily plebiscite, are excluded in favor of an exclusive Ukrainian ethnic root.

In the third part, we will see how, after 1945, Ukraine, reincorporated into the USSR, occupied a prominent position in the Soviet economic system. The structural crisis of the Soviet economy, the defeat in Afghanistan, and the crisis of the Chornobyl nuclear plant collapsed the USSR. Given the weakness of the central government, the "aspirations of the imprisoned peoples" were awakened in 1991. (4)

Independent Ukraine underwent two revolutions, consolidating its turn to the West, the EU, and NATO. The Yushchenko administration dramatically manufactured solid new capital by emphasizing a break with the Russian and Soviet past and Soviet historiography. History, according to Heidegger, "would not only be the projection that man makes of the present into the past but the projection of the most imaginary part of his present, the projection into the past of the future he chose, a history-fiction, a history of desire." (5)

The ongoing process in present-day Ukraine constitutes what Pierre Bourdieu calls symbolic power. (6) According to the notions of Hannah Arendt and Jacques Derrida, one has the impression that Ukrainian organizations write a new contemporary truth or an updated "narrative." (7) Giorgio Agamben suggests that contemporaneity has a timeless character that emerges as the Uranian nation recovers in the past, lights capable of clarifying its present. (8) Le Goff believes that history "should clarify memory and help it to rectify its mistakes. However, will the historian be immunized against a disease, if not from the past, at least from the present and, perhaps, an unconscious image of a dreamed future?" (9)

As per Pierre Nora, the war against the Russian invasion of 2022 is the return of the immediate story and the event. This time, going beyond traditional journalism, it is enhanced by digital media. (10) We debated the war resulting from the Russian invasion as one of independence. This circumstance is valued by many countries, celebrating their birth in the pain of a conflict and not as parthenogenesis. The struggle for independence produces meanings, narratives, and

a pantheon of heroes. In the Ukrainian case, they are controversial, supported by celebratory historiography of anti-Soviet resistance and other unknown spots in Ukrainian history. Many authors on this current exacerbate pre-existing divisions by refusing to forget the past and practice a daily plebiscite. The nation divided between Ukrainians and Russians proves that a war of independence is always a civil war.

1939, TWO INVASIONS

On September 1, 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland. On September 16, the USSR occupied its part, according to the secret clauses of the German-Soviet Treaty integrating Ukrainian territories into the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. (11) In 1940, the country was territorially integrated for the first time in its history. (12) (Gross, 2021) This data must not have escaped the Ukrainian nationalists who, already in contact with Nazi leaders, felt tempted to create a fait accompli by proclaiming an independent state. (12)

As Norman Davies points out, historiographies are scarce, almost not referring to the Soviet invasion of Poland, which integrated the tsarist empire. (13) Some Poles believed that the USSR would come to their aid and fight the Germans. However, the Soviet invasion eliminated Polish resistance east of the Vistula River by obtaining a secure border. (14) Immediately, the NKVD arrested and deported thousands of Poles, rigged the elections and incorporated parts of this country into the Republic of Ukraine.

BARBAROSSA

The Nazi racial cleansing policy began in 1939 in Poland. Population deemed helpful in the interests of the Reich supplied and fed, while those outside this category were starved to death. (15) Eastern Europe would receive German colonial expansion whose population would return to "nature." For the Nazi doctrine, the country's growing industrialization distanced the Germans from nature and its virtues. The reading of Germania, the work of the Roman Cornelius Tacitus (c 56 AD – 120 AD), suggested to the Nazis a return to the historical origins of "agrarian Germania." That wish would come true by colonizing the fertile lands of Ukraine. (16) Europe would be subjected to Germanic supremacy, based on the utopia of its racial superiority, excluding Jews, Slavs, and other "inferior races."

In early 1941, the Third Reich failed to invade Britain, supported by the US. The strategic option to turn to the USSR configuring the military nightmare of a war on two fronts. To achieve this goal, Hitler and his staff planned Operation Barbarossa, the largest in military history, causing the world to hold its breath. (17) Barbarossa's name came from Emperor Frederick I, called Red Beard, leader of the III Crusade, held in the East. Magical thinking made the Nazi high command, confident in their military expertise, consider the invasion a "child play." Nazi plans foresaw the German colonization of Ukraine and invaded the USSR, carrying out an ideological crusade against the Judeo-Bolshevik. (21) With the Slavs annihilated, Crimea would be transformed by employing highways into a summer vacation spot for the Germans.

The military planners of Operation Barbarossa, among them Lossberg, and General Halder, wanted to enlist the support of local populations and implant in Ukraine a puppet and collaborationist government destined to dominate it more easily. (18) The OUNb decided to collaborate with the Nazis in response to the desire of the OKW and the Abwehr to enlist their

assistance in the endeavor. Such support was unthinkable for Adolf Hitler. (19) The Führer prohibited these initiatives in 1942 for unavoidable ideological and racial reasons. (20)

At first, the invasion was successful. Sieges of Soviet armies by the Wehrmacht rounded up millions of prisoners capturing or destroying vast armaments. The Red Army, shaken by the purges, did not have secure defenses in "its" Poland. In the first weeks of the Barbarossa operation, soldiers of Ukrainian origin, newly enlisted and demotivated, abandoned their posts, fled or surrendered. They accused their Communist officers and commissioners of leaving them to die for them. They complained that the Soviets "sucked our blood for twenty-five years, enough already." (22). In some Soviet units in Ukraine, officers, commissars, or politruks were killed by their command.

The Soviet government, faced with the gravity of the invasion, took extreme measures. The Stavka decreed the scorched earth policy, removing workers, factories, and factories, especially war material, to the Urals. In some districts, the transfers were successful, but in others, the equipment fell into German hands intact. (23) In Kyiv, the Germans entered and were applauded by the population as liberators. Disturbances occurred false rumors, and sabotage. Fearing that the Nazis would look for scapegoats, some members of the local population killed communists and Jews on their own.

INHUMAN WARS IN UKRAINE

In the initial phase of Barbarossa, the Wehrmacht employed Ukrainian saboteurs from the Roland and Nitchgall unit integrated into the Brandenburger troop, disrupting Soviet communications. Under the German Army commander Herzner, Nachtigall is subordinate to Army intelligence, the Abwehr, and Army Group South. (24) (Arad, 2018) They trained under German tutelage, disguised as Volksdeutscher and workers. The recruitment of "disaffected and hostile national group, Balts and Ukrainians in particular, the Germans tried to form Fifth columns to work in the German cause" (25)

Hitler's war fought in the East would annihilate the Ukrainian population through starvation, exhaustion, and slavery, avoiding "useless eaters." Closed Ukrainian schools. (26) sending healthy students to Germany and weak ones to the fields. (27) Hitler divided Ukrainian into two governments, the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, with Volhynia, and the Generalgouvernement incorporating the Galitzien district. (28) Nazism banned Ukrainian education by closing the University in Kyiv, banning publications. For the Third Reich, Ukraine would be a "breadbasket" destined to feed the Germans. When visiting Army Group South near Poltava, Hitler saw blonde and blue-eyed Ukrainian girls, attributing this peculiarity to the permanence of God's blood in the region. (29)

The war waged by the Wehrmacht in the East ignored all moral and legal considerations. Hitler wanted to demolish Russian cities by banning German soldiers from stationing in them. The police forces, the Gestapo and the Wehrmacht, carried out a brutal occupation policy. (30) (Stahel et al., 2014) During the Cold War, English-speaking historians and thinkers avoided deepening the debates about the participation of the Wehrmacht in the extermination of 'populations in the East. Focused only on analyzing military operations, they avoided studying the tragic dimension of human and material destruction. In the long monologues collected by Bormann, he made these exclusionary arguments for his nationalism crystal clear.

Authors like J.F.C. Fuller (2018) somewhat naively consider that Nazi brutality and anti-Semitism alienated local populations from welcome support against the Soviets. German nationalism, from which the national socialist model derives, originated from romantic sentiment, forging France as a historical enemy in its national consciousness. This sentiment exacerbated "German nationalism, which arrived on the stage so late, and almost unannounced, instantly became the most activist, violent, and xenophobic species of the phenomenon." (31)

INDEPENDENCE UNDER BANDERA

For Kohn, in Eastern Europe many peoples among which "Lithuanians and Ukrainians, Czechs and Croats, Serbs and Bulgarians, some of whom had played important parts on the stage of history were no longer active factors. Among these "dormant" or "a-historical" peoples only the age of nationalism brought a reassertion of their historical consciousness". (32)

Ukraine suffered Polish and then Russian domination. Tsarist ideology considered them "little Russians", and domination rested on the Russophile population. Around 1915, Ukrainian nationalism took shape. The local population called up for war served in the Russian and Austro-Hungarian armies. Despite the blood spilled by these men, at the end of the conflict their country did not emerge unified, divided between Soviets and Poles. (33).

Poland in the 1920s and 1930s occupied Ukrainian regions, waging a vigorous campaign of absorbing Ukrainians who kept their Uniate Greek Church, schools, language, culture, and political parties separate. Opposing this Polish policy, the Ukrainian clandestine military organization OUN, organized an armed resistance resulting in having many of its leaders killed or jailed. In Ukraine under Soviet rule, this clandestine organization was also hunted down by the NKVD for various reasons. (34)

On June 30, 1941, in the early days of Operation Barbarossa, the OUN movement, led by Stepan Bandera, proclaimed an independent Ukrainian state in Lviv. This initiative was not agreed with Berlin nor with the Wehrmacht high command in Ukraine, although German military leaders were invited to the ceremony. Bandera certainly wanted to confront the Germans with a fait accompli and the fog of war would do the rest. He was a bold man, you know what in 1940, when Germany invaded Yugoslavia, the Croats proclaimed their independence in a puppet state.

In Ukraine, the Nazis repealed Bandera's proclamation and declared the OUN an unreliable entity. The extreme opinions of its members risked Germanic colonization. (35) Considering the proclamation, a coup d'etat, Bandera was arrested and released in 1944. His captors, faced with the Soviet advance, sought to take advantage of Bandera's popularity along to Ukrainians. After 1945, during the Cold War, living in Munich, Bandera provided services to British and American intelligence agencies. A CIA agent described him as an individual "by nature a political intransigent of great personal ambition [who] has...opposed all political organizations in the emigration which favor a representative form of government in the Ukraine, as opposed to a mono-party, OUN/Bandera regime." Western intelligence apparatuses employed *bandeirists* in their operations, but never Bandera personally, "owing to Bandera's infatuation with his own legend." (36)

INDEPENDENCE, ALBEIT LATE

In the 1940s, Ukrainian nationalist movements saw the Third Reich as an ally against the USSR. In the proclamation of independence read in Kyiv, they stated: "The newly formed Ukrainian state will work closely with the National-Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler which is forming a new order in Europe and the world and is helping the Ukrainian People to free itself from Moscovite occupation(...) The Ukrainian People's Revolutionary Army, formed on the Ukrainian lands, will continue to fight with the Allied German Army against the Moscovite occupation for a sovereign and united State and a new order in the world". (37)

There is a curious confluence between the anti-Semitic and anti-communist characters both at the base of National Socialism and in Ukrainian nationalist organizations. Both claimed to fight "the same enemy." (38). During World War I, the tolerant and sympathetic attitude of the German occupiers deceived the nationalists. (39) The OUN allocution proclaimed that "The dream of Ukrainian independence will soon be realized. With the help of the glorious invincible German army, we will destroy Bolshevism and reestablish a Ukrainian State". The OUN had the illusion that "It was their hope the Germans would take what they perceived to be a rational course of action and ally themselves with the 'enslaved' nations of the USSR; alternately, a proclamation of statehood could provide a rallying point for national resistance if Germany should turn against the interests of the Ukrainian people." (40)

The Third Reich repelled the Ukrainian nationalist movement as the country's fate was sealed in advance, and the refusal to support the nationalists led the movement to split into the Bandera and Malnik factions. The UPA movement began to fight the Germans and then the Soviets. (41) In 1943, its ethnic cleansing operations annihilated about 100 villages and killed 200,000 Poles. (42)

Robust recent studies point to the unequivocal Nazi vocation of the OUN. For Lund, "Founded in 1929, the OUN was the largest and most important Ukrainian far-right organization. Explicitly totalitarian, the movement embraced the *Führerprinzip*, a cult of political violence, racism, and an aggressive anti-Semitism." The organization sought to implement a "Ukrainian statehood at any price. Furthermore, utilized assassination as legitimate means to this end." It was a typically fascist organization along the lines of Europe. His ideological connections with Nazism, Fascist Italy, the Spanish Falange, and the Croatian Ustase were close. In an article written in 1928, the Ukrainian nationalist ideologue Onats'kyi rejected the term "Nazi." For him, true fascist countries had a state, and Ukrainian nationalism did not. (43)

Following the NKVD's assassination of Evhen Konovalets' leader (1891–1938), the movement split. Colonel Andrii Mel'nyk (1890–1964) was challenged by the "faction of younger, more radical nationalists led by Stepan Bandera (1909–1959). The two wings, known as the OUN and OUN (b), both courted Nazi Germany, hoping to enlist support for Ukrainian statehood in the form of a Nazi client state of the Slovak or Croatian model." (44)

What mattered to these movements was independence, an ingrained desire born of a regional situation in the abyss. Either it was then, or it never would be. Even defeated, these combatants planted seeds in social memory. The motives of the Wehrmacht were incongruous with those of the Ukrainian nationalists. The belief that the Reich supported its cause, even though it was

denied, recalls the attitude of newborn animals, the concept of imprinting, that is: "The experience of the first hours after birth marks us forever, stamps us and shows the model of who you are as a species."

EUROPEAN NATIONALISMS IN DEBATE

Will Ukrainian nationalism be able to promote national unification as in the West or maintain the idea of ethnic exclusion, a common practice in Eastern Europe? Hans Kohn considers that Western European nationalism integrated cultural and ethnic differences. "The Western zone; ethnographic and racial differences had not integrated politically and ideally." For him, Poles and Hungarians retained some national consciousness thanks to their "medieval aristocratic structure."

Western European nationalism, which emerged in the 19th century, unified regional differences within the borders of each country. The archeology of these mature movements in countries such as Italy and Germany show that, before 1870, people lived in fragmented political units. As a consequence of the dynastic and religious wars, "Germans fought against Germans, and Italians against Italians, without any realization of the "fratricidal" nature of the act. Soldiers and civilians entered the service of "foreign" rulers and served them often with a loyalty and faithfulness which proved the absence of any national sentiment."

For Hans Kohn, "The growth of nationalism is the process of integration of the masses of the people into a common political form. Nationalism, therefore, presupposes the existence, in fact or as an ideal, of a centralized form of government over a large and distinct territory. Created by the absolute monarchs, who were the pacemakers of modern nationalism, the French Revolution inherited and continued the centralizing tendencies of the kings" (45). However, the republican government subsequently filled the centralized sequence with new proposals capable of giving it power and guaranteeing cohesion unknown until then."

After the German and Italian unifications, which were not always peaceful, the resulting States modeled their populations through educational agencies or departments through a common language. The Italian politician Massimo D'Azeglio 1870 described the process in this way: "We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians." (46) German nationalism has, as we have already seen, a complex genealogy based on violence, death, and hostility to the enemy such as France, without which the German nation would have no visibility. According to Le Goff, "historiography emerges as a sequence of new readings of the past, full of losses and resurrections, memory failures and revisions. These updates can also affect the historian's vocabulary, introducing conceptual and verbal anachronisms, which seriously distort the quality of his work." (47)

National Socialism as an Exclusive Nationalism

German nationalism fed on the symbolic capital originating from culture, soap operas, and songs and the decisive element in the 19th century, History. Narratives, memoirs, and essays written by intellectuals consolidated the Germanic civic spirit, national honor, and a pathological sense of obedience to authority and discipline. At the beginning of the 20th century, an actual episode was an emblematic piece of this exacerbated spirit. A former German convict named Voight, dressed in an imperial army captain's uniform, ordered several men and women and a troop of soldiers on the streets of a city to follow him to the local town hall. The

group carried out his orders without questioning him as they were wearing uniforms. At city hall, Voight requests that municipal officials give him a large sum.

This real story that delighted Europe in 1910 (even the Kaiser wanted to meet Voight) appears in the book by German writer Carl Zuckmeyer (1896-1977), *The Captain of Köpenick*. In the play, German nationalism and hostility towards others as follows:

For still our ancient foe
Doth Sick to Work us woe
His Craft and power are great
And armed with a cruel hate
His heart is not equal. (48)

The Jew was an object of distrust, Jews rich in suspicion and hatred. In an 1890 article, the Portuguese novelist Eça de Queirós () denounced the profound anti-Semitism in the late German 19th century: "In wise and tolerant Germany, after Hegel, Kant, and Schopenhauer, with the professors Strauss and Hartmann, alive and working, restart a campaign against the Jew, the killer of Jesus." This campaign was popular and semi-official. "The State only suggests that the persecution will not come from its initiative: it does not have a word to condemn this strange anti-Semitic movement that in many points is currently organized by the State itself authorities." As if he had read Captain Köpenick, Eça describes the Germanic society rife with aggressive patriotism and anti-Semitism as ready to follow orders unthinkingly:

"The result of this is that, in a nation where conservative society forms like a large battalion, thinking about what the "order of the day" tells it, and marching in discipline, the voice of the colonel - every good German, every patriot, will immediately conclude from this ambiguous language of the government that, if the Court, the general staff, the field-m Marshalls, Mr. De Bismarck, all this venerated and obeyed world do not view the hatred of the Jew with enthusiasm, they will not, however, let it approve it in their Christian hearts. Furthermore, the new movement will certainly receive an unexpected boost from here." (49)

He described the prosperity of the Israelite population of 400,000 souls living in Germany where, with their stiff and dogged work, they irritated and annoyed the Germans "because the Jew is rich, and because the Jew is strong." A pogrom in the past was always an effective remedy for calming the masses. Maybe it was like this in 1890, and maybe since 1932: "This never failed. Whenever the Church, which feudalism felt threatened by a plebs desperate for the painful yoke - took the sip away from itself and directed it against the Jew." He concludes by stating that instead of attacking France with its two million good soldiers, Bismarck should attack "the enriched Jew"(50).

Agreeing with the Portuguese author's old assertion, Greenfeld considers that the "Final Solution" did not appear at the Wannsee Conference 1942. It is "inherent in German national consciousness. While not inevitable, it was no accident and no aberration of German history; it was not a natural response to a historically immediate structural situation and, given an identical situation, could not have happened elsewhere. Therefore, seeing another race or nation "as the incarnation of evil, and glorification of violence and brutality was highly combustible, and only Germany could produce Hitler and give this form to the response to structural conditions." (51)

The principles of Nazism were based on influential beliefs in European international politics in the 19th century that inoculated the old continent and became activated in the presence of Nazism. For Kaiser: "European politicians had frequently endorsed the idea that industrial powers needed a large protected economic hinterland to secure their economic future (...) European political leaders, intellectuals, political activists, and revolutionaries of virtually every identifiable ethnic origin had adopted and attempted to implement this idea that European states should be composing one of ethnically linguistically, racially homogeneous population since the late nineteenth century (52) (Kaiser)

Nazi nationalism was exclusive to ethnic Germans, a peculiarity that leads us to advocate for Ukrainian nationalists the "imprint" of biology. One might ask why Bandera accepted and embraced a nationalism that excluded him because he was a Slav. According to Struve, Bandera aligned himself with the Nazi movement and was a supporter of "Neuen Europa." (53) The OUN emerged in 1929 and brought together radical nationalists and fascist groups composed, as in other countries, of disillusioned war veterans. According to Rudling, historian John Armstrong forged the term "integral nationalism" and applied it to the Ukrainian movement, refusing the designation of fascism. The term integral nationalism belongs to the European fascist tradition, and the Ukrainians did not use it, ensuring the originality of the movement. Still, for Rudling, "In 1941, the organization split between a more radical wing, the OUN(b), named after its leader, Stepan Bandera, and a more conservative wing, the OUN(m), led by Andrii Mel'nyk. Both were totalitarian, anti-Semitic, and fascist. In terms of tactics, the OUN(m) was more cautious and remained loyal to Nazi Germany throughout the war, whereas the OUN(b) took a more independent line". (54)

The rise to a modern national consciousness is attractive due to the simplifying process, eliminating the other instead of long coexistence and integration. On the other hand, for Kohn, "The pioneers of nationalism were often driven to despair of achieving their goal. Nevertheless, nationalism was victorious, filling the hearts of men with great hopes of new freedom and better and more humane relations between peoples. (55)

The Soviet Presence in Ukraine

For Renan, a nation is a daily plebiscite, a desire to live together, an aspiration that in Ukraine among Ukrainians and Russians was poisoned by history. The situation of malaise began in 1921, with the occupation of the region by the USSR, elevated to the category of Soviet Republic. (56) (Kort, 2019). Ukrainian intellectuals suspected of nationalist ideas were arrested and deported or shot, and soviet police persecuted the Greek Uniate church. This confession of the Orthodox rite recognizes the primacy of the Pope of Rome. The Soviets suspected her based on the centuries-old rivalry between Russian Orthodox and Catholics. The Italian writer Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957), serving in the Italian legation in Warsaw, Poland, in the 1920s, aware of Russian suspicion, recognized that "the Uniate Church of eastern Galicia was always considered by the Holy See as a natural intermediary for the Catholic conquest of Russia." (57) The Stalinist regime, schooled by the failure of communist revolutions in other countries and the massacre of Chinese communists, developed the thesis of communism in one country. (58) Focused on the USSR, Josef Stalin consolidated his thesis through a social and economic revolution. He collectivized agriculture, especially in Ukraine, where bountiful harvests supported the industrialization of the USSR. Agricultural collectivization and industrialization transformed a poor and illiterate country into an industrial and advanced one. The centrally

planned economy, directed by an iron fist, hid its failures and was praised by many at a time when the 1929 crisis and the Great Depression devastated the world economy.

The Soviet process came up against sabotage, amateur planning, Stalinist excesses, and technical mistakes. In 1932, collectivization faced climate problems, reducing harvests. Without food reserves, all USSR was struck by hunger. Moscow refused to feed Ukrainians and other populations while exporting tons of grain. The population losses that occurred in the Ukrainian camps were filled by Soviet peasants coming from other republics. The forced collectivization of agriculture was a national disaster and was an overly ambitious goal for the USSR, surrounded by external hostility. (59)

At the same time, the first five-year plan rapidly industrialized Ukraine, producing significant social and economic changes. Heavy industry and mining made Donbas the center of prodigious industrial development. Despite forced collectivization, political purges, shootings and deportations, and great famine, Ukraine was quickly urbanized, with Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Lviv emerging as major industrial centers. (60) However, the brutality of the Soviet repressive apparatus led many Ukrainian citizens to support the invaders. (61)

The Soviet presence in the 1930s was based on "class" political violence. The NKVD arrested, deported, or shot Ukrainian nationalists, those from the Polish minority and ethnic Germans. (69) The USSR produced a bellum omnes contra omnes, making a diverse society uniform. The fights within it led to a high standard of violence between neighbors. The Soviet repressive machine destroyed Jewish political and cultural institutions and old solidarity structures between different populations that functioned as structures of social cohesion. (62)

THE NAZI INVASION

Ukraine was, for Hitler, a mythical land, stating that "Russian space is our India. Like the English, we will dominate this empire with a handful of men." The Nazis saw Ukraine as the territory for Aryan colonization. "Slavic people are not destined to live a life of their own. Today, we have no interest in maintaining the Baltic States or creating an independent Ukraine. It will be necessary to prevent their return to Christianity. Nor am I in favor of there being a University in Kyiv." (63) The black land of legendary fertility made Ukraine an area of colonization for Germans and Danes, Dutch, Norwegians, and Swedes. The colonization of Ukraine by a small group of these "pure Aryans" failed when the Dutch colonists revolted. The Nazis philosophically concluded that there was only racial solidarity between ethnic Germans. (64) (Mazower)

Hitler's ambition to conquer Ukraine was delusional: "There is a reserve here of one million tons of wheat from last year's harvest. Imagine how much can be harvested when we organize and own the oil sources. Ukraine harvests between 13 and 14 million tons of cereals each year." (65). In his work, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler makes it clear that the Jew, capitalist and literate, exercise domination over large peoples, especially in "Russia." In this country, "the Jew, with a truly fanatical ferocity, slaughtered around thirty million, some through inhumane torture, others through starvation, and all of this to ensure that a group of Jewish literati and Stock Exchange bandits would dominate over a great people." (66)

The Nazi invasion liquidated the Soviet administration by eliminating local leaders and intellectuals. The Reichskommissariat Ukraine, established in 1941, proved a terrible substitute

for Soviet domination. Erich Koch, the Gauleiter of Ukraine, who hated Ukrainians, called himself "a mad dog," carrying out a brutal policy. (67)

The Partisan War

Therefore, Ukrainian nationalists seduced by Nazi propaganda soon realized the perverse and racist face of the Third Reich. They lost hope of carrying out their independence goals. An SS officer stationed in Ukraine wrote bluntly: "We are here among black people." (68) . Racial aspects permeated the war fought by the partisans in Belarus, and its confusion was due to the ambiguity of feelings towards the Soviets. Moscow sent its supporters, partisans, technicians, weapons, and instructions to fight the Nazis. After defeating them, they would return to occupy Ukraine.

When the Soviets occupied their part of Poland in 1939, they placed these populations they called "Westerners" under suspicion. Some authors, such as Curzio Malaparte, maintain that Jewish segments were sympathetic to the Soviets, attending communist meetings. A member of the Italian legation during the Polish-Soviet war, he maintained excellent relations with the Polish government and diplomatic circles. He witnessed the hatred of these Christian populations towards the Jews, whose population in the Tsars' empire claimed to be 5 million. At the beginning of Barbarossa, in the Baltic countries and Ukraine, when the Nazis arrived and the Soviets withdrew, local nationalists shot at them. A Soviet unit, in the first hours of the conflict, was immobilized in the city center of Lviv. The commanding officer recorded: "Someone starts shooting at us from the attic of a nearby house." When an officer knocked on a house asking frightened children for water, they shouted from inside: "This is your end, 'Soviets.' We had not expected this from the 'westerners' [i.e.] former Polish citizens dubbed 'west Ukrainian after the Soviet invasion of 1939'". (70) The war against the partisans is part of the context of genocide. For Lund, it is a false assertive; therefore, the discrepant repression figures suggest that among the dead partisans were exterminated Jews. (71)

Part of the brutality exercised by the Nazis was legally justified because the USSR had not signed the Hague and Geneva Conventions, exempting the German army from following these humanitarian standards. (72) This Nazi policy soon proved counterproductive for German troops on the front line. The initial acclaim soon turned to deep hatred leading a Nazi officer to testify bitterly: "We lost all sympathy of the population. The people cannot understand the shooting of exhausted prisoners of war in villages and more prominent localities and leaving their bodies there. (73)

Greenfeld analyzes strict and automatic obedience to orders, participating in massacres, and the Holocaust was an excuse by the Wehrmacht in the name of "voluntary obedience, on willingness to obey on the part of those subject to it. This voluntary obedience-without which no social system can harden-is given in terms of the systems (of authority) claims to legitimacy, and because the subjects consider these claims persuasive." (74) (Greenfeld,2009) Nazi ideology knew that maintaining a system of authority in a modern industrial and mass society required total obedience from its subjects.

The Nazi government ensured blind obedience, as in Koepenick's Captain's narrative. According to Bourdieu, orders obeyed without questioning are part of the physical domain of symbolic power. This power allowed the persistence of the myth that Nazism "was an

unexplainable deviation from the course of otherwise virtuous German history, of which the majority of the German people were ignorant and innocent." (75)

Holocausts in Ukraine

For Snyder, the holocausts of Ukrainians and Jews perpetrated by Stalin and Hitler would be a unique event. In his classic work *Bloodlands*, the Jewish and Ukrainian Holocausts occurred in the lands between Moscow and Berlin, in Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine. In this, Stalin's crimes were deportation, atrocious hunger, deprivation, and repression. Both occupations resulted in more than 10 million deaths in the Bloodlands. (76)

Nationalist groups such as OUN and UPA engaged in massacres of Polish villages to cleanse the region of this minority. In June 1943, the commander of the OUN-North issued a secret directive stating that "We should take a large action of the liquidation of the Polish element. As the German armies withdraw, we should use this convenient moment to liquidate the male population from 16 to 60 years. We cannot lose this fight, and it is necessary to weaken Polish forces at all costs. Villages and settlements next to the massive forests should disappear from the face of the earth." (77) (Wikipedia)

In Galicia, insurgents warned the Poles to flee, while in Volhynia, unrestricted massacres were the norm. Ukrainian nationalism has shown a racist facet since the 1920s. In 1939, prominent leaders and ideologists of the movement supported the idea that in the event of a national revolution, "a large part of the Russian, Polish, and other immigrants" would be eliminated, denying citizenship to Jews. (78)

The memory of the Holocaust in the "Bloodlands" was fragmented into Polish, Romanian, and Hungarian memories. For many scholars, these lands are currently Ukrainian. German *Eintzgruppen* special troops killed Jews, many of whom became partisans serving the Soviets. (79); Germans, Romanians, and Ukrainians perpetrated the genocide of the Jewish people. Despite everything, the regime's extreme corruption saved many Jewish lives. (80) Christians of various confessions benefited materially from the Holocaust because, following the physical elimination of the Jews, they took possession of goods that the Nazis did not confiscate. For Warren Dean, during the Holocaust, there was an intense collaboration between local police forces in Ukraine and Poland, as occurred in Vichy, France. The active presence of the Ukrainian police in the massacre is a historiographical gap. (81)

Jewish-Communist Intermezzo

In 1920, Soviet revolutionary Leon Trotsky formed the Red Army. He invaded Ukraine, which Poles led by Marshal Pilsudsky then occupied. After defeating the Polish army, the Soviets took Kyiv and advanced into Poland. On June 10, 1920, his troops besieged the capital, Warsaw. Europe was in panic, threatened by the Bolshevik invasion. Curzio Malaparte described a Warsaw terrified of being taken over by the Soviets, ready to be the scene of a communist uprising. The Polish government tried to organize a truce between the parties while maintaining civil resistance. However, the threat was inside the city and the country, and not the Russians frightened the Poles. "Dans les faubourgs ouvriers, dans le Quartier de Nalewki, le ghetto de Varsovie, où 300,000 juifs tentent l'oreille au bruit de la Bataille, la revolte fermentait déjà." (In the working-class suburbs, in the Nalewki District, the Warsaw ghetto, where 300,000 Jews listened to the noise of the Battle, the revolt was already fermenting). (82)

Tensions between both the Polish Catholic and Jewish populations were ancient and insurmountable.

Par Malaparte: "Le ghetto de Varsovie était en joie. La haine des Polonais persecuteurs des enfants d'Israel, la satisfaction d'assister a la grand pitié des Pologne catholique it intolerante, s'y manifestient par des acts de courage et violence insolites chez les juifs de Nalwky, muet et passifs par prudence et tradition. Les Juifs devenait séditioneux: mauvais signes pour les polonais." ("The Warsaw ghetto was in joy. The hatred of the Poles persecutors of the children of Israel, the satisfaction of witnessing the great pity of Catholic and intolerant Poland, are manifested by acts of unusual courage and violence among the Jews of Nalwky, mute and passive out of prudence and tradition. The Jews were becoming seditious: bad signs for the Poles.") It was feared that the triumph of the red troops would lead to the installation of a "Soviet se compose des Juifs du endroit (...) Les juifs de persecutés, deveneient persecuteurs". (Soviet is made up of the Jews of the place (...) The Jews of persecuted, became persecutors.) (83) Would this latent hatred have led part of the Polish population to support the Jewish elimination by the Nazis? Certainly, for Polish communists the massacre of Kathyn's polish officialdom represented the welcome extermination of "class enemies."

THE RETURN OF THE URSS O UKRAINE

If, at first, the Barbarosa operation seemed like a military outing, the territorial breadth of the USSR and, mainly, the tenacious Soviet resistance, the climatic difficulties wore down the Wehrmacht and its war and human material. Despite its professionalism, it took only a short time for OKW to realize its tragic mistake. Despite everything, the Nazis carried out a new and vigorous assault on the Caucasus in 1942, almost defeating the USSR, but the victory was short. And the worst. The Red Army resurfaced with each defeat. (84)

After the costly Soviet winter counteroffensive on the Moscow front, the Red Army acquired expertise. Capable officers, some freed from the Gulag and others emerging from the fighting, were supported by heavy and efficient war material. Surprising military experts defeated Von Paulus' 6th Army in Stalingrad, launching offensives that took them to Ukraine and Belarus. After the battle of Kursk, Operation Bagration took the Red Army to the gates of Europe, finally reaching Berlin.

The Soviets returned to Ukraine traumatized by German looting and deportations. In addition to the fierce Germans, the Soviets faced the Ukrainian nationalist guerrilla that killed Soviet Marshal Vatutin. The existence of Ukrainian Nazis brought a new look to the phenomenon of collaboration. According to journalist Alexander Werth, who was in the region these days, "In some cities of eastern Ukraine, Banderites are so entrenched in police and self-government bodies that they remained there until the end of the German occupation. True, they needed to conceal their party affiliation (this applies to the Banderites from autumn 1941 and the Melnykites." (85)

According to Rudling, the Soviets investigated Ukrainian units such as the "Schutzmannschaft Battalion 201 fighting Soviet partisans. The way the interrogators formulated their questions indicates that the Soviet state security organs were more interested in activities they regarded as treason and undermining of the Soviet government than atrocities against 'peaceful Soviet citizens" and in Belarus. (86) The return of the USSR strengthened the authority of the

Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism. Following Werth, the Soviet periodical, The Bolshevik commented that during the Nazi period of occupation of Ukraine and Belarus: "The enemy spread the poison of racial theories in these zones, inciting Ukrainians against Russians, Belarusians against Italians, Estonians against Italians.

On the other hand, the Nazi invaders inflamed the private property instincts among these people. They liquidated the kolkhozes, distributed the land among German settlers, destroyed the intelligentsia, encouraged commercialization and easy profits, and turned workers and peasants against each other" (87). The Western Allied armies and the Red Army ceased operations on the Oder. European nations and Germany, like Vietnam and Korea, were divided. Between 1943 and 1944, six Soviet nations suspected of collaborating with the Nazi occupation, Latvia, Lithuania, western Belarus, Western Ukraine, and Moldova, were deported. (89) This region of Europe suffered intensely from the effects of war, fighting, and the destruction of Operation Barbarossa, in addition to the Soviet liberation battles. In 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke in Missouri in 1941: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent". <https://best-quotations.com/authquotes.php?auth=15> (90)

CONCLUSION

Nationalism is a controversial topic. Far from being an old theme, it is a contemporary phenomenon. A still imprecise and yet-to-be-determined neo-nationalism emerged from the convulsions generated by the decolonization of the 1960s and the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Many new nations demonstrated that the age of nationalism continued in controversial and dynamic nations like Ukraine. This untimely emergency led these countries to produce political capital based on the past and partly on the present. A war of independence builds a catalytic and decisive factor in the history of a country. It is your birth certificate in blood, sweat, and spit. The resulting products are controversial to many robust observers and scholars, confirming David Hume's belief "that reason is merely the slave of the passions." (91)

Ukraine was dispersed and possessed by powerful local empires until, at the end of the First World War in central Europe, a new constellation of countries with a complex ethnic and cultural composition emerged. The Russian Revolution of 1917 changed the situation not only with the threat of a proletarian revolutionary offensive in Europe. The newly created USSR incorporated Ukraine as a republic, receiving an immense investment of resources in industrialization, mining, and collectivism in agriculture. The hunger resulting from the setbacks of the ambitious project, plus the centralizing and political repression, created deep future resentments and the attachment to a reality that seems colonial to many.

World War II destabilized Europe, and British resistance, supported by the USA, led Nazism to invade the USSR. Operation Barbarossa and its initial spectacular advances called for the annihilation of the USSR. Ukrainian nationalists supported Nazism by proclaiming independence repelled by the III Reich. He wanted the country as a colony for settlement and exploitation of human resources and raw materials. Despite the brutality of the occupation, fascist principles influenced sectors of Ukrainian nationalist movements.

The defeat of the Third Reich and the creation of a new Soviet defensive belt increased Ukraine's importance in the context of the USSR. The reconstruction of the Ukrainian industrial, energy,

mining, and agricultural park placed the country in the Soviet centralized economic system. Police repression accentuated resentment of anti-communism and hostility towards the USSR and its heir, Russia. The significant tensions within the USSR, aggravated by the outbreak of the Chernobyl tragedy, led to the collapse of the Soviet system. Its dissolution in 1991 made Ukraine a nominal and independent republic. Under corrupt and pro-Soviet governments, its economy declined until popular revolutions and the action of Western attraction mechanisms took it away from Russia.

The Russian invasion of Crimea and the fighting in the Donbas intensified mutual hostility between Ukraine and Russia. Volodymyr Zelensky's presidency raises doubts regarding a future peace with Russia. NATO's interest in Ukraine has awakened Russia's centuries-old obsession with the security of its borders. Its European and North American supporters, who benefited from this war, are not interested in a victory in sight. Numerous critics suggest that the United States wants to prolong the war from which enormous profits come: "More than a year after the Russian invasion, it can be said that the one who is winning the War in Ukraine is not any of the countries involved, but the weapons industry. The ten largest weapons and ammunition companies in the United States and Europe showed an average growth of 7.5% in the last quarter of 2022 alone." (92)

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