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Europe or Eurasia? The Ideology of “Kuchmism”: A Review Article

Taras Kuzio

Volodymyr B. Hrynov (Vladimir B. Grinev). *Nova Ukraina: Iakoiu ia ii bachu/Novaia Ukraina: Kakoi ia ee vizhu*. Kyiv: Abrys, 1995. 99 + 99 pp.
Dmytro Vydrin and Dmytro Tabachnyk. *Ukraina na porozi XXI-ho stolittia: Politychnyi aspekt/Ukraine on the Threshold of the XXI Century: Political Aspect*. Kyiv: Lybid, 1995. 292 pp. (English text on pp. 150–292).

The authors of these two books are important political figures in Ukraine today. Their writings merit attention for the insight they provide into the ideology of the current Ukrainian leadership under President Leonid Kuchma.

Volodymyr Hrynov (Vladimir Grinev) is a presidential adviser on regional questions. He is also the chairman of the Inter-Regional Bloc of Reforms (MBR), which Kuchma, as the joint chairman, helped Hrynov to establish as their vehicle for the 1994 parliamentary and presidential elections. After Kuchma was elected the president of Ukraine in July 1994, the MBR was transformed into a political party led by Hrynov, who clearly hoped that it would become the “presidential party.” The MBR is one of two main parties in the 1998 parliamentary-election bloc SLON (Social-Liberal Alliance).

Dmytro Tabachnyk, an old ally of Kuchma’s since the latter was the prime minister in 1992 and 1993, was the chief of Kuchma’s presidential staff until December 1996. Because of his age and not very flattering curriculum vitae, Tabachnyk has often been attacked in the Ukrainian press as a “young upstart” (he is in his early thirties). Vydrin was the presidential adviser on domestic questions until his resignation in December 1995. A well-known writer, he has initiated biannual meetings between Ukraine’s and Russia’s high-level experts and elites. Vydrin is also the director of the International Institute of Global and

Regional Security, a Kyiv think-tank that has co-operated with its Western equivalents.

Hrynov's book, which has a Ukrainian text and a Russian version, is critical of President Leonid Kravchuk's "artificial isolation" of Ukraine from Russia and of the fact that independence has not brought real freedom for Ukraine's population. As for those who call for a return to the past, Hrynov writes that they "do not understand that it was precisely in this past that the core of our current problems arose and step by step, year by year, brought us to this current tragedy" (p. 4).

In chapter one, on the market economy, Hrynov makes it clear that he is both anticommunist and antinationalist, and a supporter of an independent Ukraine built on Western, liberal-democratic principles and in a strategic alliance with Russia. In his opinion, only private property and a market economy will give the majority of the population economic freedom and a high standard of living (p. 15). Hrynov's criticism of nationalism is explicitly outlined in chapter two, entitled "The State for the Citizen, and Not Citizens for the State." He rejects the correlation made by critics between strong presidential, executive power and total regimentation (p. 24).

Chapter three deals with what is still a highly controversial subject in Ukraine—whether Ukraine should be a federal or a unitary state. "The supporters of a unitary state or, as it is fashionable to say in certain circles, united state regard the idea of federalism as one that harms the integrity of the state and is even inimical to the very idea of Ukrainian statehood" (p. 27). Hence any debate on this subject is very acrimonious, because "the federal basis of the state is regarded as a basis for potential separatism, and a unitary state [is regarded] as a mechanism for its [own] 'suppression'" (p. 27).

In contrast, Hrynov sees federalism as a mechanism by which Ukraine's regions could defend themselves against the great-power designs of the new political centre, Kyiv. In his view, the nationalists and former *nomenklatura* of the Kravchuk presidency were wrong when they argued that "without a unitary state it will not be possible to tie together the remainder of the regions to their [the nationalists' and *nomenklatura*'s] understanding of statehood" (p. 29). Federalism would remove conflicts between the regions and the centre, while a unitary state could be a threat to national cohesiveness, especially if the state is aggressive (p. 35). In a federal state, regional and state programs would work side by side with state laws, which would be higher than regional decrees. Federalism would also ensure a higher rate of economic reform and privatization (p. 37).

Chapter four deals with state policies. Here Hrynov outlines his support for a strong presidency based on the American model, where the president is both the head of state and the executive, and for the creation of political parties based on ideas, not personalities. He is also in favour of a bicameral parliament based

on proportional, regional representation, the abolition of local councils, the defence of human and ethnic-minority rights, and a market economy "of the contemporary capitalist type with developed forms of social guarantees." (p. 40). He is opposed "to any kind of state (i.e. nationalist or communist) ideology" (p. 41).

Chapter five discusses Ukraine's intellectual potential and the revival of Ukrainian culture. The former Soviet system "spiritually degraded society and ruined its culture" (p. 50). But with the disintegration of the former USSR, a moral, ideological, economic, and legal vacuum was created. The Kravchuk leadership did little to develop Ukrainian culture; instead they tried to tie a new state ideology to culture while reducing expenditures on the latter. In Hrynov's view, the state's financial support for academic and cultural activities should be maintained.

Chapter six deals with another controversial, sensitive question—nationality and language policies. In Hrynov's view, Ukraine is a symbiosis of two similar languages, cultures, and historical traditions—the Ukrainian and the Russian. Ukraine was never a colony, and Russia was never an "aggressor" toward Ukraine (p. 61). This has led to a high degree of ethnic tolerance in Ukraine. In western Ukraine, in contrast, Ukrainian nationalism and anti-Russian feelings grew owing to interwar Polish repression and prevention of modernization or industrialization. Western Ukraine therefore became consolidated not on a liberal level, but on a national one.

The "party of power" in Ukraine under Kravchuk, Hrynov notes critically, wanted to isolate themselves from reforms in Russia, and this led to "anti-Russian isolationist policies" (p. 64). These policies did not work. In Hrynov's view, national identity cannot be imposed from above; it is something that individuals must decide for themselves. There is no such thing as a "core nationality" in Ukraine, and the state should encourage the development of all of Ukraine's ethnic groups, not just the Ukrainians. If the Ukrainians are singled out, this will lead to the discrimination of others. Hrynov argues that the Ukrainian language was not affected by Russification. He also opposes the current status of Ukrainian as the sole state language, because, in his view, "this could be understood to mean that the law is directed not towards the defence of the Ukrainian language, but at discriminating against Russian" (p. 70). Therefore he supports the position that Ukraine should have two state languages—Russian and Ukrainian.

Chapter seven deals with national security and defence issues. Ukraine's "inferiority complex" required an "external enemy" and a "siege-complex syndrome" (p. 73) under Kravchuk. In Hrynov's view, the security threat to Ukraine comes not from abroad, but from within—from its economic crisis, from its official nationality policy, which is anti-Russian, and from the lack of cultural and socio-economic regional autonomy. Under Kravchuk Ukraine distanced itself

from its recent allies, especially its "natural ally" Russia. This led to the "ruination of the common [Russian and Ukrainian] economic, cultural, and informational space and to the political self-isolation of Ukraine from the world" (p. 76). Because of the lack of an external aggressor, Hrynov believes that all Ukraine needs is a 100,000-strong professional, well-equipped, mobile army that "would promote the best traditions and inheritance of the past, but would be free from the problems and repeat occurrences that affected the Soviet army and from the tendencies that are unfortunately still evident in the Ukrainian armed forces" (pp. 78–9).

Hrynov's final chapter deals with Ukrainian-Russian relations. He writes that Ukraine's attempts to distance itself from Russia did not lead to greater integration with the West, but merely to self-isolation. In his view, there is no historical basis for Ukrainian-Russian antagonism (p. 82). Hrynov blames the former Ukrainian leadership for having unilaterally aggravated relations with Russia. He favours transparent borders within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), no customs barriers, no closed military-industrial cycle, co-ordinated reform policies, Ukraine's full membership in the CIS Economic Union, and the strengthening of a strategic alliance between Ukraine and Russia.

Vydrin and Tabachnyk's book contains a Ukrainian text and an English version. But the latter is unreadable—it was translated by a computer program. This is strange, given the high-ranking positions of the co-authors and the fact that one of the financial backers of the book was the U.S. MacArthur Foundation. The book also suffers from two other drawbacks: it has no real introduction, where the co-authors could have summarized their arguments and thesis, and no summary of their arguments in the conclusions. Therefore it is easy to become lost in the narrative. The tone of the book is at times impolite. When it was published, both of the co-authors were members of the presidential administration; therefore their criticism of their opponents should have been more diplomatic.

Vydrin and Tabachnyk maintain that because of the slowness of reforms in Ukraine, "we still do not have a civil society in its traditional understanding, that is, [a society] where the majority of the citizens hold one system of general values, moral underpinnings, ideas, myths, values, social norms, etc." (p. 10). Consequently the state's structures seem to be hanging in a vacuum, because it is not clear what values they are to reflect besides the dominant one of independence.

According to the co-authors, a civil society has not emerged in Ukraine because the state's structures often reflect only the interests of the *nomenklatura*, who copy Western models or rely on the Soviet past as a guide, and because there is no real middle class nor real private property or true political-party structures. The so-called middle class that exists has arisen as a result of criminal activities and reflects the interests of criminal clans. None of the political

groupings in parliament are interested in real reform; that is why none of them have proposed programs that would consolidate society. The members of the existing, corrupted "middle class" are also not interested in real reform, but only in increasing their personal wealth. During Kravchuk's presidency they were highly successful in amassing wealth from international trade with the West, which they ploughed back into "*prykhvatyzatsiia*" (privatization by the *nomenklatura*).

Vydrin and Tabachnyk point out that changes have begun in Ukraine, but none of them can be regarded as cardinal (p. 8). They ascribe Kuchma's victory to the success of "the industrial establishment as reflected by the interests of national capital." Under Kuchma, in contrast to Kravchuk's presidency, traditional industrial (not commercial) capital and centrist forces came to power. The political parties have generated new ideas and programs; but their weakness has led to a feeble legislature and judiciary, the absence of "grand" political figures, an ineffectual and corrupt state structure, and a presidential administration similar to the central apparatus of the Soviet-era Communist Party of Ukraine.

Vydrin and Tabachnyk provide a useful discussion of Ukrainian elites or the lack of them (on p. 24 they allege that Ukraine is the largest country in the world without political elites). "The main criterion of [Ukraine's] contemporary elites is ... personal security over the political instincts of national security" (p. 31). They divide the evolution of Ukraine's elites into four stages: (1) the *nomenklatura* (former elite) stage (1990–1); (2) the pre-elite stage (1992); (3) the corporate-elite stage (1993–4); and (4) the integral-elite stage (years unspecified).

In their discussion of the seven men who contested the summer 1994 presidential elections, the co-authors describe Kravchuk as an ideologue whose role it was to explain the new state ideology after the collapse of the former USSR. Oleksandr Moroz, the current Socialist Party of Ukraine leader and chairman of parliament, has tried to combine the functions of Kravchuk the ideologue and Kuchma the manager. But Kuchma is a leader as well as a manager. He has been ready to make concrete decisions and take personal responsibility, and he is not disposed towards any ideology. Kuchma's roots are urban and not rural, unlike Kravchuk and Ivan Pliushch, the former chairman of parliament (December 1991–March 1994).

By the 1994 elections, the issues that had dominated in Ukraine had been replaced by other priorities—the renewal of ties with Russia, crime prevention, and social welfare. In eastern Ukraine these problems have been more important than the question of independence, and Kuchma's emphasis on them led to his victory and consequently the greater representation of eastern Ukraine in the Kyiv elites. Kuchma's victory raised questions previously taken for granted—what Ukraine is building and where it is going. Here Vydrin and Tabachnyk criticize the previous administration: "The former ideologues (of the 'nation-

state,' 'revival of the nation,' 'rebuilding the state,' etc.) who had ambitions to play an all-national role completely exhausted and discredited themselves. These ideologues based themselves on local, western Ukrainian political and social communities, and only through the force of the *nomenklatura* did they maintain themselves as all-national" (p. 32). But the co-authors also criticize those Communists who still want to revive the former USSR, a goal that does not enjoy support throughout Ukraine. Like Hrynov, therefore, both Vydrin and Tabachnyk are anticommunist and antinationalist.

Various forces have tried to influence Kuchma to move in their direction. They include the "Belovezhans"—a derogatory term for those who are linked to the disintegration of the former USSR at the 7–8 December 1991 meeting in Belovezhskaia Pushcha—with their "bankrupt ideas" of building a new state ideology based on total respect for the state. They have the support of the national-democratic parties and the former *nomenklatura*. Meanwhile the parties of the Left have exploited social problems and tensions to promote a "people's democratic state." A third force—the so-called national liberals led by Kuchma—has promoted anti-crisis and reformist policies under their Centre-Left leader.

Kuchma has promoted the notions that Ukraine must continue to play a stabilizing role in the post-Soviet geopolitical space and have a place and role in the macro-economic process of Eurasian integration. His reform strategy is to ensure that Ukraine enters the world market as an equal. He is also strongly in favour of the integration of the post-Soviet economic space, "which is a priority for Ukraine's geo-economic interests as a state in the Eurasian region" (p. 37).

According to Vydrin and Tabachnyk, the elaboration of a new foreign policy based on new concepts and of a new doctrine of national security is in Ukraine's national interest. Radical reforms would create conditions for Ukraine's economic and political security; and new social and cultural policies would integrate Ukraine through the revival of cultural and spiritual values and the prioritization of health care, the creation of a new civil society, and social welfare.

The co-authors detail the differences between the two Leonids—Kravchuk and Kuchma. The national-democratic parties and other democratic forces have supported the national liberals on social-market reform, but have opposed Kuchma on "principled questions" such as economic integration within the CIS and the normalization of relations with Russia. Vydrin and Tabachnyk favour a Centre-Left, centrist strategic alliance between the *nomenklatura* cum middle class and the national liberals oriented toward the defence of domestic capital while remaining hostile to nationalism. This "Bloc of Constructive Forces" would include the Council of Regions, the Union of Mayors, the centrist parliamentary factions, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (which dominates the Council of Entrepreneurs attached to the presidency), the political parties cooperating with the industrialist centrist forces, trade unions, and those bankers who support the defence of industrial capital.

Vydrin and Tabachnyk devote much space to the question of normalizing and improving relations with Russia. They believe that relations would have improved already if politicians had not attempted to "improve" these relations themselves (p. 62). Ukraine paid dearly for trying to attain "full independence" under Kravchuk, for its society was not ready professionally, psychologically, or politically for independence: "Mistakes in such a situation practically were inevitable" (p. 63). They criticize Kravchuk's foreign policy for being "isolationist" and "romantic" (for example, the proposal to create a Central European Zone of Security and Co-operation), for promoting the idea of Ukraine as a buffer between the West and Russia (which, they allege, is backed by Germany and the United States), and for being overly optimistic as to the international help Ukraine would obtain. Kravchuk's isolationist policies vis-à-vis the CIS merely worsened Ukraine's economic crisis and social strife. They also led to greater demands for re-integration with Russia, particularly in eastern Ukraine, where a civil society and strong political parties do not exist, in contrast to western Ukraine.

The co-authors believe that Ukraine is more likely to obtain equal treatment within the CIS, and that Ukraine should cultivate allies (e.g., Kazakhstan and Moldova) that hold similar views. They admit, however, that improving relations with Russia will not be easy, because Russia inherited the model of aggressive and undiplomatic relations that the former USSR applied towards Eastern Europe (p. 68). Ukraine's growing self-identification has been linked to its differentiation from the "others"; because Russia is the closest "other," Ukraine's need to distance itself from it has been the greatest (p. 69). Often the most anti-Russian members of Ukraine's presidential administration (where they account for twenty percent of the staff) are ethnic Russians (p. 70).

One reason why it has been difficult to improve relations with Russia is that the policy of improving such relations has been associated with the radical Left (the Communists, Socialists, and Peasant Party of Ukraine), who have called for a military, political, and economic union between Ukraine and Russia. Many citizens have regarded the policy of normalizing relations with Russia as "inspired by the Communists," and the public at large has confused such normalization with the restoration of the USSR. The liberals have used anti-Russian slogans for domestic reasons only (many of them have business partners in Russia). On the other hand, the national democrats and nationalists, who are based primarily in western and central Ukraine and have declined in popularity since 1993, have been the most vocal on the alleged Russian threat.

That Ukraine should be an active promoter of Eurasian integration is a central theme of Vydrin and Tabachnyk's book. Ukraine should build up its position based on its national geopolitical interests as Russia's principal competitor within the CIS, and thereby influence domestic developments in Russia. The co-authors are critical of "Yeltsinintegration," according to which

many Russian leaders see Ukraine purely as a "prodigal son" who will return sooner or later. Russia does not take Ukrainian independence seriously, the co-authors argue. Russia favours unequal relations and regards Ukraine as a vassal and lesser state.

The "economic war" that has existed between Ukraine and Russia since the disintegration of the former USSR has shown that neither country is able to overpower the other; if that were so, a "hot war" would have ensued (p. 79). Russia has overestimated its strength to apply economic pressure because it has not had a complete monopoly of control over supplies and because its re-orientation to other markets is not possible. Russia has long complained that Ukraine has re-exported its raw materials at higher prices and that there has been no co-operation on pricing policy with Ukraine, which has often led to the undercutting of Russian products and to Ukraine's large debts and isolationist policies, which have blocked CIS integration. Meanwhile Ukraine has complained that Russia sells its raw materials at world prices to ruin its economy and that Russia usurped the USSR's wealth, and has criticized Russia's policy of attempting to buy up Ukraine. Russia may no longer want to ruin Ukraine's economy, but both countries will continue to compete on the international market.

In the short term, therefore, "it is still too early to be an optimist" about Ukrainian-Russian relations (p. 89). Integration is only likely to take place in the economic sphere, but not in the political or military spheres. If Ukraine decentralizes its regions and enterprises, relations will improve with Russia because industrial directors and businessmen are more pragmatic and less ideological. This improvement in relations will be aided by the creation of Industrial-Financial Groups: "That is why the basis for the improvement of these relations more than likely rests not within the realm of inter-state re-integration, but on the basis of ties—the creation of joint enterprises, banks, and then financial-industrial groups" (p. 92). The areas of conflict with Russia—the Black Sea Fleet, the division of the Soviet inheritance, and competition for influence in foreign markets are not enough to create a "hot war" between Ukraine and Russia.

In the former USSR nuclear weapons served not only a military function, but also a political one. They were an idol, a lord, a myth before which people prayed, the pride and "intellect" of the state. Ukraine inherited not only many of these nuclear weapons, but also the myths that surrounded them: the belief that any state that possessed nuclear weapons had prestige and greatness and that these weapons were the main way of guaranteeing independence. Consequently one's attitude toward nuclear weapons reflected one's civic patriotism and loyalty. Nuclear weapons could be traded as a valuable commodity, or used to deter Russia from engaging in aggression toward Ukraine.

Russia's interference in Ukrainian affairs could come about as a consequence of the discomfort of its Russian minority and the suppression of their status, rights, and abilities. Why was there no ethnic conflict under Kravchuk, the co-authors ask? They answer: (1) Psychological pressure on the Russians in Ukraine has not been not great; in reply to opinion polls, two-thirds of them stated that they had not experienced discrimination. (2) The Russians and the Ukrainians speak a similar language, are mostly Orthodox believers, and have similar mentalities. (3) There are no strong Russian civic groups or political parties, such as Inter-Front, in Ukraine. (4) The former Soviet security forces were not autonomous and had been completely nationalized. (5) Ukraine's economic decline has affected all ethnic groups and drained all their energies. (6) The radical nationalists moderated their stance after the victory of the pro-Russian separatists in the Crimea in early 1994. Finally, (7) although the leaders of the Ukrainian national revival are critical of Russia, they are moderates domestically.

The Russians in Ukraine remain negative toward Ukraine's national symbols, which they perceive as "nationalistic," and toward the independent state's new historical figures. While the "Russian idea" is prevalent in Russia, it has not yet taken root in Ukraine or been understood there. Ukraine has had a confused, dual policy: while professing equality for all ethnic groups, it has sought to ensure the dominance of the Ukrainians and the assimilation of others. The Ukrainianization policy is not unlike Russification, the co-authors argue. "The process of the assimilation of Russians in Ukraine has to some extent already begun," especially of higher and middle-ranking state officials (p. 88). But it will take years, if not decades, before this assimilation succeeds.

One of the weakest sections of Vydrin and Tabachnyk's book is entitled "The New Ukraine within the New World Order." It takes up nearly a third of the book. "The principal question is: which political force will take upon itself the policies of Ukraine's national interests," they ask (p. 95). "The growth of the Russian leadership's imperial ambitions, with the unofficial support of the United States, has only served to sharpen the disputes that have existed in the [former Soviet] region since the collapse of the [Soviet] Union.... Because of this, the view that Russia is not a state and that the growth of Russian revanchists will, in the near future, threaten Ukraine with its loss of sovereignty finds a wide group of supporters within the ranks of Ukraine's central political elite" (p. 110).

Will Ukraine belong to the "the backyard of Europe or the heart of Eurasia?" Vydrin and Tabachnyk ask. Opposition to President Kuchma is based, they believe, among the earlier Euro-centrist "isolationist conservatives." But for Ukraine to have European priorities is not realistic, as is not the policy of creating a Baltic-Black Sea axis of "Europe without Russia," i.e., a new cordon sanitaire. In other words, the "Belovezhan politicians" could not "recognize the real geopolitical priorities of Ukraine" (p. 127). Outside observers always describe Ukraine's strategic choice as being either with Russia or with Europe.

The problem is that “any kind of extremity here can become a threat to Ukraine’s integrity and statehood” (p. 129).

Although the national democrats and the liberals both support domestic reform, the former regard Eurasia as they did the USSR, and “the attempts by the president [Kuchma] to clearly define Ukraine’s national (especially geo-economic) interests [as being] within the post-Soviet space are classified [by them] as an attempt towards the ‘restoration of the [Soviet] empire’” (p. 136). This critical view of Eurasia as synonymous with the former USSR is shared by the intelligentsia, think-tanks, and publications in Kyiv that support a European orientation and the creation of a “national state.” They are very active, have funding, and organize conferences and seminars where they regularly accuse Kuchma of “refusing to return Ukraine to Europe” and of being “pro-Asian.”

Vydrin and Tabachnyk criticize these views. Their position on Eurasian integration is positive; they do not see it from the same perspective as those who wish to revive the USSR, but from the perspective that integration is vital to Ukraine’s national interests. Ukraine’s geography is such that it could become a vital transit corridor. Therefore, the co-authors argue (in a similar manner to Hrynov), Ukraine should be at the forefront of Eurasian integration, because it will enhance its regional status. (Kuchma has since explained that for him Eurasia includes not only the former USSR, but also China, Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, and other countries in southeast Asia with which Ukraine could expand economic relations.¹)

Methodological Problems and Confused Concepts

The authors of both books are anticommunist and antinationalist liberals. Therefore they contrast the alliance between the Kuchma social-democratic-liberal leadership and the industrial establishment with the alliance between the national democrats, statist, and *nomenklatura* under Kravchuk that had greater links to Ukraine’s rural community. Although this is undoubtedly the case to some degree, the former *nomenklatura* (or “party of power”) did not back Kravchuk completely in the 1994 presidential elections. If it had, Kravchuk would have defeated Kuchma. A substantial section of the party of power therefore must have supported Kuchma.

The liberalism espoused by Hrynov and the national liberalism espoused by Vydrin and Tabachnyk are both still rather weak tendencies in Ukraine, as the latter co-authors point out. A strongly developed civil society, a middle class, and widespread private property ownership are lacking in Ukraine, and it will be difficult to consolidate them in the midst of the ongoing economic crisis that has occurred as a result of the transition from totalitarianism to democracy.

1. *Vechirni Kyiv*, 1 February 1996.

Furthermore, Ukraine may be forced to pass through an authoritarian phase. Fortunately for Ukraine, however, the civil-society vacuum has not been filled by nationalism, unlike in many other regions of the former USSR (especially in Russia). Because there is no unifying national idea in Ukraine, the probability of domestic conflict and conflict with Russia has been reduced. At the same time, the pace of transition has slowed as a result of the search for compromise politics.

While Hrynov opposes the adoption of a state ideology (be it communist or nationalist), Vydrin and Tabachnyk believe that the absence of an all-embracing national idea (or state ideology) has had negative consequences for Ukraine's development. Ukraine's citizens are not united around a single cause for which they would be willing to make short-term sacrifices. Kuchma agrees more with the latter co-authors than with Hrynov: "First, I would like to stress that I never rejected the national idea. I do not reject it even now. But I am convinced that an idea did not and will not work if it has only an ethnic content. I understand, however, that the national idea is one of the important mobilizers in the independent Ukrainian state."²

Hrynov's support for Ukraine's territorial transformation along federal lines is a major reason why he has become isolated politically and why the liberal centrists have become divided. Federalism finds no favour within the Kuchma camp or among the Socialists in parliament; indeed, its introduction is widely perceived as something that would lead to Ukraine's disintegration and the growth of separatism. Proponents of federalism have therefore, at this crucial juncture in nation- and state-building, been routinely denounced as "treacherous." Article two of the June 1996 Ukrainian constitution describes Ukraine as a unitary state; article 132 elaborates that this unitary structure "combines centralized and decentralized methods of state administration."³

Hrynov's views on nationality and language policies have also divided Ukraine's liberals and elicited sharp criticism.⁴ His argument that Ukraine is a symbiosis of two languages, cultures, and historical traditions (Russian and Ukrainian) echoes the position of the eighteenth–nineteenth-century Russophile

2. Interview with Kuchma entitled "Napovnyty natsionalnu ideiu realnym zmistom." *Vechirni Kyiv*, 1 February 1996.

3. The constitution was published in *Holos Ukrainy*, 13 July 1996, and in *Golos Ukrainy*, 27 July 1996.

4. Negative reviews of the two books under review here include Kostiantyn Rodyk, "Shtuchne dykhannia dlia nebizhchyka, abo 'Korotkyi kurs' vid Hrynova." *Chas*, 20 October 1995; Ivan Drach et al., "Nova Ukraina chy nova koloniia?" *Holos Ukrainy*, 12 December 1995; Marta Kolomayets, "Kuchma Administration Authors Promote Focus on Eurasia," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 25 February 1996; and Mykola Tomenko, "Iaku Ukrainu buduie komanda Prezydenta?" *Holos Ukrainy*, 13 June 1996.

Ukrainian nobility. If his views become accepted, it is difficult to see what nation- and state-building policies, other than those adopted by the Belarusian leadership, could be undertaken in Ukraine. Hrynov's views have not only been sharply criticized by Kyiv intellectuals and journalists; they have also not found much support in eastern Ukraine. During a visit to Donetsk University in August 1996, I discovered that the main Ukrainian history textbook used in the Faculty of History was the Russian-language translation of Orest Subtelny's *Ukraine: A History* (University of Toronto Press, 1988).⁵ The Ukrainian-language and Russian-language editions of this textbook by a Ukrainian-Canadian historian are used throughout Ukraine's education system and within the armed forces.⁶

Indeed, many of Hrynov's complimentary views about tsarist Russian rule in Ukraine and his criticism of Polish rule in western Ukraine reflects the teachings of Soviet historiography, which adopted tsarist guidelines in 1934.⁷ David Saunders has concluded that an infamous edict banning the Ukrainian language issued in 1863 by Petr Valuev, Alexander II's interior minister, was aimed at preventing the emergence of a Ukrainian nation that would and diverge away from the Russians.⁸ Hrynov's views are contradicted by Saunders's conclusion: "Having sensed the possibility of a broadly based Ukrainian identity, he [Valuev] was determined to prevent it from becoming a reality."⁹

Hrynov's argument that Ukraine never suffered from Russification is contradicted by a huge array of evidence from both the tsarist and Soviet eras, when the Ukrainian language was either banned or discriminated against and vilified as an uncouth, peasant tongue with no future and unable to meet the demands of the modern era.¹⁰ In view of the disadvantaged situation that the Ukrainian

5. On the teaching of Ukrainian history, see Zenon E. Kohut, "History as a Battleground: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Historical Consciousness in Contemporary Ukraine," and Serhii M. Plokhyy, "Historical Debates and Territorial Claims: Cossack Mythology in the Russian-Ukrainian Border Dispute"; in S. Frederick Starr ed., *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 123–45 and 147–70 respectively.

6. Andrew Wilson wrongly believes that "nationalist" views such as Subtelny's would be met with hostility in Ukraine's Russophone regions. See Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 2 (April 1995): 265–89.

7. Stephen Velychenko, *Shaping Identity in Eastern Europe and Russia: Soviet-Russian and Polish Accounts of Ukrainian History, 1914–1991* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 140, 160, 167, 210.

8. David Saunders, "Russia and Ukraine under Alexander II: The Valuev Edict of 1863," *The International History Review* 27, no. 1 (February 1995): 28.

9. *Ibid.*, 50.

10. See Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification? A Study in the Soviet Nationalities Problem* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968); and Vasyl Lyzanchuk,

language was in under Soviet rule, it is completely understandable, and in keeping with liberal government policy in the West, that the newly independent Ukrainian state adopted an affirmative-action approach to the status of the Ukrainian language. Hrynov's position is contrary to the support that liberals in the West give to positive discrimination.

Similarly, although some Western liberals would agree with Hrynov about the need to reject prioritization of the "core nation," they would not be looking at this problem from Hrynov's perspective. Western liberals reject the term "core nation" within developed states that have civil societies and have completed their nation- and state-building process. But all western and central European countries have "core nations" that constitute the majority of their populations (e.g., the English in the United Kingdom, the French in France, the Germans in Germany, the Dutch in the Netherlands, and the Swiss Germans in Switzerland) and were the focus of attention in their nation- and state-building policies during the nineteenth century. In Ukraine neither a civil society nor the nation have yet been completely constructed. If the core Ukrainian nation is not the focus of attention during this nation- and state-building stage, what will be built? Would it not be more like multicultural Canada than something resembling a European nation-state?¹¹

The three authors under review, as well as the Western analysts Dominique Arel and Andrew Wilson,¹² argue that under Kravchuk Ukraine's civic nationality policies evolved into ethnic nationality policies vis-à-vis Ukraine's Russophones. But the problem with dividing nationalism into civic ("liberal") and ethnic ("illiberal") varieties is that historically *both* varieties have become homogenized internally and have differentiated their societies externally during the course of nation- and state- building. As one observer has explained: "For however committed to civic, 'universalistic,' 'liberal' norms a given form of

Navichno kaidany kuvaly: Fakty, dokumenty, komentari pro rusyfikatsiiu v Ukraini (Lviv: Instytut narodoznavstva NAN Ukrainy, 1995).

11. It is not surprising that the main Western critique of Kravchuk's nationality policies—a critique surprisingly similar to Hrynov's and Vydrin and Tabachnyk's—is by a French Canadian, Dominique Arel. See Arel's "Ukraine: The Temptation of the Nationalizing State," in Vladimir Tismaneanu, ed., *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 157–88; and idem and Valeri Khmelko, "The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in Ukraine," *The Harriman Review* 9, nos. 1–2 (spring 1996): 81–91. For a critique of Arel's views, see my article "The Evolution of National Identity in Independent Ukraine," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 2, no. 4 (winter 1996): 582–608.

12. See Valeri Khmelko and Andrew Wilson, "Regionalism, Ethnic and Linguistic Cleavages in Ukraine," in Taras Kuzio, ed., *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, forthcoming).

nationalism may be, nationalism is at bottom, as Weber saw, both an homogenizing and a differentiating mode of discourse. Nationalist discourse—even of the liberal sort—drives towards cultural standardization within the nation, which makes it hard to sustain genuinely multi-ethnic and multi-national expression. At the same time a nation favours clear territorial boundaries that distinguish it from ‘foreigners’ and ‘aliens.’¹³

The authors of both books remain critical of Kravchuk’s presidency for its alleged isolationist policies vis-à-vis Russia and the CIS. Kravchuk would strongly disagree with this view. Under both Kravchuk and Kuchma Ukraine has rejected the two dangerous extremes that Vydrin and Tabachnyk point to—complete political, military, and economic withdrawal from the CIS or full integration within it. Hrynov has been the only one in the democratic camp who backs greater non-economic integration of Ukraine with Russia and the CIS. As Vydrin and Tabachnyk point out, the Ukrainian elites and public have closely associated this view with the revival of a new USSR, and therefore, apart from Hrynov, it is only backed by the Communists (and to a lesser degree by the Socialists and the Peasant Party).

With regard to Ukraine’s attitude to political and military integration within the CIS, there has been little difference between Kuchma’s and Kravchuk’s policies. Under both presidents Ukraine’s declared non-aligned, neutral status has remained an instrument by which Ukraine has withstood pressure to join the CIS’s Tashkent Collective Security Treaty. The peculiar nature of this “neutrality” has remained the same under both leaders. Ukraine continues to reject joint CIS military manoeuvres or to participate in CIS peacekeeping operations. But under both Kravchuk and Kuchma Ukraine has been an enthusiastic member of NATO’s Partnership for Peace program (under Kuchma Ukraine has participated in more military exercises sponsored by NATO’s Partnership for Peace program than any former Soviet-bloc state). Ukraine has also refused to participate in any peacekeeping operations except those under the auspices of the United Nations (i.e., in former Yugoslavia and in Angola).

In terms of economic policy, under Kuchma Ukraine has adopted a more pragmatic approach toward the CIS. The authors of both books back Ukraine’s economic integration with the CIS and see Ukraine as playing a central, integrating role within Eurasia. But a number of problems immediately arise whenever this question is raised. Regardless of the wishes of the authors of both books, the disintegration of the former USSR and post-Soviet Russia’s and Ukraine’s nation- and state-building policies have pushed the two countries apart.¹⁴ If the current Ukrainian leadership is as interested in protecting

13. David Little, “Belief, Ethnicity and Nationalism,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 1, no. 2 (summer 1995): 290.

14. This has been reluctantly admitted even by Russian authors. See Tatiana Ivzhenko,

domestic capital as Vydrin and Tabachnyk allege, then the question we should ask is: for whom *and* against whom is this capital being protected? Countries in the throes of economic transition have often protected domestic capital, but at a price. Protectionism has led to the preservation of inefficient industries that often can only survive by relying on state credits. In addition, as Kuchma has pointed out, the only foreign capital that is a potential threat to Ukraine is not Western, but Russian.

Under Kuchma Ukraine has continued to reject full membership in the CIS Economic and Payments and Customs unions, and the transparent borders within the CIS (all of which Hrynov backs). Trade between Ukraine and Russia (and other CIS states) has declined, and both countries have built up their respective arms industries for both domestic and foreign export markets. Policies have been influenced by the exigencies of nation- and state-building, mutual suspicions, and the requirements of national security. Vydrin and Tabachnyk back Kuchma's policies of creating Industrial-Financial Groups as a way of improving Russian-Ukrainian relations at the micro-economic level and of renewing economic ties for some enterprises that otherwise would go bankrupt. But it is difficult to see how these policies can make a large contribution in view of the diversification of trade and domestic suppliers that has begun and will continue in both countries. Ukrainian officials have repeatedly complained, for example, about the untruthful media reports and dirty diplomatic and business tricks Russia has used to prevent the promotion of Ukrainian arms sales abroad.¹⁵

It is difficult to find anyone within the Ukrainian leadership who can define what Hrynov means when he calls for a "strategic partnership" with Russia. Russia and Ukraine have different perceptions of what such partnership means. On the fifth anniversary of Ukraine's independence, Ukraine's foreign minister, Hennadii Udovenko, described his country's differences with Russia as follows: "Russia proposes co-operation on the principle of special partnership and the special interests of the Russian Federation on the territory of the former USSR. In this area our standpoints do not coincide."¹⁶

Although President Kuchma and Hrynov were allies during the 1994 elections, their attitudes towards Russia have clearly diverged since that time. As Kuchma puts it: "if you say that Ukrainian sailors must leave Sevastopol, what

"Ukraina stremitsia stat blizhe k Zapadu: Opredelennaia chast kievskogo politicheskogo isteblishmenta pitaetsia pri etom otoiti ot partnerstva s Rossiei," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25 July 1996; and Arkady Moshes, "Moscow-Kiev Rift Set to Widen," *Moscow News*, 11-17 September 1996. See also my forthcoming article "Europe or Eurasia? National Identity, Transformation and Ukrainian Foreign Policy," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 14, no. 4 (December 1998).

15. *Zerkalo nedeli*, 3-9 August 1996.

16. Quoted in *Uriadovi kur'ier*, 10 August 1996.

does it mean? If we cannot live together in peace in one place, where do you propose that we go? To Donuzlav—are we supposed to set up tents there? Is this strategic partnership?"¹⁷ This different understanding of "strategic partnership" became clear at a Russian-Ukrainian conference in late 1995 in Kyiv: "While for the Ukrainian experts the essence lies in Ukraine's desire to have Moscow recognize its equal-partner status, on Russia's part the Moscow intellectuals did not even mention that issue. According to the latter, strategic partnership amounts to two states having a unanimous attitude toward a third state."¹⁸

In other words, the Eurasianism that all three authors promoted in 1994 and 1995 failed because of Russia's unwillingness to accept Ukraine as an equal within the Eurasian geopolitical space. Russia has never offered a strategic partnership of equals recognizing each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty to Ukraine.¹⁹ Ukraine has therefore increasingly looked and moved westwards, away from Eurasia towards Europe. This new policy was formulated by Ukraine's Foreign Ministry in the summer of 1996 as "co-operation with the CIS—integration with Europe."²⁰

In its search for a "strategic partnership," Russia has regarded Belarus—not Ukraine—as the model country, and it has established close working relations with it. The Belarusian leadership has supported Russian hostility to NATO's expansion,²¹ backed the creation of an anti-NATO military bloc, and agreed with Russia's demands for changes to the flank limits of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty and with Russia's military intervention in Chechnia.²² The Ukrainian leadership has not supported any of these Russian positions; therefore it is difficult to see how there could be any basis for a Russian-Ukrainian "strategic partnership" along the lines that Hrynov has proposed.

17. *Radio Ukraine World Service*, 18 January 1996.

18. *Zerkalo nedeli*, 11–17 November 1995.

19. See my "Russia Still Threatens Ukraine's Stability," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 7 November 1996; and "New Foreign and Defence Policies," in my *Ukraine under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's Press, 1997), 179–226, where I compare Kravchuk's and Kuchma's security policies.

20. *Polityka i chas*, 1996, no. 7. See also Arkady Moshes, "Ukraine's Shaky Neutrality," *Moscow News*, 4–10 July 1996. For a survey of Ukrainian security policy under Kuchma, see F. Stephen Larrabee, "Ukraine's Balancing Act," *Survival* 38, no. 2 (summer 1996): 143–65.

21. See my "Ukraine and the Expansion of NATO," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 7, no. 9 (September 1995); and my "NATO Enlargement: The View From the East," *European Security* 6, no. 2 (summer 1997): 48–62.

22. See my "Chechnya Crisis and the 'Near Abroad,'" *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 4 (1995): 553–72.

Vydrin and Tabachnyk express the more pragmatic view (in contrast to Hrynov's romantic view) that Russia is unwilling to regard Ukraine as an equal or to accept its independence as a permanent factor. Nevertheless, when Kuchma was elected the Ukrainian president all three authors still held romantic notions about Russia that have since proven to be unrealistic.

All three authors call for the "normalization" of relations with Russia and see good, neighbourly relations as important factors in maintaining domestic stability within Ukraine. Hrynov goes even further, claiming that Russia was never an "aggressor" against Ukraine and is still not likely to be one. Vydrin and Tabachnyk argue in a more realistic manner about the unlikelihood of better Ukrainian-Russian relations in the short term. Any objective treatment of Ukrainian-Russian relations since 1992 would have to criticize both nations for mistakes that have been committed—and not just the Ukrainian side as Hrynov does. Within two years of becoming president, Kuchma began using the same critical language about Russian policies as that of his predecessor, Kravchuk. Although it is highly unlikely that Russia is a potential military threat to Ukraine, Russia's refusal, until May 1997, to recognize the current borders, which are binding in international law, would be seen by any country's elites as a potential threat to its national security. This is especially the case in Ukraine when so many members of the Russian elite, including the so-called democrats, have made territorial claims against Ukrainian regions.

Vydrin and Tabachnyk ask whether Ukraine will belong to "the backyard of Europe or the heart of Eurasia." Naturally, the heart of Eurasia is occupied by Russia, which perceives the integration of the CIS around itself as synonymous with its nation- and state-building (and even renewed empire-building) process. Therefore it is difficult to see how Ukraine could or would want to have a central role in the heart of Eurasia. It would not only be difficult to achieve because of the "Yeltsinintegration," which Vydrin and Tabachnyk criticize, but it would also contradict Ukraine's nation- and state-building process. Forging a new national Ukrainian identity—a central tenet of Ukraine's nation- and state-building process—would be impossible within Eurasia.²³ A new national identity can only be forged if Ukraine is re-integrated with Europe. Surely it would be better for Ukraine to be on the edge of Europe rather than on the edge of Asia, to rephrase Vydrin and Tabachnyk's question.

The Eurasian integration proposed by all three authors has therefore largely remained an unfulfilled dream. There is little support within the Ukrainian leadership for anything other than economic co-operation within the CIS, primarily for those sectors of the Ukrainian economy that cannot find a market

23. See Stephen R. Burant, "Foreign Policy and National Identity: A Comparison of Ukraine and Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies* 47, no. 7 (November 1995): 1137–9.

elsewhere. Full Eurasian integration is still largely perceived as synonymous with the revival of the former USSR. Ukraine's non-communist Eurasianists have therefore had little success in promoting their agenda, and their influence has declined since Kuchma was elected in July 1994. If Kuchma, Tabachnyk, and the other authors under review want to be *derzhavnyky*, they have little option but to support the restriction of Ukraine's integration within the CIS, where Russia will always play a dominant role. Russia's understanding of "strategic partnerships" and integration within the CIS, where other member-countries, such as Belarus, are simply Russian-dominated quasi states, undercuts the arguments of liberal Eurasianists (such as Tabachnyk, Vydrin, and Hrynov) that Eurasia is Ukraine's "natural" geopolitical and geo-economic home.

All three authors belong to the liberal, Centre-Left or centrist, camp in Ukrainian politics and espouse the anti-communist and anti-nationalist views of the Kuchma leadership (Vydrin was, however, also a member of Kravchuk's presidential election-campaign team in December 1991). All of them, like Kuchma, are positioned between the radical Left, on the one hand, and the Centre-Right national democrats, on the other.

The national democrats and the radical Right are weak within eastern and southern Ukraine, where the main political rivals are the radical Left and the social democrats. The three main liberal groupings are Hrynov's MBR, the People's Democratic Party of Ukraine (NDPU)—the new "party of power" to which Kuchma transferred his allegiance—and the Liberal Party of Ukraine (LPU). The MBR is the only political party (besides the splintered radical Left) that still advocates Eurasianism. The NDPU and LPU espouse a European orientation. Until recently, the LPU had within its ranks the former president of Ukraine (Kravchuk) and a former prime minister (Ievhen Marchuk, the leader of the Social-Market Choice parliamentary faction and now a presidential candidate representing the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine [United] in the next elections), and it still has a well-known reformer and presidential aide on economic policy (Volodymyr Lanovy). While the MBR backs Kuchma, the LPU stands in opposition to him.

Both Hrynov's and Tabachnyk and Vydrin's books present Kuchma's victory as that of a pragmatic centrist with close ties to the industrialist lobby. But Kuchma's victory was also that of the Russophone Ukrainians of eastern Ukraine, who, as a social group, have the distinct inability to be either anti-Ukrainian or anti-Russian. Consequently, although Kuchma is trying to normalize relations with Russia, he is not undertaking this at the expense of nation- and state-building and his loyalty to independent Ukraine. Kuchma's presidency has shown that Russophone Ukrainians are as loyal to independent Ukraine and *derzhavnyky* as much as their Ukrainophone compatriots.

Kuchma's predecessor, Kravchuk, is also a centrist. His Ukrainophone, western Ukrainian background have made him more supportive of co-operating

with the Centre-Right national democrats on nation- and state-building. On socio-economic questions, both Kravchuk and Kuchma have held similar social-democratic and liberal views, and both of them have supported a state-regulated transition to a social-market economy. Kuchma's pragmatism and industrialist background have made him less cautious about renewing economic ties with the other states of the former USSR. On political-military integration within the CIS, however, there is little difference between the negative views of the two Leonids.

Although Hrynov's book is better written and organized than Vydrin and Tabachnyk's, it suffers from being a romantic wish-list of ideas and policies that is far removed from Ukraine's current reality. Vydrin and Tabachnyk's book, in contrast, although not as well written, is more realistic and pragmatic in its prognosis and pessimism about the speed of the transition process, the creation of a civil society and market economy in Ukraine, and the normalization of relations with Russia.

What is interesting is that all three authors were allowed to publish their views so openly while they were in official positions, and that no sanctions were taken against them. Their books provide an insight into the inner discussions within the Kuchma administration. In contrast, no member of the Kravchuk administration has bothered to explain the ideology of "Kravchukism," if, indeed, there ever was one. This has been left up to members of the national-democratic parties or the literary intelligentsia.²⁴

24. See, for example, Valentyn Chemerys, *Prezydent: Roman-ese* (Kyiv: SP "Svenas," 1994). The only exception has been a book where one of the authors (Mykola Mykhailychenko) was Kravchuk's domestic policy adviser: N. Mikhailichenko and V. Andrushchenko, *Belovezhe, L. Kravchuk, Ukraina, 1991-1995* (Kyiv: Ukrainskyi tsentr dukhovnoi kultury, 1996).