"Ireland of the East"? A Case of the Anticolonial Rhetoric in the Ukrainian National Movement (1870s–1923)

Gennadii Korolov

ABSTRACT

The article examines the emergence and use of the Irish example in the political rhetoric of the Ukrainian national movement. The author traces how prominent Ukrainian politicians and intellectuals understood and used the ideas of the Irish national liberation movement. Special attention is paid to the period from 1917 to 1923 when leaders used the Irish example in political and ideological arguments to illustrate Ukraine's colonial status within the Russian Empire. The use of the Irish example is presented in the context of forming an argument about this colonial status, as well as the justice of their national struggle and demands for national and economic liberation. The author also emphasizes that the anticolonial rhetoric of the Ukrainian national movement was not explicit enough. Therefore, the reference to Ireland was an attempt to find a similar example of a national struggle against imperial domination. In addition, the Irish language example was identified with the status and development of the Ukrainian language as part of a resistance to assimilation policies and imperial restrictions on language and culture.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine, Ireland, national movement, colonialism, empire, political rhetoric

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Introduction[1]

In 1917, one of the strangest books on the situation then facing the Russian Empire was published in Great Britain under the title *Russian Realities and Problems*. Among the authors were Russian liberal politician Pavel Miliukov (1859–1943), Russian historian and theoretician Alexander Lappo-Danilevskii (1863–1919), Russian philosopher and former Marxist Peter Struve (1870–1944), and the founder of Polish modern nationalism, politician Roman Dmowski (1864–1939). Its editor, the famous Scottish scholar, and translator from English-to-Russian James D. Duff (1860–1940), wrote in the preface that the book's goal was to understand Russian-Polish relations.[2] However, the book's more interesting passages from the perspective of this paper were essays concerning other nationalities, especially Ukrainians. In his chapter "The Nationalities of Russia," New Zealand-born journalist, linguist, and polyglot Harold Williams (1876–1928), who had lived in Russia for 15 years, stated,

> "Russia has, as it were, its Irish problem, its South African problem, its French-Canadian question, its colonial question; and all these questions are juxtaposed and intermingled very closely and are all entangled."[3]

What was Russia's so-called Irish problem? Williams pointed to the Ukrainians—or "Little Russians"[4]—and continued by stating, "In some respects the Southern Russian is an Irishman of Russia."[5] As Williams himself acknowledged, he came to this conclusion based on the distinct difference between the Ukrainian and Russian languages, as well as the economic and cultural situation of Ukrainian peasants, who constantly emphasized their distinctness from Russians.

The present article examines the emergence and development of the Irish example in the rhetoric of the Ukrainian national movement from the 1870s to 1923 when this movement began to be politicized and ideologized; as a result of this process, the movement found its greatest expression in the proclamation of several Ukrainian national states after World War I. It was a period of enormous transformation during which the Ukrainian national project ceased to be an interest of a narrow circle of intellectuals and became a mass project with a variety of political platforms. Therefore, this study is based on texts by intellectuals and politicians of this period, in all of which the Irish example appears in one way or another. The Irish example was one of the most successful comparisons by which Ukrainian national figures could legitimize their own aspi-

1 I would like to thank Börries Kuzmany, Fabian Baumann, Olena Palko, and the anonymous reviewers for their comments on this article.

2 Paul Milyoukov, Peter Struve, Alexander Lappo-Danilevsky, Roman Dmowski, Harold Williams: Russian Realities and Problems, ed. by J. D. Duff, Cambridge 1917.

3 Harold Williams: The Nationalities of Russia, ibid., pp. 123–152, here p. 131.

4 "Little Russians" is the term from the official lexicon of Imperial Russia, marking the third branch of the Great Russian nation, along with Russians and Byelorussians.

5 Williams, p. 141.

rations, alongside Ukrainian concepts of colonialism and a vision regarding the colonial status of Ukrainian lands under the Romanovs' rule. The terms "colonial" and "colonialism", which were used to describe the status of the Ukrainian *gubernias* (governorates), often appeared in such writings in the early twentieth century.[6] This specifically Ukrainian understanding of colonialism was not only associated with economic exploitation but also with linguistic and cultural oppression and assimilation policies, and it was typical for a moment when the Ukrainian national movement was on the verge of transitioning from the linguistic-cultural to the political phases of nation-building in East Central Europe.[7] At that time, in various circles of the Ukrainian national movement, from socialists to nationalists, anticolonialism was understood as a concept of opposition to assimilationist and discriminatory practices. The emergence of the Irish example should be seen in the context of this understanding of what anticolonialism was.

In modern historiography, the ideological evolution and transformations of the political rhetoric of the Ukrainian national movement have been explored in several recent studies.[8] The issue of comparing Ukraine and Ireland has also already been partially covered in contemporary research. The editors of the recently published volume *Ireland and Ukraine: Studies in Comparative Imperial and National History* emphasize that beyond the distinct differences between the Irish and Ukrainian historical paths in the imperial period, a comparison is still possible. They point out that Ireland was part of the British Empire, a maritime superpower and constitutional monarchy, while Ukrainian lands belonged to two continental empires, the Habsburg and Russian, and had diametrically opposite experiences of assimilation and discrimination, which included

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6 On the appearance of the terms of "colonial" and "colonialism" in Ukrainian political writings, see: STEPHEN VELYCHENKO: The Issue of Russian Colonialism in Ukrainian Thought: Dependency Identity and Development, in: Ab Imperio (2002), 1, pp. 323–367.

7 About this national movement's transformation, see: JÓZEF CHLEBOWCZYK: O prawie do bytu małych i młodych narodów: Kwestia narodowa i procesy narodotwórcze we wschodniej Europie środkowej w dobie kapitalizmu (od schyłku XVIII do początków XX w.) [On the Right to Existence of Small and Young Nations: The National Question and Nation-Building Processes in East Central Europe in the Era of Capitalism (from the End of the Eighteenth to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century)], Warszawa—Kraków 1983, pp. 38–55.

8 See: SERHII PLOKHII: Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History, Toronto 2005; ANNA PROCYK: Guiseppe Mazzini's Young Europe and the Birth of Modern Nationalism in the Slavic World, Toronto 2019; SERHIY BILENKY: Laboratory of Modernity: Ukraine between Empire and Nation, 1772–1914, Edmonton—Toronto 2023; ANDRIY ZAYARNYUK, OSTAP SEREDA: The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Ukraine: The Nineteenth Century, London—New York 2023; FABIAN BAUMANN: Between Empires: Ukraine in the Nineteenth Century, in: OLENA PALKO, MANUEL FÉREZ GIL (eds.): Ukraine's Many Faces: Land, People, and Culture Revisited, Bielefeld 2023, pp. 83–90.

the option of integration to the imperial elites.[9] In many cases, this tendency influenced the definition of the goals and ideological platforms of the national movement.[10] Therefore, this article does not examine the differences between the Ukrainian and Irish national movements and their ideologies but instead analyzes the emergence of the Irish argument in the political and intellectual discourse among Ukrainian national figures and intellectuals.

Methodologically, this paper follows three main approaches. The first is a biographical attitude, allowing an explanation of the references to Ireland's example through the peculiarities of some biographical circumstances of relevant intellectuals and politicians. The second is the history of ideas, deciphering the specifics of the interpretations of Ireland through correlations with the broader intellectual contexts that were present at the time. The third is the critical approach of the "constructivist" theory of nation.[11] To paraphrase the Polish philosopher Andrzej Walicki, if the nation is "contingent" and invented, then the question arises as to why cultural homogenization in the case of Ukraine was not fully embodied and was not the result of the "ideological manipulations of a handful of influential philologists, historians, and literary men."[12] Two main features characterize this context: the emergence of the rivalry between Russian imperial historiography and modern Ukrainian intellectual thought in the nineteenth century and the process of the understanding of history in national categories.[13]

Thus, Williams's assumption is quite revealing, as it shows, in my opinion, how representatives of the ruling elites, representing either imperial power or its political opposition, had significant colonial, cultural, and even civilizational prejudices against those peoples enslaved by them. The logic of comparing Ukraine with Ireland was based on the recognition of the oppressed, colonial status of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire.[14] Accordingly, other important

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9 Stephen Velychenko, Joseph Ruane, Lyidmyla Hrynenko: Introduction, in: Stephen Velychenko, Joseph Ruane et al. (eds.): Ireland and Ukraine: Studies in Comparative Imperial and National History, Stuttgart 2022, pp. 17–32, here p. 19.

10 Ibid.

11 For instance: Andrzej Walicki: Ernest Gellner and the "Constructivist" Theory of Nation, in: Harvard Ukrainian Studies 22 (1998), pp. 611–619.

12 Ibid., p. 616.

13 Vladyslav Verstiuk, Viktor Horobets', Oleksii Tolochko: Ukraiina i Rosiia v istorychnii retrospektyvi. T. 1: Ukraiins'ki proekty v Rosiis'kii imperiii [Ukraine and Russia in Historical Retrospective. Vol. 1: Ukrainian Projects in the Russian Empire], Kyjiv 2004, pp. 331–345.

14 Stephen Velychenko: Empire Loyalism and Minority Nationalism in Great Britain and Imperial Russia, 1707–1914, in: Comparative Studies in Society and Nations 39 (1997), 3, pp. 413–441; Stephen Velychenko: Ukrainian Anticolonialist Thought in Comparative Perspective: A Preliminary Overview, in: Ab Imperio (2012), 4, pp. 339–371; Chris Ford: The Ukrainian Revolution 1917–1921: Deciding the Fate of European Socialist Revolution, in: Workers' Liberty 2007-11-21, https://www.workersliberty.org/

and obvious questions arise: How did Ukrainian national leaders and intellectuals look to Ireland? Was this an example of colonial rhetoric in the sense of the long nineteenth century? Or was it instead simply nationalizing political language?

Fad of Ireland in the Ukrainian National Movement before 1917

Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, long before the publication of *Russian Realities and Problems*, Ukrainian politicians and intellectuals had begun to explore the Irish national liberation movement and the question of Ireland's status within the British Empire. Ireland's situation in the nineteenth century was much the same as for many colonial acquisitions of empires.[15] Of great importance to the Irish national movement was the memory and legacy of the 1848 rebellion, which fitted into the image of a heroic antiimperial and anticolonial struggle. However, the most important place was still occupied by the "Fenian" (Irish Militant) movement, which was associated with a heroic narrative of struggle against the British Empire.[16] The British historian Alvin Jackson rightly admits the trend of internationalization of Ireland's struggle for independence at that time.[17] The Ukrainians were no exception, as they, too, pointed to the Irish example of fighting against empire and for freedom.

Ukrainian national movement representatives were particularly focused on the banning and restriction of the Irish language. National activists drew many analogies between the contemporary status of Gaelic (Irish) and Ukrainian, as speakers of both had been similarly subjected to harassment and restrictions by an imperial administration. Ukrainian national activists knew about the affected status of the Gaelic (Irish) language, but more important to them was the aspect of suppression and prohibition of the language. The two bans on Ukrainian-language publications and the use of Ukrainian found in the Valuev Circular of 1863 and the Ems Decree of 1876 forced the Ukrainian national movement to search for arguments against them.[18] Their arguments underlay the emergence of the view that Ukraine's position in the Russian Empire was colonial in nature.

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index.php/story/2007-11-21/ukrainian-revolution-1917-1921-deciding-fate-european-socialist-revolution (2024-10-11).

15 See: LIAM KENNEDY: Unhappy the Land: The Most Oppressed People Ever, the Irish?, Sallins 2016.

16 ALVIN JACKSON: Widening the Fight for Ireland's Freedom: Revolutionary Nationalism in Its Global Contexts, in: Victorian Studies 54 (2011), 1, pp. 95–112.

17 Ibid, p. 112.

18 After the Ems Decree of 1876, even cultural activity was automatically political because it often stretched legality, see: SERHY YEKELCHYK: The Nation's Clothes: Constructing a Ukrainian Hight Culture in the Russian Empire, 1860–1900, in: Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 49 (2001), 2, pp. 230–239, here p. 231.

This interest in language and the Irish example was part of the broader evolution of linguistic and ethnic nationalism in East Central Europe. According to the periodization of national movements proposed by Czech historian Miroslav Hroch, the Ukrainian movement before 1900 was only in Phase A (academic) and Phase B (cultural). It was a period of ethnographic and historical research in which intellectuals comprehended and substantiated the category of "their own nation" and a time of cultural activity accordingly.[19] The conceptual development of a Ukrainian nation was based on the idea of linguistic separateness, which emphasized ethnic differences between speakers of different languages.

Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, some Ukrainian activists used Ireland's example as an ideological argument. In the early 1870s, the historian and socialist Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895) wrote to the Western Ukrainian (Galician) lawyer and ethnographer Meliton Buczynsky (Buchynskyi) (1847–1903),

> "I would advise you to pay attention to Ireland and Belgium. The first is interesting to us for its agrarian affairs and for the convenience of organizing peasants."[20]

In 1880, Drahomanov, responding to the Ukrainian-born leader of the Russian terrorist group Narodnaya Volia (People's Will), Andrei Zheliabov (1851–1881), wrote emotionally,

> "Imagine that Irish leaders were to wait passively until home-rule advocates appeared in their land, and until that moment, conducted themselves as Englishmen and followers of British centralism. In such a case Ireland also would have to wait a long time for its Parnell!"[21]

Drahomanov called for the politicization of the Ukrainian national movement in a broad sense and considered the revolutionary methods proposed by Zheliabov unnecessary. This quote is also important because it reflects a certain crossroads for the Ukrainian movement of the time, which was faced with the choice of either working with the peasants to bring them knowledge about their own land, language, and culture or choosing the path of revolutionary and terrorist struggle.

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19 See: MIROSLAV HROCH: Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations, Cambridge 1985. The newest revision of history of the Ukrainian national movement in the "long nineteenth century" has been presented by: ZAYARNYUK/SEREDA.

20 Cited by: IVAN LYSIAK-RUDNYTS'KYI: Drahomanov iak politychnyi teoretyk [Drahomanov as a Political Theoretic], in: IVAN LYSIAK-RUDNYTS'KYI: Istorychni ese, vol. 1, Kyiiv 1991, pp. 299–349, here p. 316.

21 MYKHAILO DRAGOMANOV: Istoricheskaia Pol'sha i velikorusskaia demokratija [Historical Poland and Great Russian Democracy], Ženeva 1881, pp. 408–409. Charles S. Parnell (1846–1891) was one of the most famous leaders of the Irish national movement as head of the Home Rule League in 1880–1882. He was an important symbolic figure for the Irish struggle for liberation.

Zheliabov received no response to his proposal that Drahomanov become a representative of his terrorist group. The Ukrainian thinker refused to cooperate politically with the Russian radical, who, instead of forming a Ukrainian group to struggle for national autonomy, became a leader in the centralist Russian terrorist group. On the contrary, Drahomanov reflected on the question of why Ukrainians joined (anti)imperial rather than Ukrainian national organizations. Ukrainian intellectuals avidly read Drahomanov's works, and he set the ideological tone for the national movement while revealing its symmetrical development in Eastern Europe.

By the end of the century, Ukrainian leaders had readily adopted the Irish Home Rule argument—political autonomy within the empire—as a model for their movement and as its objective. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the search for the concept of one's "own nation," according to Hroch's periodization, had been conditionally completed, and the cultural and political stages began. Arguably, therefore, Ukraine's liberation movement was not confined to just one of Hroch's stages. Ukrainians' use of the Irish example played a role in the evolution of the Ukrainian national movement from the second to third phases. The last phase, according to Andriy Zaiarniuk and Ostap Sereda, was a time of mass politics and mass political mobilization, but what was more important was the tendency to search for new conceptual frameworks. In this regard, the example of Ireland and the use of the anticolonial motif were a reflection of this problem.[22]

In 1881, Ukrainian writer and lawyer Oleksandr Konys'kyi (1836–1900) addressed the topic of Ireland in more detail. In his opinion, the Irish example clarified the model Ukraine could use to pursue national liberation and oppose imperialism.[23] Like most of his contemporaries, Konys'kyi emphasized Ireland's colonial position within the British Empire. More important, however, was his observation of the social problem:

> "As I begin to write my letters, the eyes of the whole Europe, even of all educated people, are looking at the 'Green Island.' Everyone is interested to know what will happen next in Ireland; what will come out of the social war for land and bread, the war that the people of Ireland are waging against the government of the British Kingdom. I think that it will be interesting for our readers to pay attention to the corner of the 'civilized' state where not only an important political but even more important social issue is expected to collapse tomorrow."[24]

The colonial status of Ukraine under the Romanovs in the perception of the Ukrainian movement fully corresponded to the heated debate over the social question and economic exploitation. Significantly, Konyskyi's work was republished in 1904 with a preface by Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko, who noted that the use of Ireland in Ukrainian discussions about national liberation was an example of political liberalism. In this respect, however, the key arguments

22 ZAYARNYUK/SEREDA, pp. 120–121.

23 OLEKSANDR KONYS'KYI: Lysty pro Irlandiiu [Letters on Ireland], [L'viv] 1904.

24 Ibid., p. 7.

were far from liberalism; rather, they concerned demands for revolutionary change to both empires and subject peoples' national freedom.

Ireland was one of the most popular examples and references in the Ukrainian national movement, while previous comparisons with Norway and Catalonia made by Ukrainian intellectuals became less common.[25] The Irish example gained even more prominence during the 1905 Revolution in the Russian Empire and the coterminous Irish struggle for home rule in 1906 when the Ukrainian author and poet Lesia Ukrainka (1871–1913) translated the article "The Irish Language Movement" by Irish playwright Francis Fahy (1854–1935). Not only did Fahy's idea on the oppression of the Irish language closely reflect Ukrainka's feelings and worldview—especially his arguments concerning the British national education system—but his pamphlet was also perceived as politically important. The low status of the Irish language mirrored that of Ukrainian in the Russian Empire. However, when referring to Ireland during the 1905 Revolution, Ukrainian historian and orientalist Ahatanhel Kryms'kyi (1871–1942) wrote that the "solution for the language issue would not remove national contradictions and hostility if economic problems persisted."[26] More importantly, Kryms'kyi noted and emphasized the British Empire's colonial oppression of Ireland. He claimed that "national oppositions between the Irish and the British continue to exist, and reconciliation between them can only be achieved when Great Britain returns Ireland its national independence."[27] Thus, he suggested that not even Irish Home Rule would reconcile the Irish and British nor ensure their cooperation.

Kryms'kyi wrote his work as a typical representative of modern nationalism. The British Empire's economic exploitation of Ireland reminded Kryms'kyi of Ukraine's situation. Particularly, he noted that:

> "Ireland's economic development was hindered by all sorts of things: destroying its manufactories, disrupting its agriculture, keeping its population in poverty and ignorance. The policy toward Ireland was the same as toward the American colonies. But Ireland was closer and weaker than the latter. It failed to gain national independence and thus achieve freedom of economic development."[28]

Therefore, an Irish anticolonial uprising against the British Empire seemed not only logical but necessary, because it would allow the country to gain political and economic independence and, thus, national independence. In short, Ireland's proscribed language, economic exploitation, poverty, ethnic assimilation, and struggle under an aggressive imperial administration resembled Kryms'kyi's ideas about Ukrainians' fate in the Russian Empire. Using Ire-

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25 See: SERHIJ JEFREMOV: Nacyonal'ne pytanie v Norvegii [The National Question in Norway], L'viv 1902.

26 AHATANHEL KRYMS'KYI: Chto takoe sovremennoe ukrainstvo? [What Is This Modern Ukrainianism?] [Manuscript], in: Institute of Manuscripts of Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, fond 36, spr. 660, ark. 22.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., ark. 9–10v.

land's example, he explained how a population's economic well-being is connected with its national consciousness and "with the organization of the nation in itself."[29]

Krymskyi's vision of the Irish situation coincided with the assessments in the book *Opovidannia pro Irlandiiu* by historian and politician Dmytro Doroshenko (1882–1951).[30] For Doroshenko, the Fenians resembled the Ukrainian Cossacks. He drew another analogy between Ireland's colonial status within the British Empire and Ukraine's situation. Europe's role in Ukrainian culture was treated by national figures as an aspect of Ukraine's European nature. But because the politicization of the Irish example took place among Ukrainian social democrats and Ukrainian leftist intellectuals, they used Marxist theory to explain how modern nationalism justified national liberation.[31]

In 1907, Ukrainian economist and journalist Mykola Porsh (1879–1944), one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party, stated that

> "the Ukrainian national movement will not be a bourgeois movement of victorious capitalism, as in the case of the Czechs. It will be similar to the Irish case: a movement of proletarian and semi-proletarianized peasant masses."[32]

Ukrainian anticolonialist discussions now began to emphasize the importance of separation from empire in the framework not only of nation-building but of socialist socio-economic development. Reinterpreting German Marxist Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), the Canadian historian Stephen Velychenko admits that

> "considering the Irish problem he realized that what socialists of large powerful nations called 'internationalism' meant national oppression for socialists of small poor nations."[33]

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Ukrainian anticolonialist thought began to treat the Irish struggle against the British Empire as an appropriate model for Ukraine's political program of liberation. During World War I, empires sought to exploit each other's national movements to weaken their rivals.[34] In this context, one can ask to what extent the Irish struggle inspired or influenced Eastern European national leaders seeking autonomy or independ-

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29 Ibid., ark. 11.

30 DMYTRO DOROSHENKO: Opovidannia pro Irlandiiu [Stories about Ireland], Kyjiv 1907, p. 12.

31 VELYCHENKO, Ukrainian Anticolonialist Thought, p. 343.

32 MYKOLA PORŠ: Pro avtonomiju [On the Autonomy], Kyjiv 1907, p. 31.

33 VELYCHENKO, Ukrainian Anticolonialist Thought, p. 343.

34 See: MARK VON HAGEN: The Great War and the Mobilization of Ethnicity in the Russian. Empire, in: BARNETT R. RUBIN, JACK L. SNYDER (eds.): Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building, London 1998, pp. 34–57. This argument has been more clearly presented by: MARK VON HAGEN: War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918, Seattle 2007; GEORGE O. LIBER: Total Wars and the Making of Modern Ukraine, 1914–1954, Toronto 2016.

ence. Ukrainian leaders, for their part, paid increased attention to events in Ireland.[35]

The Irish Easter Uprising in April 1916 led Ukrainian national leaders to refer to Ireland as a model for confronting empire. The uprising was organized by members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who sought an independent republic. Initially, the rebels' main demand was the expansion of home rule (the right to broad autonomy). Then, however, they proclaimed the idea of Ireland's independence as a main goal of the liberation movement. The British government brutally suppressed the uprising, which resonated significantly among national movements throughout Europe. The leader of the Bolshevik Party Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) characterized the events of the "Red Easter" in Dublin as a national uprising of a small people and a prologue to a pan-European "social revolution."[36] Activists of the Ukrainian national movement perceived the Irish uprising similarly, considering their political claims a proper reaction to disordered empires and evidence that their national and anticolonial demands were part of a global wave of anticolonialism and antiimperialism.[37]

Irish national political slogans and arguments fully corresponded with Ukrainian national goals when, after the proclamation of a satellite Polish Kingdom in November 1916, Ukrainian leaders formalized the idea of independence and a restructuring of the tsarist empire as a union of republics or a federal union. They disliked the Polish example because it left the country dependent on the Central Powers. The national leaders of the left political spectrum—Mykhailo Hrushevs'ky (1866–1934), Serhii Iefremov (1876–1939), and Porsh—preferred the Irish example, which was associated with a just struggle for freedom and confrontation with the empire.

Ireland's Example during the Revolutionary Time Period 1917–1923

After the 1917 Revolution, Ukrainian national leaders, such as Hrushevs'ky, Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1880–1951), and Iefremov, rejected monarchism and empire and understood a democratic republic, and the best form of statehood, to be a people's republic. A new stage in the Irish example's popularity began in 1917 and early 1918 with the establishment and activity of the Ukrainian Central Rada in March 1917. At this time, the vision of the Ukrainian people's colonial exploitation and oppression largely coincided with the economic tendencies and rhetoric of domestic politics but generally harmed Ukraine's external politics, particularly in the case of relations with the Triple

35 V. Chekyn: Homrul' i Ol'ster [Home Rule and Ulster], in: Literaturno-naukovyj vistnyk 65 (1914), 5, pp. 370–372.

36 Vladimir Lenin: Irlandskoe vosstanie 1916 goda [The 1916 Irish Uprising], in: Vladimir Lenin: Polnoe sobranie sochinenij, vol. 30, Moskva 1973, pp. 9–10.

37 Erez Manela: The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism, Oxford 2007, pp. 240–242.

Entente. In the context of the ongoing war, referring to Ireland's example and counting on support from the British Empire generally seemed strange and was obviously done in the context of political and ideological weakness—not to rationalize the Ukrainian nation's distinctness.

The Irish republican activists for their part were aware of events in Ukraine and saw similarities with events in their country. The *Irish Independent* newspaper wrote:

> "It has been aptly said that there is an Irish problem in Russia. […] The Ukrainian question is one of the problems which has precipitated the present crisis. The Ukrainians, or Little Russians, had suffered greatly from the centralizing policy of the Czar. […] Some weeks ago the Ukrainians set up a National assembly of their own, known as the Rada. […] In other words, Home Rule was provisionally established in the Ukraine."[38]

Nationalists in both countries, therefore, had knowledge of each other and compared and referred to their experiences and goals almost simultaneously. As Irish national movement representatives elaborated the words "Irish Republic" and "People of Ireland,"[39] the Ukrainians directly adopted these formulations to the case of Ukraine, in expressions such as "Ukrainian Republic" and "People of Ukraine." With these formulations, Ukrainian politicians created a new political lexicon, which was important for emphasizing national aspirations and demands.

In 1917, Ukrainian theoretician and sociologist Ol'gerd Ippolit Bochkovs'kyi (1885–1939) in his *Natsional'na sprava* criticized imperial colonial domination, civilizational superiority, and empires that used slogans of liberation in their foreign policies only for their own geopolitical purposes. The British—who allegedly sought to support national movements in the Habsburg, Turkish, and German empires—simultaneously:

> "forgot about its Irishmen at its side, who were forced to remind them of their existence by last year's uprising in 1916, until the hanging of the Irish national leader Roger Casement once again convinced the entire cultural world that glorious English freedom and political democracy have their very dark underside."[40]

Similar to Konys'kyi and Kryms'kyi, Bochkovs'kyi criticized imperial domination based on colonial exploitation. At the same time, Ukrainian leaders were skeptical about a possible Entente victory and drew a clear parallel between all European empires, which they portrayed as little different from each other. This understanding was a fundamental argument of Ukrainian national leaders.

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38 Irish Independent from 1917-07-20, cited by: DARRAGH GANNON: Revolution before Colour: The Irish Republic and the Ukrainian National Republic, in: VELYCHENKO/RUANE, pp. 419–442, here p. 419.

39 KENNEDY, pp. 148–149.

40 OL'GERD BOCHKOVS'KYI: Natsional'na sprava (statti pro natsional'ne pytannia v zviazku z suchasnoiu viinoiu) [National Affairs (Essays on the National Question in Connection with the Current War)], in: OL'GERD BOCHKOVS'KYI: Vybrani tvory i pratsi, vol. 1, Kyiv 2018, pp. 469–655, here p. 476.

Bochkovs'kyi emphasized this, raising huge doubt about "the sincerity of England's sympathy for the enslaved peoples—England, which at the same time very recklessly strangled the slightest manifestation of national identity among the Irish, starving these unfortunate and oppressed Irish people."[41] He directly compared the Russians to the British, who, as an imperial nation, pursued policies of defeat at that time.

During the revolution, various Ukrainian articles, pamphlets, and demonstrations referred to Irish events. In the summer of 1917, Serp i Molot (Hammer and Sickle) publishing house, affiliated with the Ukrainian Central Rada, began publishing a book series about the liberation movement of "enslaved peoples."[42] Notably, the first was a brochure by Ukrainian writer Borys Hrinchenko (1863–1910), (re)published under the pseudonym D. G., titled *Irliands'ka Respublika*. Having analyzed the peculiarities in the psychology and mentality of the Irish, as well as economic life in Ireland, he discussed historical traditions and emphasized why independent states were desirable. Tracing back to the Middle Ages, Ireland had a highly developed civilization, and Irish monasteries were not only centers of education and culture but also guardians of the European spirit after the Roman Empire's fall. The Irish continued to develop construction, music, mathematics, theology, medicine, and law, spreading this knowledge throughout Europe.[43] England had enslaved the freedom-loving Irish, who had a historical right to national self-determination.[44]

By publishing such texts, Ukrainian intellectuals legitimized their own aspirations and justified their right to proclaim national independence. However, the vivid analogies between Russia and England and Ukraine and Ireland did not turn into ideological slogans of the Ukrainian Central Rada's activities and appeared only a few times in the public sphere. The leaders of the Ukrainian Central Rada, particularly Iefremov and Panas Fedenko (1893–1981), were convinced that the Irish case could serve as an example for Ukrainian nation-building and statehood. After the Rada proclaimed national-territorial autonomy in its First Universal of June 1917, Iefremov wrote in the newspaper *Nova Rada* that Ireland

> "with its own sharply marked national physiognomy, with its own economic, political, and national peculiarities, lost all rights under centralist pressure and was reduced to the level of a lawless province. The slogan that guided the Moscow Czars and St. Petersburg emperors, 'Take over Little Russia,' was fully applied by the English Kings to Ireland. And having taken it over, they also thought that the matter

41 Ibid., pp. 475–476.

42 See for example: Herman Hummerus: Samostiina Finliandiia [The Independent Finland], Kyjiv 1918.

43 D. H. [Borys Hrinchenko]: Irliands'ka Respublika [The Irish Republic], Kyjiv 1917, p. 5.

44 Ibid., p. 6.

> was over, that Ireland would never again raise its head in the family of free nations."[45]

But Iefremov's analogies between Ukraine and Ireland are even more interesting. He particularly noted that:

> "like the Irishmen, we have our Ulster people in Ukraine—people who, living thanks the Ukrainian people and their money, are nevertheless in favor of centralism and are ready to fight against the national rights of the region and harm it more than the centralizers of the state nation."[46]

Criticizing "Little Russians," he spoke out even more sharply against the tsarist regime and its administration in Ukrainian lands:

> "Like the Irishmen, the Ukrainians consciously reacted negatively to the "liberation" whims of the tsarist government in the Great War and considered reconciliation with it impossible at any cost. As among the Irishmen, we have our own Sinn-Féiners[47] who are disappointed in the policies of the central government and want to follow the path of complete separation. On the other hand, the mistakes that the British government made in relation to Ireland are being made by our provisional revolutionary government. All this makes the Irish case extremely close and interesting for us."[48]

Iefremov at that time was skeptical about Ukrainian separatists and a break in relations with Petrograd, which he thought could harm the cause of national autonomy and progressive development. He compared Ulstermen, whom he called "the people of the Anglicized Northern Counties of Ireland," to the empire-loyalist "Little Russian" movement. Ulster hindered the implementation of the right to home rule adopted by the British Parliament. Iefremov accused the Ulstermen of supporting English centralism, "boasting of a rebellion for 'one indivisible England' that the government was so frightened and backed down that it projected the temporary removal of Ulster from autonomous Ireland."[49] This comparison of Ulstermen and Ulsterwomen with Little Russians was one of the most striking metaphors in the contemporary Ukrainian ideological discourse. In 1919, Iefremov accused the British of oppressing the Irish:

> "The best example is Ireland, to which Russian concessions were once so sympathetic—whether they are now, when Ukraine has its own Ulster, is another big question... After all, it seems that there has never been a shortage of force and weapons and gallows and other accessories of great power on Irish soil. The Irish have even

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45 SERHII IEFREMOV: Irliands'ka sprava [The Irish Question], in: Nova Rada from 1917-06-08.

46 Ibid.

47 The representatives of the Sinn-Féin are a republican political party founded in 1905, which were active participants in the Irish War of Independence.

48 IEFREMOV, Irliands'ka sprava.

49 Ibid.

been brought to the point where they have forgotten their native language and speak English."[50]

In this respect, he again returned to the Ulster example in the context of anticolonialism. Iefremov refuted the theory of a "triune Russian nation," pointing out that "Little Russians" were an invention of Russian imperial ideology—an ideology that defined Petrograd's attitude toward its Ukrainian provinces. This reorientation of Ukrainian ideological discourse from the rhetoric of cooperation with the Provisional Government to emphasizing political oppression from Russian imperialism was an important change in the way Ukrainians used the Irish example in anticolonial discourse.

The abovementioned Fedenko, a member of the Central Rada and a social democrat, wrote in his essay "From Centralism to Federation" that English rule over Ireland was manifested in primitive arrogance and the establishment of centralism as a form of imperial domination; the English in Ireland were forbidden from marrying locals, which led to the island's division into "clean" (English) and "bad" (Irish) parts.[51] This division perhaps allowed the Irish to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity, however. The opposite occurred in Scotland; the Scots lost their honor under the onslaught of the "English colonizers." In his view, Ukraine had been annexed to the centralized Muscovite state and gradually lost its self-government before colonial policies were implemented.[52] Moreover, Ukraine had lost control of its military garrisons and monetary affairs, "which fell under Muscovy's control." But Ukraine was most oppressed culturally and politically by Moscow's "national exclusivity"; Moscow's tsar could only give "equality, slaves before an all-powerful master."[53] According to Fedenko, the violation of nations' equality reflected centralism and colonialism, which divided a population into first- and second-class people "because it does not give equality to the peoples, often exploits the rich region in favor of the center, and by granting rights only to one people, forces other inferior people to follow either the path of revolutionary struggle or national separation (separatism)."[54]

After the 1917 Revolution, the question of the Ukrainian language's status became irrelevant to arguments about Russian colonialism in Ukraine. Bochkovs'kyi wrote that "history has examples of peoples changing their languages. The Irish, for the most part, already speak English, but nationally they are a separate individuality, hostile to the Englishmen."[55] However, this was not really relevant since the language issue had been reconsidered after the fall of the

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50 Serhii Iefremov: Neprymyrenni [Irreconcilable], part IV, in: Rada from 1919-09-23(10).

51 Stattia Panasa Fedenka "Od tsentralizmu do federatsiii" [Panas Fedenko's Article "From Centralism to Federation"], in: Vladyslav Verstiuk (ed.): Ukraiins'kyi natsional'no-vyzvol'nyi rukh, berezen'–lystopad 1917 roku, Kyiiv 2003, p. 90.

52 Ibid., pp. 91–92.

53 Ibid., p. 92.

54 Ibid., p. 94.

55 Bochkovs'kyi, p. 544.

tsar, especially in the context of the Central Rada's intention to Ukrainize the public sphere. Thus, language was not an issue in negotiations between the Rada and the Provisional Government in June and July 1917. Petrograd recognized the Ukrainian General Secretariat as a local government and independent authority that summer, and Ukrainians were free to pursue their own educational and cultural policies.

Noteworthy is the statement of the Ministry of Russian Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic in Kyiv during the All-Ukrainian Congress of teachers and parental organizations in 1918:

> "When we pointed out to the government the right of the people to raise their nationality with the help of Russian culture and the Russian language, one part of the Ukrainians called us traitors. But Ireland has been fighting for its nationality for 300 years, and it does not have its own language. So, the question of language is not unconditional as concerns the defense of national independence."[56]

In other words, the local Russian politicians used the Irish argument to claim language was not of particular importance as the basis for a national state. This quote shows how the language argument had failed in the case of Ireland and did not play a crucial role for the Ukrainian leaders, who generally avoided challenging the status of the Russian language. However, this was a key difference with Ukraine, where language demands were part of the liberation movement and modern nationalism.

In the entire range of assessments of the reception of the Irish example, it is noteworthy that virtually no Ukrainians from the former Russian Empire addressed or noted the presence of a distinct religious problem and its significant role in defining the ideology of the Irish national movement. The lack of interest in the religious question was obviously due to its insignificant influence on the general situation of Ukrainian peasants and workers, as well as the clear priority of national and economic liberation in the Ukrainian national movement's political rhetoric. At the same time, the situation with regard to this question was different among Western Ukrainian national figures and intellectuals.

The Irish example was of some interest also to Western Ukrainian activists and thinkers. In December 1922, in response to the beginning of the Lausanne Conference and the adoption of the Constitution of the Irish Free State in October of that same year, Stepan Tomashivs'kyi (1875–1930) expressed doubts about the need to evoke the Irish example, especially in the context of Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia and their resistance to Polish rule.[57] In his article "The Irish State," the conservative historian drew analogies between the Irish-

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[56] Vseukrainskii uchitel'skii s"ezd i s"ezd roditel'skikh organizacii [All-Ukrainian Congress of Teachers and Parental Organizations], in: Russkii Golos (Kiev) from 1918-06-08, pp. 1–2.

[57] STEPAN TOMASHIVS'KYI: Z politychnoyi khroniky (L'ozans'ka konferentsiia—L'ondons'ki narady—Irliands'ka konstytutsiia) [From the Political Chronicle (Lausanne Conference—London Meetings—Irish Constitution)], in: Svoboda from 1922-12-26, pp. 1–2.

English and Ukrainian-Russian confrontations.[58] In his view, Ireland had been completely colonized, plundered, and depopulated by British imperialists, and its population was forced to convert to another faith.

In the 1860s, the left nationalist and republican Fenian Secret Society gained considerable influence, so all their concessions were met with opposition from Irish Protestants, who disrupted home rule's implementation.[59] In this regard, for some reason, Tomashivs'kyi did not mention, or perhaps did not know, that some of the activists of the Irish national movement were either Protestants or grew up in Protestant families. He claimed that the principles of the agreement from December 1921 that ended the Anglo-Irish War "can teach Ukrainians something."[60] What this something was, exactly, he did not clarify.

Generally, Western Ukrainian politicians did not point out parallels between the Ukrainian and Irish national movements, as they perceived the latter as a religious conflict rather than a social and economic conflict. This was probably linked to the fact that in Eastern Galicia, unlike in Ukraine under the Romanovs' rule, the Ukrainian national struggle could also be considered confessional. Western Ukrainians considered Catholicism a vital element in the modern Irish nation's formation. For the Greek Catholic Tomashivs'kyi, this importance was more than symbolic and was treated as a kind of example for Ukrainian state-building. Other Western Ukrainian politicians voiced similar skepticism about the Ukraine-Ireland comparison. In the early 1920s, amid an émigré discussion about the causes of the Ukrainian Revolution's defeat, historian and former officer of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen Vasyl Kuchabs'kyi (1895–1971) opined that the Irish liberation struggle served as "an example for our headless Haidamaky [anarchic peasant] movement."[61] In this respect, he referred to the Ukrainian national movement in tsarist Ukraine, and the Ukrainian People's Republic. Kuchabs'kyi was sure that repeating "our entire history" would lead to the "making" of the Ukrainian nation, similar to England's history before the sixteenth century, but not Ireland's.[62]

Conclusion

The case of Ireland in the nineteenth century provided the Ukrainian national movement with a compelling reference point for articulating its struggle against imperial domination and oppression. By framing Ukraine's political, cultural,

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58 Stepan Tomashivs'kyi: Iriis'ka derzhava [The Irish State], in: Stepan Tomashivs'kyi: Pid kolesamy istoriii, Berlin 1923, pp. 58–66, here p. 59.

59 Ibid., pp. 60–61.

60 Ibid., p. 63.

61 Lyst V. Kuchabs'koho do Ivana Kryp'iakevycha, Berlin, 26 I 1929 r. [Letter of Vasyl Kuchabskyi to Ivan Krypiakevych, 26 January 1929], in: Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka 233, Pratsi Istorychno-filosofs'koii sektsiii (1997), pp. 482–509, here p. 495.

62 Ibid., p. 496.

and economic situation within the context of colonial subjugation, Ukrainian national leaders and intellectuals leveraged Ireland's example to underscore their own demands for national, cultural, and eventually economic liberation. This comparison, while not without limitations, served to highlight the cultural and linguistic suppression, economic exploitation, and the struggle for future political autonomy and independence.

Initially, the Irish example resonated strongly within the framework of language and cultural resistance, aligning with Ukraine's own struggles against Russia's assimilationist policy. However, after the Revolution of 1917, the scope of this analogy broadened to encompass national and political oppression. Ireland's evolving status—shifting from a subject of imperial rule to a model of national independence—mirrored the aspirations of Ukrainian national leaders who sought to legitimize their goals through a global anticolonial narrative. In the Ukrainian intellectual and political context, such aspirations for self-determination and anti-colonial struggle were increasingly justified by appealing to broader principles of justice and self-governance, which Ireland's example reinforced. Although the Irish model did not fit Ukraine's sociopolitical and cultural circumstances, it played a formative role in the Ukrainian discourse on self-determination and shaped a lexicon of (anti)colonial critique that Ukrainians used to construct their own vision of independence. Ultimately, the use of the Irish example underscored the need for national self-consciousness, the development of the national language, and economic liberation in the face of imperial control, and emphasized a common, universal imperative for national independence among subjugated nations.

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