sign. Ultimately, though, Soviet Ukrainian authorities decided that a contemporary play by a Ukrainian Bolshevik playwright would advance their propaganda more effectively than any staging of Shakespeare. They consequently proclaimed the colorless proletarian playwright Ivan Mykytenko a Soviet Shakespeare and his play Dictatorship (1929) "a new Ukrainian classic" (p. 182). Kurbas, who referred to Mykytenko with disdain as Vanya ("Little Ivan") Shakespeare, was forced to stage Dictatorship; and he did so in a subversive avant-garde production, which Mykytenko himself disowned.

The consolidation of Socialist Realism in Soviet culture coincided with repressions against the Ukrainian intelligentsia that swept away both Kurbas (in 1933) and Mykytenko (in 1937). Conservative and realistic, Stalinist theater embraced the classical canon and rejected all traces of modernism. Saksahansky's tradition of ethnographic realism was resurrected as the national theatrical school, while Kurbas's modernist experiments were suppressed for decades. In an effort to find the missing link between their aesthetic principles and nineteenth-century realism, Soviet theater critics retrospectively mythologized Saksahansky's 1926 production of Othello as the precursor of Socialist Realism, thus conflating the realistic principles of nineteenth-century Ukrainian ethnographic theater with those of Soviet didactic melodramas. The "unpacking" of this Soviet Ukrainian theatrical tradition began only during the late 1980s, when simultaneously with the collapse of ideological controls, the Ukrainian public began rediscovering the legacy of Les Kurbas and Ukrainian modernism.

Makaryk's book is the result of painstaking archival research. One feature that the reader will especially appreciate is the unusually large number of illustrations - 43 rare photographs of acting scenes and stage designs - which help the reader understand what the theoretical debates translated into in theatrical practice. Makaryk's excellent monograph is a welcome addition to literature on Ukrainian culture, modernist theater, and the staging of world classics in the age of nationalism and mass culture.

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Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn, Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003. 216 pp. $39.95 (cloth); $27.95 (paper).


The early history of Scotland was once described as murder tempered by theology. The more recent history of Ukraine could also qualify. No other part of Europe during the past hundred years has been so convulsed by turbulent political events, with horrendous and massive losses of life and property. In fact, as a crossroads between East and West, Ukraine has long been involved in a continuous struggle to obtain independence and identity. In its repeated attempts to achieve a national revival, the local churches have played a significant role, not only as inheritors of past traditions, but also
as active participants in fashioning new intellectual and ideological agendas, as they relate to the indigenous religious populations.

The complexity and conflictual character of much of the Ukrainian ecclesiastical scene has long deterred Western scholars from any evaluative surveys. In fact, the most comprehensive account is by the German scholar, Friedrich Heyer, who recently updated his initial study written fifty years ago. So it is all the more welcome to have the short analysis by two former Ukrainian scholars now resident in Canada, which will help to sort out some of the entangled religious and political questions of the current period.

Because of its earlier history, Ukraine was always multi-ethnic and hence pluralistic in its religious loyalties. At the same time, its rulers - then and now - have sought to mobilize religious forces to advance their particular cause. The tsarist monarchs promoted the Moscow Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, while in the western parts of the country, the Uniate Church, which is familiarly but misleadingly known as the Greek Catholic Church, owing its allegiance to the Pope in Rome, predominated under the sponsorship of the Austro-Hungarian emperors. In the twentieth century, further religio-political alliances resulted during and after the First World War. The rise of Communism in the Soviet Union and the subsequent persecutions led to the growth of local groupings such as the breakaway Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox church. During the Nazi occupation, both this splinter group and the Greek Catholics sought to regain ground. But after the Soviet victory, both were liquidated, and the remnants compulsorily amalgamated under the Moscow-dominated Patriarchate.

After 1989, the Greek Catholics almost spontaneously resurrected themselves and reclaimed their former churches and constituents. At the same time, another section of the Orthodox community sought to re-establish its own patriarchy in Kiev. But for political reasons they refused to acknowledge the autocephalous group, and both are spurned by those who still acknowledge Moscow’s ecclesiastical authority.

These internal struggles, as the authors make clear, are intimately related to the different concepts of national autonomy upheld by rival political groups. Some look back to the past as a model for the revival of Ukrainian cultural and political independence, seeking to promote the Orthodox Church as the upholder of a specific Ukrainian destiny. But the political record of the autocephalists during the Second World War continues to leave a bitter legacy. On the other side, the long subordination to the Moscow Patriarchate, with its frequent execution of the Soviet leaders’ demands, has also caused deep resentments. For example, after 1989, a large number of Orthodox priests and congregations switched over, or back, to the Greek Catholic Uniates. But these Uniates, in turn, seek to establish their independence from their Polish neighbors, who maintain the Latin rite and equally see their Roman connection as a vital part of the Polish national revival. Since there is a great intermingling of these respective populations and no clear acceptance of any one model for national resurgence, the result is still one of unresolved tensions and religious divisions.

Plokhy and Sysyn provide ample evidence of the close interaction between state building and religious movements. The politicians seek to enlist, or even to exploit, the churches in pursuit of their particular view of national identity. This, however, still remains illusory. These same problems are explored in the collection of essays, edited by