

Grzegorz Skrukwa
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Ukrainians and the Black Sea. Nationalist Geography in the Post-Soviet Reality

In the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, in most European countries, geography was quite frequently linked with nationalism.¹ The latter, too, always remains in some relation to the issues of territory—it strives to establish the sovereignty of the nation over the territory deemed to be national. Academic geography provided argument for the building and unification of the nation state. School geography instilled and preserved the image of the nation state territory as eternal and immutable.

There have been (are) two parallel processes within nationalism, namely national territorialisation and territorial nationalisation.² The former is developing (and contesting at the same time) ideas of the national territory. The drawing of maps with the image of the homeland and its historical borders, marking places of historical and cultural importance; the development of a canon of images of native landscape and nature by poets, writers, painters, etc.; the establishment of a canon of locations related to the events in national history and national culture (national historical places, monuments of national culture, trails of heroes and bards, etc.). Whereas territorial nationalisation is a socialisation of the population to identify itself with the homeland and nation. The population that becomes a nation begins to feel they are the lawful and rightful masters of the given

¹ Nationalism is construed here as the movement and ideology oriented to gaining and preserving autonomy, unity, and identity of the community whose members are considered to constitute an actual or prospective nation. See A.D. Smith, *Nacjonalizm [Nationalism]*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 16-22.

² R.J. Kaiser, "Geography," in: *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, Vol. 1., ed. A.J. Motyl, San Diego 2001, s. 315-331.

territory from time immemorial, starts to establish its borders and identify the strangers.

The nationalist geography of the 19th and 20th centuries was dominated by the paradigm of environmental determinism. It was a belief that the physical geography of the region (country) determines the characteristics of the people who inhabit it not only in their socio-economic behaviour but also in their ethno-cultural and psychological profile and political attitudes.³

The word territory is derived from Latin *terra* (earth, land); yet in the considerations about the spatial aspects of nationalism it is also necessary to include the parts of the Earth covered by water such as oceans and seas. Besides, there is a parallel term *aquatory* (*akvatoriya*) in both Russian and Ukrainian. Nationalists tend to look upon the postulated or established borders of their nation state as organic and natural. Sea border is usually seen as the best natural frontier. The history of nationalisms and political and ethnic conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th century provides manifold examples of conflicts over coastal regions and the coastline, such as the Polish-German conflicts over Gdansk and the whole Pomerania, Lithuanian-German over Klaipeda Region, Yugoslavian-Italian over Dalmatia and Istria, Bulgarian-Romanian over Dobruja, and Bulgarian-Greek over East Thrace, to name but a few. It is reason enough to take interest in the views the founders of the idea of the Ukrainian national movement had on the sea border, or the Ukrainian border on the Black Sea, and therefore the Ukrainian-Russian conflicts in the region.

Nations are products of modernisation processes. Nationalist movements, especially in their 20th-century phase, usually (though not always, of course) have a programme of national and economic modernisation. Within a modern nation, there is a vertical economic integration and division of labour. In Central and Eastern Europe, the coastal regions, and the port cities in particular, often (mostly even) had a different ethno-cultural profile than their hinterlands, or had a mixed profile: they were borderlands. The dominant group in the sphere of economy, culture, and politics as well, was ethnically different from the majority group.⁴ The upper and middle classes (owners of shipyards, ship-owners, great merchants, officers of the navy) belonged to the dominant group, such as the Germans in the Baltic cities and the Italians in the Adriatic ones. National movements, including Slovenian,

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 315, 318.

⁴ J. 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.)* [The right to exist of small and young nations. The national question and nation-formation processes in eastern Central Europe in the capitalism period (from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries)], Warszawa-Kraków 1983, p. 33.

Croatian, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian, criticised this state of affairs as reflecting injustice and oppression, and postulated its change. They also stressed the fact that these port cities have inseparable economic and social ties with their hinterlands, inhabited by “small,” “young,” and “non-historical” nations.⁵ Therefore, they were emancipatory movements both nationally and socially. The ultimate goal of these movements was to strip the so-far dominant group of their dominant position and to develop their own middle and upper classes in the maritime sector.

What is more, the postulate of gaining access to the sea, expanding the national sovereignty to the coast, and territorial nationalisation of port cities was not only of local but nation-wide importance. Gaining access to the sea, having a “window on the world,” creating its own maritime sector, was meant to give the country a share in world economy and to bring it modernisation and development. A prime example here is the idea and myth of “Maritime Poland” developed during the Second Polish Republic (II RP) and continued in the People’s Republic of Poland (PRL) with certain modifications and limitations. As a result, there was a certain model of the relationship between the nation state and sea functioning in the 20th century, which was expressed in its full form in the II RP and PRL, and in which it is possible to discern about 10 functions:

The nation has access to the sea (national coastline);

There is a national port—a window on the world;⁶

The national merchant fleet carries the national export and import cargo under the national banner;

A national shipyard builds ships for national ship-owners;

A national ocean liner carries national passengers;⁷

A national sailing ship trains national seamen;⁸

⁵ *Idem, Między dyktatem, realiami a prawem do samostanowienia. Prawo do samookreślenia i problem granic we wschodniej Europie Środkowej w pierwszej wojnie światowej i po jej zakończeniu* [Between the dictate, the realities, and the right to self-determination. The right to self-determination and the issue of borders in eastern Central Europe during and after World War I], Warszawa 1988, pp. 498-504.

⁶ There are a dozen or so symptomatic cases from Central and Eastern Europe, namely the struggles over the contested port cities of Gdansk, Rijeka, Trieste, Klaipeda, Shkodër; Macedonian aspirations to Thessaloniki and Serbian to Shkodër; the post-war development of Rostock, the port of the DDR. See also the example of the Russian Empire and the “cutting the windows on the world” by Peter I and Catherine I, and later by Stalin (Kaliningrad, the non-freezing port of the RSFSR).

⁷ Cf. the Polish ocean liners of the inter-war period, *Polonia, Pułaski, Kościuszko, Piłsudski, and Batory*, as well as the post-war *Stefan Batory*.

⁸ Cf. the legend of the training ships *Lwów* and *Dar Pomorza*, recorded by the writer Karol Olgierd Borchard in his book *Znaczący kapitan* (1960) and by his continuators.

A national sailor on a national yacht circumnavigates the world in the name of the nation;
 The national fishing fleet catches fish and serves it to the tables of the nation;
 The national navy defends the coastline and the communication routes;
 The nation goes to rest at the national beach (a national “3 × S—Sea, Sand, and Sun”).

It should also be stressed that this model, implemented in a more or less complete form by the national states of Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania) in the 20th century, was modelled on the so-far well-established policy of Western-European states (powers), such as Great Britain and France, and, in slightly later times, by Germany (in particular by Wilhelmian Germany). It is fairly easy to find non-economic—cultural and political—motivations for “the nation’s presence at sea.” Flying one’s banner at sea was seen in the 20th century as a constituent of the prestige of the nation and state. Moreover, it has been noted by ethnolinguists and researchers of nation-formation processes: according to a popular quip, “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy.”⁹

In the case of the Ukrainian national movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, the opportunities to develop a nationalist academic and school geography were severely limited. Obviously, it is also the case of the conditions in which the processes of nationalisation of territory and territorialisation of the nation took place in the 20th-century Ukraine. The Ukrainian state that could provide an institutional framework for them appeared only transitorily “in the fire and storm of the revolution” of 1917–1921. It then continued its existence as the Ukrainian SSR, a component of Soviet ethno-federalism, where all aspects of development and transformations of national identity were affected by various forms of totalitarian social engineering.¹⁰

The idea of an independent Ukrainian state was formulated in the beginning of the 20th century, and in 1917–1921 an attempt was made to realise it. In all the complexity of the overlapping conflicts of the time (Ukrainian struggle for independence, social revolution, the Russian Civil War, final events of World War I, disputes over succession to Russia and Austria, etc.), two major facets of the problem can be distinguished. First, are the Ukrainians a nation at all, do they have any right to sovereignty, or

⁹ A. Ahlqvist, “Language and languages,” in: *Language minorities and minority languages in the changing Europe*, eds. B. Synak and T. Wicherkiewicz, Gdańsk 1997, p. 28.

¹⁰ Of course, the complex history of the formation of the Ukrainian nation and the modern Ukrainian national identity exceeds the scope of this paper. For more on the present state of the scientific discussion and the main interpretations, see: *Ukraïna. Protsesy natsiotvorennia* [Ukraine: The nation-formation processes], ed. A. Kappeler, Kyïv 2011.

autonomy and political representation at least? Second, what are the limits of the Ukrainian national territory, to the rule of which the Ukrainians may aspire? The conflict over the Black Sea areas was one of the key issues of the second facet. In 1917 the Central Council of Ukraine (Ukr. Tsentralna Rada—UTsR) was established.¹¹ Its territorial programme was conceptualised in a paper by Fedir Matushevsky, presented at the All-Ukrainian National Congress on 18 April 1917 (N.S.), in which, based on the linguistic and ethnographic criterion, the Kherson Governorate, the Berdyansk, Melitopol, and Dnieper counties (Ukr. povit) of the Taurida Governorate, as well as the Taganrog Okrug of the Don Voisko Oblast were listed as parts of the territory of Ukraine.¹² Therefore, the Ukrainian coast would span from the Dniester Liman to the mouth of the Mius River, which is less to the west and more to the east than today, and would not include Crimea.¹³

The First Ukrainian Universal (23 April 1917 N.S.) proclaimed autonomous Ukrainian sovereignty over nine governorates, including the Taurida Governorate without Crimea. In the summer of 1917, the General Secretariat, the executive body of the UTsR, was granted the status of autonomous territorial government within Russia by the Provisional Government, in the area of Kiev, Chernigov, Volhynian, Podolia, and Poltava Governorates, that is, the area roughly corresponding to the Ukrainian lands of the pre-partition Commonwealth, poorly industrialised and not reaching the sea.

¹¹ Initially the Council was a coordinating body of the Ukrainian national movement which in time become the national pre-parliament, then the legislative body of the Ukrainian autonomy, and finally the legislature of the Ukrainian People's Republic from November 1917 to April 1918. The UTsR was dominated by the left-wing Ukrainian intelligentsia concentrated in two parties, social-democratic (USDLP—Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party) and social-revolutionary (UPSR—Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary Party); the activists of the former Society of Ukrainian Progressionists (TUP), present under the banner of the Ukrainian Party of Socialists-Federalists (UPSF) enjoyed much influence in the Council as well.

¹² *Ukraïn'sky natsional'no-vyzvolny rukh, berezen-lystopad 1917 roku: Dokumenty i materialy*, ed. V. Verstjuk, Kyiv 2003, item 58, paper presented by F. Matushevsky at the All-Ukrainian National Congress on 6 April 1917 (O.S.). Its author was an activist of TUP/UPSF. The All-Ukrainian National Congress (17–21 April 1917 N.S.) was a rally of representatives of local organisations of the Ukrainian national movement, convened by the UTsR, where the role of the latter as the leading body of the national movement was sanctioned, transforming it from a coordinating body in Kyiv into a national pre-parliament. The representativeness of the UTsR was increased and the postulate of the territorial autonomy for Ukraine was formulated.

¹³ This conceptualization was founded, of course, upon previous achievements of Ukrainian thought. The idea that Black Sea coast belongs to Ukraine can be found in the writings of Cyrillo-Methodians, in the thought of Mykhaylo Drahomanov, in the programmes of the first Ukrainian parties, including the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party of 1905, and in the historiographical writings of Nataliia Polonska-Vasylenko and Mykhailo Hrushevsky.

Therefore, the point of contention between the Ukrainian and Russian democrats were the eastern and southern territories of present-day Ukraine (Kharkov, Yekaterinoslav, Kherson, and Taurida Governorates). These lands, incorporated into the Russian Empire in the 17th–19th centuries, were previously part of the Wild Fields (the Great Steppe), an area occupied by Turkic-speaking nomads and a zone of influence of the Ottoman Empire, and at the turn of the 19th century bore an official name of Novorossiya. In the summer of 1917, the UTsR had to accept that its autonomous power was limited to five governorates. However, when the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) was proclaimed on 20 November 1917, its territory was expanded again to nine governorates, including the Taurida Governorate without Crimea. The Black Sea coast of the UNR was then to extend from the Dniester Liman to the Isthmus of Perekop, and the Azov coast from the Isthmus of Perekop to Mariupol, including the city.

The actual control of the UNR over this coast is a separate issue, since it was never firmly established throughout the period of the UNR. It did not seize control of the Black Sea Fleet of the former Russian Empire, or at least its significant part, either, although of course such attempts were made. The UNR in the Central Council period (November 1917–April 1918), the Ukrainian State of Hetman Skoropadsky (April–November 1918), and again the UNR in the Directorate period (from November 1918 on) had ministries of naval affairs, ensign patterns, military navy (actually composed of ships on slipways, whose construction was stopped after the revolution), and even marine divisions.¹⁴

The issue of the coastal regions and the access of Ukraine to the sea was also contested in the programmes and policy of the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russia. Initially only a small part of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine accepted the notion of a separate Ukrainian nation, much less that it has the right to sovereignty over the whole area postulated by the Ukrainian national movement. These Bolsheviks, such as Mykola Skrypnyk and Vasyl' Shakhrai, wanted to replace the UNR with a Soviet form of Ukrainian state. However, a faction of influential Bolshevik leaders connected to the Red Army and industrial regions forced in 1918 a project to establish political structures based on individual industrial centres, with Russian-internationalist cultural profile. Namely, it is the bloc of the so-called "Soviet republics of southern Russia:" in early 1918 the Odessa Soviet Republic was formed, as well as the Mykolaiv Commune of the Working People, Taurida Soviet Socialist

¹⁴ See: G. Skrukwa, "Polacy i Ukraińcy wobec morza (do 1939 roku)" [The Poles and the Ukrainians towards the sea (until 1939)], in: *Polska - Ukraina. Dziedzictwo i współczesność* [Poland-Ukraine: Heritage and modernity], eds. R. Drozd and T. Sucharski, Słupsk 2012, pp. 57-63.

Republis, and Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic. The builders of these ephemeral quasi-states considered them parts of the Russian FSSR and renounced all connections with Ukraine. Finally in 1920, however, after over two years and a half of fighting over Ukraine against the UNR forces, White Russians, and peasant guerrilla, in order to win, the Bolshevik leadership had to acknowledge the strength of the Ukrainian national movement and win over a part of its left wing (Ukapists and Borotbists, left-wing splinter factions of USDLP and UPSR).

The third main force in the war over Ukraine, the Russian Whites, i.e., forces gathered first around General Denikin and later General Wrangel, consequently occupied the position of "One Undivided Russia;" they not only rejected the Ukrainian identity of the Southern Ukraine, but the Ukrainian national identity at all. For the Whites, the Black Sea coast was still the coast of Novorossiia. Only in the final phase of the Civil War, a possibility of decentralisation of the whole Russia was considered, which took into account the local peculiarities of Novorossiia (and, separately, of Malorossiia).

Therefore, the form of territorial and political organisation of Ukraine which emerged from the turmoil of the revolution and civil war was a kind of compromise between the programme of the Ukrainian national movement, Moscow centralism, and proletarian internationalism. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic encompassed a territory similar to that of the UNR, i.e., lying within the borders based on the ethnographic and linguistic criterion, yet it was not independent and, of course, in spite of all the complexity of Bolshevik and Soviet nationality policy, it never became the Ukrainian nation state. It fulfilled some of the aims set by the Ukrainian nationalism, but the sphere of science, education, and culture was subject to the dominant communist ideology and the power centre in Moscow.

The key political geographical texts, which defined the relationships between Ukraine and the Ukrainians, and the Black sea, defined the borders of Ukraine, including its sea borders, determined the place of the coastal regions within the Ukraine, defined the relations between Ukraine and other countries lying in the vicinity of the Black Sea, and postulated the visions of the Ukrainian naval policy, were all written outside of the USSR. These include, first and foremost, the writings of Stepan Rudnytsky and Yuriy Lypa. These two writers are considered as the chief co-authors of the Ukrainian political geography.¹⁵

Stepan Rudnytsky, born in 1877 in Przemyśl, studied history, geography, and German philology at the universities in Lviv and Vienna. He found his

¹⁵ M.S. Dnistrians'ky, *Etnopolitychna heohrafiya Ukraïny: problemy teorii, metodolohii, praktyky* [Ethno-political geography of Ukraine: Problems of theory, methodology, practice], Lviv 2006, pp. 91-102.

direct masters in the German geographer (Ice Age researcher) Albrecht Penck and geologist Eduard Suess. They, in turn, were backed by the authority of Friedrich Rätzl (1844–1904), the “father” of modern political geography and, at the same time, a geographical determinist and socio-Darwinist. In 1908 Rudnytsky received habilitation and a post of Privat-Dozent, that is, lecturer of geography in the Ukrainian-speaking department of the Lviv University. Connected with the Ukrainian national movement, during World War I he issued numerous political publications meant to justify its postulates. In 1919 he was an advisor to the authorities of the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic (ZUNR). Since 1920 he stayed in Vienna, was one of the founders of the Ukrainian Free University in Prague and the dean of its philological faculty. Similarly to many other Ukrainian emigrants, however, he underwent a pro-Soviet reorientation (“change of signposts”) in mid-1920s: he came to believe that he had to go to the Soviet Ukraine to join the institutional development of the Ukrainian science and culture within the framework of the korenisation (Ukrainisation) policy adopted at the time. In 1926 he left for the USSR, founded the Institute of Geography and Cartography in Kharkov and became an Academician of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Science. Nonetheless, in 1933 he was arrested on the charges of counter-revolutionary activity and espionage for Germany, sentenced to a 5-year term, and transferred to the Solovets Islands penal colony. In 1937 Rudnytsky was sentenced to death by NKVD and executed.¹⁶

The most important among Rudnytsky’s writings were his works published during World War I and in the early 1920s, which were meant to further the Ukrainian aspirations for state-formation and territorial claims. These are such works as *Chomu my khochemo samostiynoi Ukraïny* (Vienna 1916), *Ukraïnska sprava zi stanovyshcha politychnoi heografii* (Berlin 1923), and *Ohliad natsionalnoi terytorii Ukraïny* (Berlin 1923).¹⁷ Thanks to these and to the maps he edited, he is considered as the chief “national

¹⁶For the biography of Rudnytsky and the description of his scientific as well as journalistic and political activities, see: O. Shably, “Peredmova” [Introduction], in: *Chomu my khochemo samostiynoi Ukraïny*, Lviv 1994, pp. 5-34; G. Hausmann, “Terytorii Ukraïny: vnesok Stepana Rudnyts’koho v istoriiu prostorovo-terytorial’noho myslennia v Ukraïni,” in: *Ukraïna. Protsesy natsiotvorennia*, pp. 154-166. See also: D. S. Shelest, “Natsional’no-derzhavnyts’ki pohliady S. L. Rudnyts’koho,” *Zapyski Istorychnoho Fakul’tetu Odes’koho Derzhavnoho Universytetu*, Vol. 5, 1997, pp. 93-98.

¹⁷This article uses the 1994 Lviv re-edition, edited by and with introduction by Oleksandr Shably (S. Rudnytsky, *op. cit.*). The single volume contains 5 works, “Chomu my khochemo samostiynoi Ukraïny,” “Ukraïns’ka sprava zi stanovyshcha politychnoi heografii,” “Ohliad natsional’noi terytorii Ukraïny,” “Do osnov ukraïns’koho natsionalizmu,” “Halychyna ta Soborna Ukraïna.”

geographer,” the Ukrainian counterpart to Eugeniusz Romer in Poland and Veniamin Semenov-Tian-Shansky.¹⁸

The paradigms of Rudnytsky’s scientific writing can be unequivocally characterised as geographical determinism, as well as primordialism and perennialism in his views of the nation. He believed that nation state is the goal of the historical development in the 20th century.¹⁹ Multi-national countries are more or less artificial and so doomed to collapse. Conversely, a nation is an organic entity: it has common traits of physical anthropology, common language with developed literature and science in that language, common historical traditions and political aspirations, common material and spiritual culture, and a defined common territory, where the nation state exists, existed, or may exist. The Ukrainians fulfil all the above criteria and so are a nation, therefore they should have their independent state within its natural borders.²⁰

It should be examined what the following questions looked like in Rudnytsky’s writing: first, the sea as the border of Ukraine; second, the territorial span of the Ukrainian sovereignty at the coast; third, the significance of the sea in the past and future of Ukraine; fourth, the attitude towards other countries of the Black Sea basin.

Rudnytsky considered the Black Sea as the natural, and therefore the best border of Ukraine. At the same time, he criticised the territorial programme of the UTsR and Hetmanate as too cautious. The areas he regarded as parts of Ukraine included Crimea, southern Bessarabia, a greater part of the Don Voisko Oblast, the whole Kuban Oblast, Black Sea Governorate (Chernomorshchyna, Chernomoriya),²¹ Stavropol Krai (Stavropolshchyna), and fragments of the Terek and Astrakhan Voisko Oblasts. If the totality of Rudnytsky’s programme were ever realised, the Black Sea coast from the Danube Delta to Gagra (in present-day Abkhazia) would belong to Ukraine, the Azov Sea would become an internal sea of Ukraine, which would

¹⁸ Romer and Rudnytsky worked at the Lviv University at the same time and were both pupils of Penck, although Romer was slightly older and enjoyed a higher status in the European scientific community. For a comparison between Romer, Rudnytsky, and Semenov-Tian-Shansky against the geographic paradigms of the time, and for the question of the role in the processes of national territorialisation, see: G. Hausmann, *op. cit.*, pp 160-164.

¹⁹ S. Rudnytsky, *Chomu my khochemo*, p. 131.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-42.

²¹ An administrative division of the Russian Empire, with a centre in Novorossiysk; consisted of a narrow coastal zone from Anapa to Gagra, the present-day Black Sea coast of Russia (Krasnodar Krai), and a small part of Abkhazia.

additionally have access to one more sea—the Caspian Sea, near the mouth of the Terek River!²²

Ukraine is the land where the Ukrainians live....Ukraine—is a great, rich, and once famous country....From the rapid Poprad and muddy Wieprz, it stretches to the distant Caspian Sea, surrounded by red steppes, from the hot Hungarian lowlands and the wooded Carpathian peaks to beyond the fishing Don, from the dark woods of the Białowieża Forest to the ice-bound Caucasus, from the bottomless swamps of Polesia to the sunny Black Sea coast.

...By the sea, Moscovised cities sit, Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Taganrog, and Rostov, there is once-Tatar Crimea and the sub-Caucasian Cossack Kubanshchyna, Chernomoriya, and Stavropolshchyna.

So does the Ukrainian nation sit...over wide navigable rivers and seas, on great trade routes.²³

Of course, it was a maximalist programme. Rudnytsky himself, however, divided the Ukrainian lands into two broad categories. Ukraine consists of the Ukrainian ethnic lands and those colonised by Ukrainians. Geological, climate, and hydrographic processes had created the country: the north Black Sea basin of Dniester and Dnieper, which flow into the Black Sea.

The Ukrainian land constitutes a distinct geographical whole, self-contained and separate from the neighbouring lands: Moldova, Hungary, Poland, Belarus, and Moskovshchyna. To the south it leans against the Black Sea, Carpathians, and Caucasus, and against the swamps of Polesia to the north. Although Ukraine has no good natural borders to the west, north-east, and east, it has strong traits of unity being the northern coast of the Black Sea....Ukrainian waters are centred in the Black Sea, Ukraine is the north-eastern region of the Black Sea catchment basin.²⁴

This country, in turn, produced its own nation, with uniform physical and anthropological traits, language, history, and material and spiritual culture, which led to the formation of the ethnic Ukrainian lands.

The other category of lands described by Rudnytsky as part of Ukraine are the areas of Ukrainian colonisation, or lands at the border between Europe and Asia settled by the Ukrainian population in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century:

The Ukrainian nation has inhabited, from time immemorial, the north-western part of its present territory. In 10th–11th centuries, the Old Ukrainian Kievan state controlled the whole Black Sea coast, from

²² S. Rudnytsky, "Ohliad natsional'noi terytorii Ukrainy," in *Chomu my khochemo*, pp. 258–263.

²³ S. Rudnytsky, "Chomu my khochemo," p. 78.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

the Danube Delta up to Kuban. The pressure from Asiatic nomads pushed the Ukrainian nation away from the Black Sea coast for whole centuries; however, in the 16th century began a new expansion of Ukrainians to the south and east, which has continued to this day. In the 18th century the Ukrainian nation reached the Black Sea and Caucasus again, in the 19th century consolidated its lands here, reached the Caspian Sea, and expands its territories in that region further and further.²⁵

A significant part of the coast claimed by Rudnytsky as Ukrainian had been inhabited, until recently, by Turkic and Caucasian peoples. Rudnytsky's attitude to colonisation processes was ambiguous. On one hand, the criticism of the situation where the Ukrainian people was or is exploited, deprived of the fruit of its labour and the riches of its country by foreign rulers and exploiters is a recurring theme in his works. As the geographer stresses, the Ukrainians show no expansionist tendencies:

What is characteristic of the Ukrainian historical and political tradition is a total lack of imperialism. The Polish and Muscovite political thought is based on the enslavement of other nations. The Poles dream of restoring the Polish state stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, in which they would be the masters and would rule over Germans, Lithuanians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians. The Muscovites want to preserve the greatness of their state, that oppresses a hundred subjugated nations, and dream of expanding it over all the Slavic nations. All the Ukrainians want is the Ukrainian nation state in its ethnographic borders. They only want to be the masters on their own land—they do not want what belongs to others.²⁶

The examples of colonial exploitation known from world history were used by Rudnytsky in comparisons with the situation of the Ukrainians. For instance, the social relations in the pre-partition Commonwealth were compared to those in plantation colonies,²⁷ and the relationships in the Black Sea basin from the 16th to the 18th centuries, dominated by the Crimean trade in Ukrainian slaves, to those in the Eastern Africa, dominated in turn by the Arab trade in African slaves.²⁸ Yet, on the other hand, a clear historiosophical socio-Darwinism is apparent in Rudnytsky's works. The history of humanity is a struggle between races and nations, governed by the Darwinian rules of the struggle for existence and natural selection. The more civilised nations have the right to claim uninhabited or poorly

²⁵ S. Rudnytsky, "Ukrains'ka sprava zi stanovyshcha politychnoi heohrafii," in: *Chomu my khochemo*, p. 97.

²⁶ S. Rudnytsky, „Chomu my khochemo,” p. 70.

²⁷ S. Rudnytsky, "Ukrains'ka sprava," p. 111.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

inhabited territories: the Ukrainian Cossacks colonise the steppe up to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, just like the American pioneers do in the North American interior.²⁹

As far as the historical significance of the Black Sea for Ukraine is concerned, according to Rudnytsky, since time immemorial these waters have been Ukraine's main link to the Southern Europe and Asia Minor. It was through the Black Sea that Christianity came to Ukraine, which was thus introduced to the family of civilised European nations. The contacts with Byzantium through the Black Sea contributed to the solidification of the Ukrainian statehood and attaining the highest civilisational level of all medieval Slavic states. Under the pressure from Asiatic nomads, the Ukrainian nation was pushed away from the sea, and thus from the Mediterranean Sea as well. When in the 18th–19th centuries, after 600 years the Ukrainian nation reached the Black Sea coast again, the main centres of global communication and civilisation already lay by the Atlantic Ocean, and what lay on the other side of the Black Sea was not Byzantium anymore but the Turkish state, “the enemy of all cultural development.”³⁰

It has to be stressed here that, while the Black Sea was of large significance to the history of Ukraine, according to Rudnytsky, apparently it was not fundamental. The Ukrainian nation formed in deep interior, in the forest and steppe-forest zone, without access to sea, and is primarily a nation of farmers.³¹

At the same time, Rudnytsky subscribed to the notion of the colonial status of Ukraine within the Russian Empire, by repeating the thesis of intentional underdevelopment of the Ukrainian sea transport:

The Russian government hampers the Black Sea shipping to promote the Baltic one, which may be more profitable to the Moskovshchyna itself. Ukrainian waterways are in a very sorry state due to the indolence and negligence of the government. Ukrainian railroads have been laid so that they serve foreign centres of industry and trade, mainly central and Muscovite ones, and not as the good of Ukraine would dictate. The tariffs on Ukrainian railroads are set so that it is cheaper to export goods from Ukraine to Moskovshchyna or to the Baltic ports than to the Black sea ports!³²

On the issue of the significance of the Black Sea for the future of Ukraine, two main threads in Rudnytsky's thought can be distinguished. First, he believed that the significance of the Black Sea basin would grow, since the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

³² S. Rudnytsky, “Chomu my khochemo,” pp. 87-88.

shortest route from Western Europe to Persia and India led through Ukraine, from which the latter may profit:

Waterways and land routes of Ukraine should be marked out so that they take over a significant part of the world communication with the Orient and India. This goal must be served by the development of the Ukrainian fleet in the Black Sea and construction of navigable channels from the Black Sea to the Baltic and Caspian Seas, the projects of which have been considered as realistic for a long time, yet never realised due to the indolence of the Russian government.³³

Second, he stressed that without the control of Ukraine, Russia would be unable to develop its expansion to the Balkans and Caucasus, and beyond towards the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the existence of independent Ukraine as a barrier for the Russian imperialism is in the best interest of the European powers, chiefly the United Kingdom and Germany. Third, he cautiously supported the idea of establishing a Baltic-Pontic Federation, composed of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine, but never Poland. Of course, the leading force of such a federation was to be Ukraine.³⁴

Rudnytsky's nationalist geography found its continuation and development, in particular concerning the Black Sea and its region, in the writings of Yuriy Lypa (1900–1944). Born in Odessa, he was a son of a prominent Ukrainian national activist from that city Ivan Lypa. After the fall of the UNR, he emigrated to Poland. He studied medicine at the University of Poznań and graduated in 1929. In the course of the studies, he led a Ukrainian student corporation "Chernomore" in Poznań. He acquired further education in Lviv, Warsaw, and London. In 1930s he was involved in literary activity and political journalism, becoming one of the theoreticians of the Ukrainian nationalist movement (in its narrow meaning, i.e., the movement focused around the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists), though he was not formally associated with it. During World War II, he directed the Ukrainian Black Sea Institute in Warsaw.³⁵ In 1944, he was arrested and murdered by the NKVD in Eastern Galicia.³⁶

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁴ S. Rudnytsky, "Ukraïns'ka sprava," pp. 154-155.

³⁵ A small scientific and publishing post of several people, active semi-legally under the German occupation; its publications were signed as issued in Odessa.

³⁶ On Lypa's place in the history of the Ukrainian political thought and the reception of his ideas, see R. Yu. Kazankov, "Problema formuvannia chornomors'koho heopolitychnoho prostoru v pershiyy polovyni XX st.: ukraïnsk'y variant," *Visnyk Kharkivs'koho Natsional'noho Universytetu imeni V.N. Karazina* No. 835, series: *Istoriya*, Vol. 11, 2008, pp. 44-50.; Yu. V.

Lypa's most important political and geographic reflections are contained in three brochures, namely *Pryznaczenia Ukraïny* (1938), *Chornomorska doktryna* (1940, 2nd edition 1942), and *Rozpodil Rosii* (1942). Called the "father of the Ukrainian geopolitics," Lypa is believed to have predicted the fall of the USSR.³⁷ Quite a lot of modern publications present an apologetic or hardly critical view of him; on the other hand, it is stressed that his journalistic writings are still not known and understood enough in Ukraine. There are also voices pointing out methodological shortcomings of his paradigm, including using a mythical version of the history of Ukraine.³⁸ Individual thoughts from Lypa are quoted fairly often, e.g., "Who controls Sevastopol, controls Crimea, and who controls Crimea, controls the Black Sea."³⁹

Lypa's main theses claimed that the region of countries surrounding the Black Sea is a natural whole ("a Black Sea fortress"), the "vaulting" of which is Ukraine.⁴⁰ Ukraine should adopt a Black Sea orientation and become the leader of the bloc of Black Sea countries, in which an important role would also be played by Bulgaria and Turkey, and the prospective unified Caucasian state. In spite of his very negative evaluations of the role of the Crimean Khanate in the history of Ukraine and noticeable Turkophobic tendencies, Lypa made a clear distinction between the positively evaluated modern Republic of Turkey and the historic Ottoman Empire.⁴¹ He very positively assessed Bulgaria and the Bulgarians, while Romania and the Romanians negatively.⁴²

Regarding the national territorialisation and the postulated reach of the Ukrainian coast, Lypa considered Crimea as genuine Ukrainian ethnic and state territory, since in the political and cultural dimension Ukraine is also the successor of the Bosporan Kingdom, the ancient Hellenistic state in Crimea.⁴³

Vasylevych, "Chornomors'ka koncepciya Juriya Lypy u heopolitychniy dumtsi Ukraïny," *Naukovi Praci Chornomorskoho Derzhavnoho Universytetu*, Vol. 178, 2012, pp. 8-11.

³⁷ M.S. Dnistriansky, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Dnistriansky's critical remarks concern S. Rudnytsky as well.

³⁹ I. Losiev, "Krym jak heopolitychna problema Ukraïny na zlami XX-XXI stolit'," *Chornomors'ka Bezpeka* No. 1, 2005. Ihor Losiev is a well-known Ukrainian intellectual and publicist, faculty member of the University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, frequently published in the opinion-forming weekly „Ukrainsky Tyzhden.”

⁴⁰ Yu. Lypa, *Chornomors'ka doktryna*, Odessa 1942, p. 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-50.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-72.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

Lypa's publications largely bear the marks of their time, such as geographical determinism, organic and racial understanding of nation, the ideal of ethnically homogenous state, nationalist mythmaking, and evaluation of individual nations. One may also find in them the germs of an ethnic purge programme: he thought it was advisable to stimulate the emigration of Tatars from Crimea to the Republic of Turkey and approved of the 19th century migration forced by the Tsarist authorities.⁴⁴ Lypa's ideas may evoke quite unequivocal connotations in a Polish reader, calling to mind the concepts of some of the Polish extreme right political circles (the Szaniec Group, Konfederacja Narodu) from the World War II period concerning the Slavic Empire or the domination of Poland in the "ABC Region." In a sense, however, Lypa acted for the emancipation of the whole region. He wrote that the whole Black Sea region was "Europe No. 2," treated by the West as a reservoir of raw materials and grain. He evaluated with equal amounts of criticism the Russian imperialism, French intervention of 1919, and the contemporary expansion of the Axis countries. Thence the visible sympathy for Kemalism, construed as a sign of emancipation of the Black Sea nations.⁴⁵

Ukraine gained independence in 1991, in the process of the dissolution of the USSR. The borders of the former Soviet republics became internationally recognised state borders, and the form of the independent Ukraine was finally shaped by the internal and external politics of the USSR. In comparison to the 1922 borders, the territory of 1991 Ukraine differs in shape, of course, and its access to the sea. In 1925 the Taganrog Okrug was transferred from the Ukrainian SSR to the RFSRR, and so the Azov coast of the former was diminished by some 50 km in the east and one important port and industrial city. There were gains as well. In 1940 after the annexation of Bessarabia, its southern part (so-called Podunavia, or historical Budjak) was allotted to the Ukrainian SSR as the Izmail Oblast. The Republic gained about 100 km of sea coast, access to Danube, and the ports of Reni, Izmail, and Bilhorod (Akkerman). Finally in 1954 Crimea was transferred from the Russian FSSR to the Ukrainian SSR. Thus, some of the postulates of the nationalist Ukrainian geography were realised, in a way.

Essentially, however, after the incorporation of Budjak and Crimea, the processes of national territorialisation and territorial nationalisation did not occur there. The incorporation of Budjak in 1940 was first of all a form of political recompense for the cessation of a zone along the left bank of the Dniester, which was included in the bridgehead Moldovan Autonomous SSR of the Ukrainian SSR (present-day Transnistria). In 1940–1954 Budjak was

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-84.

a separate Izmail Oblast, before its incorporation into the Odessa Oblast in 1954. Throughout the period when it was part of the USSR, it remained an isolated, underinvested peripheral region, with backward farming, inefficient industry, provincial educational system and cultural life. The echoes of the all-union and republican “Thaw” or “Shestydesatnytstvo”⁴⁶ did not reach there. This multi-national region, from the 18th century inhabited by Ukrainians, Moldovans/Romanians, Bulgarians, Gagauz people, and Russians (including Old Believers), and until the World War II by Jews and Germans as well, was dominated now by a general Soviet culture reflected by the Russian language. The institutional conditions for the development of Ukrainian and Moldovan identities were bad, and even worse for the Bulgarians and Gagauzians.⁴⁷ A very large number of toponyms of Turkic or Romance origin were replaced by new banal East Slavic names of Soviet ideological persuasion (Zhovtneve, Trudove, Prymorske, Pervomaiske, Desantne, Suvorovo, etc.).⁴⁸

The situation in Crimea was similar. The peninsula was incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR already after the deportation of Crimean Tatars as a “Slavic territory.”⁴⁹ The authorities of the Ukrainian SSR and the local authorities launched an action of Ukrainisation of the new area, i.e., encouraged Ukrainians to settle in Crimea and organised institutions of Ukrainian culture in the peninsula.⁵⁰ However, while several hundred thousand inhabitants of “continental” Ukraine were resettled to Crimea, which population movement lasted until the 1980s, the development of Ukrainian schools, publishing houses, theatres, and culture centres in the peninsula was slowed down in 1959–1960, and afterwards its results were being eliminated, i.e., the scope of education in Ukrainian was decreased, Ukrainian press was being replaced with Russian-speaking titles, etc.⁵¹ From the beginning of the 1960s to the period of Perestroika, the formal affiliation of Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR was of little practical importance. Crimea

⁴⁶ “Shestydesatnytstvo,” a phenomenon of activity by a group of young artists and scientists in the Ukrainian SSR in the early 1960s, who took advantage of the conditions created by the Khrushchev thaw and through their works and social activity contributed to the rebirth of the Ukrainian national identity and the democratisation of the Ukrainian SSR. Their circle later gave birth to the dissident opposition.

⁴⁷ O.M. Lebedenko, A. K. Tychyna, *Ukrains'ke Podunav'ya: mynule ta suchasne*, Odesa 2002, pp. 171-192.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

⁴⁹ P. R. Magochiy, *Istoriya Ukrainy*, Kyiv 2007, p. 560.

⁵⁰ V.K. Baran, V.M. Danylenko, *Ukraina v umovach systemnoi kryzy (1946–1980-i rr.)*, Kyiv 1999, p. 82; O. Bazhan, *Sproby “ukrainizacii” Krymu v druhiy polovyni 1950-ch rokiv*, http://ukrlife.org/main/uacrim/conf_50x.htm (accessed: 22.01.2011)

⁵¹ For more, see: P. Volvach, *Ukrains'ka provesin' Krymu*, Simferopol 2008, pp. 104-116.

served, above all, as the “all-union spa” (Rus. vsesoyuznaya zdravnitsa) and militarised Black Sea Fleet infrastructure. For a long time, this affiliation was not expressed in the sphere of consciousness either. The Ukrainian Soviet historiography simply repeated the chief ideas of the Russian Soviet historiography concerning Crimea, that is, emphasising the Tatar-East Slavic conflict as the main thread in the history of Crimea, negative assessment of the Crimean Khanate, and showing the expansion of the Russian Empire, including the incorporation of Crimea to Russia, as “objectively progressive” processes.⁵²

Obviously, the processes of national territorialisation and territorial nationalisation took a peculiar Soviet form and content not only in the areas incorporated to the Ukrainian SSR in 1940 and 1954 but in the whole Ukraine and the whole coast, in the Odessa, Mykolaiv, and Kherson Oblasts. On the one hand, the Ukrainian SSR was a Ukrainian nation state, to some extent. In the USSR, nations were treated as objectively existing entities, according to the so-called Stalinist (later called Marxist-Leninist) definition of nation. After 1956, and definitively after Khrushchev’s resignation, the borders of political and administrative units, as well as the republican elites, were permanently stabilised. On the one hand, it was impossible, of course, to perform research based on a nationalist paradigm or to refer to such research, on the other, open discourses questioning the form of the USSR or the existence of the Ukrainian nation were not possible either (one could not, for example, claim that “Odessa is Novorossiia and not Ukraine”). The shape of the republics began to be projected into the past, and much more remote than the nationalist historians from the beginning of the century happened to do.

With the development of archaeology and reaching ever deeper into the past, all peoples and cultures within the borders of the USSR of the time gradually began to be regarded as the ancestors of the USSR nations and the Soviet state. In the school message, the history of the Rus’ people/ Ukrainians still began with the Antes, yet the academic research was more and more focusing on Scythians, Sarmatians, Cimmerians, Trypillian culture people, and Greek colonisation of the Black Sea coast.⁵³ It paved the way for the eruption of the idea of the “steppe-Black Sea,” “Iranian,” and “Aryan” ethnogenesis of the Ukrainians, revealed in the early 1990s, and for various hypertrophic concepts of Ukraine-Oriana-Aratta as the Urheimat of the

⁵² For more on this subject, see: G. Skrukwa, “Krym—ukraiński punkt widzenia. Historia i współczesność,” *Sensus Historiae*, vol. II (2011/1).

⁵³ A. Wilson, *Ukraińcy* [The Ukrainians], Warszawa 2000, p. 21.

Aryans and the cradle of the world' civilisation. The Black Sea plays a much greater role in these concepts than in the classic Ukrainian historiography.⁵⁴

On the other hand, the nationality policy towards the Ukrainian SSR alternated between repression and affirmation of the Ukrainian culture, beginning with the policy of terror at the end of the Civil War, the Ukrainisation of 1924–1930, collectivisation and the Great Famine (Holodomor) and the subsequent “Executed Rebirth” (Ukr. *rozstriliane vidrodzhennia*) in 1937, the Great Purge and the crushing of national communism; then, in turn, the Stalin-Khrushchev unification of Ukraine in 1939 and in 1944–1945, along with the tide of Soviet Ukrainian patriotism (which culminated in a separate UN membership for the Ukrainian SSR); next, the Ukrainian version of the Zhdanov Doctrine, with Ukraine being assigned the place of a younger brother at the side of the great Russian nation, the Ukrainian revival and the activity of the Schestydesanyks, as well as the patriotic aspects of Petro Shelest's leadership; and finally the stabilisation, stagnation, and Russification of the Brezhnev and Shcherbytsky period.

The results of the terror of the 1930s proved to be much more permanent in the south and east of Ukraine than in Kyiv and the rest of the centre. As far as Odessa had been radically modernised at the turn of the 1930s (the main language of administration, press, educational system, and culture was Ukrainian), the revival after the Stalinist repressions never restored that state, and the humanities and the character of both humanities and culture remained strongly Soviet and provincial (e.g., the prescribed research area for historians in Odessa was the study of the local and internationalist revolutionary movement). The names of the newly built satellite ports of Odessa are also telling. The first was named Illichivsk (Ukr. *Illichivs'k*) to commemorate Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, even though the postulated Ukrainian name was Sukholimansk, after its location (Sukhyi Liman). The name given

⁵⁴ These concepts often refer to the Black Sea deluge hypothesis, which assumes that in prehistoric times, until about 7500-5500 BC, the Black Sea was a closed freshwater lake (the New Euxine Lake), covering a smaller area than now. Following the breaking of the isthmus and the creation of Bosphorus, waters of the Mediterranean supposedly poured into the lake at a very fast rate, raising its level and flooding terrains occupied by highly developed Neolithic cultures, which became the underlying event of the flood archetype in the mythologies of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean peoples. However, as far as this hypothesis is treated only as a hypothesis in the scientific discourse (see: C. King, *Dzieje Morza Czarnego* [The Black Sea: A history], Warszawa 2006, pp. 26-29), the conclusions built upon it by some authors of popular parascientific books are fairly free speculations. First, they see the Ukrainian lands as the cradle of the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. Second, they substantially perceive the prehistoric inhabitants of Ukraine as the Ukrainian nation (which is primordialism stretched to its limits). Cf. A. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-39.

to the other one, Yuzhne (“Southern”) was derived from the Russian, not the Ukrainian root (in which case it would be Pivdenne).⁵⁵

The maritime sector of the Ukrainian SSR was, in a vast majority, an integral part of the centralised defensive and economic system of the USSR. The Black Sea Fleet was a strategic unit of the Soviet Navy (Rus. *Voenno-Morskoy Flot SSSR*), which in turn was a branch of the Soviet Armed Forces. In the Black sea fleet, contrary to the land forces, no form of Ukrainisation took place, the sole exception was that two ships were given names in Ukrainian, namely the cruiser *Chervona Ukraïna* (1922) and destroyer *Nezamozhnyk* (1926). In 1962–1985, the Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy was Alexei Yepishev, one of the protectors of the so-called *ruskaya partiia*, a secret movement of Russian nationalists in the CPSU and Komsomol. Earlier, in the 1950s, Yepishev was the first secretary of the regional party organisation in Odessa and one of the executors of the Russification policy under the Zhdanov Doctrine in Ukraine.⁵⁶ After World War II, the educational and ideological tradition in the Black Sea Fleet referred more and more to the imperial ones, and Sevastopol was repeatedly called the “City of Russian Glory” (Rus. *Gorod Russkoy Slavy*).

The whole mercantile and passenger shipping and sea ports in the USSR were subordinated to the all-union USSR Ministry of Sea Transport in Moscow.⁵⁷ Republican ministries of sea transport did not exist, there were only regional shipping administrations below the level of republic: Black Sea in Odessa, Danube in Izmail, and Azov in Mariupol. Only sea fishing was subordinated to Soviet republics. There was a Ministry of Fisheries of the Ukrainian SRR, dependent on the USSR Ministry of Fisheries, of course. Odessa was the base of Antarctic flotillas of all-union significance.⁵⁸

There has been a quite vibrant debate over the sea affairs in Ukraine since 1991, both in journalistic and scientific discourse. The general undertone seems fairly critical towards the developments after 1991, concerning the maritime sector, the coast, and the Black Sea region. There are voices about unfulfilled potential, wasted opportunities, “yet another destruction of a squadron;”⁵⁹ there are theses that Ukraine is not a maritime state but only

⁵⁵ O. Olijnykiv, “Porty ta portovi mista” [Ports and port cities], in: *Ukraïna—mors’ka derzhava*, ed. D. P. Dmytrijev, Odesa 2001, p. 162.

⁵⁶ N. Mitrochin, *Russkaya partiya: dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR 1953–1985*, Moscow 2003, p. 103

⁵⁷ Under this name since 1954. Earlier names: Central Directorate of Sea Transport, State Black Sea-Azov Merchant Fleet, Administration of Black Sea shipping.

⁵⁸ M. Dergausov, *Ukraina - derzhava morskaya*, Donetsk 2000, pp. 8-10.

⁵⁹ V. Lartsev, “Yak ginula eskadra,” *Ekonomichna Pravda* 14.11.2012, http://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2012/11/14/343814/view_print/ (accessed: 21.05.2013). The title of

a state by the sea.⁶⁰ This discourse is strongly related with the discourse over the identity and the meaning of the independence of Ukraine, and is quite typical for all the discussions about the entire situation of Ukraine. Nationalist circles (that is, oriented towards the tradition of independence and striving to the greatest possible emancipation and separation from Russia and the Russian culture) can be heard saying that the problems are caused by “not enough independence” and the failure to radically part with the Soviet heritage, the indolence of the post-Soviet administrative staff, homo sovieticus mentality, pro-Russian lobbying, activity of secret services, etc. Whereas from the pro-Russian circles (oriented towards the Soviet heritage and postulating to retain or even strengthen the cultural, political, and economic bonds with Russia) come voices that the crisis phenomena result from “too much nationalism,” lack of professionalism and rowdiness of “nationalist authorities,” or even the independence itself.

How to the historical now concepts of Rudnytsky and Lypa relate to it? Two answers can be found. The first is critical towards the present-day Ukraine: the Black Sea coast is a peripheral region, full of centrifugal tendencies, provoking conflicts, associated with pathologies (smuggling, corruption, gunfights, mykolaivske zvirstva⁶¹), and region around the Black

the article refers to the 1934 drama by the Soviet Ukrainian writer Oleksandr Korniychuk *Zahybel eskadry* (Rus. *Gibyl eskadry*) [Destruction of the squadron]. This play, filmed in 1965, tells the story of the Black Sea Fleet sailors who, at Lenin's order, sank their own ships in Novorossiysk in May 1918 to prevent them from being captured by the Germans.

⁶⁰ S. Grinevetskiy, “Ukraina—iz morskoy derzhavy v ‘stranu u morja’?,” *Zerkalo Nedeli* 2010 No. 2, dated 23.01.2010, http://gazeta.zn.ua/ECONOMICS/ukraina_iz_morskoy_derzhavy_v_stranu_u_morya.html. (accessed: 2.07.2012); *idem*, “Morskaya otrasl': proshla li Ukraina tochku nevozvrata?,” *Rupor Odessy*, 26.03.2012, <http://rupor.od.ua/article/Morskaya-otrasl-proshla-liUkraina-tochku-nevozvr/> (accessed: 2.07.2012). Sergey Grinevetskiy (Serhiy Hrynevets'ky) - born in 1957, agricultural engineer, Komsomol apparatchik; since the dissolution of the USSR businessman and politician, 1998-2005 Governor of Odessa Oblast. Member of the People's Party—Lytvyn Bloc, elected many times to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

⁶¹ One of the few events which made Mykolaiv, the oblast administrative centre, port, and shipyard city notorious in Ukraine and abroad, was a violent rape and murder of 18-year-old Oksana Makar in March 2012. The investigation was conducted indolently, while the public opinion believed that the perpetrators belonged to the “bigwig” category (Ukr. *mazhory*) and thus are being protected by the militia and procurators.

Sea is a zone of instability and conflict (Snake Island⁶² and Tuzla,⁶³ Crimea, Transnistria and Abkhazia, the Russia-Georgia war of 2008, “Vahabites” in Crimea,⁶⁴ etc. What attracts attention is that the only two open territorial disputes of the present-day Ukraine are over islands on the opposite sides of the Black Sea coast, where it touches the territories of Romania and Russia. The status of the Azov Sea is also problematic, since at present it is an internal sea of both Ukraine and Russia, although Ukraine postulates its demarcation.

There is also an answer that the concepts of the national geographers “have been fulfilled.” The USSR has fallen, Ukraine is independent and has a coast. What is more, organisations of Black Sea countries, such as the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) have been established, being the implementation of Lypa’s Black Sea doctrine.⁶⁵

With the fall of the USSR, Ukraine took over 18 of its 64 sea ports, 8 shipyards, 27% of the merchant fleet, and 50% of the passenger fleet. It also took over the greatest shipping enterprise in the world, the Black Sea Shipping Company (Ukr. Chornomors’ke Mors’ke Paroplavstvo—ChMP), which in 1990 had 393 ships with a total deadweight tonnage of 5.5 million

⁶² Zmiinyi Ostriv, an island belonging to Ukraine, close to the border of territorial waters of Ukraine and Romania, some 35 km from the continental coast. Until 1997 Romania lay claims to the island, denying the legality of its transfer to the USSR in 1948. It was only in 2009 that the dispute over the borders of the continental shelf and exclusive economic zones between Romania and Ukraine was settled by the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands.

⁶³ Tuzla Island, part of a spit in the Strait of Kerch, in terms of geography located closer to the Russian Federation, yet part of the territory of Ukraine. In 2003, Russia pressed claims to the island and attempted its de facto annexation, by building a dam from the Taman peninsula towards it. The conflict over Tuzla was one of the most critical events in the present-day relationships between Ukraine and Russia. It is part of a broader issue of delimitation in the Strait of Kerch and the status of the Azov Sea. Cf. L. D. Chekalenko, *Zovnishna polityka Ukraïny*, Kyiv 2006, pp. 416-420.

⁶⁴ The issue of muslim extremism in Crimea is raised relatively often in the Russian-speaking media, which is perceived in turn by the Ukrainian media and nationally and democratically orientated centres as overstatement and mystification. Cf. “Nedoekestremisty,” *Ukraïns’ky tyzhden’*, No. 8 (69), 27 II 2009. See also: O. Bogomolov, S. Danylov, I. Semyvolos, *Islam i polityka identychnostey u Krymu: vid symbolichnykh viyn od vyznannya kultur’noho rozmaïttya*, Kyiv 2009

⁶⁵ O. S. Kuchyk, *Mizhnarodni orhanizatsii*, Kyiv 2005, http://pidruchniki.ws/19570411/ekonomika/chornomorski_doktrini_geopolitichniy_dumtsi_ukrayini (accessed: 19.05.2013); See also: Yu. Oliynyk, “Stvorennja Balto-Chornomors’koï osi—tse shans Ukraïny staty rehional’nym liderom u Central’no-Skhidniy ta Pivdenniyy Yevropi,” *VO Svoboda—oficiyna storinka*, 19.12.2012, <http://www.svoboda.org.ua/dopysy/dopysy/033697/> (accessed: 19.05.2013).

tons. At present, the ChMP still exists in name, but it does not have ships any more, since they have been sold or seized for debts. The fall of the ChMP is often considered as a symbol of the fall of the whole sector.⁶⁶ There are even voices that accuse the Western capital of causing the bankruptcy of the ChMP by hostile actions and harmful recommendations given by the experts of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund.⁶⁷

A vast majority (95%) of cargo to and from the Ukrainian ports is carried by ships sailing under other flags. The Ukrainian ports have registered a notable decrease in transshipment rates compared to the Soviet times, they are losing the competition with the Romanian and Bulgarian ports in trade (export+import) between the European Union and Caucasus, and with the Baltic ports in trade between Russia-Belarus and Asia. The embodiment of an Ukrainian at sea now is a *podflazhnik*, or a seaman sailing on a ship under another flag. Beside Filipinos, Ukrainians are one of the largest nationality groups at the international job market for seamen (other notable groups are Poles, Russians, and citizens of the countries of Oceania).

Yet what do a maritime country and national maritime economy mean in the modern world? In the West, the set of paradigms of national maritime economy and national maritime culture began to transform and disappear already in the 1970s.⁶⁸ It can be seen as a derivative of such occurrences as the oil crisis, the shift from Keynesian capitalism to global turbo-capitalism, and more generally from the traditional industrial capitalism to financial capitalism. The individual functions of the 20th-century model of relations between the nation state (nation) and the sea are being transformed.

A national port—a window on the world. The realities of the Europe of open borders and deep economic integration make ports of different countries compete with one another. The stakes are not whether a given country will have a port of its own but which way the stream of goods will flow (Szczecin vs. Rostock, Constanta vs. Odessa, etc.) and thus which city, region, and state will benefit from the investments, taxes, and infrastructural fees. For some of the political class, entrepreneurs, and consumers, the benefits of the country having its own ports are not necessarily obvious; for instance, if goods imported to Poland from Asia can be cheaper when brought in via Hamburg or Bremen, they do not see a need to “subsidise” the

⁶⁶ M. Dergausov, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83, 176-186; V. Lartsev, “Yak hynula eskadra,” *idem*, “ChMP—chastyna tretja. Rekviyem za Chornomors’koyu eskadroyu,” *Ekonomichna Pravda* 14.11.2012 <http://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2013/01/25/357617/>

⁶⁷ Such opinions have been related, with some criticism, by Dergausov; cf. M. Dergausov, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁶⁸ M. Mollat du Jourdin, *Europa i morze* [Europe and the sea], Warszawa 1995, pp. 268-272.

port infrastructure of Szczecin or Tricity. In the case of Ukraine, corruption, fiscalism and bureaucracy, bad condition of roads, and broad railway gauge are listed as the causes of losses in port economy.⁶⁹ The “shortest way from Europe to India,” postulated by Rudnytsky, leads through Constanta and Varna, not through Odessa.

The national merchant fleet carries the national export and import cargo under the national banner. Nowadays, merchant shipping is a purely commercial activity. The bond between the nation state and the merchant shipping has been almost completely broken.⁷⁰ The ship-owner, captain, and crew come from different nationalities, states, and cultures, and crews are enlisted on short-term contracts. The traditional categories of loyalty to the flag and the “Merchant Marine Service” ethos have disappeared, the fall of the seamen’s professional ethics is being written about.⁷¹ The ownership structure of the ship-owning business is confusing, almost conspiratory: individual ships are registered as separate enterprises, and the real owner remains hidden behind a chain of agents and holding companies registered in different countries. In the late 1990s, 48% of the world’s merchant tonnage was registered in the so-called flag of convenience countries (Liberia, Panama, Marshall Islands, Bahamas, and others), that is, countries with low taxes, low social standards, and not too strict (and sometimes non-existent) control of safety standards.⁷²

Two Black Sea countries—Moldova and Georgia—have also become banners of convenience, whereas Ukraine does not even have a second register.⁷³ Most likely, a considerable majority of formerly Ukrainian ships still remains in the private hands of Ukrainian citizens, hidden behind chains of companies registered offshore, or in the so-called tax havens.

⁶⁹ M. Dergausov, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-156

⁷⁰ R. C. Rubel, “Navies and Economic Prosperity: The New Logic of Sea Power,” *Corbett Paper* No. 11, London 2012, p. 5.

⁷¹ M. Błuś, “Dlaczego statki toną?” [Why do ships sink?], *Morza Statki i Okręty* 1997, No. 3, pp. 76-77.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Second register is a form of competition with banners of convenience introduced in the late 20th century by developed Western countries, offering a second register of civilian ships with reduced fees and simplified procedures. A second, or international, register is maintained by, among others, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. However, there are some limitations imposed on ships registered in second registries, such as not being allowed to provide transport to and from its flag country. Sometimes, second registers are formally *offshore*, being assigned to overseas territories and dependencies, e.g., the British second register is officially the register of the Isle of Man, and the French of the French Antarctic Lands.

A national shipyard builds ships for national ship-owners. Globalisation of the economy caused a displacement of the global shipbuilding industry centres. For instance, the production of civilian ships in the USA and Sweden has completely disappeared, and South Korea is becoming a global shipbuilding power. The dispute over shipyards in Poland was very characteristic: there were two clear positions. The first claimed that if the shipyards are unprofitable, they should be simply shut down, the second that the state should create the conditions in which the shipyards would be profitable. Of course, it is but a fragment of a wider dispute over the economic and industrial policy of the state. In the case of the former USSR countries, the problem is compounded by the historical situation that the Soviet shipbuilding industry in general was geared to fulfil the needs of the military complex. Shipyards built warships, while a large proportion of merchant vessels was commissioned in Poland, the DDR, Romania, and Bulgaria.

A national ocean liner carries national passengers. This function stopped working already in the 1950s, when aviation took over the major role in transcontinental communication. Ocean liners were transformed into cruise ships, which are a part of the globalising international tourism business.

A national sailing ship trains national seamen or educates young people under sails. This function is still present in some countries but is not as interesting to the public opinion as it was in the period of national states. In the consumer society, the aspiration to pass “a hard school of life under the sails” have disappeared.⁷⁴

A national sailor on a national yacht circumnavigates the world in the name of the nation. Professional yachting ceased to be the subject of nationwide interests and emotions; instead, it is seen as one of many expensive and exclusive sports, and as a means of individual self-fulfilment rather than the fulfilment of national aspirations.

The national fishing fleet catches fish and serves it to the tables of the nation. Since 1970s, the countries' exclusive zones have been expanded; as a result, countries in less favourable geographical locations had to limit their deep-sea fisheries.

The Soviet maritime sector was highly centralised. An enormous part of its management staff could not operate in market economy. Whereas indubitably some of them could manage perfectly in the shadow economy

⁷⁴ Cf. K. Michnal, “Kiedy statki były z drewna, a ludzie z żelaza” [When ships were made of wood and men of steel], *Nasze Morze* 2010, No. 4 (52), pp. 5-7. Contrary to the first impression from the title, the author is rather critical of the fact that Poland maintains a school ship, pointing out the routine, anachronism, and difficulty in serving representative, training, educational, and economic functions at the same time. The text also mentions Ukraine.

(Rus. *tenova ekonomika*), on the bureaucratic market of the USSR and later in the conditions of the rent-oriented peripheral economy. Due to the dissolution of the USSR, shipping companies, shipyards, and ports lay in Ukraine, yet the foreign trade centres were in Moscow and they retained their network of contacts and agencies, even a fraction of which, of course, was not transferred to Ukraine. Shipyards, too, were dependent on the cheap energy raw materials from Russia.⁷⁵

When Ukraine gained independence in 1991, it had a much broader access to the sea than in the 1917 programme of the Tsentralna Rada. Its scope was largely similar to the programs formulated by Rudnytsky and Lypa: Ukraine has Crimea and Budjak with access to the Danube. In the post-Soviet reality, however, it turns out that the fulfilment of the territorial postulates of the Ukrainian national movement concerning the sea coast was not reflected in the territorial nationalisation of the coastal regions, at least not to the extent which could satisfy the aspirations of Ukrainian nationalists. The integration processes within the Russian Empire and the USSR proved to be very strong, much stronger than the idea of nation, construed as a political force produced, according to the classics of nationalism, by a nation, an organic entity. In spite of having lost control over Ukraine, Russia remained a Black Sea state and a power, at least on the scale of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea-Caspian region. Energy raw materials play a crucial role in the present-day international economic relations, and political as well, and since they are not equally distributed, Ukraine is still deprived of the chance to become the leader of the Black Sea region. This may change, however, owing to the exploitation of possible oil and gas deposits from the bottom of the Black Sea in the Ukrainian economic zone. Should this perspective be realised, the Black Sea will yet again be an opportunity for Ukraine.

**The Ukrainians and the Black Sea. Nationalist Geography
in the Post-Soviet Reality**

by Grzegorz Skrukwa

Abstract

In the 20th Century Central and Eastern Europe the geographers engaged in nationalist movements were strongly interested in maritime affairs. They, making the national territory maps, promulgated the nation's rights to access to the sea,

⁷⁵M. Dergausov, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

national sovereignty over the coast and territorial nationalization the seaport cities. Their aim were to expand the national territory and to secure the “natural” boundaries. They strived to modernize the nation-state and to increase its position in the region and in the whole world also. The access to sea, the “window on the world”, creating own national maritime sector, were perceived as a vehicle to modernization and to equal participation in the world economy. In Ukraine, the most prominent nationalist geographer writing on maritime questions was Stepan Rudnyts’kyi (1877-1937), “father of national geography”. In his most important works, published during World War I and Ukrainian independence struggles (1914-1923) he argued for Ukraine’s wide access to Black Sea, Azov Sea and even to Caspian Sea. Geographical determinism and primordialism on national questions were the main paradigms of his works. His thoughts were continued by Yuriy Lypa (1900-1944), political writer associated with Ukrainian integral nationalist movement of 30es and 40es. He is an author of “Black Sea Doctrine” – the doctrine of Ukrainian leadership in the Black Sea region. The contemporary post-Soviet Ukraine, independent since 1991, has a wide sea coast. However, the coastal region (South with Crimea) is often perceived as a separatist, pro-Russian region. There is also a discussion in Ukraine: is Ukraine a “maritime state” or only a “state near the sea”? The critical opinions on Ukraine’s maritime and Black Sea policy are often formulated. However, the inadequacy of classical nationalist visions of Ukraine as a maritime state to the contemporary (post-Soviet) reality is not only a question of Ukraine’s subjective case, but an example of deconstructing the classical nationalist model of “national state at sea” in the whole world.

Keywords: nationalism, geography, national territorialisation, territorial nationalisation, Ukraine, Black Sea, maritime sector.