



## Introduction

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*– Харків: Новий Вид, 2001. – С. 8-9.*

*При використанні матеріалів статті обов'язковим є посилання на її автора з повним бібліографічним описом видання, у якому опубліковано статтю. Дана електронна копія статті може бути скопійована, роздрукована і передана будь-якій особі без обмежень права користування за обов'язкової наявності першої (даної) сторінки з повним бібліографічним описом статті. При повторному розміщенні статті у мережі Інтернет обов'язковим є посилання на сайт Східного інституту українознавства імені Ковальських.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Imperial Russia were multi-national states that attempted but failed to create a single nationality out of their peoples. Scots, Ukrainians, Irish and Poles, who were both colonized and colonizers in the British and tsarist empires shared multiple identities and a tradition of sentimental nationalism. Nationalists bemoaned their fate. Loyalists, alongside the English and Russians, regarded this resentment as either unfounded or trivial, while outsiders often failed even to distinguish between the aggrieved minorities and their nominal oppressors.

The essays in this special edition of *Skhid—Zakhid* examine the relationship between national identities and institutions in the eastern and western peripheries of Europe. They compare tsarist policies towards Ukraine and Poland with English policies towards Scotland and Ireland—the “British Empire in Europe”—and the reaction of Ukrainians, Poles, Scots and Irish to those policies. Authors note the impact of laws, contingency, images and nomenclature on the formation and representation of national and supra-national identities. They remind us that the modern state could sustain as well as erode the distinctiveness of peripheries, that tsarist cultural “Russification” can be understood as a policy option rather than an inevitable result of autocracy, and that devolved institutional-legal autonomy is as important to nationalism as ethnicity and folk-culture. On a dissenting note, two contributors draw attention to the shortcomings of comparative methodology and question whether Scotland and Ukraine can be meaningfully compared.

Europe is changing from a continent of centralized national states into one of confederated regions and its leaders must deal with historical legacies and unprecedented challenges. On the one hand authoritarian as well as democratic practices linger in the European Union. The legacy of devolved democracy and rule of law, traced from Greece and Rome through the Protestant Reformation and popular uprisings, is institutionally reflected in the European Parliament, the Council of Regions and the European Court of Justice. The legacy of centralized authoritarianism, traced from the Catholic Church through Cameralism, the business corporation, and twentieth-century fascism and state socialism, is reflected in the European Commission, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Central Bank. Which legacy will dominate is unclear but territorial expansion and new global organizations will undoubtedly influence the outcome. An

inclusion of the former Soviet Bloc alone would turn the EU into a thirty member supra-national poly-ethnic state with a population of over 500 million, forty commissioners, and at least 1000 members of parliament. Advocates imagine that this superstate based upon “European” core values can provide a forum of democratic renewal for national regions and generous subsidies. Skeptics point to unilateral EU imposition of minority rights regulations on eastern European governments and to the fact that EU admission criteria are non-negotiable. Their arguments remind us that Montesquieu and Catherine II claimed that huge countries had to be ruled despotically, while John Stuart Mill had wondered if free institutions were possible in countries composed of different nationalities. Transnational, horizontally structured corporations and non-governmental organizations — criminal and legitimate— meanwhile, are eroding territorially based loyalties and vertical structures of production, and administration. These new organizations present leaders with the problem of reconciling the interests of anational cosmopolitan groups who benefit from this “globalization,” with those of local national groups who are not part of the transnational corporative- information world.

Today the Irish and Poles are presumably convinced that the EU gives them a better deal than England or Russia ever had. Scots and Ukrainians are divided over EU membership and not all of them would agree that their association with England and Russia had been undesirable or deleterious. England and Russia, for their part, have reservations about the new Europe and it would be interesting to compare the terms of association that they offered their minorities with EU membership conditions. If they do join it is unlikely that Britain’s “unwritten” constitutional and Russia’s authoritarian traditions would carry more weight in the EU than the historical experiences of France, Germany or Austria. Nonetheless, Britain and Russia serve as useful models of democratic and authoritarian states and they faced problems in the past similar to those faced by the EU today. While ruling officials attempt to hold together a huge territory and population, create wealth and deal with nationalism and democracy, minority leaders seek to prevent unity from becoming uniformity.

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