History of higher education in Ukraine between Sovietization, linguistic discrimination and internationalization (1890–1972)[*]

Historia de la enseñanza superior en Ucrania entre la sovietización, la discriminación lingüística y la internacionalización (1890-1972)

Dorena Caroli
University of Bologna
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8288-8810

Abstract: This article aims to reconstruct the main aspects of the development of the Ukrainian system of higher education from its birth to the 1970s. It provides an overview of the historiographical debate, covering not only higher education but also the role played by intellectuals and the history of nationalities. After an introduction describing the history of higher education in the Ukrainian territories during the modern period, the article is divided into four parts analyzing, respectively, the development of higher education from its start in the modern

Resumen: Este artículo pretende reconstruir los principales aspectos del desarrollo del sistema ucraniano de enseñanza superior desde su nacimiento hasta la década de 1970. Ofrece una visión general del debate historiográfico, que abarca no sólo la enseñanza superior, sino también el papel desempeñado por los intelectuales y la historia de las nacionalidades. Tras una introducción en la que se describe la historia de la enseñanza superior en los territorios ucranianos durante la época moderna, el artículo se divide en cuatro partes en las que se analiza, respecti-

era to the last decades of the nineteenth century, before Ukraine's existence as a nation-state; the reform of higher education after the October Revolution until World War II, with reference to the Soviet system; the impact of World War II on these reforms; and the role of UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (from 1972). This makes it possible to grasp the salient stages of a development that thanks to the succession of governments was very complex and was also marked by internal tensions and nationalist overtones.

Key words.: history of higher education, historiography, UNESCO-CEPES, Ukraine, nineteenth century, twentieth century.

vamente, el desarrollo de la enseñanza superior desde sus inicios en la era moderna hasta las últimas décadas del siglo XIX, antes de la existencia de Ucrania como Estado-nación; la reforma de la enseñanza superior tras la Revolución de Octubre hasta la Segunda Guerra Mundial, con referencia al sistema soviético; el impacto de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en estas reformas; y el papel del Centro Europeo de Enseñanza Superior de la UNESCO (a partir de 1972). Ello permite captar las etapas más destacadas de una evolución que, gracias a la sucesión de gobiernos, fue muy compleja y estuvo marcada también por tensiones internas y tintes nacionalistas.

Palabras clave: historia de la enseñanza superior, historiografía, UNESCO-CEPES, Ucrania, siglo XIX, siglo XX.

Introduction

The history of Ukrainian institutions of higher education is unusual because, unlike the situation in other European countries since the end of the nineteenth century, it does not concern those territories that earlier coincided with today's nation. It is only in the last thirty years that unstable borders, whether political, cultural or ethnic, have matched national ones. Indeed, it can be said that Ukraine's current borders (May 2024) coincide only with those delineated after World War II, albeit with due caution concerning, for example, Crimea.

Ukraine has attracted increasing attention since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and especially since the invasion by Russia on February 24, 2022. This country was the second largest republic in the former Soviet Union and is also the largest country in Europe. In many Soviet-era sources, Ukraine is likened to the republics of Belarus and Moldova, given their European and Slavophone elements, and it has often been compared with them in terms of the development of their higher education systems.

The history of Ukraine has been characterized by the presence of geographic areas that were subject to different political and cultural influences, with the western area being dominated by several forces. Precisely because of this geographical location, it has always been characterized by a strong multiethnic component and by multilingualism or bilingualism, elements that have influenced its educational system. A study by Wolfgang Mitter highlights these aspects, which contributed to the escalation of tensions in-

side Ukraine and between Ukraine and Russia in the decades following the proclamation of Ukrainian independence and the development of a higher education system[1].

This article aims to present research into the Ukrainian education system from its emergence until the Soviet phase, while at the same time providing an in-depth study of a particular body of sources that shows the specific nature of the higher education system in a former Soviet republic on the threshold of perestroika.

The first part presents the birth of institutions of higher education in the modern age, from the late nineteenth century until the fall of Tsarism. The second part deals with the reforms of the Soviet period. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the advent of the Soviet regime did not immediately bring about Soviet reform in Ukraine; until 1922, its education system was separate from the Soviet system for almost a decade, until the beginning of Stalinism. Sovietization, which took place after World War II, must be related here to the policy on nationalities that the Soviet regime developed in the interwar period, thus highlighting the contradictory aspects of the so-called Ukrainization policy[2]. The third part deals with the impact of World War II, during which part of Ukraine's territories were not only occupied by the Nazis but also underwent special administration, and the immediate postwar period, which marked the beginning of the resumption of international contacts. The fourth part sheds light on the fact that Ukrainian reform constituted a special case during the Cold War.

Because of its history and geographic location, the Ukrainian education system, along with those of other Soviet bloc satellite countries in Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia Romania, Serbia and Hungary) and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Moldova), was influenced by the educational policy of the decentralized office of UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur, hereafter CEPES). This also served as a collection point for documentation, thus allowing the first steps towards improving the higher education system in Central Europe. CEPES documentation is used here to reconstruct how UNESCO's education policy sought to bring countries out of isolation, thus helping to prepare the ground for the perestroi-

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[1] Wolfgang Mitter, "Internal conflicts in Ukraine and their impact in education," in *The Political Function of Education in Deeply Divided Countries*, ed. Theodor Hanf (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011): 61-72.a

[2] Kenneth C. Farmer (ed.), *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth, Symbols and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy* (The Hague, Boston and London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980).

ka that was initiated in 1985. However, these documents, often gathered by officials and relating to conferences, do not bring out the main aspects of the Ukrainian system.

The cultural changes of the 1970s emerge with greater nuance in studies that were produced by Ukrainian intellectuals who opposed the Soviet regime and were hit by waves of arrests in Ukraine. In particular, the collection of writings by Viacheslav M. Chornovil (1937-1999), a journalist and dissident imprisoned several times by the Soviet regime (1967-1969), and later a statesman and political leader in sovereign Ukraine, has been very significant[3]. He participated in the creation of the Manifesto written by leading Ukrainian intellectuals in 1995 that attempted to separate the Ukrainian history from the Russian and Soviet past and to search for a national post-soviet identity, with inevitable geopolitical repercussions for the twenty-first century.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, the analysis of historiography produced in different fields (relating to the history of the school system, higher education, politics, nationalities) provides an initial glimpse into the complexity of higher education reforms and their historical and political context.

1. On the banks of the Dnipro. The emergence of higher education in the territories of Ukraine (sixteenth-nineteenth centuries)

The history of higher education, which in the Ukrainian territories dates back to the sixteenth century, can be regarded as composing a large mosaic in which each institution is shaped by a very different educational culture – either religious faith and the humanistic tradition in Jesuit colleges or Orthodox beliefs in Orthodox fraternal schools. It is not a linear history but discontinuous, because from the mid-seventeenth century and for more than two centuries afterwards these territories were dominated by different parties; they underwent a nation-building process that led them to their current borders by the end of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, these territories, with the left and right banks of the Dnipro (right-and left-bank Ukraine) ruled by different powers[4], were characterized

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[3] From 1976 he was a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, which monitored human rights in Ukraine; *The Chornovil Papers*. Compiled by Vyacheslav Chornovil, "Introduction" by F.C. Barghoorn (New York, Toronto and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968, 1969).

[4] The right (west) bank of the Dnipro River, corresponding to the modern-day regions of Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr and Kirovohrad, as well as the western parts of Kyiv and Cherkasy. Most of these regions remained in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until the late eighteenth

by the presence of different ethnic groups and inevitably by multilingualism. The Dnipro alone is a boundary line that could constitute an interesting case study concerning a comparative European history that focuses on local geographical entities[5].

Although this geographical subdivision between the two banks of the river may be an oversimplification (because in some ways it later concerned the transboundary River Dniester), it makes it easier to understand the reasons why a multitude of educational institutions were founded for the elite, mainly Polish, on the right bank and the Russian elite on the left, while the Ukrainians were affected by strong discrimination, pushing many students to study at European universities. These two geographic areas were ruled by the Kingdom of Poland (right bank) and the Cossack Hetmanate (left bank); in 1654, Bohdan Chmel'nyc'kyj, leader of the Cossacks, and the Tsar of Russia, Alexis, stipulated the March Articles (also well known as the Pereiaslav Agreement) that guaranteed Moscow's protection. This peace, which recognized the Cossack Hetmanate (in Ukrainian the *Livoberežna Ukraïna*) as under Russian rule, had strong political implications.

The first higher institutions founded in the territories of Ukraine between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were Jesuit colleges, which promoted the spread of humanistic education for the local elite[6]. The most important institutions were the colleges in Jarosław (founded in 1574), Lviv (1608), Lutsk (1614), Kamianets-Podilskyi (1611), Vinnytsia, Bar, Brest, Peremyshl (1570), Pynsk (1633) and Kyiv (1647). To counteract the influence of Jesuits and Protestant schools and to preserve the Orthodox faith, from the 1580s Orthodox institutions began to offer a specific curriculum. Some scholars have reconstructed the history of these colleges, although they have encountered difficulties in finding archival sources. The first Jesuit college in Khyriv (Chyrów school) is an example of what happened when borders shifted. Initially located in the area occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire following the partition of Poland in the late nineteenth century, and for the Polish elite, it was within the borders of independent Poland from 1918 to 1939, from

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century (Partition of Poland); the left (east) bank of the Dnipro, comprising the regions of Chernihiv, Poltava, Sumy and the eastern parts of Kyiv and Cherkasy.

[5] See the recent debate presented by David Motadel in the following special issue "L'histoire européenne après le tournant global," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 76, n. 4 (2021): 641-643.

[6] Wasyl Lencyk, "Jesuits," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1989). https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CJ%5CE%5CJesuits.htm (last access: May 11, 2024).

1944 the site was in the Soviet Union and from 1991 it has been in present-day Ukraine[7]. The case of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is also interesting. It assumed the "European" model for training the Ukrainian elite, "opening up to the ideological pluralism and culture of the Latin world"[8]. However, it was the first institution in the country that was to become Russia, as it was founded in Moscow in 1681.

During the seventeenth century, marked by the Treaty of Perpetual Peace (between the Tsardom of Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, signed on May 6, 1686), the eastern portion of Ukraine came under Russian rule. In the part of Ukraine that was under the Cossack Hetmanate (coinciding with central Ukraine), the more important educational institutions were in Chernihiv (later it became a seminary) and Pereislav (in 1778 also a seminary). Charkiv was the first university (founded in 1805) in the Russian-ruled Ukraine [charged with the supervision of colleges (in Russian *Litsei*) in eastern Ukraine], while those colleges situated in right bank Ukraine came to be largely under Poland. In general, universities were responsible for colleges and institutions of higher education in the part that was under Russia's control[9].

The history of the University of Lviv, located in Galicia, also mirrors the political situation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ann Sirka has researched the history of the Ukrainian educational system in the Austrian province of Galicia and places its development in the context of Polish-Ukrainian relations[10]. In this region the two nationalities (Polish and Ukrainian) were about equal in numbers, but the Ukrainians were discriminated against under the Austro-Polish regime, because they lacked a landed nobility and urban middle class. Raising educational standards for the pea-

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[7] Beata Topij-Stempińska, "Memories of the Khyriv school kept alive by its students: sources and methodological contexts," *Paedagogica Historica*, 55, n. 4 (2019): 608-625.

[8] Yaryna Moroz Sarno, "L'Accademia Mogyliana a Kyiv: cenni storici sull'istruzione europea in Ucraina," *Annali di storia delle università italiane*, 27, n. 2 (2023): 3-16.

[9] Dorena Caroli, "Educational institutions, curricula and cultural models in the higher education of the nobility and intelligentsia at the turn of the 20th century in Russia," *History of Education & Children's Literature*, 7, n. 1 (2012): 341-388.

[10] The Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria (that is, the Austrian Galicia and well known also as Austrian Poland, was a possession of the Habsburg monarchy in the region of Galicia. The crownland was established in 1772; the lands were annexed from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as part of the First Partition of Poland. In 1804, it became a crownland of the newly proclaimed Austrian Empire. From 1867, it was a crownland within the Cisleithanian or Austrian half of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, which benefited from provincial autonomy until the dissolution of the monarchy in 1918.

sant population and training an educated national elite was perceived as a threat by the Polish ruling classes. Education thus became one of the main areas of conflict. The number of schools and colleges reveals that Poles were more educated than Ukrainians[11].

When the school founded by the Jesuits in Lviv in 1608 began to decline, it was rescued by Polish magnates. As has emerged from a recent reconstruction,

> After repeated requests, on January 20, 1661, King Jan II Kazimierz signed a charter granting the school under the auspices of Lviv Jesuit Collegium, 'the honour of the Academy and the title of the University' with the right to teach all university subjects and to confer degrees of bachelor, licentiate, master and doctorate. However, immediately after signing the charter, the creation of the Academy was strongly opposed by Cracow University and some influential officials. Despite the obstacles, the studies in Lviv University were conducted on the model of other European academies. Later in 1758, Polish King Augustus III approved the charter issued by Jan II Kazimierz on January 20, 1661. From its founding until 1773, Lviv University was completely under the control of the Jesuit Order and it was subordinated to the Jesuit General in Rome[12].

In 1784 the Austrian Emperor Joseph II considered the university an institution of higher education for newly acquired territory when Poland was partitioned (Austria acquired Galicia in 1772). According to Emperor Francis II and his minister of foreign affairs, Klemens von Metternich, this meant that the Ukrainian (and the Polish) language had no place in the university. In 1871, the German character of Lviv University was changed for a Polish one, thus undermining career prospects for young Ukrainians. The request by Ukrainians for a separate university in Galicia was the cause of Ukrainian-Polish conflicts. In the late nineteenth century, the Ukrainians made repeated attempts to gain cultural and educational concessions before the Viennese Reichstag bypassing the Polish-dominated Diet; "the historic causes can be traced to the nationality relationships in the supernational Austro-Hungarian monarchy"[13].

During the 1890s, the need for a national university indicated that cultural and scientific institutions were fully engaged in the idea of a nation: "The Shevchenko Scientific Society had in its ranks members who would

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[11] Ann Sirka, *The Nationality Question in Austrian Education: The Case of Ukrainian Galicia 1867-1914* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern and Cirencester: Peter D. Lang, 1980).

[12] Sirka, *The Nationality*; but also see a more up-to-date analysis: *Lviv University History*, https://lnu.edu.ua/en/about/university-today-and-tomorrow/history (last access: 21.09.2024).

[13] Sirka, *The Nationality*, 136-141.

have been qualified candidates for posts at the new University. In addition, there were Ukrainian professor teaching at Universities in Prague, Graz, Chernihiv and Zagreb, not to mention those in Eastern Ukraine and Russia". Furthermore, a separate university would have various advantages for society at large and education specifically. First of all,

> a Ukrainian university was seen in terms of a training ground for future professors for the Ukrainian gymnasiums, as well as lawyers, who could use the language in the courts of Galicia and when dealing with their clients. For both groups it would be more beneficial to study in the language in which they would be later teaching of practicing. Not only were the practical benefits limited to teachers or lawyers. A Ukrainian university was the logical follow-up in the hierarchy of establishing Ukrainian educational institutions. Students who finished Ukrainian gymnasia were best prepared to continue their studies at Ukrainian institutions. At Polish or German universities, they were at a definite disadvantage, for all their previous preparation had been in a different language. Without a Ukrainian university, there were parents who were not willing to send their children to a Ukrainian gymnasium so as not to subject them from the start to educational and economic disadvantages[14].

The Ukrainian student body also continued to push for a separate university, which led to clashes between Ukrainian and Polish students. These student protests, which lasted until 1910, primarily concerned the use of the Ukrainian language at the proposed university. The 1907 electoral reform of the Austrian government led to the election of thirty-seven deputies (twenty-seven from Galicia and five from Bukovina), who formed a significant voting bloc during the negotiations that followed between representatives of the government, Polish deputies, Ukrainian deputies and university professors. However, even after twenty years of parliamentary struggle, agreement between the government on one side and Poles and Ukrainians on the other was not to be found[15]. After the war, the University of Lviv and the eastern territories of Galicia found themselves within the borders of independent Poland: "even though the Paris Peace Conference (25th June 1919) provided the framework for the establishment of a Ukrainian university in L'viv, the question was not to be settled until the end of World War II, when Eastern Galicia was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945"[16].

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[14] Sirka, *The Nationality*, p. 143.

[15] Sirka, *The Nationality*, pp. 144-145. See also Lyudmyla Zelenska, "Comparative Analysis of Higher Education Systems of Ukrainian Land of the Dnieper Ukraine in the First Third of the XXth Century," *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, 170 (2021), 311-317.

[16] Sirka, *The Nationality*, p. 155. See also Olha Zarechnyuk, *The Spaces of Lviv University*

2. Separated from Soviet reform: Ukrainian higher education after 1917

After the Revolution of 1917, the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) was proclaimed on October 19, 1918 in the Austro-Hungarian Ukrainian-speaking territories, while in the area that had belonged to the Tsarist Empire, the Ukrainian People's Republic, with the capital Kyiv, and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, with the capital Kharkiv, clashed. Ukraine did not become part of the Soviet Union until 1922, becoming the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, with the capital Kyiv[17]. Split between different governments, the reforms of higher education had different fates. In 1920, for example, as is well known, the Ukrainian People's Republic established an independent People's Commissariat of Education, which developed a separate educational system from Bolshevik Russia. For the other Soviet republics, from the mid-1930s, the People's Commissariat of Education in the Russian Republic provided a kind of model and was a type of directing authority, especially during World War II and the postwar period. It was not until 1966 that federal and republican ministries were established to oversee the education systems in the various republics[18]. In all likelihood, the Ukrainian system was the most autonomous in all the republics, but it gradually adapted to echo that of the Russian Republic with the advent of Stalinism.

The first Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education, founded during 1920, strongly supported professional education both at secondary and higher levels, and in summer 1920 a department for professional education was set up because the country's economy needed skilled workers in order to recover from the aftermath of World War II and civil war. Educational reform in Ukraine continued to have some particular features in comparison with Russian and other Soviet republics, such as the introduction of the mother tongue in elementary education. The school system was also affected by transnational ideas about education, such as basing learning on a child's

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(1783-1914), trans. by Andriy Masliukh, https://lia.lvivcenter.org/en/university-1784-1918/ (last access 02/06/2024).

[17] The Treaty of Riga (between Poland and Bolshevik Russia, March 18, 1921) assigned Galicia and Volhynia to Poland, while the Soviets got the rest of the country. The Ruthenian-speaking territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were divided among three nations. Poland incorporated the present-day regions (oblasts) of Lviv, Volhyn, Rivno, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil; Czechoslovakia incorporated the Transcarpathian region and Romania the present-day Chernihiv region. After World War II, these territories were assigned to Ukraine, and then to the Soviet Union. Ukrainian Cossacks suffered also from deportations during the 1920s.

[18] Oscar Anweiler, "Centralisme et fédéralisme dans le système d'enseignement soviétique," *Revue des Études slaves*, 58, n. 2 (1986): 229-243.

experience[19]. Concerning the relationship between primary and secondary education, Matthew D. Pauly states that "Unlike in Russia, debate in Ukraine over the educational system's labour orientation was not as constant and intense because Ukrainian educational officials had already embraced some vocationalisation for the republic's secondary schools and had shortened the duration of primary schooling to meet this objective. The teachers knew those students who advanced would enter a professional school"[20].

Terry Martin's groundbreaking study offers a fundamental context for understanding school and higher education reforms in Ukraine between 1923 and 1939[21]. He analyzes the issue of linguistic Ukrainization from the point of view of *korenizatsiia* (from the Russian term *koren'*, root) an expression used first by Stalin in an article published in *Pravda* on October 10, 1920. As Martin states,

> *Korenizatsiia*, as definitively formulated at party congresses in March 1921 and April 1923, consisted of two major tasks: the creation of national elites (Affirmative Action) and the promotion of local national languages to a dominant position in the non-Russian territories (linguistic *korenizatsiia*). Linguistic *korenizatisiia* would prove much more difficult to achieve. Between April 1923 and December 1932, central party and Soviet organs issued dozens of resolutions urging the immediate implementation of linguistic *korenizatsiia*[22].

Despite the fact that republican and local authorities issued numerous linguistic *korenizatsiia* decrees, it was only partially realized in schools and higher institutions, while it failed in other fields. It is interesting to note that this was not simply a question of ideological imposition: in the early 1920s, it was perceived that the two languages symbolized two civilizations, but it was not understood that this implied Russian domination over the Ukrainian language. Rather, Ukrainian was perceived as the language of the backward countryside while Russian was the language of cities and modernization. Beyond the fact that the influx of Russians in charge of administration was in-

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[19] Larysa Berezivska, "Pedagogical discourse on the new Ukrainian school 1917-1921: using newly gained independence to reach out to the world's ideas after the fall of the Russian Empire," *History of Education*, 52, n. 1 (2023): 17-31.

[20] Matthew D. Pauly, "Teaching place, assembling the nation: local studies in Soviet Ukrainian schools during the 1920s," *History of Education*, 39, n. 1 (2010): 75-93 (p. 78). See also Matthew D. Pauly, *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923-1934* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

[21] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001): 75-124.

[22] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 75.

deed concentrated in the cities, speaking Russian was a matter of modernity. On several occasions, the party leadership opposed Ukrainization, which was perhaps perceived as an imposition on Russia's politically, administratively and economically engaged elites. The dispatch of Stalin's right-hand man, Lazar M. Kaganovitch (1891-1993), gave impetus to the process of Ukrainization, which he conducted by force[23].

It is not possible to account for all the steps that ended with the failure of comprehensive Ukrainization (1926-1932); here we are interested in its impact on higher education that is the university, which like the factories expressed "an urban communist identity"[24]. If the Ukrainian language was symbol of a peasant language and culture, it was important "to transform higher education from another of Ukraine's russified urban islands into a linguistically Ukrainian environment"[25]. In academia, indeed, Ukrainization proved more successful than in other areas of political and economic life. The new commissioner of education Mykola Skrypnik (1872-1933), a proponent of the Ukrainian Republic's independence, was "the most passionate and influential of the higher leadership's proponents of Ukrainization"[26]. He wanted Ukraine to become a model for Bolshevik politics on nationalities, and elaborated a politics that was aimed at expanding the Ukrainization of primary and secondary school education. Despite this forced Ukrainization, which the commissioner carried out despite strong resistance, "Ukrainian students were attracted to a Ukrainian identity that did not exclude a professional use of Russian language of a strong all-union Soviet-identity"[27].

The language problem, concerning the relation of language or multilingualism to identity and function to elite professional development, persisted even after World War II, as we will see, and was intertwined with complex political and economic issues. This process coincided with an educational policy that aimed to unify the policies of the two People's Commissariats of the Russian Republic and Ukraine, given the economic requirements dictated by planning. Compared with the initial vision that had supported vocational education, opening access to higher education at the expense of general education, a new trend had emerged by the late 1920s that was geared toward bringing the Ukrainian system in line with the Soviet system, which gave grea-

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[23] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 86.
[24] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 105.
[25] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 105.
[26] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 105.
[27] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 112.

ter importance to dividing the general and vocational education systems (in Ukraine this included three years of study that were divided into industrial and agricultural branches), thus extending elementary schooling to twelve years. This system aimed to guarantee students in technical colleges a better qualification, so they were able to access higher education[28].

Further examination of the Soviet system makes it possible to note aspects that later become components of the Ukrainian higher educational system. Laurent Coumel's extensive archival research reconstructs the Soviet centralized education system from 1917 to after World War II, including all its levels. After the Revolution of 1917, the reform of higher education was developed by a state system under the centralized politics of the People Commissariat of Education. To overcome social inequalities, educational policy aimed to liberalize access to university in order to "proletarianize" students; that is, to guarantee access to higher studies for a social class that had hitherto been completely excluded from a path of social advancement. However, institutions were subjected to stronger political control, resulting in discrimination against the old intelligentsia and downgrading some categories of students (referred to by Coumel as *categories déclassées*)[29].

The state's investment in technical and higher education, at least according to statistics, was huge: "between 1920 and 1938, the number of VUZ [Higher Educational Institutions] rose from 244 to around 700, and the number of students from 206,000 to 500,000, for the whole of the USSR"[30]. These higher technical institutions trained qualified managers for industrial developments: they were the new managerial elite whose careers were tied to political allegiance. Michael D. Fox has analyzed the attempt to mold a new elite in three main fields of higher education: 1) the old universities, the higher educational institutions (VUZ) and research institutes under the Commissariat of Enlightenment; 2) the uniquely autonomous Academy of Sciences; and 3) the commissariat-based institutes (that depended directly on these central institutions). Alongside higher party education, all these institutions contributed to the origin of the phenomenon of social promotion to positions of responsibility in order to create consensus[31].

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[28] Ian P. Riappo, "Na putiakh unificatsii system narodnogo obrazovaniia," *Revoliutsia i kul'tura* (1930): 7-19.

[29] Laurent Coumel, *Rapprocher l'école et la vie? Une histoire des réformes de l'enseignement en Russie soviétique (1918-1964)* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2014): 47.

[30] Coumel, *Rapprocher l'école et la vie?*, 51.

[31] Michael D. Fox, *Revolution of the Mind. Higher Learning Among the Bolsheviks, 1918-1929* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press: 1997): 18.

The process of Sovietization of the higher education system in Ukraine during the 1930s, which deserves to be explored regionally, certainly confronted the language aspect. On the eve of World War II, on November 1, 1939, the territory of Western Ukraine was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the following day an analogous decision was announced regarding Belarus. On November 29, all inhabitants of these lands –Polish citizens– were given Soviet citizenship[32]. In these territories, the lack of a system of higher education was explained by the legacy of Polish and Romanian domination; generally low literacy rates did not facilitate access to higher levels of education[33].

3. From Nazi occupation to Sovietization reforms

The history of higher education and universities in Ukraine during World War II is a tragic one. Following Operation Barbarossa, some regions of Ukraine became part of the Nazi-occupied territories (Volynia-Podolia, Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Mykolaïv/Nikolaev), Dnipropetrovsk and Crimea), administered by the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, which was subject to Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946), Minister of the Occupied Territories (and considered by Hitler to be a Nazi ideologue).

Between the recent scholars that has dealt with this transition from one totalitarian system to another with particular reference to the education system, Tetiana Zabolotna has reconstructed the history of the education system in Galicia during the German occupation[34]. Simone Attilio Bellezza's original research on the Nazi administration of Generalbezirk Dnipropetrovsk (the most eastern region) between September 1941 and August 1944 takes into consideration not only the school system but also universities, which corresponded to the Nazis' racial and social policies[35]. The commissioner in charge of Ukraine (from 1941 to 1944) was Erich Koch, who subjected

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[32] On December 4, 1939, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree relating to a new administrative-territorial division of the former Western Ukraine, the territory that included the Lviv, Drohobych, Ternopil, Stanislav, Volyn and Rivne regions.

[33] Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth Century Ukraine* (London: Macmillan, 1985): 219.

[34] Tetiana Zabolotna, "Features of school education in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine and the District of Galicia (1941-1944)," *Paedagogica Historica*, 56, n. 5 (2020): 704-722.

[35] Simone A. Bellezza, *Il tridente e la svastica. L'occupazione nazista in Ucraina orientale* (Milan: FrancoAngeli: 2010): 141-145.

both schools and universities to the same policy – aimed at training workers who would be useful to the Nazis. The university and polytechnic in Dnipropetrovsk had already been affected by Stalinist repressions throughout the 1930s: "in 1933 alone, the universities in the three largest Ukrainian cities (Kyiv, Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk) lost 270 professors, while 1937 was the year that saw the attack on the famous academic Javornyc'kyj, in which the career of Education Commissar Kozar was also involved"[36].

Koch was ordered by Hitler to exploit Ukrainian research institutions. The Nazis were interested not only in agricultural academies but also in the Khorticija mining institute (Khortytzia, today Zaporizhzhia, is south of the Dnipro Rapids), which was essential for exploiting the Donbas coalmines. Both the university and the polytechnic in Dnipropetrovsk were reopened. The teaching staff closely collaborated with those in power, and this led to the purge of twenty-eight Jewish professors who had not yet escaped[37]. On October 30, 1941, Rector Rozhin indicated there were thirty-six vacancies at the university in various disciplines: among the successful applicants were Pavlo A. Kozar', commissioner of education, and some ethnic Germans. Kozar' himself then spearheaded a group of nationalists who worked for the forced Ukrainization of subjects under their purview: he "decreed that the only language of university teaching would be Ukrainian, dismissing Russian speakers, and eliminated the discipline 'Russian literature,' bringing it under the broader category of 'general literature'"[38].

The period of cooperation did not prevent the closure of the university, revealing the inevitable failure of German educational policy. Most young people also began to harbor pro-Bolshevik sentiments because of the continued dispatch of workers to Germany. These vicissitudes of collaborationism and an enemy that the Red Army sought to defeat in the face of severe human losses have long weighed in Ukrainian and Soviet history, and unfortunately in recent political discourse as well – as if "denazification" in Putin's discourse can eradicate a present enemy through the memory of past events, those events that the rhetoric of World War II perpetuated in a very specific way in order to revive the Communist project after the war.

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[36] Bellezza, *Il tridente e la svastica*, 147.
[37] Bellezza, *Il tridente e la svastica*, 150.
[38] Bellezza, *Il tridente e la svastica*, 151.

4. Comparative studies of higher educational institutions in Ukraine after World War II

In general, universities in the Soviet Union and satellite countries, isolated by the consequences of the war and Cold War policies, needed to ensure access to them by young people and to improve education through cooperation and scientific exchanges. Internationalization, which had involved the reform of mass elementary schooling during the 1920s, something that had been interrupted by the advent of Stalinism[39], seemed to be an important solution, especially in view of the establishment of UNESCO in 1946.

Taking this perspective, the work of Merrit Madison Chambers (1899-1985), Professor of Educational Administration at Illinois State University from 1969 to 1985, was essential: he surveyed universities in various countries and provided an informational tool that would allow scientific contacts and exchanges to resume, with a view to international cooperation. In the introduction to his work, he announced that he was continuing the work of his predecessors by presenting more than 2,000 institutions of higher education in more than seventy countries and localities outside the USA[40]. Since the 1920s, scientific organizations had undergone changes that had led to the establishment of the International Organization of Intellectual Cooperation, one of the four technical organizations of the League of Nations. Thanks to this organization, UNESCO was founded in Paris in 1946[41].

In 1947, UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education signed an agreement providing for close cooperation between them in fields of common interest[42]. An in-depth study of archival materials could reveal whether and to what extent both countries, the Soviet Union and, in particular, the territory of Ukraine, benefited from these exchanges, and whether there were rivalries if scientists excelled in the same fields of study. Careful analysis could also reveal how these organizations, one of the privileged means of soft power, have contributed to various democratization processes in the Soviet republics since the 1970s.

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[39] Kevin J. Brehony, "A new education for a new era: the contribution of the conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the disciplinary field of education 1921-1938," *Paedagogica Historica*, 40, n. 5 (2004): 733-754.

[40] Merritt M. Chambers, "Preface," in *Universities of the World outside USA* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1950): vii-xi.

[41] Francis J. Brown, "Universities in World-Wide Cultural Cooperation," in Chambers, *Universities of the World outside USA*, 11-21.

[42] Brown, "Universities in World-Wide Cultural Cooperation," 13.

In the part of Chambers' study devoted to the Soviet Union, which consisted of sixteen republics, it was pointed out that the three most populous republics were the Russian Republic (with half of the entire population), the Ukrainian Republic (one-fifth) and Belarus; the other thirteen had no more than 4 percent of the total population. Chambers briefly described their history, their place in the state education system and the seventy specialized institutions that covered various fields of education and knowledge. The expansion of the higher education system was also described[43]. Ukraine had seven universities, in Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa and Uzhgorod. Three had come into its jurisdiction only after World War II: in the interwar period Lviv had been in Poland, Chernivtski (Cernăuți) in Romania and Uzhgorod in Ruthenia, the eastern segment of Czechoslovakia[44].

Chambers' overview also presented part of the report written by S.M. Vukhalo, chief of the higher school administration of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers, in 1947, describing the postwar condition of Ukrainian higher institutions:

> The colleges suffered heavy losses during the German occupation. Thousands of teachers were tortured and killed, and buildings were destroyed and looted. The State University at Kiev –the treasure-house of Ukrainian culture– was pillaged and burned, and among other institutions which were destroyed were the Donetsk National Technical University, the Dnipropetrovsk Institute of Mining and Chemical Technology, the Kiev Institute of Food Technology, and teacher training institutes of Poltava, Chernigov, Kharkov, Zhitomir, Stalino, and Vinnitsa – in short, every single training college in the Ukraine[45].

Vukhalo had accepted the request of the New Education Fellowship (an international organization devoted to the spread of progressive education) to devote a special issue of its journal *New Era* to education in Ukraine and hoped "that will be the beginning of a systematic exchange of information between the teachers of the Ukraine and those of all free countries and peoples"[46].

With regard to the Ukrainian reform of higher education after World War II and until the end of the 1960s, analysis of two volumes by scholars of the Ukrainian diaspora provides an insight into the evolution of the system, with reference to the characteristics and formation of a class of intellectuals

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[43] *Soviet Union*, in Chambers, *Universities of the World outside USA*, 840-874.

[44] *Ukraine*, in Chambers, *Universities of the World outside USA*, 875-880.

[45] S.M. Vukhalo, "Higher education in the Ukraine S.SR.," *The New Era*, 28, n. 12 (1947): 113-115.

[46] Vukhalo, "Higher Education in the Ukraine S.SR.," 115.

who began to strongly dissent towards the Soviet regime, which was perceived in Ukraine as a more pronounced colonization, especially with regard to the discourse concerning use of the Ukrainian language.

These volumes, one by John Kolasky (1915-1997)[47], the other by Bohdan Krawchenko (1946-)[48], are essential for exploring education reforms. They both agree on the discrimination that was integral to the colonized system of Ukraine, but the second delves more into the political implications of the cultural changes that led to the collapse of the regime. Kolasky's work makes use of the normative and statistical sources of the time in relation to the language problem, while Krawchenko's better presents aspects of the Ukrainian system in relation to the role of dissenting intellectuals in the emergence of a national identity as opposed to the Russian/Soviet one[49].

Kolasky, of Ukrainian origin, was writing after returning to Ukraine in 1963. He reconstructs the education system in Soviet times and recognizes the advances that Ukrainians made in the field of education[50]. Statistical tables include data showing that in the second largest Soviet republic there was a great deal of discrimination not only in terms of funding but also in the unequal access of students to higher institutions[51]. This disparity was characterized by three main aspects. The first of these was the major language discrimination that took place to the detriment of Ukrainian students, which Kolasky describes according to sources of the time, but without relating the issue to bilin-

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[47] Kolasky was born in Ontario because his family had emigrated to Canada; he was a member of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC; Товариство Об'єднаних Українських Канадтсив), a national cultural-educational nonprofit organization established for Ukrainians in Canada. Canada was a destination of choice for Russians as early as the early twentieth century: the children of approximately 140,000 Ukrainians arrived before 1914. Ruthenians, Bukowinians and Galicians came from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empire. See Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Ruthenian schools in Western Canada 1897-1919," *Paedagogica Historica*, 10, n. 3 (1970): 517-541.

[48] Born in Günzburg (Bavaria), Krawchenko is the former director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the University of Alberta. In 2004, he joined the University of Central Asia (founded by the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), where he currently serves as the Advisor to the Rector).

[49] John Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine: A Study in Discrimination and Russification* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1968); Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth Century Ukraine*, 219-220.

[50] John Kolasky graduated from the University of Saskatchewan and that of Toronto; taught high school in Transcona and Manitoba (Winnipeg, Canada) during the years of the Great Depression; became a Marxist and fervent partisan of the Soviet Union; left Canada in 1963 to study in Kyiv; and in two years wrote his volume devoted to the education system.

[51] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 98-99.

gualism and the high density of Russian speakers in the regions (this has been affected by the war from February 24, 2022, to the present time - May 2024).

This is indeed an issue that could be difficult to resolve. After Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, Lavrentiy P. Beria (1899-1953), Stalin's right-hand man, wrote a memorandum to the Central Committee of the Communist Party "condemning Russification" and asking "that the party return to Lenin's national policy of allowing non-Russian freedom to develop their languages and culture"[52]. On June 13 of the same year, the Secretary of the Central Committee was dismissed because he supported Russification of higher educational institutions in Western Ukraine, asserting that; "Subsequent plenums of the regional committees of the party of Lviv, Drohobych, Stanislav, Transcarpathia, Izmail and Chernivtsi, in identical language condemned 'the changing of instruction to Russia language' in various higher and other educational institutions in Western Ukraine"[53].

On June 28, 1953, the official Party newspaper of the city of Kyiv (*Radyianska Ukrayina*) declared that "it is necessary to end decisively the underprivileged position of the Ukrainian language in the higher educational institutions and to organize instruction in the native language all over the country"[54]. But this was a text that remained on paper; the language of instruction in educational institutions continued to be Russian in the various universities of Dniporopetrovsk, Odesa and Kharkiv. In another four universities (Kyiv, Lviv, Uzhgorod and Chernihiv), Ukrainian was still used by some lectures in particular faculties, especially in the social sciences[55].

A first solution was put forward in the Rules of Admission to the Secondary Special Educational Institution of the USSR for 1960, according to which: "the Ukrainian language is taught as a subject in the professional institutions [in the original: *technicums*] of Ukraine, but it takes second place to Russian in the number of hours it is allotted"[56].

The second aspect noted by Kolasky concerns the disparity in the number of Ukrainian teachers and professors compared with Russian ones, which again resulted from a state policy that the Russian Republic had introduced involving a centralized system of grants (*stipends*) for students undertaking these studies. Parents' monthly salary of 90 rubles would not be enough to support children in their studies at university. Statistics showed

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[52] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 136-137.
[53] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 137.
[54] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 137.
[55] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 137.
[56] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 98-99.

that 60.73 percent of the grants were distributed in the Russian Republic[57]. This explained the lower number of graduates in Ukraine, because higher education was not affordable for the parents:

> in 1959 the number per 1000 of the population in the USSR was 18, in the RSFSR 19 and in the UkrSSR only 17. For some of the other Republics the figure was lower. However, in 1939 the number for both Russia and Ukraine was the same: seven per 1000 population. Here too the responsibility lies at the door of the central authorities because 'the quota of students in educational institutions is also determined by the Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR in accordance with the state economic plan'[58].

As for the third aspect, there was an obligation for students to work for two years after secondary school graduation in order to enroll in a higher education institution. This meant that access to higher education was more difficult for a Ukrainian student, as he or she would have to work for two years in the planned economy before entering university. During 1960, statistics for higher educational institutions revealed a strong disparity, with fewer Russian students being obliged to postpone access to higher education than Ukrainian ones (57 percent in the former case, 75 percent in the latter). The Ukrainian percentage was also affected by the fact that it was easier for a student from an urban location to access higher education than someone living in the countryside, both because of prior preparation and accommodation. Moreover, Russian teachers or professors were less inclined to recommend Ukrainian students, especially if there were plans for them to be hired by industry or agriculture after secondary school, which discouraged them from aspiring to higher education[59].

These mechanisms did not favor ethnic Ukrainian students. For example, in 1960, out of 12,611 graduates in the Vinnitsa region, most went to work in agriculture (5,943), 2,283 in industry and 1,393 in other branches of the economy; they generally did not continue their studies. In this region and the Poltava, they all remained working on farms. In addition, young Ukrainian graduates were among those sent to work in the northern and eastern regions of the USSR, alongside young people from Belarus, Moldova and Lithuania. There were about 2 million places in the labor force for students in the Soviet Union. These "internal migrations" were constant but produced a kind of Russian colonization "to speed up Russification and to tighten the Russian grip on

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[57] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 115-117.
[58] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 120.
[59] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 129.

these border regions. In exchange, Ukrainian youth who should have procee-
ded to further education, end up in factories and on construction in Siberia"[60].

The consequence of these choices was visible in 1965 in the proportion
of students who had a doctorate: "Ukraine had 14.35 percent of all candida-
tes of science in the USSR, 12.77 of all doctors and 14.14 of all scientists"[61].
This trend was confirmed by the statistics relating to access to higher edu-
cation. Kolasky comments that Ukrainian students "could become a threat to
Russian hegemony in Ukraine"[62].

The issue of access to higher institutions, which included two years
of compulsory work, had also generated tensions during the change in or-
ganization of higher educational institutions (VUZ) proposed following the
introduction of the Khrushchev reforms in the Soviet Union in 1958[63]. In fact,
unlike the management of smaller universities and higher educational ins-
titutions, the rectors of the large Russian universities and other research-
oriented VUZs were in favor of admitting young people who had work expe-
rience and the extension of the practical internship in production. The clash
between these two managements, in relation to the training of higher mana-
gement (particularly engineers)[64], may have had consequences in Ukraine to
the extent that this work experience became compulsory for Ukrainians and
not for Russians, and perhaps pushed Russians towards higher institutions
in Ukraine knowing that they were privileged.

Current research does not allow us to grasp the Ukrainian Academy's
policy of discrimination, as existing studies highlight the history of a great
institution with luminaries in science and excellence in various fields[65]. It
is not possible to discover whether any prosecuted academics were listed
by Chornovil in 1968[66], for example, from the department of the Academy's
agricultural section, guilty of disagreeing with the theories of Ukrainian-
born geneticist Trofim Lysenko[67], or those historians who were beginning
to move away from the official conception of history to break the silence on

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[60] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 122.

[61] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 129.

[62] Kolasky, *Education in Soviet Ukraine*, 127.

[63] Coumel, *Rapprocher l'école et la vie?*: 279-280.

[64] Coumel, *Rapprocher l'école et la vie?*: 180-181.

[65] Vladimir V. Nemoshkalenko, Nikolaj V. Novikov and Vladimi M. Pelykh (eds.), *Academy of
Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1970).

[66] *The Chornovil Papers*.

[67] Dorena Caroli, "And all our classes turned into a flower garden again – science education
in Soviet schools in the 1920s and 1930s: the case of biology from Darwinism to Lysenkoism,"
History of Education, 48, n. 1 (2019): 77-98.

the drama of the terrible famine, the Holodomor, recognized as genocide in 2006[68].

According to Krawchenko's research, data from the Minister of Education Pjotr P. Udovychenko (1914-1992) for 1969 shows that in the previous three years the number of young people who had attended general or specialized secondary education had increased from 76 to 82 percent, but the number of students seeking admission to higher education grew much more rapidly than the places available. The problem was the percentage who failed to gain access to higher education, owing to, for example, social origin – with students from the intelligentsia or white-collar backgrounds having an advantage over those with working-class and peasant backgrounds. Family influence on professors also occurred, with ethnic Ukrainians appearing in small numbers in comparison with Russian students[69].

During the 1960s, the dissident linguist Sviatoslav Karavans'ky (1920-2016) wrote numerous historical and linguistic articles; he was arrested for this reason and managed to leave the country in 1979. He noted that Ukrainian students whose native tongue was Ukrainian did not enjoy the same rights in entering the higher institutions as those whose native tongue was Russian. The admission language in Russia inevitably favored students whose secondary schooling had been in Russian[70]. The main reason for this laid in the fact that after the establishment of the Union-Republic Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education in 1959, fewer institutions were under the jurisdiction of the Ukraine Ministry of Higher Education and Specialized Secondary Education – in 1965, only fifty out of a total of 132 higher institutions. Entrance exams were also crucial in favoring Russian students, who, owing to a lack of places in the Russian Republic, were turning to Ukraine. Comparison of data between 1955/1956 and 1970/1971 revealed a decrease in the number of Ukrainian students (from 63.8 to 59.9 percent), but this did not mean that Ukrainian students were attending institutions elsewhere. The decrease also occurred among Tatar minority students[71].

After Khrushchev's removal in 1964, various educational reforms were dismantled. Ukrainian party leaders thought that "the time was opportune for a change in the nationalistic policy"[72]. Taking into account the pressure on

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[68] Andriy Portnov, "Soviétisation et désoviétisation de l'histoire en Ukraine. Aspects institutionnels et méthodologiques," *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, 2, n. 45 (2014): 95-127.

[69] Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness*, 219-220.

[70] Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness*, 222.

[71] Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness*, 225.

[72] Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness*, 228.

the intelligentsia, Iurij M. Dadenkov (1911-1991), the republic's Minister of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, gave a lecture to an assembly of rectors in 1965. In this, he presented a proposal that became the basis for a circular that established the use of the Ukrainian language at different levels of education and administration, and in textbooks: "making Ukrainian the medium of instruction in higher education would have enhanced the prestige of the language and would have broadened its social function"[73].

From the early 1970s, the Soviet regime resumed its curbing of the democratization process, despite the apparent "solicitation of social participation" in local institutions that occurred later[74]. This also occurred in Ukraine as evidenced by the debate that took place[75], although only the importance of language policy can be highlighted there.

UNESCO has played an unprecedented role in the eastern area, laying the foundation for changes in the higher education sector that have gradually introduced the right to higher education for its citizens in their native language.

5. Toward the internationalization of higher education reform through CEPES (1972-2010)

For about four decades, from 1972 to 2011, the Ukrainian higher education system came under the influence of CEPES, established by UNESCO in Bucharest as a decentralized office, the purpose of which was the promotion of international cooperation in the field of higher education among UNESCO's member states in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe[76]. CEPES carried out intensive information work on higher education with a view to cooperation between some Soviet republics and satellite countries of the Soviet Union with UNESCO.

In the first report that covered Ukraine, published in 1985 by the Director of CEPES Franz Eberhard (former President of Austrian Rectors' Conference and Secretary General of the International Association of Universities from 1987), the history of higher education was presented from the early foundations of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy established in 1632 to the contemporary

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[73] Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness*, 228.

[74] Marc Ferro, "Y a-t-il 'trop de démocratie' en URSS?," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 40, n. 4 (1985): 811-827.

[75] For more information, see *The Chornovil Papers*, 166-225.

[76] The official journal of CEPES was *Higher Education in Europe*. Countries then part of the European Union and others, including Canada, the USA and Israel, were also members of CEPES.

period, with the aim of describing the growth of higher education in Ukraine (where it did not yet correspond to levels of education that subject to international codification since the early 1970s; the current report corresponds to 2011 levels). Eberhard observed that higher education was described "in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as designating education upon the completion of which a student receives a university or any other equivalent degree. Such education corresponds to levels 6 and 7 of the third stage as designed by the ISCED"[77].

The Director of CEPES, who relied on official data provided by Ukrainian authorities, highlighted that the industrialization of the country in the 1930s had required an increasing number of graduates in engineering, and that engineering schools increased in Ukraine almost fourfold in 1930-1931. In early 1930, new institutes were founded: the Civil Aviation Institute, the Automobile and Road Engineering Institute, the Railroad Transportation Institute in Kharkiv, the railroad Transportation Institute in Dnipropetrovsk and the Communication Engineers Institute in Odesa. Since World War II, the number of students had steadily increased: 137,000 in 1945, 325,900 in 1955, 690,000 in 1965 and 831,300 in 1970. In the postwar years, evening (part-time) and correspondence courses at higher education institutions were developed. This was a policy aimed at training an elite of professionals who would be engaged in the economic development of the country, and from the official statistics it is possible to discern a trend toward overcoming the discrimination of the 1960s.

Some improvements in the higher education system were introduced, with the first being covered by Article 43 of the Constitution of 1978:

> Citizens of Ukrainian SSR have the right to education. The right is ensured by [the] free provision of all forms of education by institutions of universal, compulsory secondary education, and [by the] broad development of vocational [and] specialized secondary and higher education in which instruction is oriented toward practical activity and production; by the development of extramural correspondence, and evening courses; by the provision of state scholarships and grants as well as privileges for students; by free issue of school textbooks; by the opportunity to attend a school [in which] teaching is in one's native language; and by the provision of facilities for self-education[78].

The other two main events that improved the Ukrainian higher education system when it was part of the Soviet Union were the third conference

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[77] UNESCO-CEPES (European Centre for Higher Education) (eds.), *Higher Education in the Ukrainian SSR*, preface by Franz Eberhard (Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES, 1985): 7.

[78] UNESCO-CEPES, *Higher Education in the Ukrainian SSR*, 12.

of Ministers of Education of Member States of the Europe Region of UNESCO (Sofia, June 12-21, 1980), which indicated improvements in various aspects of education, and the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which was held four years earlier (February 23-March 3, 1981) and planned education over the following five years.

The fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1991 meant that the role of CEPES was expanded to improve the higher education system. In addition, laws relating to education (1991, 1996) and to scientific and technological activities (1991) introduced innovations that included the right of private universities and specialized institutions to introduce three levels of higher education corresponding to degrees (Bachelor, Specialist and Master)[79]. Furthermore, on the basis of an overview by Vasyl Kremen, president of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine –a scientific institution established by decree of the President of Ukraine on March 4, 1992–, it is possible to see that institutions involved in vocational education have assumed the status of higher education institutions.

Educational history since the 1990s is yet to be studied in detail, and to do so will have to involve examination of the transition of higher education to a European system, as regards the Bologna process initiated in 1999; the international network that fostered these changes over the following thirty post-Soviet years will also be examined in future investigations.

Conclusion

The Ukrainian system of higher education has been analyzed here on the basis of available and up-to-date studies, to provide a very broad picture of the reforms and their main features. The second republic of the former Soviet Union and the largest country in Europe has had a unique journey. A picture emerges of a country that is considered "The Gates of Europe" for having been a transit territory between Europe and the East[80].

In relation to this nation, the concept of borders reveals its limitations, because in Ukrainian territories ethnicities, languages and religions historically have mixed, and there have been successive ruling parties and political regimes – all of which has affected the evolution of education.

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[79] Vasyl Kremen, *National Report on the State and Prospects of Education Development in Ukraine* (Kyiv: National Academy of Educational Science of Ukraine, 2017): 44-45.

[80] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2021, revised ed.).

The emergence of the higher education system is rooted in a past that has contrasted Catholic and Orthodox educational cultures. The Ukrainian tradition and the country's later inclusion in the Soviet Union contributed to a decade of relative autonomy from Soviet reform of higher education, between about 1920 and 1930. Stalin's introduction of the planned economy from the end of the 1920s involved adapting the education system to the purposes of economic development, which came at an inhuman cost to Ukraine with the terrible famine of 1932-1933. The colonization of the higher education system by the Soviet elite also entailed discrimination against ethnic Ukrainian students, which continued even after Nikita Krushchev's 1958 reforms, with special reference to women's access to higher education.

In the aftermath of World War II, UNESCO laid the groundwork for the reestablishment of scientific cooperation to overcome the dramatic consequences of the war and contribute to the resumption of peaceful life, although the Cold War phase was not conducive to mobility among scholars or to meaningful academic exchanges. The establishment of CEPES by UNESCO in 1972 meant that the Ukrainian government became a separate member of UNESCO, together with Belarus (the USSR as an entity was also a member), and could thus compare its higher institutions internationally and progressively introduce improvements.

The result of this was the formation of an elite that had hitherto been sacrificed by constraints of nationality or gender, the fostering of cooperation and exchanges in higher education, and the improvement of economic conditions. Although CEPES deserves a more in-depth study than the one presented here, it is possible to identify some areas of change in the Ukrainian higher education system. Educational policies led to the overcoming of language discrimination, although recent studies have shown that the language spoken (in the case of Ukrainian/Russian bilingualism) did not pose identity problems.

This international policy helped to accelerate an ongoing process of democratization that led to the collapse of the Communist system. The emergence of Ukraine as a nation (following Ukraine's Declaration of State Sovereignty, adopted on July 16, 1990; the Declaration of Independence of Ukraine adopted by the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on August 24, 1991; the referendum and declaration of independence of Ukraine held on December 1, 1991) marked the beginning of major reforms in higher education, as also happened in the Asian republics during

modernization of the national system[81]. Transition from the common Soviet past and a search for identity have been characterized by debates and tensions that have escalated over the years.

Some of these aspects were highlighted in the 1995 Manifesto of the Congress of Ukrainian intelligentsia adopted by the People's Movement of Ukraine, led by Chornovil, which contains statements that have a nationalistic and anti-Russian mood:

> Ukraine is being ruined carefully and professionally by those governing it today and directing it from another country [Russia] … The fierce pressure of the anti-Ukrainian forces is growing at all levels of government, especially in the southeastern and some central oblasts of Ukraine. They are making us into a country unique in the world. Higher officials are encouraging and propagating an anti-Ukrainian 'regional' approach in the sphere of culture in order to split and disunite our nation. The 'law of language,' passed in imperial times, is not only not implemented but constantly threatened by revisions proposed by Russian nationalist in Ukraine … The Ukrainian intelligentsia resolutely condemns the provocative and destructive policy of the anti-Ukrainian forces in our ancient land…[82].

Among the twenty-two signatories were Chornovil, whose opposition to the post-Soviet and pro-Russian regime was continued not only to President Leonid Kuchma's government during the Orange Peaceful Revolution (2004), but also the Revolution of Dignity (2013/2014), and even now after more than two years of Russian aggression.

In recent years, the issue of native language use in Ukrainian schools has continued to be a contentious issue, and when a law banning the use of minority languages was proposed, it was the intervention of the Council of Europe in 2018 that resolved the situation[83]. A few days after the invasion on February 24, 2022, UNESCO's Director General stated on March 15 that "War and conflict are always unbearable: no matter the place, whatever the continent, all violence causes equal suffering to every human being, and is heartbreaking for our humanity"[84].

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[81] Iveta Silova (ed.), *Globalization on the Margins. Education and Postsocialist Transformation in Central Asia* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2011).

[82] "The Manifesto of Ukrainian Intelligentsia," in *Towards Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995*, ed. Ralph Lindheim and George S.N. Luckyj (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996): 395-398.

[83] Dorena Caroli, "Evoluzione del sistema scolastico ucraino tra ricerca dell'identità nazionale e plurilinguismo (1991-2021)," *Nuova Secondaria*, 39 (2022): 22-38.

[84] "La guerre et les conflits sont toujours insupportables: quel que soit le lieu, quelque soit le continent, toute violence cause une égale souffrance à chaque être humain, et est une déchirure pour notre humanité", see Audrey Azoulay A., *Discours de la Directrice Générale de l'UNESCO*

One would like to count down to an imminent return to peace, to the rebuilding of entire cities and their educational institutions, to a return to peaceful and normal life even in higher institutions and universities, and, to realize Anthony Padgen's perhaps somewhat utopian idea of a "supranational or transnational government"[85], which should and would avoid and condemn armed intervention in conflict resolution.

Map concerning the Ukrainian regions during Soviet rule (including Crimea from 1954).
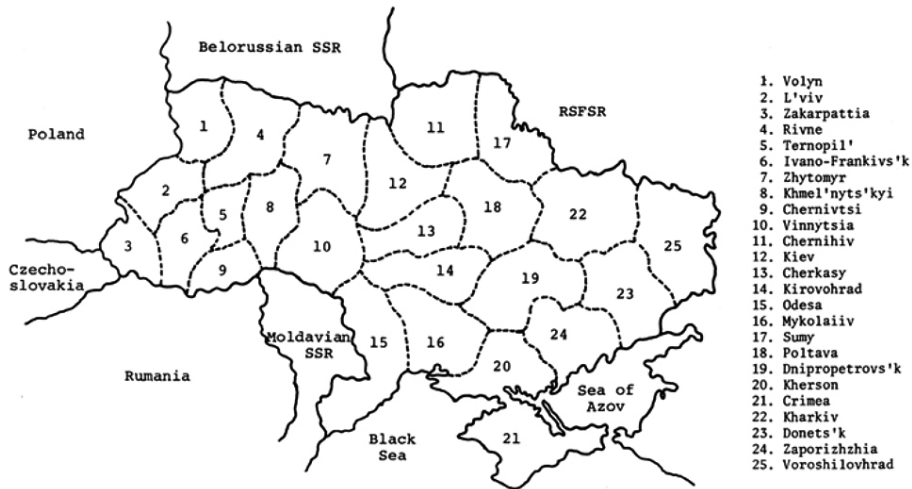
Source: Kenneth C. Farmer (ed.), *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth, Symbols and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy* (The Hague, Boston and London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980): XII.

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