

Original Paper

The Same Room is No Longer Good for Each Other: The Unity and Separation of the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian “Slavic” Identity

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Abstract

After the fall of Western Rome, the formerly widely stamped “Germans”, “Wends” (ancient Western Slavic), and “Antes” (ancient Eastern Slavic) terms that were defined by the ancient Romans began to dissipate. The brand of barbarism began to fade away, and different tribes within the same caste culture strengthened their original independent tendencies. With the emergence of modern nation-states and their accompanying establishment of state borders and sovereignty, the macroscopic perception of the “Slavs” also split, with the “East Slavs” represented by the three nation-states of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus being the most prominent. At a time of intense conflict between Russia and Ukraine, deteriorating relations between Ukraine and Belarus, and close cooperation between Russia and Belarus, a new understanding of the unity and separation of the Slavic identity between Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus is important for exploring the origins of relations between the three countries.

Keywords

Slavs, ancient Rus, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarus, ethnic history, ethnic identity

1. Introduction

Since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the debate on the justness of the war has not ceased, involving the jurisprudence of Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union’s ownership of Ukrainian territory, and Ukraine as a sovereign state born after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Leaving aside the notion of nation-state and modern international law, it is impossible to avoid the

controversy over the respective claims of legitimacy of the Kievan Rus regime simply by going back to its origins, since almost all questions about the history of the Russian-Ukrainian nation revolve essentially around the interpretation of “Rus” and “Slavic brothers”. Likewise, excluding Lukashenko’s close political ties with Putin, Belarus has a long history of being “Slavs” and “Russians” together with Russia, and the relationship between Russia and Belarus is not as incompatible as that between Russia and Ukraine. Even though the relations between Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus as nation-states are inextricably intertwined, there is no denying that they started together as “Slavs”.

This article will summarize based on the existing but scattered historical data, to show the birth process of the cognitive unity and contradiction of the “Slavic people” in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. It is not limited to a single country, but covers the history of many countries, and is combined with a single thread so that it is easier to see the historical context of the East Slavs’ perception.

2. Method

2.1 “Slavic” Perceptions and the Birth of “Rus” Orthodoxy

The current systematically documented view is that the ancient Slavs first originated in Poland in the upper reaches of the Vistula River, along the Tisza River Valley, and in the Carpathian Mountains. (Note 1) In the Roman period, the geographical and imperial administrative divide separated the two groups of Slavs: the ancient Western Slavs, who were governed by the Empire and influenced by Latin culture, were called “Wends” by the (Western) Romans (the Latin term for Wends is not fixed, but is known as Venedi, Venethae, Venethi and Veneti), the ancestors of the Poles, Czechs and Slovaks; outside the Empire, the ancient Eastern Slavs, who lived for a long time in the Dnieper and Dniester valleys, were called “Antes” by the Eastern Romans (Greek: Ἄνται), from which Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus evolved. Both Eastern and Western Slavs produced their languages and scripts, while there was also a group that went south to the Balkans and was called “Slavs” (Greek: Σλάβοι, or “Slavs”) by the Eastern Roman Greeks, who, together with the local tribes (Thracians, Illyrians, etc.), the descendants of which evolved into the present-day Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian, and Slovenian peoples. Given the influence of the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages and its pronunciation in the Slavic language group, which is similar to the word “glory” (today, whether Russian: слава; Czech: sláva; Polish: chwała; Serbian Cyrillic: славу\Latin: slavu; Croatian: slava or Bulgarian: слава, the pronunciation of “glory” in all Slavic national languages is highly similar to “Slavic”, and even Lithuanian: “šlovės”, which is not a Slavic nation but is heavily influenced by Polish today), is pronounced as “The name “Slavs” was gradually recognized by all ancient Slavs and became a synonym for all three branches of the East, West, and South. Due to the successive invasions of the Huns, Avars, and Khazars, the East Slavic settlements were repeatedly interrupted and reborn, and with continuous migration,

settlement, and reproduction, the East Slavic tribes settled down and flourished on the plains of Eastern Europe, probably in the 7th century AD, which is regarded by some scholars as the beginning of Russian history. (Note 2)

In 753, the Rus' (i.e., Norsemen, Vikings, Ancient Rus': Ροῦς or Ρυς) from Northern Europe, called "Varangians" (Ancient Rus': Варягъ, also called "Varyag") by the Eastern Slavs, founded the city of Ladoga (Old Scandinavian: Aldeigja; Russian: Ладога) in the northwestern part of the Eastern European plain, near the confluence of the Inland River and the Baltic Sea. The city was located at the transit point of sea and river transport for trade between the Russians and the Byzantine Empire, and gradually became the control of the "Great Waterway from the Varangians (Russians) to Greece (Byzantium)" (Greek: Εμπορική οδός Βαράγγων - Ελλήνων; Russian: Путь из варяг в греки) in the northern part of the city, (Note 3) This is the first time that "Rus" left its mark on the history of Eastern Slavs. With the increasing commercial contacts with the Byzantine Empire, the Russians were able to use the waterways to get in touch with various local native tribes of the ancient Slavs, and in the course of plundering, conflicts, and exchanges, a cultural fusion was formed, which laid the foundation for the birth of the entire ancient Rus' culture in later times. Although the Rus was once expelled from the sea by the Eastern Slavic tribes, these tribes soon became embroiled in mutual struggles themselves, as well as facing encroachment from other nomadic peoples, such as the Khozars. With time, free from the Khazar's rule, the most powerful tribe Polyany (Russian: Поляне) gradually took control of 15 East Slavic tribes. (Note 4)

In 862, at the invitation of the Polian nobility, the Russians returned to Eastern Slavonia to completely expel the remnants of the Khozars from Eastern Slavonia and break away from the primitive tribal system of governance as soon as possible and achieve permanent stability in the settlement. Using the city of Gadollah as a springboard, Rurik went to Novgorod and founded the Principality of Rus. Thus, "Rus" appeared in history as an official political symbol for the East Slavs, who began to be called Russians, while the Varangians, who had come south as "Russians", were gradually assimilated by the East Slavs. (Note 5) 897 After the death of Rurik, his close friend Oleg succeeded to the throne and led his troops southward along the Dnieper River to conquer the Krivichi tribe in Smolensk, occupying the central city of Kyiv and making it the capital, and then conquered and taxed many East Slavic and non-Slavic tribes in the middle reaches of the Dnieper. (Note 6) By this time, the control of the Kievan Rus' (Old Rus' \ Church Slavic: Ροϋς; Latin: Russia or Rossia; Greek: Ρρωσία) regime was fully secured, and it also meant that the "Rus' orthodoxy" in the eyes of the East Slavs was officially established.

2.2 The Awakening of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian National Consciousness and the Dissipation of the "Slavs"

After the establishment of Kievan Rus, in addition to the continued forceful expansion of the Varangians, there existed ways of unification beyond force. For example, over time, the Slavs of the former Severian and Kryvic tribes became Novgorodians, Chernigovians, and Polochars after

converting to Orthodoxy, and tribal identity became history as the Christian identity transcended the tribal divisions. (Note 7) However, this elimination of tribal identity and emphasis on geography provided an important source for the later split between “Russians” and “Slavs” and the emergence of a modern ethnic consciousness based on geography in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. It can be said that the first signs of the separation within the Eastern Slavs started from the moment of the baptism of ancient Rus’ in 988.

The reign of Grand Duke Vladimir I of Kyiv, in addition to converting ancient Rus to Orthodoxy, also deepened the process of feudalization of the country. As a result of the emergence of the division of real power, the fragmentation of Kievan Rus began to take shape and the whole regime soon became centrifugal. Even before the Mongol invasion, Kievan Rus’ was divided into various sized principalities, and from the middle of the 12th century Kyiv and the middle Dnieper region were reduced to almost empty cities and wilderness. (Note 8) After the loss of Kyiv’s central position, the leadership potential of Gurus was rapidly buried in several principalities in the Central Russian highlands, (Note 9) and the arrival of the Mongol iron hordes accelerated the demise of the Gurus regime. With the hard resistance of the Eastern Slavs and the rise and intervention of Lithuania, the Mongols were finally driven out of the Rus’ sphere of influence, but half of the ancient Rus’ territory, including Kyiv, was immediately occupied by Lithuania, and not only that, but the territory of today’s Ukraine and Belarus was also under its control. After many considerations, the Russians decided to transfer their political center to Moscow, because the geospatial structure of the northeastern part of Russia, centered on Moscow, was an extension of the narrow north-south “chain” of Kievan Rus’ space to the northeast, which added an east-west depth to the north-south depth of the geospatial space. (Note 10) This laid a solid foundation for the revival and expansion of the “Rus nation” (Russian: Русская нация; Latin: Rus narod) with the Moscow principality as the core, and also meant the official start of the history of the “Rus nation”, moreover. It is also the source of the rightful inheritance of the orthodox claim of the Moscow people to the self-centeredness of the “Rus” (Russian: Россия, from the Greek Ῥωσία and Latin Rossia). The strategy of “Rus unity” was deeply ingrained in the minds of every Moscow ruler, and the ultimate expression of this influence was “Pan-Slavism” (Панславизм) in the later Romanov dynasty, which completely excluded the Varangian power.

As with the “Greater Serbian” in the Balkans, not all people are impressed by the Russian rhetoric. As a byproduct of the late Middle Ages, when Russia, which started as the Duchy of Moscow, was able to promote a sense of nationalism under the banner of “Slavic and Russian orthodoxy,” so could other duchies. The transformation of the star-studded Grand Duchy of Moscow from the Lurik dynasty to the Romanov dynasty was marked by class contradictions and the collapse of the dynastic system, which led to the unprecedented “Смута” (Smuta, or Time of Troubles), which at one point left Moscow in the hands of the Poles who took advantage of the situation, as well as the expansion of the “New Russia” region coveted by the Duchy of Moscow. It also shook the “New

Russia” region, such as Ukraine, which was coveted by the Moscow principality in its expansion. Back in the early 13th century when the Mongol westward conquest of Kievan Rus left only Galicia-Volun (Russian: Галицко-Волынское; Ukrainian: Галицько-Волинське; Polish: Halicko-Wołyńskie; Lithuanian: Haličo-Voluinės) The independence of this place concerning the Principality of Moscow was already demonstrated when the country was spared. Since both Galicia and Volyn were located on the southwestern border of Kievan Rus’, they were called “Ukraine” (Russian: пограничну) by ancient Rus’ and later by Russia, meaning “frontier land”, which is the first appearance of Ukraine in the perception of Eastern Slavs. This was the first time Ukraine appeared in the perception of Eastern Slavs. After the defeat of Mongolia, the Principality of Galicia-Volun was destroyed by the Kingdom of Poland (Polish: Królestwo Polskie) and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Lithuanian: Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė) in 1352, and the western part of Galicia and Volun was occupied by the Kingdom of Poland, while Kyiv the western part of Galicia and Volyn was occupied by the Kingdom of Poland, and the regions of Kyiv and Eastern Volyn were incorporated into the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. (Note 11) From then on, there was a constant flow of immigrants from Lithuania and Poland, and Kyiv, which had been deserted, flourished once again, and a large number of Slavic speakers of Polish and Lithuanian-influenced dialects settled in Ukraine, resulting in a largely West Slavic culture in Kyiv and Southwest Russia. From this time on, Ukraine was destined to become culturally isolated from Russia, which had not been able to establish substantial rule in Southwest Russia.

But the real awakening of Ukrainian national consciousness came after the 17th century when the nomadic (non-ethnic, due to its complex ethnic composition and lack of a unified language and script) Cossacks in southwestern Rus’ revolted against the rule of the feudal landlords in the Poles, led by Bogdan Khmelnytsky (Богдан Хмельницький, 1595-1657), launched a massive armed uprising, which the Poles called the “Potop” (Great Flood). Khmelnytsky’s army marched straight up the lower Dnieper River, took Kyiv, and in 1649 signed the Treaty of Zborov with the Polish king, creating the Cossack Hetmanate (i.e., the Hetman State, Ukrainian: Гетьманщина, Hetman means “chief”), thus “Ukraine” officially existed as an independent regime. Due to the chaotic situation in the whole South Russian region, where Poland, Russia, and the Ottomans were fighting repeatedly, the Zaporizhzhia Cossacks were faced with the dilemma of fighting on multiple fronts - on one side the Polish nobles, who had been oppressing them for years, and on the other side the Turkish Ottomans, who were also looking for them. Because of Russia’s desire for the old territories of Kievan Rus’ in the frenzy of “Rus’ unification” and the urgent need to fight against Poland and the Ottomans, the Cossacks decided to bow down to Russia. To curry favor with Moscow, Khmelnytskyi openly called himself “Little Russia” (Ukrainian: Малоросією) in his letters to the tsar, and by 1654 he even changed the tsar’s name from “Sovereign of All Rus’ (“Ukrainian: Государ всієї Русі”) to “Monarch of Great and Little Rus’ (“Государ Ве ликої і Малої Русі”). (Note 12) In the same year, the Treaty of Pereiaslav was signed between the

Ukrainian Cossacks and the Principality of Moscow, and all the Hetman chiefs and emirates swore allegiance to the Russian Tsar. It is believed that from then on Ukraine fell under the spell of Russian Orthodox civilization, and this treaty is seen as the beginning of the exclusion of Ukraine from European civilization. (Note 13) The narrative of Moscow's "Little Russia" (Russian: Малороссия) of Ukraine was thus made popular, and Russian rule was established in Ukraine.

However, due to the peculiarities of the Cossack regime, Ukraine maintained considerable autonomy after joining Russia, so much so that by the time of Ekaterina II, the Cossack poet Semyon Tivovich (Семеном Дівовичем) dared to claim in his 1762 poem "Dialogue between Great and Little Russia" ("Розмова Великоросії з Малоросією) claims that the Ukrainian use of the word "Russia" (in this case "Rus", in the Slavic language, the whole ancient "Rus" in the language of the Slavs, all ancient "Rus" and "Russia" of the Moscow principality were always the same, the etymology being Русь or Rus). In other words, in Dvorovich's eyes Moscow's so-called "Russia," a "frontier land" that Ukraine could pursue equally, had no less right than its northern neighbor, and he insisted that the two countries were equal in status, the only connection being their common loyalty to the tsar. (Note 14) This shows that the "Ukrainian spirit" shaped by the Cossack Emirate was always based on freedom from Moscow's control and that Ukraine rejected the term "Little Russia" from the very beginning.

Compared to Ukraine, Belarus has a less checkered history. Belarus originated from the Principality of Polotsk (Belarusian: Полацкае княства), founded by the Krivich tribe, and the Krivich people became the core tribe of Kievan Rus' after the conquest by the Oleg due to the important location of Kyiv. The history of the founding of Polotsk is still disputed, but it is now generally accepted that the city officially became the political center of the Krivichi tribe around the 9th century. (Note 15) After the conquest by Grand Duke Vladimir I of Kyiv, the Principality of Polotsk became part of Kievan Rus', and since Kyiv was also one of the main Krivichi settlements, the Belarusians also claimed the right of succession to Kievan Rus'. Strictly speaking, the history of the real "Belarusian nation" begins in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which, like Galicia-Volyn, was occupied by Lithuania (later the Poles) for a long time, and was largely influenced by Lithuanian culture. In the 14th century, the Knights of the Teutonic Order (German: Deutscher Orden) turned their attention to Eastern Europe, as the Mongolian Golden Horde was amid civil strife and division. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania needed strong foreign aid to fight against the enemy, so Poland and Polotsk, which bordered on it and were also suffering from the invasion, became the target of cooperation. At that time, Lithuania, which had already received Kyiv, was still a "Slavic state" in the legal and subjective sense of the Orthodox Church, and not a Baltic "pagan" state, (Note 16) For reasons of national interest, national sentiment, and religious ties, the relationship between Lithuania and Polotsk was very close due to national interests, national sentiments, and religious ties. To fight against the Teutonic Knights, Lithuania came together with Poland, and in exchange for their conversion to Catholicism, the two

kingdoms declared their union. After the defeat of the Teutonic Knights, Lithuania's power grew, and eventually it inevitably fell into expansion, and Lithuania's encroachment on Polotsk became more and more violent. By the end of the 14th century, the extremely weakened Principality of Polotsk was reduced to an administrative unit within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which existed in name only and officially became its province in 1504.

However, like the Hetmanate, which became part of the Moscow principality, the Polotsk province had considerable independence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since the Krivichians, who were an East Slavic tribe, also had expectations of Kievan Rus' orthodoxy. First of all, it renamed its Lithuanian language as "Belarusian", which was strictly speaking derived from Lithuanian. Since the official expression of the so-called "Lithuanian" before the union with Poland was more like a special Slavic dialect, the official language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the so-called "Lithuanian", in the opinion of the Principality of Moscow, was, in fact, the official language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the so-called "Lithuanian", was in fact "Belarusian", (Note 17) which is also related to the fact that Lithuania was heavily influenced by the Orthodox Church. Even in 1886, Lithuanian was still perceived by the citizens as "Belarusian" and not as the "Baltic national language", which had been Czechized and Polished, (Note 18) which shows the deep connection between Belarusian culture and Lithuania, and also Lithuania, as a country with a majority of Baltic peoples, was destined to part ways with Slavic, especially East Slavic, culture from the time of the rise of nationalism in modern times.

The name Belarusian origin of the nation is not known, but there are three recognized theories: first, the ancient inhabitants of the territory of present-day Belarus wore light canvas clothing with blond hair and the unique gold eyes of the Slavs, flawless as "white"; second, the Belarusians were never trampled by the Mongols in history, and even when they were annexed by Lithuania, which was also a Slavic culture, they insisted on their independence. Secondly, Belarusians have never been trampled by the Mongols in their history, and even when they were annexed by Lithuania, which was part of the same Slavic culture, they insisted on their independence, so "Belarus" means "freedom". Thirdly, unlike the "Black Russia" (Belarusian: Чорная Русь), the territory was marked as "white" by Christians as a sign of "enlightenment" due to the widespread spread of Christianity. (Note 19) (Note 20) All three explanations are valid, but none of them is fully convincing, because they are based on modern interpretations, which are more or less far-fetched, for example, the concept of "Black and White Russia" has changed throughout history, and the specific designations are extremely confusing and lack authority. However, certainly, the official designation of "Belarus" as an ethnic group began in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where from 1620 the Eastern Slavs living in the eastern part of the Duchy in the valleys of the Sydwina and Dnieper rivers were called "Belarusians" (Lithuanian: Baltarusiai) or "Rusėnai" to distinguish them from Lithuanians (Lietuviai). (Note 21) Ruthenia is a Latin transcription of the word "Rus" (Русь or Россия, and also "Russia" in the Chinese context). Ruthenia Thus, it can be seen that the

Belarusian national consciousness was gradually formed along with the birth of language and identity markers, and from the 14th to the 17th centuries the national consciousness of “Belarus” and “Lithuania” was awakened and opposed at the same time. antagonism. This increasingly incompatible development reached its peak when the Principality of Moscow developed into the Russian Empire (Russian: Российская империя), and the awakened national consciousness of each forced Lithuania to yield to Russia, which was in the midst of “Russian unification” frenzy, and to the Belarusians, who were also “Slavic brothers”. In the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were broken up by Prussia, Austria, and Russia, and the territory of the formerly established Belarus was transferred to Tsarist Russia. “In 1915, the Belarusian academician, historian, linguist, and political activist Václav Ustinovich Rastovsky (Belarusian: Вацлаў Усціновіч Ластоўскі), who was a member of the Russian Federation, was appointed as a member of the Belarusian government. He first proposed the creation of a Belarusian nation-state of their own, and his ideas were put into practice in 1918 by the Peace of Brest (Russian: Брестский мирный договор). However, the regime called “Belarusian People’s Republic” (Belarusian: Беларуская народная рэспубліка) existed for only one year before it was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

In general, the national consciousness of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus in the modern sense is based on geography, language, ethnicity, and the quest for “historical orthodoxy. The “Russian nation” of the Moscow Russian Principality/Empire saw it as its duty to carry on ancient Russian orthodoxy; Ukraine was founded on the Cossacks’ desire for freedom from Polish aristocracy, and the Galician-Wolyn homeland in present-day western Ukraine was briefly inherited by The title “Kingdom of Rus” (later incorporated into Poland as a “Russian province”) and the location of its capital Kyiv, the political heart of ancient Rus, have made them more orthodox than Russia in recent times, and with a long history of The Belarusians, on the other hand, were born out of Lithuanian rule, and their cultural and linguistic habits were similar to those of ancient Lithuania, and after their annexation by Poland and Lithuania, they also survived for a long time as “Ruthenians”. Despite being the only nationality that was not trampled by foreigners (Lithuania before its conversion to Catholicism, for example), the fragility of their ancestor’s Polotsk regime did not make them as averse to the rule of the great powers as in Ukraine, and the Belarusian national character seems to be more uncontested, both in Tsarist Russia and in the later Soviet Union.

Either way, the fact is that the broad and simple perception of the “Slavs” over time could no longer sustain the unity of the modern nation-states that developed from the various tribes and principalities, and was replaced by a sense of “otherness”. The emergence of the “other”. For as early as the Roman period, the three major Slavic nations of the East, West, and South had gradually gone their separate ways culturally and linguistically, and the East Slavic tribes were so loosely connected that they had to rely on foreigners to establish their authority to suppress them,

and soon the process of feudalization intensified internal centrifuges. Finally, under the triple aggression of Mongolia, Poland, and Lithuania, the already shaky and hard-built “East Slavic homeland” of Kievan Rus was completely disintegrated. The distant memory of “Slavs” or “East Slavs” in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have gradually blurred, and all that remains is the “acre of land” based on the long settlement of the community. The only thing that remains is the “acreage” based on the long settlement of the community, and the subconscious desire to inherit the “Rus” tradition, but the self-centered pursuit of nation-building. This division was only briefly curbed by the emergence of Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union, from the time when Russia became an empire.

2.3 Re-Unification and Re-Separation

Belarusians and Ukrainians have one thing in common, which sets them apart from all other non-Russian ethnic groups in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. While few Russians would deny the ethnicity of Georgians, Estonians, and Chechens, many Russians question the ethnic identity of Belarusians and Ukrainians. (Note 22) This is because the narrative of “Great Russia” and “Little Russia” has been held like a yoke over the heads of Ukrainians since the time of the Russian Empire, and Ukrainians have not recognized the “Little Russia” narrative since the moment the Gatchamanate was subjugated to Tsarist Russia. Little Russia” (at least not for Cossacks like Tivovich). The Ukrainian nationalist independence movement against Russia dates back to the Battle of Poltava in the Great Northern War of 1709 (Russian: Великая Северная война; Swedish: stora nordiska kriget), in which a group led by chief Ivan Mazepa (Ukrainian: Іван Степанович Мазепа) led by Ukrainian Cossack forces allied with Sweden against the Russian Empire. Although the Cossacks lost the war, for the past three centuries, Ukrainian intrigues and betrayals with the Western powers behind them, intent on weakening Russia, have been at the heart of Ukrainian-Russian relations, a degree of inimicality that goes far beyond Belarus. If Ukrainians support the Tsarist, Soviet, or Russian ethnic hierarchy, the Russians are their “big brother” (Ukrainian nationalists insult them with the Tsarist term “Little Russians”), while those who disagree are defined as hierarchy were defined as “Austrian agents”, “bourgeois nationalists” and “fascists”, who were actively defined by the nationalists as “Ukrainians”. For all Ukrainians, they, along with Belarusians, existed for a long time as part of the “Russians” in a vague way.

After the October Revolution, Soviet power was established in Moscow, and the fire of revolution then swept through the territory of all Tsarist Russia (If you ignore the ephemeral Russian Provisional Government). After a series of wars and annexations, the Soviet government, with Moscow at its core, formally declared the Soviet Union in 1922. Compared to its predecessor, Tsarist Russia, Soviet Moscow achieved de facto control of all former Tsarist territories, including Ukraine and Belarus, in the form of united republics, except for the loss of control over the Baltics and Finland. From the mid-to late-1930s, the Soviet regime increasingly pursued the blurring of Soviet and Russian identity and Russian nationalism and Soviet patriotism, drawing inspiration

from Russian historical themes. The historical narrative of Russia as the “big brother” began to proliferate. To suppress the national narratives of other member states, Soviet Russia marked and marginalized other scholars who opposed the “Big Brother” theory. For example, Mikhail Grushevsky (Михайло Сергійович Грушевський), a historian and political leader who strongly opposed Russian dominance and sought equal independence for Ukraine, was classified as a “bourgeois historian” in the early 1930s, and a number of his views were. In the early 1930s he was classified as a “bourgeois historian” and his ideas were labeled as “national fascism”. (Note 23) As a result of his influence, the study of the history of Russia and its self-proclaimed successor, Kievan Rus’, has been divided into four schools of thought in Ukraine: pro-Russian (Russian Empire), pro-Soviet (Soviet), East Slavic, and pro-Ukrainian (Ukrainian nationals). (Note 24) One of these schools, the Pro-Russian School, emerged during the Tsarist period and reappeared in the Russian Federation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It also established the dominance of Western Russian historians. Pro-Soviet historiography existed mainly during the Soviet era, but today it is still an integral part of the Ukrainian school of history education, not only in Ukraine but also in Belarus, where it was reintroduced into the country’s history education after the election of Lukashenko in 1994, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The pro-Soviet school is similar to the pro-Russian school in many ways. It prioritizes Russia as the leading East Slavic state and also accepts the transfer of power to Vladimir Suzdal, the Principality of Moscow, and the Russian Empire after the collapse of Kievan Rus’, and the translation of Kievan Rus’ legacy is a central concept of pro-Russian and pro-Soviet historiography. The East Slavic School opposes the nationalization of Kievan Rus as a former Ukrainian state, arguing that it deviates from objective standards of “scholarship. Scholars of the East Slavic School agree with the pro-Soviet and pro-Russian critique that pro-Ukrainian historiography is “nationalistic” and therefore more political than academic. This criticism of Ukrainian nationalism has its advocates even among Western scholars. This extremely confused scholastic struggle has exacerbated the cognitive divide among Ukrainians, the imprecise nature of which has been described: “Some of them are Soviet in the morning, Russian in the afternoon, and Ukrainian in the evening - and the order tends to change irregularly”. (Note 25)

In contrast to Ukraine, where the sense of “separation” is based on the imposition of “unity,” the situation in Belarus is slightly different: first, the majority of Belarusians are of Orthodox background and have few religious ties to Russia or even Ukraine. Second, Russia has long been a major cultural donor to Belarus. Russian classical literature, music, and other art forms (including Russian rock culture) have been accepted “organically” in Belarus as part of the local cultural tradition, rather than as “cultural colonization,” and the “Great Russian” national myth, sustained by generations of academic historians, has been a major cultural contributor to Belarus. The “Great Russian” national myth, supported by generations of academic historians, has long influenced the popular mentality; moreover, for most Belarusians, Russian is the only language they speak

fluently. Therefore, as recipients of ideas of Western or other foreign origins, “passport Belarusians” are no different from “passport Russians”. These ideas had to be expressed in Russian to be absorbed, and not become “second-hand” because some native Russian speakers happened to live in Belarus; moreover, the forces at work for Belarus to achieve statehood (or to change such key parameters as national borders) were always external, not internal, 1919 and 1991. Moreover, the Belarusian division in 1921, the expansion of Eastern Belarus (BSSR) in the 1920s, the reunification of Poland after the fourth division in 1939, and the loss of Vilna to Lithuania were all externally initiated and had little to do with the Belarusian national movement; (Note 26) Finally, Belarus appears to have ruled a relatively small state from the Principality of Polotsk onward, and would not have posed a neighboring country as a military threat, so post-dissolution Lukashenka had to seek more or less ties or alliances with Russia, and contemporary Belarusians tend to have a deep nostalgia for the Soviet past. Moreover, as the center and fulcrum of the party’s operations, the capital Minsk became the dominant center. More than 25% of the city’s population and more than one-sixth of the total Belarusian population live in Minsk. The city is a cultural center, the center of the educational system, and almost all of the publishing industry. It has also been the center of the official media. During the Soviet era, the Communist Party apparatus in Minsk was one of the strongest and most entrenched in the Soviet Union, which provided a solid foundation for the “loyalty” of Belarusians. (Note 27) The country’s image of power appears strong and stable (88%). “A strong dictatorship oriented toward order, legitimacy, and prosperity” or “stability, which is what Belarus needs.” As a symbol of Belarus as a country, Lukashenko is almost 100% known in Russia, and for 40% of the respondents, Lukashenko is “a symbol of Belarus”. (Note 28) Since the end of the Cold War, Russia’s strategic space has been under constant threat from NATO, and the 2014 Ukraine crisis has exacerbated tensions between Russia and NATO, while neighboring Belarus, surrounded by four countries - Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine - has naturally become an important geopolitical defense for Russia against it as a bridgehead facing NATO. (Note 29) In 2020, Belarus was once plunged into protracted political turmoil, and Russia, the external security base on which its great power revival rests is under serious threat. The joint promotion of military integration is therefore on the agenda of Russia and Belarus to gain a secure space for development. On this basis, Russian-Belarusian relations are getting closer, and on November 4, 2021, Russia and Belarus signed an integration agreement covering 28 sectoral integration programs, defining the basic directions for the future implementation of the state treaty on the establishment of the Russian-Belarusian Union, covering several areas such as macroeconomics, taxation, loans, trade, industry, agriculture, as well as the unification of the markets for oil, gas, electricity and transport services. Unification and coordination, in addition to the full results of military cooperation between the two countries.

3. Result

It can be seen that in the present era, relations between the Eastern Slavic countries, especially Russia and Belarus, have been entirely in the service of national interests and political stability, without the vague narrative of the so-called “Slavic brothers”, and that even if the Russian-Ukrainian conflict breaks out in 2022, Putin will fully stand on the main narrative since the Moscow principality and the Russian Empire. This self-centered interpretation of “Slavic brotherhood” does not fit well into Ukraine’s perception.

4. Discussion

From the Antes to the Rus’, from the Norsemen to the East Slavs, from Kievan Rus to Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, the whole “East Slav” started as a separate tribe and ended as a separate state, and there were attempts to unify the identity, but they were destroyed by foreign invasion after invasion. The Russian feudal principality destroyed the foundation of unity, and the Mongolian conquest completely overthrew the only orthodoxy, and then Poland and Lithuania assimilated the Ukraine and Belarus on both cultural and political levels. Moscow, carrying the banner of “Russian orthodoxy” and “Pan-Slavic”, continued to rise and expand, while Ukraine and Belarus, also of Russian descent, struggled to survive as subordinates. Neither Ukraine, with its Cossack resistance, nor Belarus, with its long-standing Lithuanian roots, has the cultural capacity to compete with Moscow, the “Messiah” appointed by the Orthodox Church, and the narratives of “Greater Russia” and “Lesser Russia” provide legitimate refuge for Russia’s expansion in southwestern Russia. The “Great Russia” and “Little Russia” narratives also legitimize Russia’s territorial expansion in Southwest Russia. Thus, “salvation” turned into aggression, and the nationalism that had been awakening across Europe since the late Middle Ages gave Ukraine and Belarus, already reluctant to submit to Moscow and Lithuania, the power to unite their communities, and meant that their respective “otherness” took shape. The “other” has taken shape. At the same time, the three countries were highly united in their quest to restore and inherit the “Kievan Rus’ unity”, or rather, to use it as a pretext to promote their national existence. At this point, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia as nation-states have become materially incompatible, and all claims to “Slavic brotherhood” and “Russian orthodoxy” serve only national interests. Whether in conflict or cooperation, the Slavic name “Slavs” is still slapdash in the Slavs’ perception, and the historical origin of all this is unique.

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technological assistance, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and other Slavic-speaking countries of the data search would be severely hindered, resulting in the lack of objectivity of the article. This is the author's first published paper that truly conforms to my major, that is, world history in international politics, so it is also of great significance to me. In any case, thanks to the shoulders of giants, thanks to the development of modern technology, and the maturity and professionalism of the academic environment. Finally, please allow me to extend my great gratitude to the World Journal of Education and Humanities for your recognition of my ability.

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