

DR. YURIJ D. KNYSH

# COMBAT CORRESPONDENCE

*Selected Epistolary Confrontations  
on the  
Question of Ukrainian Identity*

Winnipeg, 1971

"Dyvys', jaki ! Karamzina,  
Baczysh, proczytaly,  
Ta j dumajut', shczo os'— to my! . . .

.....  
Ot-ot ukaz nadrukujut':  
'Po mylosti Bozhij  
I vy — Nashi, i vse — Nashe. . "

(Velykyj L'okh)

"Kazhut', baczych, shczo 'vse-to te  
Taky j bulo nashe,  
A shczo my til'ko najmaly  
Tataram na pashu  
Ta Polakam'. . . Mozhe j spravdi !  
Nekhaj i tak bude !  
Tak smijut'sia zh z Ukrainy  
Storonniji lude. . .  
Ne smijtesia, czuzhi lude! . . .

.....  
Svit pravdy zasvityt', . . . ."

(Subotiw)

### Foreword

The letters which are reproduced in this pamphlet belong to five distinct "actions" undertaken by myself in defence of some aspect or other of truth as it pertains to the Ukrainian people and their indubitable right to fair and equal treatment in this world.

It will not, of course, come as a surprise to anyone at all acquainted with this type of problematic that there should exist specific problems with respect to the establishment of elementary facts about Ukrainians, their language, culture, history, civilization — facts which analogically are taken for granted when any other earthly population of comparable significance crops up for discussion. The weight of the past, constituted via ceaseless propagandistic bombardments on the part of variegated groups and individuals upon the consciousness of English-speakers as it pertains to Ukraine, provides an inescapable, but not insuperable, handicap for such as would want — as much in the interests of honest Anglo-Saxonia as of honest Ukraine or humanity — to rectify what is from all points of view save that of ideological egoism an untenable situation. To this weight must be added present political conjuncture, inimical as ever to all genuine aspirations towards truth or right which do not reflect the concrete needs of "powers

that be", as well as the abysmal ignorance of most "cultured" non-Soviet Ukrainians and their sympathizers concerning Ukrainian civilization. The last factor makes it difficult to muster any sort of relevant "action" in support of truth; the former make it perhaps even more difficult for such "actions" to succeed, if by "success" is meant total elimination of discriminatory intellectual practices.

Yet, in spite of those odds, a great deal is being done, and hopefully will continue being done. Thus, mentioning only names connected with the material to come, the letter to F. E. COMPTON'S is but a minute addition to a vigorous protest campaign initiated by Dr. H. Klufas, widely supported by American/Canadian associations and private persons, which managed to breach at least to some extent the standard wall of cynical indifference behind which function the so-called "free enterprise" publishing empires of North America. The correspondence with *Scientific American* and with *Webster's* was begun at the request of, and in collaboration with, Dr. O. M. Bilaniuk of Swarthmore College, Penn., who has long been an assiduate promoter of such processes of enlightenment.

What is important, it seems to me, what is far more important than even those "successes" occasionally garnered — is that protest letters to influential publications which distort or falsify Uk-

rainian reality are a measure of the presence of "men upon this earth" (T. Shevchenko), a measure of the willingness of mortals to become witnesses of what is regardless of the powers arrayed against them, and witnesses against what is not. This means that actions in defence of Ukraine where she is coldly manhandled are not peculiarly "Ukrainian" actions, but such as possess universal moral content, and are easily grasped as pertaining to the highest ideals of humanity by all those souls who are not afraid or envious of the naked power wielded by the world's political and intellectual Tsars.

The rhythm of the reproduced correspondence will speak for itself, as will the clash of ideas. Such further explanations and clarifications as were deemed necessary I make in the footnotes which accompany the text. It is possible that some of the argumentation will strike the reader as particularly untraditional. This would depend upon the meaning and identity of the "tradition" envisaged. I have always been struck by the "traditional" distaste for and misunderstanding of T. Shevchenko displayed in "cultured" Ukrainian circles. In all humility, I do not feel that this great genius would find a great deal to disapprove of in the intentions which have guided me. Did he not, after all say "YAKBY VY VCZYLYS' TAK YAK TREBA, TO J MUDRIST' BY BULA SVOJA"? And I

would further suggest that if our "Ukrainians" paid more attention to the wisdom contained in his immortal poetry they would not so easily come under the influence of pseudo-theories about East European history which have little to do with facts, and much with propagandistic nonsense. There exists today a growing literature capable of introducing the mind to a correct appreciation of the nature of bygone times on the Eurasian plains. This literature, some of it in Ukrainian, is available to anyone who wishes to profit from it. But first, one must have the basic will and desire to seek it out. This one will hardly do while still under the influence of chronic inferiority complexes which hide behind statements that "the cause of humanity is greater than that of Ukraine. . ." et sim. People who think thus have little to offer humanity, which after all is composed of many "Ukraines" and it is quite unlikely they will do much good to any nations they consider as "superior" to their own. Now Shevchenko is the ideal antidote for such feelings: and an education for "action" can well begin with a careful study of his thoughts. Few peoples can boast of possessing a poet and prophet of his stature; but it is also perhaps true that one is not a prophet in one's own land. . . Or is it? Dear reader, only you can decide this question for yourself.



1. To **American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc.**, Horizon Books Division, 551 Fifth Ave. New York, N.Y. 31

(A) — Editorial Committee, AHPC Inc.  
10 February, 1971

Dear Sirs:

When library perusals led me to discover your **Horizon Book of the Arts of Russia**, I had for some time been on the lookout for precisely a work of this type, in order to recommend it to my students as a useful background source for my political science courses. Unfortunately, and despite my enjoyment of its many fine aesthetic features, I found in it a large number of structural inconsistencies and outright factual blunders, and had thus to put it aside as unsuitable for my purposes. Indeed I could not, due to lack

of time (a) systematically go through the work in class pointing out and commenting upon its theoretical inadequacies; and likewise could not, in all scholarly honesty (b) suggest it, with no reservations, as supplementary reading material.

In the remainder of this letter, I shall offer some remarks you may find of interest should you eventually decide to publish a second edition of this beautiful reference work.

The term **Russia** (and derivatives) is without doubt one of the most equivocal presently in use within the various fields of historical science. It is, of course, a Westernized version of the Old Slavic **Rus**, and, as such, possesses three major (though not equally known, or in-use) connotations:

(1) **Political.**—(a) It originally stood for the territory and populations of the State-entity ruled by the Great Prince of Kiev Volodimir (-I spell his name thus, rather than the more usual "Vladimir", following in this the latest readings of the 11th century graffiti in the Kievan St. Sophia Basilica), and his dynastic successors. In this sense, the term has been a historical memory and nothing more since the Mongolian invasions of 1237-1240, the effect of which was to destroy the **Rus** imperial complex. The term's original (and at the time obsolete) meaning was best brought out in a 1573 treatise written by a French nobleman, Blaise de Vigenere, for the instruction of the future Henry III of France — at the time occupying the throne of Poland, and eager to learn what he could about his vast dominions.

— (b) The term also stands, since 1721, for the territories and populations under the rulership of the Moscovian Tsars and their Bolshevik successors. This second political meaning has none save a verbal relationship to the first, and it was introduced as part of the Moscovian policy to claim for itself, as its own history and culture, the entire history and culture of Volodimiran "Russia", a policy which at first met with much resistance among Western intellectuals (cf. e.g. Montesquieu's **Spirit of the Laws**) but which eventually succeeded, and, in its character of purely ideological concoctionism, has plagued scholars of "Russia" up to our own times.

(2) **Religious.**— In this aspect the term originally stood for the territory and faithful under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the "Metropolitan of Kiev and of all Rus" (cf. on this H. Paskiewicz's **The Making of the Russian Nation**) and was practically identical to connotation (1) (a) *supra*. After the Mongolian invasions of 1237-1240, Byzantine religious policy was directed (i) at the conversion of the Golden Horde; and (ii) after 1313 at the "building" of a Caesaropapist Orthodox State in the Christian areas controlled by the Muslim Tatars. As a result of this policy (and it must not be forgotten that Byzantium had nigh absolute authority over the top hierarchy of the Rus Church, consistently staffing it with persons of Greek i.e. Byzantine origin or inclina-

tion) there arose a series of differentiations in the use of the term (including those brilliant and highly artificial inventions of Constantinopolitan -chancellery wisdom, "Great" and "Little" Russia), and its **major** (though not exclusive) meaning since 1589 has been that of the territory and faithful under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow, irrespectively of their ethnic status. In this religious (and now highly archaic) sense, "Russia" simply stood for Eastern Slavic-rite Orthodoxy, much as **Christianitas** had stood for Western Roman Catholicism prior to the Reformation.

(3) **National.**—(a) The original ethnic meaning of **Rus** and its derivatives referred to the people inhabiting the Taimanian peninsula in the second half of the first millenium A.D. This people was not, apparently, Slavic, and belonged to the Khazar political complex until the early 10th century. In fact its ruler was called "Kagan" just as the Khazar rulers were, and the memory of this title persisted unto the era of Yaroslav the Wise (cf. **your book**, p. 131, Ilarion's **Eulogy**).

(b) When Rus princes and their retinue acquired the Slavic lands of the Dnieper region, they gave their name not only to the territory (as e.g. the Franks to France, the Bulgars to Bulgaria, etc.) but also to that part of the Slavic population with which they amalgamated and to which they assimilated within three generations. As reported in Nestor's **Chronicle** (ca. 1112 A.D.) the ethnic name of these Slavs was "**Poliany**", but in his time they were called "**Rusy**" (or variants., e.g. "**Rusyny**", "**Rusyczi**") and they were the dominant political, social, cultural, and economic element in the whole Rus Empire (sense (1) (a) *supra*), not only in their own ethnic territory (roughly coinciding with the forest-steppe area of the present-day Ukrainian S.S.R.) but in all the major imperial cities, including **Novgorod**, **Pskov**, **Suzdal**, and **Ryazan**. (—Note that the architectural style of the beautiful churches and monasteries reproduced in **your book** on pp. 10-11/ Pokrovsky Monastery, Suzdal/ p. 32/ Church of the Intercession of the Virgin on the r. Nerl/, p. 34 /Novgorod's St. Sophia/, page 35 /Novgorod's Church of the Savior/, pp. 38-39 /St. Dimitry Cathedral, Vladimir (Volodimir-on-the-Kly-

azma)/ et al., is **Rus-Polianian** in one or another variant, and is in striking contrast to the later Moscovian "onion dome" architecture.)

(c) After the Mongolian invasions of 1237-1240, the term **Rus** as an ethnic appellation remained with the erstwhile Polianians, and with such as willingly assimilated to them (e.g. the ruling classes of the present-day Bieloruthenians). Not until the 19th century did there occur a massive change-over from "Rusyny" to "Ukrainians" on the part of the descendants of those same Polianians — principally as a result of their desire to clearly differentiate their nationality from that of Moscovians. These had, under Peter the Great, fused their religious, political, and national names, and have since those times been known to the world as "Russians".

(d) The **national** name of today's Russians was, at the time of the Volodimiran Empire, "Meryans", and from the 14th to the 18th centuries, "Moscovians" (i.e. identical to their **political** name: subjects of the State of Muscovy). During the **Rus** epoch, today's Russians were a ruthlessly oppressed and exploited Finnish-speaking people in the Volga-Oka area, who gradually, under the influence of their Rus-Polianian rulers and the Rus Church, abandoned the use of their own language (which nevertheless persisted as a second language in many areas until the 19th century, and as a **substratum** in so-called "Great Russian" dialects) and adopted various Slavic dialects. The Meryans of the 10th-13th centuries have nothing to do with the cultural monuments created in their land by their colonial oppressors, though the story of their eventual resurgence is undoubtedly one of the more interesting episodes in the annals of humanity. Russian scholars in the 19th century (Pogodin, Klyuchevsky) and their disciples (who still predominate in American Universities) developed a theory explaining the continuity of Rus and Moscovian history and culture via a supposed **massive migration** from the South to the North-East. This theory is no longer archaeologically tenable, and as the results of the painstaking diggings of Soviet archaeologists will become more widely known, diggings which conclusively demonstrate the essential

stability and continuity of population patterns in the Old Rus area throughout the 9th-14th centuries and beyond, this theory will be abandoned. (CF. on this M. J. Brayczevskij, *Pokhodzhenia Rusy*, Kiev. 1968).<sup>20</sup>

My chief complaint, then, is that your book insufficiently distinguishes between the multifold senses of **Russia**, and represents a pretty faithful adherence to the ideological scheme developed in the 18th century by the Moscovian Tsars and their advisors. Had, e.g., the French (or substitute the German, Italians, Spaniards — for this purely theoretical analogy) proclaimed the identification of Frenchness and Catholicity, and thereupon declared as nationally French the culture and history of all other Catholic peoples, this would have been treated by reflective persons as a ridiculous piece of chauvinism and conceit, and as unworthy of serious scientific debate. Frankly the Moscovian scheme, with its shameless appropriation of Ukrainian and other cultures, deserves, and will eventually provoke, just such a reaction.

I hope that in a future edition you will rectify interpretational errors in the text itself (viz. all those stemming from uncritical acceptance of the scientifically nonsensical Moscovian scheme), and will likewise refrain from presenting as "Russian" (sense (3) (d) *supra*) materials such as the following:

- (1) The Scythian creations on pp. 8-9.
- (2) The Suzdalian complex on pp. 10-11/ Suzdal was not "Russian" (sense (3) (d) in the 12-13th centuries, just as Gaul was not "French" in the 3rd C.A.D.
- (3) The Church on the Nerl — p. 32.
- (4) Novgorod's St. Sophia — p.34-35./ Novgorod did not become "Russian" (sense (3) (d) i.e. Moscovian, until the 16th century — and then as the result of brutal genocide./
- (5) Novgorod's Church of the Saviour — p. 36.
- (6) Volodimir's Cathedral of St. Dmitry pp. 38-39.
- (7) Kiev's St. Sophia — pp. 40-41.
- (8) The Virgin of Volodimir — p. 68.
- (9) The Pskov icon — p. 90./ Pskov was "Russianized" in the 16th century./
- (10) The Ukrainian materials on pp. 122-123.

- (11) The quotations from Nestor on pp. 130-131, 133-136.
  - (12) The quotations from Ilarion on p. 131.
  - (13) The quotations from Volodimir Monomakh on pp. 131-132.
  - (14) The quotations from **The Lay of Igor's Campaign** on pp. 132-133.
  - (15) The quotation from the Monks of Ryazan on p. 134. / Ryazan was "Russianized" in the 16th century.
  - (16) The quotations from Polycarpe on pp. 136-137.
  - (17) The quotation from the Novgorod Chronicle on p. 138.
  - (18) The quotation from Serapion on p. 138.
  - (19) The quotation from the Sadko tale on p. 140.
  - (20) The quotation from the Ilya of Muror bylina on pp. 140-141.
  - (21) The Dovzhenko materials on pp. 285-287. / Note, incidentally, that the placard carried in the picture on p. 286 is in Ukrainian: a line from the poet Shevchenko. His statue stands in Washington, D.C., since 1964. /
  - (22) The Azerbaidzhani material on p. 343.
- Naturally, as to items (2) to (6), (9), (15), (17) to (19), my approach should not be interpreted as a denial of the authentic, contemporary, Russian character of these cities and areas, but as an effort to re-establish a sense of historical perspective. I would not, by analogy, suggest that Italy has a claim to englobe France, merely because Rome once controlled Gaul. Nor do I deny Russia the right to recognize these (and other) items as part of its cultural heritage, if by that is meant merely e.g. what is meant by American recognition of Medieval Europe or of Ancient Greece as part of its own cultural past.

Yours sincerely,

George D. Knysh, B.A. (L.Ph.),  
M.A., Ph. D.

Associate Professor, Department of  
Political Studies, University of Manitoba,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

(B) Miss Wendy Buehr, Editor, Horizon  
Book Division, AHPC Inc.

11 April, 1971

Dear Miss Buehr:

Some time ago (February 10) I wrote  
to your editorial committee expressing

misgivings as to the accuracy of certain  
points made in the **Horizon Book of the  
Arts of Russia**. I have now read the  
**Horizon History of Russia**, and am be-  
ginning to understand the reasons for the  
committee's complete failure to respond:  
it apparently condones and encourages  
the dissemination of monstrously non-  
sensical Russian imperialistic propaganda.

Beautifully presented the **History** un-  
doubtedly is, and at the same time utter-  
ly worthless, irrelevant, as a serious work  
of science. For indeed, how can one re-  
spect a "History of Russia" which, among  
countless other repulsive distortions, calm-  
ly present as "Russian" history what is in  
fact Ukrainian history (cf. esp. pp. 15-  
56), cheerfully making Russians out of  
Ukrainians and others — in the best  
traditions of Czarist imperial historiogra-  
phy!! This is an insult not only to the  
Ukrainian people but to the Russian  
people as well, for it robs **both** of them in  
loathsome fashion of their respective cul-  
tural heritages, of their identity, of their  
sources of national pride, and of their  
**humanity**.

I have expressed in the aforementioned  
letter to your editorial committee the  
chief technical reasons for my dissatis-  
faction as a scholar with the tendencies  
your Company represents. I would gladly  
restate these to you upon request. Do you  
for instance realize that the massive po-  
pulation shifts of which Mr. Grey speaks  
on p. 34 **never occurred?** And do you  
grasp the momentous implications of this  
simple fact, now established beyond  
doubt by archeology? Did you know that  
the "migration theory" was invented in  
the 19th century by the Russian chauvin-  
ist historian Pogodin, on the basis of mis-  
guided national sentiment, because he  
could not accept the fact that the lowly  
Ukrainians of his time had been the  
creators of the Kievan realm — at a  
period when his own Russians were but  
a conglomeration of conquered Finnic  
tribes? Are your "experts" not familiar  
with contemporary literature on this their  
subject, with names such as Rybakov Gim-  
butas, Brayczewski et al. ? ? <sup>9)</sup> Is it  
too difficult for their keen minds to un-  
derstand that if the Kievan Empire was  
"Russian" and Volodymyr the Great was  
a "Russian" ruler, then by the same brilli-  
ant logic the Roman Empire was "French"

((or "German", or "Spanish") and Julius Caesar was a "Frenchman" (or a "German" or a "Spaniard" — take your pick)?

In any event, the **History of Russia** American Heritage has published will draw upon itself the contempt of all those historians whose primary allegiance is to fact. Possibly you as editor are not to be blamed for this abysmal breakdown in the intellectual probity of the "experts" you have consulted. But I should like to advise you not to rely so fully in the future upon the likes of e.g. Mr. Starr or Mr. Grey; for in so doing you will unfortunately draw upon your Company the ineluctable discredit which accompanies all exposures of fraudulence masquerading as knowledge.

Most Sincerely, Yours,  
George D. Knysh.

2. To **F.E. Compton Co.**, 425 No.  
Michigan, Chicago, Ill.  
(A) Mr. Jerry Miller,  
Asst. Sales Administrator.

12. February, 1971

Dear Sir:

It may interest you to know (if you do not already possess this information) that your letter to Dr. H. Klufas of Dec. 29, 1970 was printed on the 5th page of the Ukrainian-American daily newspaper **Svoboda** for January 26, 1971, and commented upon in an editorial of that same day (unfavorably, of course, as a typical example of complete intellectual obscurantism with respect to the question at issue). Not having a copy of Dr. Klufas' letter to you, I am unable to judge the extent to which some of the attitudes you took were justifiable in context, and will thus content myself with remarks on statements you made which I deem to be irrelevant and eminently obscurantist in any context.

(1) You state: "Our editors point out that Ukraine and Latvia **are now** governed by the Soviet Union and thus those who live there are Russians." Now this is a complete **non-sequitur**. I take you to mean that the existence of a particular sovereign state-entity implies a common legal bond which may be and is expressed by way of a unique nomenclature. Without going into some of the difficulties you would have to meet were one to point out

that the Union Republics of the U.S.S.R. possess obvious legal attributes of sovereignty (some more so than others — e.g. the Ukrainian S.S.R. being a full-fledged member of the U.N.) to a far greater extent than the states of the U.S., I simply draw your attention to the fact, that the **only** political entity having a legal status to which the term "Russia" may freely be applied is the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, which **theoretically** is not even a member of the U.N.! The various Union Republics of the U.S.S.R. have established (again in legal terms) a common superstructure **vis-a-vis** the rest of the world, and Russia no less than Ukraine, Latvia, or Armenia has agreed to allow this superstructure to represent for the time being its legitimate interests, which the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. fully safeguards, in allowing to **any** Union Republic the legal right of reclaiming these interests (e.g. foreign affairs, defense, etc.) at any time. Hence the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is in no way, legally speaking, "Russia". Nor have its leaders, in any public statement of internal or external significance ever so referred to it. And the common name applicable to citizens of this superstructure is not "Russians", but "Soviets". Ukrainians since 1923, and Latvians since 1940 are, consequently, **not** "Russians" as you have stated, but "Soviets". So that, Mr. Miller, neither you, nor your editors, nor your advisor are justified in committing the confusing blunder of misnaming the object of your analysis in the aforementioned fashion. You are **free** to do it, of course, as long as you possess the will to do it, but such endeavours do not attract the blessings of Science.

(2) You state: "Our advisor on our Russia material is a native of the Ukraine. I rather imagine that if he thought we were wrong he'd say so. And he has not". Surely, Mr. Miller, you are not so naive as to genuinely believe what the entire known history of humanity eloquently refutes, viz., the spontaneous ardor of all individuals, no matter what the circumstances, to offer unbiased information, assuming they indeed have it to offer. I can well believe that your advisor "is a native of the Ukraine". But does this automatically guarantee his intellectual reliability? After all, do you

not constantly experience the antithetical manner in which "natives of the United States" speak about their native country? Each piece of information should be carefully assessed on its merits, not swallowed quietly upon "authority". I am afraid your advisor has sadly let you down as to the scientific accuracy of some of your positions advanced in your letter. But then, you know best what is, and what is not, in your interest.

Sincerely Yours,

George D. Knysh.

(a) Mr. Miller's reply.

February 16, 1971

Dear Dr. Knysh:

I have received your February 12th letter regarding my correspondence with Dr. Klufas and articles in COMPTON'S ENCYCLOPEDIA on Russia and Ukraine.

I am enclosing copy of our executive director's letter of February 5th to Dr. Klufas explaining the situation.

We thank you for your letter and your interest.

Sincerely,

F. E. COMPTON CO.

Jerry Miller, Asst. Sales Administrator.

(a) add. Mr. Miller's enclosure.

February 3, 1971

Dear Dr. Podiuk-Klufas:

I have your January 19th letter concerning editorial contents in COMPTON'S ENCYCLOPEDIA on Russia and Ukraine.

It always has been the policy of F. E. Compton Company to publish the very best encyclopedia, written in an interesting style, accurate and up-to-date at all times. This is why we are happy to have your letter and the material contained therein.

Please be assured that our editorial board will take this material and your comments into consideration. We are already in contact with our advisers on this subject.

Your interest is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Balzano.

3. To National Review, 150 East 35th St.,  
New York, N. Y.

(A) Mr. James Burnham, Editor.

2 March, 1971

Dear Sir:

I should like to correct a misapprehension readers of M. Geltman's article in the

9 February issue of NR ("The Arrogant Cult of Youth", p. 141) may retain concerning the character of Nestor Makhno, one of the significant figures of the unsuccessful 1917-1922 Ukrainian Revolution. It is not practical, in this short note, to discuss the manifold aspects of Makhno's political career. Too much obscurity still surrounds this man, whose co-optation by the likes of Cohn-Bendit reminds me of even more blatant stupidities, e.g. the pot counter-culture's "Christian" roots (as per Roszak). Makhno has had extraordinary bad press on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and the time may be ripe to place him in scientific perspective. The Bolsheviks hate him, so does much of the articulate West, so do various Ukrainian emigre parties, from the far left to the far right; hence such a task will be quite difficult.

On one point though I think a firm statement can even now be voiced: **Makhno was not, ever, an antisemite.** (1) His closest theoretical advisors were Jews; (2) his policy with respect to the massive assistance voluntary Jewish battalions gave to the Bolsheviks was a model of hyper-tolerance. While he ordered the execution of the commanders and commissars of each **officially** Bolshevik contingent he defeated, he always released the rank-and-file (many of whom were Jewish) with orders to leave the country (i.e. Ukraine) immediately. His troops avoided all conflict with the aforementioned battalions of pro-Bolshevik Jewish volunteers, and did not, on religious or racial grounds, molest the Jewish population of the cities and villages they occupied.

Professor Lipset (whom Mr. Geltman quotes) ought to know this, or if he does not, keep silent; for no one is an authority in a factual void, no matter how illustrious their other achievements.

Yours Most Sincerely,

George D. Knysh.

(a)—NR's reply.

Friday, March 26, 1971

Dear Mr. Knysh:

Your letter to the Editor will appear in the April 6, 1971 issue of NATIONAL REVIEW.

Sincerely Yours,

Michael A. Watkins



4. To **Scientific American**, 415 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

(A) Mr. Dennis Flanagan, Editor. (i)  
5 March 1971

Dear Sir:

Your excellent journal has long provided intellectual enjoyment to people such as myself, who, not directly engaged in the pursuit or teaching of the **Natural Sciences**, wish at the same time to be cognizant of variegated developments in these as part of their own personal overall cultural enrichment.

Nevertheless, I find certain points in your editorial policy susceptible of improvement. They pertain to a field in which I have a certain measure of competence, and since I believe in inter-disciplinary communications, I shall proceed in the hope that you will not find the following remarks altogether remiss, granting them consideration in the same spirit friendly if serious, in which I offer them.

Two recent articles (I. Berenyi, "Computers in Eastern Europe", /SA, vol. 223, n. 4—October 1970—pp. 102ff./; W. C. Gough, B. J. Eastland, "The Prospects of Fusion Power", /SA, vol. 224, n. 2—February 1971—pp. 50ff./) have included demonstrable blunders I see no clear reasons for, save as manifestations of an editorial policy whose merits are quite overshadowed by its defects. I refer to the Berenyi article's mention, on p. 103, beneath the photograph, of a "Russian" computer factory in Kiev, and to the Gough-Eastland article's parallel mention, on p. 51, also beneath the photograph, of a "Russian" stellarator in Kharkov. As a matter of fact both of the discussed **apparati** are Ukrainian, located in the two major cities of Ukraine, one of which happens to be its capital. I can see but a single argument which may be advanced to justify such identification of the scientific achievements of non-Russians in the U.S.S.R. with those of the Russians, viz., that a clear differentiation would entail a certain degree of practical difficulty due to the necessity of effectuating a fairly fundamental change-over in the policy itself — in other words, **bureaucratic inertia**. A serious charge to level at a concern functioning within the framework of the free enterprise system, the most revolutionary economic system

the world has yet seen. This inertia is becoming increasingly irrelevant, and will in due time be costing too much for its continuation to be worthwhile. Consider:

(1) The Russians no longer constitute a majority in the U.S.S.R. (cf. **Newsweek**, 12 Jan. 1970), which is why the Kremlin has failed to release the results (as to national composition) of the 1970 census. Hence the political and economic system there prevailing can no longer be maintained without an increase in the "goodwill input" of the CPSU **vis-a-vis** the non-Russians, accompanied by a corresponding tightening of ideological reins ("restalinization" is certain to gather momentum at the forthcoming 24th Party Congress) and "blackening" of the "evil capitalists" of the West. In such changed political conjunctures, the Kremlin as always will welcome any assistance it can obtain from those same capitalists. When Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Armenians or Georgians, conscious of their significance for the U.S.S.R. read that their scientific achievements, of which you may be certain they are quite proud, are ascribed by influential "capitalist" journals not to themselves but to the Russians, they will not fail to draw the obvious conclusion, viz., that America is not what it claims to be; that their political future lies in a continued attempt to better the Communist system in which they find themselves at present (by implication "burying" America), because while the Russians may be hypocrites, the Americans are something else again. — An editorial policy which made practical sense of sorts at a time when monolithic Stalinism, backed by a determined Russian majority, guided the destiny of World Communism, makes no sense at all now, when all sorts of protest movements among non-Russians in and out of the Soviet Union create a potentially mortal danger to the continuation and expansion of its imperialistic interests. Your traditional editorial policy can only be welcomed by the likes of Shelest, Podgorny, or Brezhnev since it gives them (or their ideological apologists) weighty arguments to enlist the co-operation of non-Russians in the Communist enterprise. What an unlikely combination.

Mr. Dennis Flanagan and Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, objective allies. . .

(2) There exist a good number of signs indicating that important American commentators and political analysts are beginning to grasp the tremendous opportunities of this non-Russian revival in the U.S.S.R. for the global strategy of the U.S.A. (The Chinese, for their own purposes, had grasped it even earlier, broadcasting vehement appeals in e.g. Ukrainian to Soviet soldiers across the Ussuri during those widely-heralded clashes). Consult, for instance the various columns written in the past year by Mr. James Burnham for **National Review**, or the recent book by Delia and Ferdinand Kuhn (**Russia on our minds**, Doubleday, New York, 1970, esp. pp. 4, 83-87, 89-91) and I could go on and on. The identification of the U.S.S.R. with "Russia" in the ethnic sense is no longer as widespread. **Compton's Encyclopedia**, if we are to believe its executive director Mr. Frank Balzano, is contemplating serious revisions in its approach to the issue. Why should **Scientific American** lag behind? As a Canadian, I may point out that you Americans apparently even have a law in your statute-books, passed in 1959 / Public Law 86-90 / which would wholly encourage such a positive, progressive policy shift.

(3) But if the forces of bureaucratic inertia should prove too cumbersome at this stage of the game to permit a wholesale change in editorial policy, why not at least go part of the way? For instance, print a statement explaining the need of continuing to use the historical colloquialism "Russians" when referring to the non-Russian inhabitants of the U.S.S.R., adding that this in no way intends to insult their national feelings or to confuse them with the Russians by attributing to the latter their own technological successes — and refer to this statement by way of footnotes in every subsequent article where the colloquialism would tend to foster scientific obscurity or nonsense.

Yours Most Sincerely,

George D. Knysch.

(a) Mr. Flanagan's reply.

March 10, 1971

Dear Dr. Knysch:

Thank you for your letter. We here at **Scientific American** are very much aware

of the distinction between "Ukrainian" and "Russian". I am afraid, however, that it is common usage in English-speaking countries to say "Russian" when one means "of the U.S.S.R." To be sure, there is an alternative in "Soviet", but that has a specific political connotation which we, at least, would like to avoid.

There is an analogy in the use of "American" for "of the U.S." Many North and South Americans who are not citizens of the U. S. have observed that they are just as "American" as we are. I hope it goes without saying, however, that we observe these distinctions when they are essential to the meaning of an article.

Cordially,

Dennis Flanagan, Editor

(B) Mr. Dennis Flanagan, Editor. (ii)

12 March, 1971

Dear Sir:

Had I to choose between insulting my correspondents' intelligence, or ruffling their sensibilities by some minor breach of etiquette (viz., failure to answer a letter), I should unhesitatingly opt for the latter. This strong statement (others will follow) reflects my deep resentment at having written in good faith to a person capable of replying to me as you did in your letter of 10 March instant. Involvement with the fact that the **Scientific American** editor's level of logical proficiency rivals that of a junior high school dropout is simply not my cup of tea. I cannot however refrain from making two brief comments.

"Common usage", I am afraid, is not the reason why you have adopted the highly objectionable and defamatory editorial policy of identifying as Russians all of the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. whether or not they are Russians. If you have **decided** to reject the equally common (and in some respects fairer) name "Soviets", but have decided to retain "Russians", which has a **national** and ethnic connotation as evident as the former's political one, then it is clear that we have to do here with something quite deliberate, not with a helpless bow to "common usage". Such combination of exquisite purism and callous vulgarity with respect to the exact meaning of terms demonstrates conclusively a sad lack of good will on the part of **Scientific**

American, nay, a persistent intention to mislead and deceive its public. The point that you are not personally a victim of this intellectual swindle is irrelevant; indeed, it makes the policy appear all the more loathsome.

Your "analogy" between the use of "Russian" and "American" is incredibly out of place. What can it possibly mean? Are you suggesting that "North and South Americans" other than Americans who question the right of Americans to call themselves Americans because they too are Americans somehow sin against "common usage" in a way analogous to that of Jews or Ukrainians who resent being identified as Russians? Such logic may be at home in the mind of a hippie; one does not expect it from the editor of **Scientific American**. Whatever its intent or meaning (I submit it would take a fine psychologist to unravel these) this 'analogy' merely confirms the basic and conscious illegitimacy of the editorial policy you defend; it would have been ethically much simpler to modify the policy even partially rather than to resort to such patronizing, ludicrous verbal manoeuvres.

Writing this has been distasteful to me; but it was necessary to reject your nonsensical assertions, as well as the blandly hypocritical benevolence with which they were presented. Understand me, Mr. Flanagan, I shall expect no answer to this letter, hoping to be spared the reading of further standardized reactionary bigotries.

Yours Truly,

George D. Knysh.

(b) Mr. Flanagan's reply — (ii)

March 17, 1971

Dear Mr. Knysh:

I am sorry that my letter so annoyed you. I do not think, however, that citing common usage is frivolous. The custom to which you object is observed not only by us; it is followed by **The New York Times** and all other American periodicals. Moreover, universities have departments of Russian literature, even though many of the writers taught in them are not Russians. It seems to me your quarrel is with a regrettable linguistic necessity. Be this as it may, you have certainly sharpened our awareness of the problem (although we were already aware of it).

I doubt that we would ever say something like "Ukrainian computer" because that would automatically raise irrelevant questions. I do think, however, that we and others should be more careful in applying the adjective "Russian" to things that are specifically identified with the Ukraine.

Cordially,

Dennis Flanagan, Editor

(C) Mr. Denis Flanagan, Editor (iii)

20 March, 1971

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the March 17 (!) letter. I understand your position. Could you nevertheless // and I would greatly appreciate this additional kindness from one busy man to another // clarify the following points:

(a) Why is it, from your point of view, a lesser evil, **less regrettable**, to use the term "Russian" than to use the term "Soviet"?

(b) What would be the irrelevant questions which would automatically be raised by your calling a Ukrainian computer "Ukrainian"?

Yours Sincerely,

George D. Knysh.

(c) Mr. Flanagan's reply — iii

March 23, 1971

Dear Dr. Knysh:

Thanks for yours of March 20. Let me answer your questions as best I can.

1. We find "Russian" less regrettable than "Soviet", because "Soviet" refers to a political system rather than to a group of peoples (however inaccurate "Russian" may be for the latter purpose). In purely logical terms "Soviet Union" might pass muster, but in our view "Soviet" does not. Using "Soviet" as an adjective for the U.S.S.R. is rather like using "democratic" for the U.S.

2. The kind of question that might be raised by the term "Ukrainian computer" are as follows. Does the Ukraine have its own program of computer development that is separate from the program for the U.S.S.R. as a whole? Have Ukrainians outside the U.S.S.R. perhaps banded together to build their own computer? I admit that such questions would not occur to everyone, but we editors are always concerned to eliminate as much ambiguity as we possibly can. All we meant to establish in the caption you

mention was that the computer was in the U.S.S.R.

Cordially,

Dennis Flanagan, Editor

(D) Mr. Dennis Flanagan, Editor (iv)  
27 March, 1971

Dear Sir:

I will admit, nay gratefully affirm that there is some sense to your answer n. 2. Your query ("Does the Ukraine have its own program of computer development that is separate from the program for the U.S.S.R. as a whole?") shows a healthy, significant, excellent strain of **realpolitik**. Indeed it is true that the CPSU has harnessed the technical energies of many non-Russian nations for its own imperialistic purposes. And to what extent it is correct to view these non-Russians as "employees" of the CPSU on a par with the Russians. But then, legal niceties aside, so are the satellite nations of Eastern Europe. The "Socialist Bloc" (as per the Brezhnev doctrine) is a unity; it is quite unrealistic under present conditions to claim that entities such as Poland or Czechoslovakia exercise sovereignty in any real sense. The point is, of course, that control by the Kremlin does not make "Russians" out of Poles or Czechs. Nor, I submit, does it make Russians out of Jews, Uzbeks, or Ukrainian, despite the different forms this control assumes in their cases. The distinction is admittedly a fine one at times, but it seems to me that the technological apparatus (as perhaps against certain aspects of its use) existing in non-Russian areas, largely created and staffed by non-Russian nationals, ought not to be attributed to Russians, at least not if, as you say, "we editors are always concerned to eliminate as much ambiguity as we possibly can." I would maintain that simple designation of things by their proper names is the best editorial policy it is possible to have, and I would once more strongly urge you to adopt it. This would include the choice of a suitably neutral if correct nomenclature for all cases where the context dictates an emphasis upon unity rather than upon diversity.

Which brings me to your answer n. 1. I cannot in all honesty accept it as having been seriously put forth. In the first place, it is not properly speaking an answer, since it does not reply to my

question. I asked: "Why is it, from your point of view, a lesser evil, **less regrettable**, to use the term "Russian" than to use the term "Soviet"?" (In my previous letter / 12 March, par. 2/ I had pointed out that "Russian" was a term **just as equivocal** as "Soviet", but that the latter was **fairer** because it did not confuse the various peoples of the U.S.S.R. with the dominant Russian nation). Given this double equivocity, I was interested to know if there was any particular reason for your choosing to adopt the more confusing, the more ambiguous, the less fair. Your answer simply reiterated the view that "Soviet" was a univocal term, comparable to "democratic". This is not so, Mr. Flanagan, although it may well have been so once. **FUNK & WAGNALLS STANDARD DICTIONARY (1958)** gives as one of the meanings of "Soviet" — **Of or pertaining to the Soviet Union; WEBSTER'S THIRD NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY (1961, p. 2179)** offers as the term's second major meaning: **of, relating to, or associated with the U.S.S.R., or its inhabitants; RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (1966, p. 1362)** suggests: **of the Soviet Union** — as a fifth acceptable meaning. Hence "Soviet" clearly has acquired connotations which "democratic" does not, analogically speaking, possess.

Allow me then to repeat my question. Since "Soviet" is just as common, just as acceptable a designation for "of the U. S.S.R." as "Russian", and since, unlike the latter it does not suggest that non-Russians are Russians, why does **Scientific American** nevertheless consider the latter term to be preferable?

Yours Sincerely,

George D. Knysh.

(d) Mr. Flanagan's reply — iv

April 9, 1971

Dear Dr. Knysh:

Thank you for your kind letter of March 27. It is good of you to take such pains to further clarify your argument. I can only say that I do not agree with the authorities you have cited. I might point out that the adjective "Russian" had the same general meaning before the Russian Revolution. Would you argue that it would have been more proper at that time to refer to other inhabitants

of the country as "Tsarists"? I repeat that you have sharpened our awareness of the problem, and that we have no objection to using the term "Ukrainian" wherever it seems to us to be logically necessary.

Cordially,

Dennis Flanagan, Editor

(E) Mr. Flanagan, Editor (v)

14 April, 1971

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your latest communication. I take it that your indirect answer to my question consists in (a) rejecting the authorities I have cited, and (b) advancing an additional argument in the form of a query (i.e. whether I consider "Tsarist" to be a correct pre-1917 designation for inhabitants of the Russian Empire — the implication being that if I do not this would by analogy dispose of my efforts to view "Soviet" as a legitimate designation for "of the U. S. S.R.").

Now I thought, Mr. Flanagan, that our narrower debate ("Soviet" vs. "Russian") was not a matter of playing with esoteric terminological neologisms, but rather a prosaic attempt to review common usage. I suggest that your query /b/ sidesteps this issue completely. . . Personally, I would be opposed to an equivocal use of "Tsarist" just as I am now dissatisfied with the connotative extension of "Soviet"; but our personal preferences have little to do with common usage as you repeatedly urge me to discover. The point is, of course, that "Soviet" is an established adjective, **precisely in a sense and area where "Tsarist" is not (and never was).**

Your mention of the Russian Revolution is beside the point, since I have never even in criticism denied that current English common usage has retained "Russian" as one equivalent for "of the U.S.S.R.". I take it you are aware that for three centuries (15th-18th) English common usage referred to the ancestors of today's Russians as "Muscovites" or "Moscovians", rejecting their Tsars' occasional attempts to appropriate the term "Russians" which, as a national connotation, was applied exclusively to the ancestors of contemporary Ukrainians.<sup>6)</sup> The pre-revolutionary usage you refer to was not firmly entrenched in Anglo-American consciousness before the late 18th cen-

tury. It is thus an eminently "historical" category, and while I admit that it reigned unchallenged in English usage for over one hundred years, I resolutely deny that it does so now. This is recognized by the *New York Times*, which you seem to accept as authoritative. It is also recognized by many English-speaking universities which have established dept's of, and courses in, "Soviet studies". However, what is the sense of appealing to these facts? "Common usage", as any objective reader of our letters would readily admit, is a factor which you cite only where it agrees with the distortions you wish to advance; where it does not so agree, you ignore it or reject it as lacking authority.

Your persistent refusal to deal fairly with my simple and perfectly legitimate question demonstrates a clear lack of good faith, as well as an immovable propensity to support Russian imperialistic propaganda of the whiteguard variety. I am profoundly sorry that you should have chosen to adopt this completely unscientific attitude.

Yours truly,

George D. Knysh.

5. To **G & C. Merriam Company**, Springfield, Massachusetts

(A) Editor, Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.

12 April, 1971

Dear Sir:

Leafing recently through WEBSTER'S SEVENTH NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, I noticed that a rather serious error had, no doubt inadvertently, been allowed to creep into your definitions of the term "Russian"./ Cf. p. 755, col.1, "Russian"— definition 2b: the three Slavic languages of the Russian people including Belorussian and Ukrainian./— I say "inadvertently" because its grotesque character suggests that it is an automatic carry-over from earlier editions compiled at a time when Russian imperialistic propaganda ruled unchallenged in the consciousness of most English-speaking persons.

So much material is now available to establish the fact that Ukrainian and Belorussian are entirely distinct Slavic languages, just as self-determined as Russian, Polish, or Serbian (cf. e.g. **Ukraine — a concise encyclopedia**, University of Toronto Press, 1963-1971), that retention of

the aforementioned "definition" is embarrassingly irrelevant to say the least. The overwhelming majority of Russians speak neither Ukrainian nor Belorussian as alternate or additional tongues. But even if they did, appropriation of Ukrainian and Belorussian as "Russian" would make about as much sense as to suggest that proficiency in English, German, and Dutch on the part of some Russians should result in the addition of a definition 2c to your dictionary, where "Russian" = "the three Germanic languages of the Russian people". . .

I sincerely hope that your editorial committee will not neglect to eliminate this somewhat unfortunate definition 2b from future editions of what is in all respects an excellent reference work.

Cordially Yours,

George D. Knysh.

(a) Reply by F. Stuart Crawford — i  
April 20, 1971

Dear Professor Knysh:

In reply to your letter of April 12 we may say that there is no error in the definitions of **Russian 2** (the language senses) in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Definition **2a**, which you appear to have overlooked, gives the strict meaning of the term: "a Slavic language of the Russian people that is the official language of the U.S.S.R." Sense **2b**, to which you take exception, gives a looser sense which is, however, well attested, in which **Russian** is a convenient inclusive term for all three languages spoken in different parts of Russia and which were once one language, Old Russian. We are not under any such misapprehension as you suggest, that the three are not now distinct languages, and you will find **Ukrainian** and **Belorussian** correctly defined as independent languages at their own alphabetical place in the Dictionary. But the three, including Russian in the narrower sense **2a** (sometimes designated as **Great Russian** to distinguish it from the other two), are in fact more closely related genetically to one another than to Polish or Serbian and the other Slavic languages and hence it has been found convenient to have a comprehensive term for the group. If one wishes to avoid any confusion he may call them **East Slavic** (compare the Indo-European Language

Table on page 428), but the fact that all are spoken in one part or another of Russia, and were once the same language, has given rise to the looser usage of **Russian 2b** which no respectable dictionary could fail to record.

Very truly yours,

G. & C. MERRIAM COMPANY

By F. Stuart Crawford

(B) Mr. Stuart Crawford

24 April, 1971

Dear Mr. Crawford:

Thank you most kindly for your interesting reply of April 20. I should like to comment upon a number of points raised therein with which I strongly disagree, not, of course, through personal idiosyncrasy, but as a scholar interested in establishing factual truth.

(1) You draw my attention to **definition 2a** which, you claim, presents "the strict meaning" of Russian, whereas **2b** "gives a looser sense".// — I assure you, Mr. Crawford, that I had not overlooked this **definition 2a** — but simply decided to hold my objection in abeyance, since the definition could have received a correct interpretation **provided 2b** had been dropped or altered.// May I respectfully suggest that in fact **2a** is just as "loose" a definition as **2b**? If by "Russian people" you do **not** mean the so-called "Great Russians", but either the "East Slavs" or **all the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R.** (and that some such confusing sense is intended would, I think, be gathered from any careful analysis of the meaning attached to "Russian people" in both **2a** and **2b**), then I submit that **2a**, far from being scientific, is based on the same blunder of Russian imperialistic ideology as **2b**.

The clarifications provided in your letter appear to substantiate my reasoning. For indeed you **twice** note that Ukrainian and Belorussian are spoken in various "parts of Russia", and that, together with Russian, they "were once one language, Old Russian". You also state that because of this term **Russian** is "a convenient inclusive term", that it "has been found convenient . . . (as) . . . a comprehensive term", and that this usage is "well attested". As to the latter, allow me to put a rhetorical question to you: "**Convenient**" . . . **for whom?** "**Attested**". . . **by whom?** Scientists committed to factual truth? Hardly! These "usages" came into being

as a result of persistent tsarist imperialistic propaganda, and they are being maintained exclusively by scholars of Whiteguard Russian commitments (e.g. Vernadsky, Florinsky, Riazanovsky et al.), their American students, and their American sympathizers. <sup>61</sup> Luckily, there still exists a goodly number of books written in the West (16-18cs.) before the onslaught of the Russian propagandistic machine, and these, quite clearly and unequivocally, do not consider either Ukraine or Belorussia as "parts of Russia", nor the three languages as stemming from "Old Russian".

(2) I would like to point out that the U.S.S.R. does not possess an official language. The "dominant" language is Russian, but its position is such due to social pressures and necessities (it is often referred to as the *de facto* language of "international communication" within the U.S.S.R.), not to constitutional provisions of any kind.

(3) When the Russian Empire dissolved in 1917, Ukraine and Belorussia had been "parts" of it (with qualifications) for somewhat less than 200 years. The U.S.S.R., which came into existence in 1923, is not "Russia". It is a legal superstructure erected by a number of formally independent "socialist" countries (of which Russia — the R.S.F.S.R. — is but one) to represent their common interests *vis-a-vis* the rest of the world. The United States did not recognize "Russia" in 1933: it recognized the U.S.S.R., the "Soviet Union". The Russian Whiteguard imperialists etc. . . are unhappy about the events of 1917ff. . . , and understandably wish to distort their meaning and import. But why should Webster's follow suit? Is it really in the best interests of American students, to learn antiquated ideological fairy-tales?

(4) It is not difficult to demonstrate that Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian are not derived from a common language, viz., "Old Russian". This "theory" is the linguistic counterpart of the view that "Great Russians", "Little Russians", and "White Russians" are three branches of a once unified "(Old) Russian people". There never was such an Old Russian people, Mr. Crawford, believe me. . . All this nonsense was invented by ideologists of the Moscovian Tsars in the 17-18

centuries. The fact is, as Soviet archaeology has conclusively shown, that no mass migration of "Russians" from South to North occurred in the 12-13 centuries. . . You will remember that this "population shift" thesis is religiously repeated in all American "History of Russia" volumes written by, or under the inspiration of, Russian Whiteguardist scholars, who have not bothered to keep abreast of their topic, and still rely uncritically on the studies of Pogodin, Sobolevsky, and Klyuchevsky. Soviet archaeology shows that in the time of "Kievan Russia" // the correct terminology is **Kievan Rus** or **Kievan Ruthenia** // (and even before in the case of Belorussia) a certain veneer of cultural uniformity was imposed within its borders upon populations of distinct genetic characteristics. Specifically, certain Ruthenian (Ukrainian) cultural traits were spread by mimetism to non-Slavic peoples of Baltic and Finnish stock. The former were the ancestors of the bulk of today's Belorussians, the latter of today's Russians. (This "slavonization" process is somewhat reminiscent of the "romanization" process as a result of which different peoples e.g. the French, the Spaniards etc., acquired related languages). Since the chief agent of 'slavonization' among Finns was the Ruthenian Church, it is understandable that "Church Slavonic" should have had a far greater impact upon the Russian language (which did not finally constitute itself until the mid-18th century) than upon Ukrainian or Belorussian. And since most literary texts of Kievan Ruthenia were written in Church Slavonic (playing there a role analogous to that of Latin in the West) the "theory" of an "Old Russian" language had some *prima facie* plausibility. However, even in Kievan Ruthenia, popular idioms tended to infiltrate into Church Slavonic, and many elements of Ukrainian are universally recognized to exist in texts of the 11-12th centuries. **This does not mean that Ukrainian developed out of Church Slavonic!** Spoken and sung Ukrainian (and Belorussian — the Belorussians were "slavonized" in the first millenium A.D.) were going linguistic concerns long before the emergence of Church Slavonic! What it does mean is that both Ukrainian and Belorussian exerted great pressure

upon the writers of Church Slavonic, so much so that, in spite of its religious prestige, it was abandoned as a literary language for Ukrainians in the 18th century, at which time modern Ukrainian literature in the spoken popular idiom could make its beginnings. **Neither Ukrainian nor Belorussian developed out of Church Slavonic, which they antedate, but Russian certainly did, with minor qualifications, replacing a variety of Finno-Ugrian dialects.**

Finally may I offer you something to chuckle over? Did you know that in the 19th century certain Polish "historiographers" developed the "theory" that Ukrainians and Belorussians (but not Russians) descended, together with the Poles, from an "Old Polish" nation, and that the "Polish people" had three languages, "Polish proper", Ukrainian, and Belorussian? I kid you not. They were even taken seriously for a time in some quarters. . .

I have had to greatly condense these remarks, so as not to overswell my letter. They are all, however, scientifically unimpeachable. I hope, Sir, that you will draw the appropriate conclusions, or else indicate to me in a further communication whatever objections you may still have towards my request.

Yours Sincerely,

George D. Knysh.

(b) Mr. F. Stuart Crawford's reply. ii.  
April 30, 1971

Dear Professor Knysh:

In reply to your letter of April 24 we beg to remind you that we do not pretend to be either ethnologists or political historians. We are lexicographers of the English language, and undertake in our dictionaries to record the meanings of English words which are assigned to them by considerable numbers of English speakers and writers. If, as certainly is the case, the majority of English speakers use the word **bug** to refer to a louse, we cannot refuse to recognize that usage simply because to an entomologist **bug** has a much narrower sense which does not include the louse. In the case of the word **Russian** as a language name not only do most laymen fail to distinguish between the three major languages of European Russia, lumping them all together as simply Russian<sup>2</sup>, but there is

as we stated in our previous letter, scientific justification for regarding the three languages as forming a single group more closely related to one another than to any of the other Slavic languages. We know of no linguistic authority who would deny such a close relationship. For example R.G.A. de Bray in his **Guide to the Slavonic Languages** (1951) while devoting separate chapters to Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and so on, at the beginning of his chapter on Ukrainian (p. 69) states of this language, "It has a common origin with Great Russian, in that Old Russian, the language of the non-ecclesiastical documents of Kiev Russia up to its destruction by the Tatars in 1240, is the common ancestor of both — and indeed of Byelorussian as well." The somewhat similar survey **Russian and the Slavonic Languages**, by W. J. Entwistle and W. A. Morison (1949) actually treats "White Russian" and "Ruthenian" (Ukrainian or Little Russian)" at the end of its chapter on Russian as "Dialects" of Russian (p. 280), though it says (p. 282), "The claim of Ruthenian to be regarded as an independent language, not a mere dialect, is considerably stronger than that of White Russian." On page 288 we read, "Viewed as a local speech, Great Russian is on the same footing as White Russian and Ruthenian, though its area and population are vastly greater. They are three divergent forms of one common Russian language which was substantially the same from the ninth to the twelfth centuries."

We may point out that these scholars are all Englishmen, writing in English, not either "Whiteguard" or "Red" Russians whose views might presumably be influenced by their political ideology, and who, writing in Russian (or Ukrainian or Byelorussian), could not in any case be of the slightest relevance as to the meaning assigned by English writers to English words like **Russian**. Finally we think it should be obvious that books even written in the West in the 16th to 18th centuries, before the rise of scientific Comparative Philology, are hardly to be taken authoritative as to the genetic relationships of languages.

In conclusion we find no reason to doubt that the definitions at **Russian 2**



in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary correctly represent English usage of the term and that such usage does not clash with the sophisticated conclusions of modern authorities as to the relationships between the three languages. The definitions have no political implications whatever.

Very truly yours,

G & C. MERRIAM COMPANY  
By F. Stuart Crawford  
(c) Mr. F. Stuart Crawford

11 May, 1971

Dear Mr. Crawford:

My very sincere compliments to you for the elegantly packaged attempt to defend the indefensible displayed in your letter of 30 April. I shall be satisfied in this reply to comment upon the arguments which you have newly advanced, though I should like to point out that refusal to consider ethnologic or political evidence insofar as either relates to linguistic genesis testifies to a certain poverty of imagination as to the nature of scientific correspondence in someone claiming high regard for modern scientific procedures.

1. "In the case of the word **Russian** as a language name not only do most laymen fail to distinguish between the three major languages of European Russia (*sic*) lumping them all together as simply **Russian**, . . ." (11. 8-11, p. 1, text of your 30 April letter).

There is a crucial difference, it seems to me, between a **negative** lumping by laymen, one which does not distinguish between languages or peoples because these laymen are **unaware** of the existence of differential factors // in the case at issue an English-speaking layman would lump Russian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian as "Russian" because, **and only because**, he was unaware of the existence of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian peoples and languages as distinct entities, or as any sort of entities. Such a "lumping" would be peculiar and **negative** in that the layman would be unaware that he was doing anything of the kind; he would be convinced that he had to deal with a single, unified, objective reality. Only knowledgeable "outside observer" would know about a **negative** lumping. . . // — and a **positive** lumping by laymen, which would be the result of a conscious decision arrived at

upon full knowledge of relevant differential factors // viz., in our case, an English-speaking layman would lump R., U., and B. as "Russian" because of some theory as to U. and B. being "dialects" of R., or for some other reason//. **Negative lumpings are not recognized as a valid basis for the determination of meanings by a self-respecting dictionary.** And you know full well that English-speaking laymen, who are notorious for their common sense, have never **positively** held and do not at present hold the term **Russian** to possess the connotation you have numbered **2b**. This absurd definition, which has nothing whatever to do with English common usage, is an esoteric piece of dialectical nonsense derived from certain "authoritative" sources. Hence your first argument can be dismissed as untrue. The very presence in your dictionary of **Ukrainian** and **Belorussian** is a refutation. I hope you appreciate this.

2. ". . .there is. . . scientific justification for regarding the three languages as forming a single group more closely related to one another than to any of the other Slavic languages. We know of no linguistic authority who would deny such a close relationship. . ." (11. 11-14, *ibid.*)

This depends, of course, on what you mean by "close relationship". . . You quote a passage from DE BRAY to the effect that "Old Russian" is the common ancestor of R., U., and B. But you very conveniently omit what he states immediately afterwards: ". . . it can be claimed that the oldest works of Russian literature also belong among the oldest examples of literature in Ukrainian, and indeed they do geographically." (p. 69). / Hence, according to DE BRAY'S reasoning, "Old Ukrainian" is just as plausible a term for the common ancestor language of R., U., and B. as "Old Russian". . . / **You likewise most conveniently neglect to observe that DE BRAY nowhere uses "Russian" in the sense of your definition 2b., and yet it is DE BRAY whom you adduce as a first scientific authority for this highly artificial invention!!! — ENTWISTLE-MORISON is a special case. I know of no other respectable modern philological authority who would concur with E-M in holding Ukrainian and Byelorussian to**

be "dialects" of Russian. This view has long since been exploded by a vast majority of the very authors whom E-M adduce on pp. 398-400 as sources... While on pp. 70-72 of his own work, DE BRAY offers many examples of attempts, political and "scientific", to deny Ukrainian the status of an independent language, attempts which he understandably views with scientific distaste... It would appear, Sir, that one of your cited authorities (DE BRAY) can hardly be used in support of your position as to the accuracy of definition 2b, while the other (E-M) happens to be very much in a minority among scientific philologists. Since you offer me two authorities, allow me to counter with four:

(a) R. Jakobson, *Slavic Languages* (New York, 1955).

(b) G. Y. Shevelov and F. Holling, *A Reader in the History of Eastern Slavic Languages* (New York, 1958).

(c) G. Y. Shevelov, *Prehistory of Slavic* (New York, 1965).

(d) J. S. Roucek, ed., *Slavonic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1949).

None of these authorities accepts the fact that Russian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian descend from an "Old Russian" language, and more important, none of them uses the term "Russian" in sense 2b. Some (Stotsky, Gartner — mentioned in Roucek's *Encyclopedia*, p. 624) opine that Ukrainian is closer to Serbo-Croatian than to Russian. All, whenever they wish to emphasize a postulated original linguistic unity of Slavs, or East Slavs, use terms such as "Proto-Slavic", "Common Slavic", "Old Slavic", or simply "Common Language". Shevelov uses the expression "Old Rus' language" where Rus ≠ Russian. Not only, then, is common usage opposed to this particular definition 2b; 2b can draw support of a most dubious kind from but a wretchedly inconspicuous minority of English-language Slavonic philologists. Do these represent the "considerable numbers of English speakers and writers" mentioned in your letter? What sort of "lexicography" is it that you stand for? One that "invents" definitions for some obscure propagandist reasons quite unrelated to the science involved??

3. "We may point out that these scholars are all Englishmen, writing in English, not either "Whiteguard" or "Red" Russians whose views might presumably be influenced by their political ideology..." (11. 1-3, p. 2, *ibid.*)

May I in turn point out that both DE BRAY and E-M have relied very heavily (even overwhelmingly) upon scholars who were neither Englishmen nor writers of English; that a large proportion of these scholars were in fact Russians writing in Russian; and that while E-M's motives remain unclear it is an indubitable fact, based upon their own statement on p. 400 of their work, that they chose to reflect precisely those "linguistic" views of certain Russian sources which have been overwhelmingly rejected by scientific philology (including many Russians!) as worthless Russian imperialistic propaganda, with no foundation in science. To that extent, and to that extent only, E-M qualify as objective carriers of Russian imperialistic propaganda, even though they are Englishmen writing in English.

4. "...and who, writing in Russian (or Ukrainian or Byelorussian) (*sic*), could not in any case be of the slightest relevance as to the meaning assigned by English writers to English words like Russian." (11. 3-6, *ibid.*)

An amusingly naive remark! I am afraid that your conception of the manner in which English writers of English assign meanings to English words is too simplistic, and smacks of obtuse ethnocentrism. In fact, Sir, matters proceed otherwise, and I am sure that even a brief glance at E-M's sources as outlined by themselves would convince you they accepted principles entirely opposed to the navel-gazing introspection you seem to favour. No one would deny that E-M's confused use of "Russian" (as compared to the clear, straightforward sense given to it by a vast majority of philologists) is in direct proportion to their unaccountable (**and isolated**) fascination for the absurd categories of Russian imperialist "science". This conclusion is inescapable and draws with it some further conclusions I shall state shortly.

5. "Finally, we think it should be obvious that books even written in the West in the 16th to 18th centuries, before the rise of scientific Comparative Philology, are hardly to be taken as authoritative as to the genetic relationship of languages." (11. 6-9, *ibid.*)

I can see that on this matter of "the rise of scientific Comparative Philology" you, very simply and very obviously, know not that of which you speak, contenting yourself with a brave-sounding logical abstraction. Yet surely even logic should whisper to you that what signifies is not age, but relevance? I would urge you to take the opportunity of studying both the nature of Philological science in-itself, and the way in which the founders of scientific Comparative Philology utilized the works and insights of their allegedly non-scientific predecessors. Rest assured that their attitude was quite different from yours . . .

It is rather apparent, I think, after this dissection, that the bases, upon which you concluded that WEBSTER'S definitions of **Russian 2** are correct, have been pretty well disposed of. I would remind you that arguments presented in my previous two letters, when added to the present analysis, leave you no alternative but to discuss terms of accommodation. I am enough of a realist to allow for the contingency of your hurriedly inventing additional "arguments" to defend a contemptible fraudulence, representing neither English common usage nor science. But such a game could not go on forever, and would

be sidestepped in the usual way, I promise you. It irritates me to have to give to my students what they, after all, have every right to expect from a publication such as WEBSTER'S: a correct definition of **Russian**.

I mentioned in a previous letter that definition 2a, defective as it is, may nevertheless be susceptible of a correct interpretation as it stands. Definition 2b on the other hand is not only nonsensical, but creates considerable semantic confusion as to the exact meaning of 2a in context. The best solution, therefore, would be to scrap 2b altogether from a future edition of the dictionary. An alternative solution might be to add the qualifying clause "disputed, controversial" to 2b, and hope that somehow students will be able to make their way through this jungle . . . Whatever is decided, one thing is quite clear: definition 2b, which reflects nothing save the view of a tiny minority of English-speakers and a large majority of Russian imperialists, cannot be allowed to stand as is; not, that is, if WEBSTER'S is a self-respecting lexicographical concern.

If, other things being equal, 2b is not scrapped or qualified, but retained, all of us self-respecting English-speakers, laymen as well as clerks of variegated descriptions, will see to it that WEBSTER'S "political implications" are made translucent where such things matter. And when we say WEBSTER'S, we don't exactly mean WEBSTER's if you understand me.

Sincerely Yours,

George D. Knysh,  
Associate Professor



#### Footnotes

1. Both of my letters to **American Heritage** remain unanswered.
2. I consider Brayczevsky to be the outstanding contemporary Ukrainian historian, and **must reading** for anyone interested in accurate, concrete reconstruction of Ukrainian, Russian, and Byelorussian history, esp. the 1st millenia B.C. and A.D. Besides **Pokhodzenia Rusy**, his chief works are: **Koly i yak vynyk Kyiv** (1963); **Bila dzherel slov'jans'koi derzhavnosti** (1964). Naturally, since he functions in the U.S.S.R., Brayczevsky

must occasionally be read "between the lines", though, comparatively speaking, his bows to "scientific" (i. e. Marxist-Leninist) orthodoxy are few.

3. The work of M. Gimbutas should be **must reading** on a par with that of Brayczevsky. Two items deserve special mention: **The Balts**, a monograph which traces with great precision the processes of Baltic "slavonization" in Polissia, Byelorussia, and Southeast Russia from ca. 300 B.C. to ca. 600 A.D.; an article on Indo-Euro-

- pean origins in the **American Anthropologist** (1963), where she outlines the manner in which Europe was linguistically "Indo-Europeanized" from ca. 2.400 B.C. onwards. The attentive reader will easily discover that ancestors of modern Ukrainians played a key role in this development.
4. These results, suitably doctored, were finally made public in April, 1971. They "show" that Russians still make up 53% of the Soviet population (as against 55% in 1959).
  5. As it stands this statement is deficient. For two centuries (16-18), Englishmen used "Muscovites" and "Russians" interchangeably, and by 1800 the former term was obsolete. Continental European nations, however, did strictly adhere to the usage described, with but occasional and insignificant deviations. It should also be noted that while Englishmen fell a prey to Russian propaganda sooner than other peoples, they did so in good faith, in that they thought the Muscovites were a branch of those "Russians" (Rusyny) they had known well in medieval times.
  6. A substitution of "Western" for "American" would be in order here.
  7. The emergence of Russian as a language was not due exclusively to Church Slavonic. The spoken idiom of Ukrainian rulers also played a significant role in the growth of "slavonic dialects" among Ugro-Finns which in turn influenced and were influenced by Church Slavonic. And it must be remembered that in the 15th and 16th centuries Moscovia absorbed important Slavonic populations (esp. Novgorod, Pskov, Rязan') whose assimilation likewise played a part in the emergence of standard Russian. But these are qualifications which do not affect the main thesis. It is interesting that practically all of the Ukrainian scholars who helped to educate and civilize Russia in the 17-18 cs. did not consider the various "Great Russian" dialects to be independent languages, viewing them rather as *distortions* of Ukrainian... *Sic transit gloria mundi*...
  8. One notes with amusement that the "objective" Mr. Crawford seems here to directly contradict what he wrote in his previous letter concerning the "distinctness" and "independence" of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian tongues.

