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I am grateful to Professor Pearson for his admirably lucid re-statement of my book's major arguments, as well as his kind words about its contribution to our understanding of the Soviet Union. I see that we are soul mates in our high regard for the footnote and our regret that almost all academic publishers now insist on spoiling their books with endnotes. I am pleased that Pearson has publicly commended Cornell University Press for giving their author the necessary space and academic apparatus to address a very large and important topic in a comprehensive manner, and am happy to express here my own gratitude as well.

I will proceed by first briefly alerting the reader to a few of the book's themes and arguments that Pearson lacked space to mention, and then by addressing his query about the place of my story in the broader context of Tsarist/Soviet history. One of the great benefits of access to Soviet archives was the possibility to analyze patterns of ethnic conflict, which turned out to have been quite severe throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s. Interestingly, a radical Soviet policy designed to lessen ethnic conflict - namely, the creation of thousands of small national territories down to the district, village soviet, and even individual collective farm level - actually exacerbated it considerably. As national territories became smaller and smaller, the threat of becoming a national minority in one of them became more and more threatening, leading to further ethnic mobilization and conflict. I also found that ethnic conflict was most severe - in right-bank and southern Ukraine, the Kuban, Bashkiria, Kirgizia, and above all, Kazakhstan - where such territorial conflict combined with conflict over land and historical estate or *soslovie* divisions (an important instance of the influence of the Tsarist heritage). By making the possession of land worthless, collectivization actually reduced ethnic conflict, a fact of considerable relevance for understanding the relative lack of rural ethnic conflict in the recent Soviet collapse.

I also present a new argument concerning the vexing question of the role of the Ukrainian national question in the mass famine of 1932-33, making use of a large quantity of elite, decision-making sources in Kyiv and Moscow, including the recently declassified personal archive of Joseph Stalin. As many readers will know, some interpret the famine as a planned genocidal act directed against the Ukrainian people, while others counter that it had absolutely nothing to do with nationality, but instead targeted peasants in the country's major grain-growing regions. Both positions rely on real facts but grossly exaggerate their significance and ignore sources gathered by the other side. I argue, as do almost all serious scholars, that the famine was not intentional genocide, but the result of a reckless collectivization and dekulakization policy and an even more reckless exporting of grain in 1930-31 to acquire hard currency, combined with a mediocre harvest. Once a famine crisis had emerged in the summer of 1932, a strategic decision was taken to concentrate the famine in the Soviet Union's grain-growing regions in order to be able to minimally feed the politically crucial army and urban populations.

I depart from this fundamentally correct 'peasantist' interpretation, however, by demonstrating that *Stalin personally* (and, I would add, falsely) interpreted greater peasant resistance to state grain requisitions in Ukraine and the Ukrainized North Caucasus region of Kuban as being caused by Ukrainian nationalism, aided and abetted by Petliurite forces in Pilsudski's Poland and acting underground in Ukraine. On 11 August 1932, Stalin wrote to Kaganovich confidentially: "If we don't make an effort now to improve the situation in Ukraine, we may lose Ukraine. Keep in mind that Pilsudski is not daydreaming, and his agents in Ukraine are many times stronger than [the Ukrainian Communist leadership] thinks. Keep in mind that the Ukrainian Communist party includes not a few (yes, not a few!) rotten elements, conscious and non-conscious Petliurites, as well as direct agents of Pilsudski. [Without major reforms], I repeat - we can lose

Ukraine."(p. 298) These reforms would include a year-and-a-half-long wave of terror against Ukrainian intellectuals and Galician émigrés, and a substantial scaling back of the policy of Ukrainization. The Ukrainian question, then, was not a cause of the famine, but it did quite quickly become a major factor in the politics surrounding the famine crisis, and ultimately triggered a fundamental revision of the Soviet nationalities policy. I hope (undoubtedly naively!) that this interpretation will resolve the increasingly sterile debate between the 'peasantist' and 'Ukrainian' interpretations of the famine.

Before turning to the relevance of my findings for the long-term fate of the Soviet Union, let me briefly address two small points. Although I did (and do) regret that I was unable to work in KGB archives for this book (not so much to study the terror, but for their surveillance reports on the popular mood), I have subsequently worked in several former KGB archives and no longer feel that the documentation there will fundamentally change our understanding of Soviet social history. Rather, I think future progress will come through detailed local studies based on regional archives, many of which are already beginning to appear (for instance, recent books by Matt Payne on Kazakhstan, Hiroaki Kuromiya on the Donbas, Amir Weiner on Vinnytsa, and forthcoming books by Jörg Baberowski on Azerbaijan, Douglas Northrop on Uzbekistan, Adrienne Edgar on Turkmenistan, Kate Brown on right-bank Ukraine, Nick Baron on Karelia, and Michaela Pohl on Kazakhstan). Second, Professor Pearson made a minor mis-statement in his description of the national operations of the 'Great Terror', which indeed did target Poles and Finns (among others) as 'diaspora nationalities', but not Ukrainians and Belorussians, who were categorized as indigenous nationalities. I only cited some evidence suggesting that they *might* have suffered disproportionately due to being located on the sensitive western border and due to a significant Roman Catholic population in those border regions.

The author of a large book on a broad theme can only be gladdened when the primary criticism of a reviewer is that he did not extend the book's chronological scope. Nevertheless, I feel Professor Pearson is perfectly correct to raise this issue and I did, at various times, consider adding a brief account of Tsarist policy in the introduction and a conclusion dealing with longer-term trends, including the collapse of the Soviet Union. I did not do so partially out of respect for the complexity of these issues and my dislike of superficial, potted historical summaries. However, with respect to the period before 1923, the reason was much more my preference to use my introduction to frame the study in terms of the global, world-historical problem that the Bolsheviks were attempting to resolve - how to govern a multi-ethnic state in a centralized fashion in the age of nationalism - and the novel solution they attempted: what I call the 'Affirmative Action Empire', the conscious promotion of national territories, elites, languages and identities (even where these barely existed!) as a prophylactic strategy for defusing the emergence of separatist nationalism and the subjective perception among non-Russians that they were living in a Russian empire. This was the first and most radical response to the crisis of the multi-ethnic state created by the collapse of the Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov empires, and I believe that the novel Soviet experiment in addressing this crisis should be better known by students of nationalism, empire, affirmative action and contemporary multi-ethnic states (the book is published in a comparative, multidisciplinary series on politics, history and culture). For this reason, I did not deal extensively in my introduction with the Bolshevik re-conquest of the Tsarist borderlands or their fascinating improvisational policy decisions during the Civil War, topics admirably dealt with by Richard Pipes and Jeremy Smith, both of whom I in fact do cite in my introduction as authoritative (see notes 2, 3, 9, 29, 44).

With respect to the long-run significance of the policy evolution that occurred from 1933 to 1939 (described in chapters 8-11), I agree with Pearson that the revised policy did largely structure Soviet nationalities policy through to the Gorbachev reforms. The two most important changes were the conquest of the Baltics, western Ukraine, western Belorussia, and Moldova which, as Roman Szporluk has long argued, foolishly re-created in a new form the Tsarist regime's Polish problem: that is, the problem of ruling peoples with a more developed sense of nationality (for whom Soviet affirmative action offered nothing) and a comparable or greater economic potential (for whom developmentalist socialism offered nothing). Second, the end of mass terror and Brezhnev's doctrine of 'stability of cadres' allowed indigenous first Party secretaries in the eight southern republics of Central Asia and Transcaucasus - and to a lesser extent in the six western republics - to practise a kind of '*korenizatsiia* from below', creating indigenous, neo-traditional patron-client networks that

came to control republican politics and, in most cases, easily assumed leadership after the collapse in 1991.

However the key contradiction, I would argue, was already in place in 1939. The original 'Affirmative Action Empire' strategy was specifically designed to prevent the emergence among the non-Russians of the subjective perception that they were living in a Russian-dominated empire, for Lenin and Stalin correctly understood that in the age of nationalism, the subjective perception of empire meant the belief that the state would eventually collapse along national lines. To that end, they implemented the twin policies of non-Russian nation-building and the downplaying of the Russian nationality, so that their centralizing policies, which otherwise might provoke nationalist resistance, would be perceived as Soviet and not as Russian. After 1933, the first policy was preserved in a scaled-back form, but the second was reversed and Russians were celebrated as, in effect, the state-bearing people of the Soviet Union. As a result, not only could overtly discriminatory actions such as the national operations of the Great Terror and the national deportations during World War II, but also more ambiguous events as the famine in Ukraine, collectivization in the Baltics, denomadization in Kazakhstan, or even the censoring of a national author, all be interpreted as the actions of a Russian empire. Prior to *glasnost'*, such perceptions were mostly confined to émigrés and dissidents, but after 1986 they spread with stunning rapidity and quite quickly undermined the legitimacy of not just the Communist Party but the multiethnic Soviet state as well.

Nor were the Russians fully content with their national status as elder brothers. After 1933, Russians were lauded as the most Soviet nation, encouraged to view the whole Soviet Union as their homeland, not required to learn 'national minority' languages, but Stalin's policy (and this was very much Stalin's policy, not Lenin's) of denying the Russian nationality any institutional base was very much continued. There was no Russian Communist Party, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian flag, and so forth. There was only a multiethnic All-Russian (*rossiiskii* not *russkii*) Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (and Stalin had even vehemently opposed Lenin's creation of a separate RSFSR exactly on the grounds that it would create an institutional base for Russian separatism; in other words, one must admit that Stalin did foresee the danger of a Yeltsin). From all evidence, save a small nationalist dissident coterie, Russians were perfectly content with this status (and many are now nostalgic about it). However, with *glasnost'* and the torrent of abuse directed at Russian imperialism, particularly from the western republics, a brief moment emerged when the 'burden of empire' argument seemed persuasive to enough of the Russian elite to allow Yeltsin to use the RSFSR to destroy the Soviet Union.

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