



Anna Procyk. *Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Europe and the Birth of Modern Nationalism in the Slavic World.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019. Illustrations. 288 pp. \$77.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-4875-0508-0.

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In 1836, Giuseppe Mazzini, the intellectual leader of the Italian Risorgimento, claimed that “the real problem” of “the nineteenth century” was the “need” for “Humanity” and “Country” (*Patrie* in Mazzini’s French original) “to be harmonized within the European system.” The “ultimate objective” of political reform was to build a universal humanity using the *patrie* “as its starting point.”[1] Neither would humanity as a whole absorb the individual nation, nor would the individual nation take precedent over the international; rather, both would be constructed together. Mazzini later described this project as “the United States of Europe,” a concept he opposed to the more homogenizing term “Europe.”[2] Anna Procyk’s new book studies the reception of Mazzinian internationalist and nationalist political ideas in eastern Europe in the 1830s and 1840s. She employs a wide-ranging cast of east Europeans who were formally and informally affiliated with Mazzini’s revolutionary organization Young Europe to show how the emerging “concept of nationhood [evolved] within the context of a supra-national idea” (p. 14). While the book focuses heavily on Poles and Ukrainians (Procyk prefers “Ukrainian” to “Ruthenian,” a more commonly used term at the beginning of the nineteenth century), she also extensively discusses Slovaks and Czechs.

Procyk begins her story around 1830, when the revolutions in western Europe (especially in Belgium) inspired the November Uprising in Poland, and ends in 1848, the year of the Springtime of Nations and of the pan-Slavic congress in Prague. Using this time frame, Procyk shows that the pan-Slavic moment of 1848 was the result of years of conspiratorial and revolutionary organizing in eastern Europe. By combining the intellectual history of Mazzinian ideas with the revolutionary enactment of these ideas, Procyk forcefully argues that nationalism cannot be categorized neatly as either cultural or political. Cultural nationalism is already political. Procyk compellingly explores the political history of a subject and texts

often relegated to the intellectual sphere and argues that the ideas of Young Europe hastened the politicization of east European intelligentsia.

Romantic nationalism was foundational to the development of the study of east European nationalism. While many earlier books highlighted Romantic nationalists’ contributions to fostering an intellectual tradition for their respective nations, recent books have begun to reframe the debate through a more international lens.[3] Procyk’s book can be profitably read alongside Serhiy Bilenky’s *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian Political Imaginations* (2012), Lidia Jurek’s *Polish Risorgimento: Visions of the Modern Polish Nation and Their Italian Foundations* (2012), Alexander Maxwell’s *Choosing Slovakia: Slavic Hungary, the Czechoslovak Language and Accidental Nationalism* (2009), and Dominique Kirchner Reill’s *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice* (2012), as well as Timothy Snyder’s *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (2003), each of which shows the centrality of internationalism or multinationalism to nineteenth-century nation-building (Bilenky’s and Snyder’s books appear in Procyk’s bibliography). By bringing together sources in Czech, Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, French, German, and Italian, Procyk successfully demonstrates the wide-ranging formal and informal networks between revolutionaries throughout Europe and shows that the internationalism of her subjects was not merely a rhetorical flourish but a deeply held belief that pushed individuals to risk their lives.

The book opens with three chapters examining Mazzini’s ideas and their reception in eastern Europe. Mazzini was a voracious reader and voluminous correspondent. His extraordinarily prolific writings and correspondence run to 106 published volumes and show a sustained interest in the Slavic nations.[4] Procyk cites a study suggest-

ing that a staggering forty thousand of Mazzini's letters "dealt in one way or another with the Polish question" (p. 27). While in Marseille in 1831, Mazzini met political exiles from eastern Europe who helped to internationalize his political consciousness. Thanks to these contacts, he began to see parallels between the Habsburg domination of Italians and Slavs, as well as the possibility for mutual liberation through international activism. [5] Mazzini expected that Poland would play a role similar to the one he imagined for Italy in launching "the political renaissance" of their respective regions of Europe (p. 51). The Slavs (whom Mazzini referred to as a race, understood in linguistic terms) had not been corrupted "by domination over others" and "were destined to become the dominant power in Europe"; their youthful vigor would "'regenerate' the older nations of Europe" (pp. 161, 35). As Mazzini wrote, "There are some races, such as the Slavs, for instance, whose lives thus far have been but a vague anticipation of things to come. There are some languages that have yet to be clearly structured according to the logic of prose; their voice still wavers naively, poetic and imprecise like a lullaby." [6] Mazzini and Young Europe aimed to bring about politically events only anticipated in that prose.

Polish, Russian, and pan-Slavic nationalists all promoted similar ideas to Mazzini's, often, as Procyk notes, focusing more on the Slavic nations than Europe as a whole. For both Mazzini and Procyk's east European characters, exile played a critical role in the development and dissemination of this internationalist nationalism. After developing intellectual and personal networks in western Europe, Slavic exiles brought these nationalist ideas back to eastern Europe. Mazzini's organization, Young Europe, "an international revolutionary alliance of subjugated peoples" founded in 1834, proved critical to the dissemination of these ideas. Young Europe was a loose affiliation of national societies (initially Germany, Italy, Poland), where Young Poland played an important role as

one of the largest in terms of membership. Moreover, the Polish lands were also conceptually important for the implementation of Mazzini's ideas: Procyk argues that Habsburg Galicia's multinational population in particular provides one of the best laboratories for studying the viability and implementation of Mazzini's ideas. "Young Europe's ideals of brotherly love and cooperation among nations underwent one of the most critical tests" in Galicia (p. 10).

Despite Mazzini's extensive personal contact with Slavic intellectuals and revolutionaries and his avid consumption of texts on the subject, he largely disappears after the opening chapters. As a result, the reader is sometimes left wondering about the exact nature of the reception of Mazzini's ideas in eastern Europe. After all, Mazzini's opinions about the future greatness of the Slavs was not peculiar to him but a much-discussed idea at the time. Already in the eighteenth century, the German theologian and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder claimed the Slavs would eventually take their place at the head of European politics. As Procyk notes briefly, Herder's writings were in vogue among students at the University of Kharkiv, and Polish and other Slavic Romantics and revolutionaries also read him devotedly. The Slovak Lutheran minister Ján Kollár adopted and adapted Herder's thinking, and Adam Mickiewicz, in turn, cited Kollár in his opening lectures on Slavic literature in Paris in the 1840s: "All peoples have delivered their last word," Mickiewicz exclaimed, "now, Slavs, it is our turn to speak." [7] Walerian Krasiński, a distant relative of the Romantic poet Zygmunt Krasiński, similarly appealed to the same idea to recruit audience members for his lectures on the history of the Slavs in England in 1842. It can be difficult as a result to determine the source of each thinker's beliefs about the Slavs: did those ideas originate via Mazzini and Young Europe, or did they belong to a larger intellectual *Zeitgeist* in Romantic Europe? However, by allowing Mazzini to play second fiddle here, Procyk grants her cast of

characters greater agency and dynamism in creating their own intellectual and political worlds than may otherwise have been the case with the charismatic Italian placed center stage.

The second half of the book focuses on the implementation of Mazzinian ideas in eastern Europe, providing an image of a fairly decentralized Young Europe. Throughout the book, religious clergy and seminaries fall at the center of Procyk's analysis of internationalist nationalism. Mazzini himself recognized the role that clergy could take in fomenting nationalism. He called "priests of my fatherland" to "take [their] place at the head of the people and lead them on the road to progress" (p. 98). Procyk argues that this appeal was not merely metaphorical: Young Europe intentionally targeted and recruited members in east European seminaries. For example, the Czech František Cyril Kampelík developed his interests in Slavic culture and literature as a theology student at the Lutheran Lyceum in Bratislava, where "it was customary to be a member of a study group known as *Spoločnosť Česko-Slovenska*" (p. 78). Kampelík traveled underground to Cracow in the mid-1830s to work with Polish conspirators and before he was arrested and imprisoned in Lviv by the Habsburg police.

As Kampelík demonstrates, the centrality of religious figures did not make conspiratorial activity sectarian in a religious sense. In fact, the above *Spoločnosť* at the Bratislava Lutheran seminary "doubled its membership by opening its doors to Catholic students and establishing contact with alumni of the lyceum" (p. 84). Seminaries offered one avenue to appeal to the devout populations of the region. Furthermore, Procyk argues, the structure of a seminary provided the ideal circumstances for recruiting new members. Mykola Hordynsky taught at the Greek Catholic seminary in Lviv and helped smuggle books from western Europe. He used his close contact with seminarians to evaluate potential recruits, a task he managed with such professionalism that "in spite of re-

peated orders sent by the provincial chief of police ... no serious incriminating evidence was uncovered on the premises of the seminary, and no leaks to the police came from within the institution" (p. 105). Hordynsky is merely one example of the many Procyk provides to support her argument that historians have "consistently underestimated" the "political sophistication" and involvement of the Greek Catholic clergy of all levels in nationalist projects (p. 182).

Roman Catholic institutions play a much smaller role in the book than do Greek Catholic or Lutheran ones. This focus seemingly implies that Roman Catholic institutions were less susceptible to nationalist infiltration than other denominations. Yet some Roman Catholic clergy were also involved in revolutionary activism, as the case of Piotr Ściegienny could have demonstrated. Ściegienny was a Roman Catholic parish priest who encouraged peasant revolt and distributed a fake papal encyclical to support his cause. Ultimately, like many of the characters who do appear in Procyk's book, Ściegienny was defrocked, sentenced, and exiled to Siberia.[8] Similarly, Bogdan Jański, a socialist atheist who founded the Congregation of the Resurrection after his conversion to Catholicism, advocated for pan-Slavic religious solidarity. While he was not a revolutionary (although he was militaristic), Jański shows just how widespread international thinking was in the 1830s among avowed nationalists.

Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Europe and the Birth of Modern Nationalism in the Slavic World offers a history of a brand of nationalist activism that did not ultimately win out, although Procyk argues that Mazzinian ideas had a long afterlife. Most controversially, Procyk offers an explicit defense of Romantic nationalist internationalism, arguing that nationalism of a Mazzinian flavor was intended to be "democratic" and lacked ideas of "racial exclusiveness or 'ethnic purity'" (pp. 11, 199). Procyk suggests that Mazzinian nationalism nonetheless managed to temper "the impact of so-

cial Darwinism, with its stress on the natural right of the strong to dominate the weak.” She identifies a similar “attitude of tolerance” in the careers of Mykhailo Hrushevky, Józef Piłsudski, and Tomáš Masaryk, who advocated for nationalist policies that were “unequivocally democratic and profoundly humanistic” (pp. 200–201). It was by betraying their own ideas and “seeking to subordinate the Ukrainian movement to their own revolutionary aspirations for national liberation [that] the Poles awakened and strengthened the Ukrainians’ feeling of national separateness” (p. 130). International solidarity between Poland and Ukraine reemerged after the Poles experienced international domination in the twentieth century; Procyk implies that the legacy of Young Europe was again visible in 1991, when Poland became the first state to recognize Ukrainian independence. Yet it remains unclear if Mazzinian ideas ever had any popular appeal beyond the intellectuals and exiles who populate this study.

Procyk valuably draws our attention to a broad cast of characters little known beyond specialists of this subject. By placing them in a broad international context that extends beyond eastern Europe, Procyk helps to break down the intellectual boundaries that have long compartmentalized the study of individual east European nations, as well as the sharper divisions between west and east European history. In so doing, Procyk offers a model of transnational east European history well worth developing further.

Notes

[1]. Giuseppe Mazzini, “Humanity and Country (1836),” in *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations: Giuseppe Mazzini’s Writings on Democracy, Nation Building, and International Relations*, ed. Stefano Recchia and Nadia Urbinati (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 53.

[2]. See Mazzini’s 1850 essay, “Organizzazione della democrazia” [The organization of democracy], translated as “From a Revolutionary Alliance to the United States of Europe,” in *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations*, 132–35.

[3]. Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *Origins of the Czech National Renaissance* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993); Peter Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An Essay in the Intellectual History of East Central Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Elinor Despalatovic, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1975); and Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1982).

[4]. Giuseppe Mazzini, *Scritti editi ed inediti di Giuseppe Mazzini* (Imola: Cooperativa Tipografica, Editrice Paolo Galeati, 1906–90).

[5]. For example, “There are the Slavic peoples of the Austrian Empire: the Czechs, Slovaks, Rusniaks, Wendic, etc. They form more than half the population of the Empire, groaning, like the Lombard-Venetian Italians, like the Walachs of Bukovina and Transylvania, under the yoke that 6 million Austrians impose on them” (Mazzini, “The European Question: Foreign Intervention and National Self-Determination (1847),” in *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations*, 194).

[6]. Mazzini, “Humanity and Country (1836),” 57.

[7]. Quoted in Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), 14.

[8]. Włodzimierz Djakov, ed., *Piotr Ściegienny i jego spuścizna* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1972).

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