Ihor Stebelsky. ***Placing Ukraine on the Map: Stepan Rudnytsky's Nation-Building Geography.*** Kingston, Ontario: Kashtan Press, 2014. iii, 50 pp. Foreword. Illustrations. Endnotes. References. Afterword. Cloth.

I**hor** Stebelsky, a geographer and professor emeritus at the University of Windsor, has put together a remarkably timely book about Ukrainian geographer-cartographer Stepan Rudnytsky, who was a strong advocate of statehood for Ukraine and of its dominion over Ukrainian ethnographic territory. Rudnytsky did his work a century ago. Today Ukraine is independent, which was an unexpected turn of events in 1991. However, the spring of 2014 brought even bigger surprises, of a different nature: Crimea was annexed by Russia, and an armed conflict ensued in defense of other Ukrainian territory against Russian incursion.

The book under review is not very long—only fifty pages, which include endnotes, references, and other content that is not part of the main text. It provides an interesting, relevant, and nicely illustrated summary, in English, about a noteworthy scholar, his turbulent times, and his patriotic geographic mission for the sake of Ukraine. The author draws on a number of sources, including more substantial biographies that were written in Ukrainian in the 1990s by Oleh Shablii and Pavlo Shtoiko.

Stepan Rudnytsky (1877-1937) worked at a time of rising nationalism in Europe. There was great competition between nations to secure places as fully recognized countries on quickly changing contemporaneous maps. Ukraine's claims to statehood were complicated by a centuries-long history of divided ethnographic territory under the rule of various foreign powers. At different times and in varying territorial configurations, Ukraine was subjugated by Russia, Poland, Lithuania, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, among others. Also, to varying degrees depending on the ruling power, the Ukrainian language was suppressed, as was the feeling of Ukrainians that their culture had equal footing with the cultures of their more powerful neighbours. Despite these and other handicaps, Ukrainians began to shed their colonial mindset in the nineteenth century, owing to the efforts of early champions of the national cause, such as writers Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko; Ukrainian scholars Mykhailo Maksymovych and Izmail Sreznevs'kyi, who collected Ukrainian folk songs, oral histories, and folklore; and (a little later) the eminent historian Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi, who was the president of the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic in 1918-19. Professor Stebelsky's book draws our attention to yet another champion of Ukrainian statehood—Stepan Rudnytsky, a map-making geographer, who for his sacrifice was eventually sentenced to forced labour on the White Sea-Baltic Canal and then with execution in Solovki, the most notorious of the Gulag

© 2015

prisons. His crime was described by betrayers in Soviet academe as using geographical research and publication to support fascism.

The book's publication, in this reviewer's opinion, is quite coincidental, as Ukraine is again in the position (as it was during Rudnytsky's lifetime) of having to assert its right to statehood in response to a Russian aggressor—amid Russian claims that the country is nothing more than "Little Russia" or "Novorossia" and that the Ukrainian language is just a dialect of a supposedly superior Russian language. Vladimir Putin was widely reported to have said to US President George W. Bush at a summit in Bucharest in 2008 that Ukraine is not even a country. Now, years later, the Russian president seems to be adhering to that opinion as he annexes territory—while propagandizing the premise that it rightfully belongs to Russia—and waves a fist to indicate that he wants even more. Stebelsky's discussion of Rudnytsky's work is a reminder that Ukraine's struggle with its neighbours for a space on the map has indeed been a long one. One key map from 1917—a product of Rudnytsky's systematic fieldwork—depicts the extent of Ukrainian ethnographic territory, showing it to have been considerably larger than today's outline of Ukraine, even if one includes Crimea. This territory included not only the Donbas—the epicentre of today's armed struggle—but also many border regions in the fertile plains of the Kuban, normally considered to be part of Russia.

Rudnytsky was born in Peremyshl, Galicia. He completed his higher education at Lviv University—under the tutelage of Hrushevs'kyi—and Vienna University. He later held postdoctoral positions at the universities of Vienna and Berlin, where he refined his skills in geomorphology. He lectured at Lviv University, where he was allowed to teach in Ukrainian and became "Ukraine's first Ukrainian professor of geography" (14). He devoted himself to field studies, research method development, and student training. Volodymyr Gerynovych was his first doctoral student, and they collaborated on the project to map Ukrainian ethnographic territory. Both professor and student became outspoken proponents of the idea that the political borders of a free and independent Ukraine within Europe should be determined on the basis of where Ukrainians constitute a majority of the population. Rudnytsky's most important works were: *Korotka heohrafiia Ukrainy* [Brief Geography of Ukraine], which was published in two volumes in Kyiv in 1910 and Lviv in 1914 (unfortunately this work contained printing errors and a volume was lost by the publisher); a booklet from 1916, entitled *Chomu my khochemo samostiinoi Ukrainy?* [Why Do We Want an Independent Ukraine?], in which he elucidated his political goals; a short illustrated textbook from 1917, called *Ukraina—nash ridnyi krai* [Ukraine—Our Native Land]; and from 1916, a German reworking of the two-volume publication, which was later translated into English (under the title *Ukraine, the Land and*

Its People) and French. In addition, in 1924 and 1926 he published *Osnovy zemleznannia Ukrainy* [Foundations of the Earth Science of Ukraine], in two volumes. In 1926 he moved to Kharkiv, the capital of Soviet Ukraine at the time, where he became a professor of geography at the Kharkiv Institute of People's Education and the director of a research institute in geography and cartography that he had founded.

All told, Rudnytsky wrote about seventy scholarly works before he was arrested. His maps were especially important, particularly three from 1917—the aforementioned ethnographic map and two that had hung as wall maps in schools: the first was a political map that identified Ukraine's administrative regions, rivers, and the locations of hundreds of cities and towns; the second was a physical map that highlighted Ukraine's topography and relative elevation. All three maps were in colour and written in Ukrainian, and they played a special role in shaping what Stebelsky calls Ukrainians' "mental maps" (19, 31) of their country. Smaller reproductions of all three maps are included as foldouts at the end of the book under review; they are useful in helping the reader understand the importance of Stepan Rudnytsky's scholarship both during his lifetime and in the context of today's geopolitical reality.

Roman Cybriwsky
Temple University