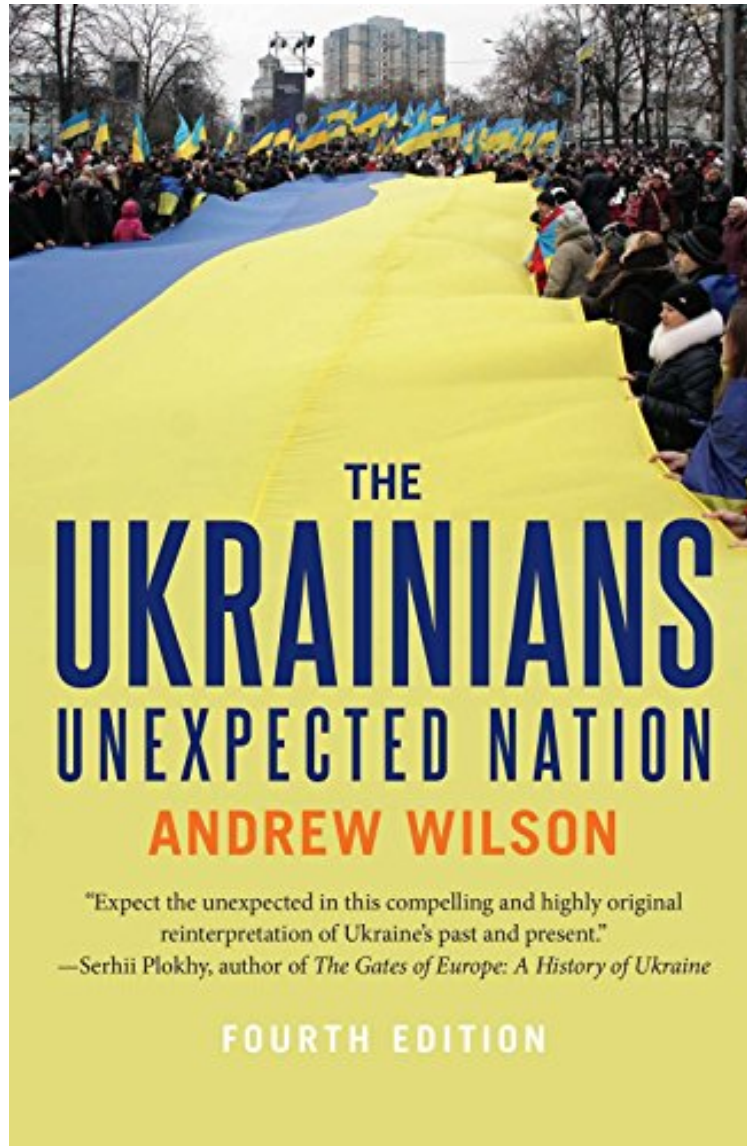


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The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation, Fourth Edition

Andrew Wilson

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Andrew Wilson : The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation, Fourth Edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation, Fourth Edition:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A long but partial socio-political historyBy Geoff CrockerAndrew Wilson provides a comprehensive narrative of the last 1,000 years of Ukraine's history. Wilson's text is dense and detailed, and requires careful attention. It's fascinating, but often difficult to absorb. Core themes inevitably get repeated over this timeline. Long sentences could have been edited to become more accessible (and there are often

additional sentences in parentheses). There are missing elements. Chapter 11 on religion only deals with the established church, and omits mention of churches like the Pentecostal church whose members gathered in remote snowy mountain locations to avoid persecution, and who clung to old traditions such as singing all 150 of the Bible's psalms by heart, men and women sitting separately, men refusing to wear 'wordly' ties. He also includes no account of Berdychiv where in 1789, 75% of the population was Jewish, becoming by 1847 the second largest Jewish community in the Russian empire, but where on 5 October 1941 over 30,000 Jews were murdered by the invading Nazis. Honoré de Balzac was also married in Berdychiv. Chapter 12 on the economy doesn't include the important point that some 40% of each USSR republic's GDP was derived from inter-republic trade, so that, when Gosplan was disbanded overnight, as Gorbachev had correctly warned, each republic suffered an inevitable 40% drop in its GDP, since no market mechanism could replace Gosplan overnight. Male life expectancy dropped significantly. This counts in many people's eyes as an economic crime inflicted on the USSR economy by the US led western powers determined to eradicate the planned economy. Wilson doesn't mention either how moribund the industrial economy of Russified east Ukraine is, from its coal mines whose seams are too deep, too thin, and insufficiently horizontal to be economically mined, to its huge coal mining equipment factories which produced immense numbers of roof supports, conveyors and shearers for underground mining, but of such poor quality that they lasted less than a year in operational use. These are important missing elements, since they present more of the character of Ukraine than the hurly-burly antics of its political leaders. Wilson's last chapters on the Orange Revolution, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and the civil war in the east, are rushed and skate over their material superficially, compared to the depth with which he treats far earlier history. He doesn't present any overall conclusion about the nationhood of Ukraine, or suggest where hope may be found.

The most acute, informed, and up-to-date account available today of Ukraine and its people, now in its fourth edition. "An interesting and provocative read, which will, one hopes, contribute to the Western understanding of what Ukraine is and why it matters."—Volodymyr Kulyk, Harvard Ukrainian Studies "A spirited and eminently learned investigation of who Ukrainians say that they are, how they came to be so, and how others view them. . . . If you read only one book of Ukraine, this should probably be it."—Elizabeth Luchka Haigh, H-Net Reviews

About the Author Andrew Wilson is reader in Ukrainian studies at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London.