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The Challenge of Change

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Note on Spelling and Transliteration

In this volume we employed a slightly modified Library of Congress version for Ukrainian or Russian languages. Ukrainian personal and place names have been transliterated from Ukrainian: for example, Hrushevskyi instead of Grushevskii, Kyiv instead of Kiev, Odesa instead of Odessa, Donbas instead of Donbass. To make it easier for English-speaking readers, we avoided diacritical marks in names and other words: for instance, Glaziev instead of Glaz'iev, Silantiev instead of Silant'iev, Korchynska instead of Korchyns'ka, Kyivan Rus or Kyiv Rus instead of Kyivan Rus'. We preserved them only in quotations. Russian personal names and places were transliterated from Russian: for example, Danilevskii instead of Danylevskyi, Aleksandr instead of Oleksandr, Tsargrad instead of Tsarhrad, Vladivostok instead of Vladyvostok. The occupied territories of Crimea and the Donbas are treated as Ukrainian, and thus names of places have been transliterated from Ukrainian: for example, Simferopil instead of Simferopol. The "English" spelling is preserved in names that gained international fame, such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn. For letters "й" and "я" we used "i" and "ia" respectively: for example, Iegor instead of Egor, Ianukovych instead of Yanukovych, Iatseniuk instead of Yatseniuk, Ieltsyn instead of Yeltsin, Iuliia instead of Yuliya. Yalta constitutes an exception. For the ending "ii" or "ei" in Russian or "yi" or "ii" in Ukrainian in first or last names, we preserved "y" only for names that have been consistently used with "y" in the West, or in cases when we mention a certain publication in English written by a person with this type of name: for instance, Andrey Makarychev instead of Andrei Makarychev, Dostoevsky instead of Dostoevskii, Brudny instead of Brudnyi, Kuchabsky instead of Kuchabskyi, Rudnytsky instead of Rudnytskyi.

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(2008), *Franko and/not Kameniar* (2006), *Femina melancholica. Sex and Culture in Gender Utopia of Olha Kobylianska* (2002) and others. She is a recipient of various fellowships at Columbia University (USA), Harvard University (USA), University of Hokkaido (Japan), and Monash University (Australia). She is a Fulbright scholar, the editor of several journals, and she taught at American, Canadian, European and Ukrainian universities.

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Introduction

Olga Bertelsen

In late March of 2015, a Kyiv pensioner, a volunteer who makes camouflage nets, socks, and underwear for the Ukrainian army, asked a soldier who had just returned to Kyiv from the war in eastern Ukraine, whether the army needed more white camouflage nets to cover their equipment. "We've made plenty of them," she said. The young man replied: "It is warmer now. There is no snow there. We now need green nets. But no worries… We'll need the white ones next winter…" Fighting in Donetsk and Luhansk for nearly a year, the soldier perceived the Russian-Ukrainian war as a long-term conflict which was not going to end any time soon. His certainty and casual fatalism appeared striking and disturbing to the woman. This conversation exacerbated her uncertainties about the future of her country.[1] There are innumerable stories like this one about Ukraine, illuminating a popular feeling of instability and collective insecurity.

Observers have argued that Ukraine's transitional period has been "one of the most difficult and prolonged" because the country was hesitant to break from the Soviet traditions of corruption and political passivity.[2] By late 2013, governed by the Ianukovych regime, the Ukrainians felt that their country no longer belonged to them. The revolution of 2013–2014, known as the Euromaidan, was an attempt to discontinue the vicious cycle of the state's failures and its inability to function within the rule of law, especially after Viktor Ianukovych's election to the presidency in February 2010.[3] Indeed, the Euromaidan Revolution broke the monotony of Ukraine's transition and slow progress. The loss of more than one hundred human lives, people who were shot by snipers in broad daylight in the center of Kyiv in February 2014, triggered a far-reaching national

1 Private conversation with Liudmyla Shalaieva, a resident of Kyiv, May 9, 2015.

2 Anders Aslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), xi.

3 Igor Lyubashenko, "Euromaidan: From the Students' Protest to Mass Uprising," in *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention: Ukraine's Complex Transition*, eds. Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 61–85.

awakening and accelerated the tempo of change in Ukraine. The victory of the revolution and people's subsequent optimism, however, were marred by the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine, backed by the Russian Federation. Russia's annexation of Crimea and its hybrid war in the Donbas fundamentally changed Ukraine's priorities in modernizing its economic sector, legal and political system, and jeopardized the implementation of social reforms, so desperately needed in Ukraine.[4]

Despite the fact that Ukraine has been a center of world attention on several occasions over the course of the last century and new millennium, many in the West are still uncertain about where Ukraine is located. The closest approximation they often offer is "somewhere in Europe." Over the years, Ukrainian news that made the cover pages of the international press was uplifting, most was tragic. For example, in the late twenties the West was shocked by scattered reports about the scale of Soviet terror. The cultural renaissance of the mid-1920s made many Ukrainian poets, writers, and theatre directors internationally recognized celebrities who contributed to European and world culture. For the first time, speaking Ukrainian became stylish and fashionable, and the Ukrainian diaspora began to return to Soviet Ukraine to help build a new Ukrainian culture. Yet, in the late twenties newspaper accounts about Soviet show trials against Ukrainian intellectuals proliferated in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Unprecedented state violence in Ukraine in the early thirties claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainian peasants during the man-made famine (the Holodomor) and thousands among the intelligentsia, which provoked deep concerns around the world.[5]

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4 For a discussion about Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the role of Crimea in Ukraine-Russia relations, see Nedim Useinov, "Crimea: From Annexation to Annexation, or How History Has Come Full Circle," 207–26; and Natalia Shapovalova, "The Role of Crimea in Ukraine-Russia Relations," 227–65, both in *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention: Ukraine's Complex Transition*, eds. Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014).

5 William Henry Chamberlain, *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935); Anonymous author, *Experiences in Russia-1931: A Diary* (Pittsburgh: The Alton Press, Inc., 1932); Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, and Bohdan S. Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932–1933* (Ontario-Vestal, New York: The Limestone Press Kingstone, 1988); Margaret Siriol Colley, *More Than a Grain of Truth: The Biography of Gareth Richard Vaughan Jones* (Newark,

During the Second World War Ukraine, together with other states, became the bloodlands where mass killings occurred that resulted in tremendous losses of human life. Millions of Jews, Ukrainians, Russians, Belorussians, and Poles were exterminated by Hitler and Stalin in the territories of Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Belarus, and RSFSR. The world observed in trepidation the unmatched mass violence that transformed the war into "the most lethal conflict" in human history.[6]

The period of late socialism in the 1970s and 1980s made human rights activists in the West anxious. They alerted the international community about Moscow's prosecution of Ukrainian dissidents and the use of punitive psychiatry against them. After prolonged pharmaceutical torture by administering haloperidol and sulphazine in psychiatric clinics, the Ukrainian intellectual Leonid Pliushch and the Ukrainian student Viktor Borovskii made their way to Europe and the United States. Their revelations about the psychiatric abuse of dissidents resulted in heated public discussions about human rights violations in Ukraine and in the Soviet Union.[7]

Nottinghamshire, UK: AlphaGraphics, 2005). For more details on the Holodomor, see Bohdan Klid and Alexander J. Motyl, eds., *The Holodomor Reader: A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1923–1933 in Ukraine* (Edmonton, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2012); Stanislav Kulchytskyi, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. iak henotsyd: Trudnoshchi usvidomlennia* (Kyiv: Nash chas, 2008); on Stalin's repressions of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, see Olga Bertelsen and Myroslav Shkandrij, "The Secret Police and the Campaign against Galicians in Soviet Ukraine, 1929–34," *Nationalities Papers*: *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42, no. 1 (2014): 37–62; Myroslav Shkandrij and Olga Bertelsen, "The Soviet Regime's National Operations in Ukraine, 1929–1934," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* LV.3–4 (2013): 417–47.

6 Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), viii.

7 Leonid Pliushch, *History's Carnival: A Dissident's Autobiography*, ed. and trans. Marco Carynnyk (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979); Victor Borovsky, *Potsilunok satany* (New York: Meta Publishing Company, 1981); Petro G. Grigorenko, *Memoirs*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (New York & London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982); Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway, *Soviet Psychiatric Abuse: The Shadow over World Psychiatry* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985); Robert van Voren, *Cold War in Psychiatry: Human Factors, Secret Actors* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010); Olga Bertelsen, "Rethinking Psychiatric Terror against Nationalists in Ukraine," *Kyiv-Mohyla Arts and Humanities* no. 1 (2014): 27–76.

The devastating news about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986 once again made Ukraine the epicenter of concerns that were overwhelmed by more striking news—the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.[8] Even then, Ukraine was on the pages of all leading international newspapers that considered the newly created independent state of Ukraine a key player in the politics of destruction of the "evil empire."[9]

Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine did not follow in the political and economic footsteps of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania. The post-Soviet political order resembled in many ways the Soviet one. Despite the Orange Revolution, which astounded the world with its innovative techniques, the bravery, and sacrifice of the demonstrators, little changed in post-Soviet Ukraine. [10] Only the Euromaidan fundamentally restructured Ukrainian political life,[11] awakened patriotic feelings and sharpened national consciousness among the majority of Ukraine's citizens. A deep re-evaluation of identities and cultural realignment occurred on individual and collective levels, a dramatic cultural change that propelled the state's nearly dormant transition toward a more unified nation and civil society.

Our hope is that this book will help our readers understand what important changes occurred after the revolution of 2013–2014 in Ukraine, and why they took place. We believe that our analyses will facilitate their discovery or rediscovery of Ukraine, a state whose historical flow has

8 For more details about the Chernobyl disaster, see David R. Marples, *Chernobyl and Nuclear Power in the USSR* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); Zhores A. Medvedev, *The Legacy of Chernobyl* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992); Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*, trans. Keith Gessen (New York: Picador, 2006); Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens After Chernobyl* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

9 The first recorded use of this expression in reference to the USSR belongs to Ronald Reagan. See the transcript of Ronald Reagan's speech "Evil Empire," an address to the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida (March 8, 1983), *Miller Center (University of Virginia)*, accessed June 18, 2016, http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/speech-3409; on the role of Ukraine in the collapse of the Soviet Union, see Serhii Plokhy, *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

10 For a discussion about the Orange revolution, see Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

11 Serhiy Kvit, "The Euromaidan Revolution and the Struggle for Ukraine's Place in Europe," in *Jews, Ukrainians, and the Euromaidan*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Toronto: Kashtan Press, 2014), i.

been at times dynamic, at times stagnant but whose future means a great deal to global security.

We also hope that this book will help more people to see Ukraine as an important counterbalance to Russia's aggression and militant ideology, rather than a region fated to remain in Russia's shadow or as a permanent borderland between East and West. The manifesto of the Russian youth organization "Rossiia-3," founded by Aleksandr Dugin, a Russian ideologue whose ideas inspire Putin, reads:

> We are imperial builders of the newest kind and will not agree to less than governing the world, because we are the masters of the Earth, we are the children and grandchildren of the masters of the Earth. Peoples and countries worshiped us and were subservient to us, we governed half of the world, and our feet trampled the mountains and valleys of all continents of the Earth. We will recover everything.[12]

This manifesto suggests an ideological imperative for new generations of Russian citizens, an immediate tenuous future for Ukraine and other former Soviet republics, as well as a possible long-term threat to global peace and security. Importantly, the events in Ukraine, the focus of this anthology, seem to align with the dynamics in other parts of eastern Europe, which reveal the uneven relations between Russia and its neighboring states.

This volume invites readers to revisit conceptions about the immense power of human agency, the ethics of politics, and the morality of human choice. As events of the last two years in Ukraine and Russia have demonstrated, the activities and behavior of a single individual driven by his or her identities, values, and beliefs, have a broader impact, going beyond this individual's village, city, or state: these activities ultimately change patterns and procedures of global security and political behavior.

The discussion of cultural change in Ukraine, provoked by the Euromaidan, and Russia's cultural realignment and motivation for invading the Ukrainian territories allows us to contextualize newly occurring events and, most importantly, to introduce historical, moral, and aesthetic analyses of individuals' actions which shape others people's behaviors, perceptions, and lives. These analyses help us employ history, facts,

12 See "The Catechesis of a Member of the Eurasian Union of Youth," *Rossiia-3*, *Ievraziiskii soiuz molodiozhi*, accessed June 18, 2016, http://www.rossia3.ru/katehizis.html.

imagination, intellect, and common sense to establish patterns of politics and human behavior, which have always been "the ultimate criterion of reality as against illusion, incoherence, fiction," and fabrication.[13]

Some scholars argue that Ukraine's history runs in certain temporal rhythms or cycles.[14] Others identify it as "repeated patterns inimical to the consolidation of democratic norms and the creation of a vibrant civil society."[15] No matter how Ukrainian history is defined, the Euromaidan created a paradigm shift in Ukraine's development, a shift which suggests rapid change, and illustrates the contingent nature of history, affirming the paramount role of human agency in history.

Although all authors traverse their topics in their own unique ways, there are several common themes that explicitly shape the leitmotif and the thesis of this collection.

Contemporary Ukrainian history and culture serves as a starting point for our inquiry and as the conceptual thread of this book, which helps us grasp, among other things, the deep connection between culture and the degree of coherence in Ukrainian society. Language, art, literature, and religion are the integral assets of a people with a common identity. In Ukraine, cultural construction, destruction, and reconstruction are associated with Stalinism, mass killings, and an enormous loss of cultural artifacts, and this legacy of a disrupted and distorted national narrative and identity haunts the Ukrainians in their struggle to rejuvenate their traditions, the core of social cohesiveness and civilized political culture. The analyses of cultural trends in contemporary Ukraine help us better understand Ukraine's self-destructive paroxysms and, most importantly, the evolution of national sensibilities provoked by the Euromaidan and Russia's invasion.

13 See, for instance, Isaiah Berlin's discussion about the possibilities such analyses grant in his essay "The Concept of Scientific History," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* by Isaiah Berlin, eds. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 48–49.

14 Taras Kuzio, "University of Toronto Censors Book on Corruption in Ukraine," *YouTube*, July 3, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mCSORPNBh8, and his book *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger Security International, 2015).

15 George Liber, private e-mail conversation, July 13, 2015.

The Euromaidan and its grounding in dignity, humanity, and resilience are the recurrent themes that inform this discussion.[16] The revolution is viewed as a historical event, a tradition, and a philosophical metaphor of freedom that cemented a common, multi-national narrative in Ukraine. The events of January–February 2014 appeared to many insiders and outsiders no more than a surrealistic staged spectacle,[17] a splash of human emotions, and a revolution without any prospect of political victory. As the essays in this collection demonstrate, the Euromaidan instead seems to have been a historical turning point, "the beginning of a new history,"[18] yet with dramatic consequences. The revolution that became known as the Revolution of Dignity was saved through the sheer critical mass of people who stayed and visited Independence Square in Kyiv during several critical months in 2013 and 2014 and through human sacrifice. The studies included in this collection implicitly divide Ukraine's history into pre-, mid-, and post-Maidan, a phenomenon that led to global changes, rearranging political alliances in the world. In anthropological terms, this division is of course relative. History constitutes itself through human communication and individual and collective experiences,[19] and changes in such day-to-day exchanges are often gradual and even blurred. Yet in political terms, as the Euromaidan has demonstrated, this conceptual framework is justifiable and even necessary. Tectonic shifts in Ukraine's political culture, social arrangements, and people's mentality have occurred, which revived the ferment of resistance that for centuries has kept Ukraine from disappearing into the vortex of imperial abuse.[20]

16 For a discussion about the Ukrainian "psyche," see Alexander J. Motyl, "Here's Why More Ukrainians Admire Nationalists, and Why the West Shouldn't Freak Out," *Atlantic Council*, July 8, 2015, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/understanding-contemporary-ukraine.

17 Vladyslav Kyrychenko, "Black Side of the Maidan," in *Maidan. (R)evoliutsiia dukhu*, ed. Antin Mukharskyi (Kyiv: Nash format, 2014), 54.

18 Iurii Andrukhovych, "Simsot liutykh dniv, abo rol kontrabasa v revoliutsii," in *Maidan. (R)evoliutsiia dukhu*, ed. Antin Mukharskyi (Kyiv: Nash format, 2014), 146.

19 Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner and others (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 27.

20 Ukrainian intellectuals have written a great deal about the imperishability of the Ukrainian "ferment." See Michael Browne, ed., *Ferment in the Ukraine* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971); Kenneth C. Farmer, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the Post-Stalin Era: Myth, Symbols and Ideology in Soviet Nationalities Policy* (The

But what reignited world interest in Ukraine in 2013 was not this prolonged struggle for its independence and nationhood but rather people's willingness to sacrifice their lives for freedom and moral values in the digital age, where relative comfort, consumerism, and pragmatism prevail. Many felt that the Ukrainian revolution emerged from a parallel world, an anti-world, as the Russian poet Andrei Voznesenskii would characterize it,[21] where human gallantry and the pursuit of the ideal exist, but not in our world. The Euromaidan has demonstrated that human sacrifice for the common good and the desire to create a better world—free, happy, just—is not an anachronism or a utopian romantic concept.[22] These Enlightenment ideas and beliefs are vivid and quite modern. Commentators on Ukraine around the world found this particular phenomenon astounding when the imagined ideal and the reality had collided, reestablishing and reaffirming people's beliefs in the possibility of human altruism and resourcefulness. Once again, the world was inspired to rethink the nature of state violence and the danger of total liberty which are not simply dangerous—they are fraught with mass death and destruction. "Total liberty for wolves is death to the lambs," Isaiah Berlin reminded us.[23] Are people able to remain human during violent revolutions, and is there a compromise when moral and cultural values clash? Should people resist an atrocious tyranny at all costs, even at the expense of their own lives or the lives of their loved ones? These torturous and at the same time vital questions became an underlying motif of this book.

By March of 2015, when this book was conceived, the separatists backed by the Russian army had occupied a significant portion of Ukrainian territories and war had become a frightening reality.[24] For the

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Hague, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1980); Mykola Zhulynskyi, *Natsiia. Kultura. Literatura: Natsionalno-kulturni mify ta ideino-estetychni poshuky Ukrainskoi literatury* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2011).

21 Andrei Voznesenskii, *Antimiry* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1964).

22 On people's pursuit of the ideal, see Isaiah Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, eds. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), 1–16.

23 Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 10.

24 By late March 2015, reports by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (RNBO) such as this one became quite typical: "Kremlin-backed terrorists attacked Ukrainian forces and shelled Ukrainian positions a dozen times overnight using weapons that [were] inside the 25 kilometer buffer zone that militants should have cleared by early March in violation of the Minsk 2 agreement. The Ukrainian army did not return fire." See "Crisis in Ukraine: Daily

first time during its years of independence, military issues, such as weapons, ammunition, and conscription, became the primary concern for a post-Maidan Ukraine. According to Ukraine's Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak, by late March 2015, 230,000 people were serving in the Ukrainian armed forces, fighting against an army of "rebels" that employed the most modern Russian guns, rockets, and heavy equipment.[25] In many Ukrainian cities, towns, and villages people have been mourning over the dead and missing soldiers. Commemorative events to honor the dead have become common place. Mutilated combatants fill Ukrainian hospitals and rehabilitation centers. In contrast, Moscow conceals its war casualties, and dead Russian soldiers are buried secretly or cremated in the Donbas by mobile crematoriums.[26]

This volume offers a discussion of external and internal factors that contribute to the fragility and instability of the situation in Ukraine, and its general difficulties in reforming the country. Although Ukraine's domestic problems, such as massive corruption, account for this, the major destabilizing factors are Russia's annexation of Crimea, its war in the Donbas, and Russian propaganda. Putin's "geopolitical project" has been discussed in several essays of this anthology, and his efforts at destabilizing Russia's "near abroad" seem to be quite successful despite the western sanctions imposed on Russia. It has become quite apparent that they do not constrain Russia's aggression in Ukraine or elsewhere. Explanations for that lay beyond the scope of this volume. However, one view seems particularly relevant here to contextualize Russia's protracted war in Ukraine and the findings of some of the essays of this collection.

According to various sources, the range of Russian President Vladimir Putin's wealth has been calculated between $79.2 and $200 billion.

Briefing—20 March 2015, 6 PM Kyiv time," *Ukrainian Canadian Congress* (the official website), March 20, 2015, http://www.ucc.ca/2015/03/20/crisis-in-ukraine-daily-briefing-20-march-2015-6-pm-kyiv-time/.

25 "Crisis in Ukraine: Daily Briefing—18 March 2015, 6 PM Kyiv time," *Ukrainian Canadian Congress* (the official website), March 18, 2015, http://www.ucc.ca/2015/03/18/crisis-in-ukraine-daily-briefing-18-march-2015-6-pm-kyiv-time/.

26 "They Were Never There: Russia's Silence for Families of Troops Killed in Ukraine," *The Guardian*, January 19, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/19/russia-official-silence-for-families-troops-killed-in-ukraine; Douglas Ernst, "Russia Using Mobile Crematoriums to Hide Dead Troops in Ukraine, U.S. lawmakers Say," *The Washington Times*, May 26, 2015, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/26/russia-using-mobile-crematoriums-hide-dead-soldier/.

Some argue that he runs the country as his own household, financing it from his own pocket. The former Vice-Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alfred Kokh posits that Putin controls an enormous machine of illegal businesses in Russia such as drug trafficking, shielding a network of brothels and casinos, and a lucrative arms trade, a claim that was also confirmed by other accounts, including one by Aleksandr Litvinenko, who was allegedly assassinated by Russian secret services in London in 2006. The annual income from these businesses has been estimated to be tens of billions of dollars. Kokh insists that these funds are controlled by Russian secret services and Putin personally, and that is how he finances their special operations in "near abroad" and runs his "Komintern" in Europe and the United States. Everyone who is significant is paid: the agents of influence, journalists, deputies, radical parties, and politicians.[27]

The analysts of the Polish business channel "TVN24 Biznes i Swiat" hold that over the last six months Russia's currency reserves decreased by approximately $130 billion. They presume that if this tempo continues, by 2017 Russia should be bankrupt. However, according to Kokh, Putin's private funds are non-exhaustible: low oil prices, the sanctions, and other cataclysms of mammoth proportions will not lead to the collapse of the Russian government. Kokh and other commentators believe that Putin's financial power makes his shadow economy stable and indestructible, and thus, his short-term goals (individual power, personal enrichment, and support of his inner circle), and long-term-goals (destabilization of Europe and NATO) are potentially possible and even likely. Moreover, there are also grounds to suggest that Putin controls many politicians in Kyiv and elsewhere, who are positioned at the very top of the political hierarchy: Ukraine's own sanctions against Russia have not been seriously considered even two years after Russia's invasion, and the war in eastern Ukraine is still identified as an ATO (anti-terrorist operation).[28]

If this is true, analyses of Putin's military doctrine, its geopolitical implications, and practical application make perfect sense at least from a

27 "Kokh rasskazal, kak finansiruietsia putinskii 'Komintern' v Ievrope i SShA," *Khartyia'97*, March 5, 2016, https://www.charter97.org/ru/news/2016/3/5/193904/.

28 Iurii Pryhornytskyi, "Fistashka miliard berezhe, abo Haman presydenta i hamanets RF," *Literaturna Ukraina*, March 17, 2016, p. 5.

financial standpoint: Russia manages to support considerable military maneuvers and maintain multiple theatres of war, which require huge financial investments. Its grandiose plans in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and in the Black Sea region seem to suggest the availability of routinely replenished, and thus unlimited, resources, a serious problem for the West in general, and Europe in particular. More immediately, the dilemma to be solved in Ukraine focuses on how the country should reform while being continuously destabilized economically and politically by its powerful neighbor. Putin has created a situation in which future relations between Russia and Ukraine will be difficult for generations to come, and where peace seems to be possible only when subversion is a key element of the political landscape in the region. Crucially, chronic political instability in eastern Europe and its vulnerable balance between war and peace may have disastrous global ramifications, as the history of this region has demonstrated.[29]

Russia's propaganda efforts to portray the new Ukrainian government as fascist and the power of words are prominent themes in this anthology. Indeed, the information war became an inseparable part of Russia's expansion in Crimea and its incursions in other parts of the region. On March 18, 2014 Putin recognized Crimea's "independence" and signed the treaty of accession in Moscow. Almost immediately, the new authorities distributed guns to residents of the peninsula to protect them

29 As Iurii Shcherbak persuasively showed in 2006, Russia's "games" in Ukraine began much earlier than 2013–2014. The new global energy empire chose Ukraine for economic, geopolitical and ideological reasons. Yet Putin's plans are not limited to Ukraine. Today, without fully completing its plans in Ukraine, Russia prepares to move westward, testing the defense systems of European states and the United States by probing their airspace and territorial waters. The danger to global peace is real, especially given the murky and unpredictable nature of Russian politics. For a discussion about Russia's attempts at ideological subversion in Ukraine, see Iurii Shcherbak, "Pro natsionalnu hordist Ukraintsiv," in *Ukraina v zoni turbulentnosti: Demony mynuloho i tryvohy XXI stolittia* (Kyiv: Ukrainskyi pysmennyk, 2010), 305–15. See also Nolan Peterson, "Why Putin's Warplanes Are Penetrating European Airspace," *Newsweek*, March 27, 2015, http://www.newsweek.com/why-putins-warplanes-are-penetrating-european-airspace-317255; and the expert evaluation of US President Obama's choice to chair the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Commandant Joseph F. Dunford, about Vladimir Putin's Russia as the most significant military threat to the United States in Rob Garver, "A New Warning About Putin's Russia from a Top U.S. General," *The Fiscal Times*, July 9, 2015, http://finance.yahoo.com/news/warning-putin-russia-top-u-172100437.html.

against "Ukrainian fascists," and this narrative was firmly imbedded in the psyche of the Crimeans by its routine reiteration in the mass media. The Kremlin's extraordinarily strong presence and dominance in the media's narrative have been studied extensively.[30] Pro-Kremlin narratives are systematically reinforced through television channels such as *Sputnik* and *RT* (Russia Today), which are generously supported by a variety of agencies favoring Putin's regime. The idea of fascists in Kyiv was amplified and expanded by Putin who on March 18, 2015 at a concert in the center of Moscow, dedicated to the one-year anniversary of the takeover of Crimea, addressed thousands and praised the Russian people's "amazing patriotism" by supporting the annexation of Crimea and its people who fought against fascist Kyiv.[31]

Defining democratic transformations in Ukraine as fascism was and still remains crucial for Russia, and was designed for domestic and foreign consumption. Truly, whoever defines the situation has power over people and their perceptions. "The very concept of 'fact' becomes irrelevant because every meaningful political object and person is an interpretation that reflects and perpetuates an ideology," as Murray Edelman has suggested.[32] Guns as a defensive tool and measures against the "fascists" in Kyiv became a powerful argument and "evidence" of "defenseless" Crimean citizens who needed help. Interestingly, in order to receive a Kalashnikov at the local military commissariat, it was sufficient to show a passport with local *propiska* (registration) at one of the locations provided by the new authorities and to swear allegiance to Russia, expressing simultaneously hatred toward Kyiv.[33]

30 On the suppression of the media in Russia, see, for instance, Yuri Felshtinsky and Vladimir Pribylovsky, *The Corporation: Russia and the KGB in the Age of President Putin* (New York: Encounter Books, 2008), 355–428.

31 "Russia Celebrates Anniversary of Crimea Takeover—and Eyes Second Annexation," *The Guardian*, March 18, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/18/russia-celebrates-anniversary-crimea-takeover-eyes-second-annexation; see also Andrea Chalupa, "Putin's Fabricated Claim Of A Fascist Threat In Ukraine," *Forbes*, April 4, 2014, http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2014/04/04/putins-fabricated-claim-of-a-fascist-threat-in-ukraine/#cc97c6a1782e.

32 Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 10

33 Andrey Kurkov, *Ukraine Diaries: Dispatches from Kiev*, trans. Sam Taylor (London: Harvill Secker, 2014), 160.

Students of KGB methods and practices, contemporary Russian propagandists employ repetition as a powerful tool capable of transforming people's beliefs, views, and perceptions. The language and words matter, as several essays in this anthology demonstrate. Russia's use of definitions, such as the "Ukrainian crisis" and the "conflict in Ukraine," repeated over and over again, transcended the space of journalism, encouraging scholars and politicians to refer to Russia's aggression in Ukraine in these terms and entitle their books, speeches, and articles using the same concepts. The examples are numerous: the "conflict in Ukraine," the "crisis in Ukraine," "the Ukraine crisis of 2014," "the civil war and crisis in Ukraine," and the like.[34] These concepts reinforce the idea of "locality" and an isolated conflict that is not contingent on external factors. Repeatedly employed, these terms shape a certain perception of reality in Ukraine, and have helped the Russians position themselves as outsiders and neutral observers of the "crisis" in Ukraine. The use of this term may have been accurate until late December 2013, when the first victims of protests began to die in the streets of Kyiv. But after many, potentially hundreds of protesters in various cities of Ukraine disappeared and were murdered, after the Ukrainian parliament stripped Ianukovych of his presidential powers, and after Russia's invasion of Crimea and eastern Ukraine, this intellectual short-cut, a bastardized notion of Ukraine's purely domestic affair, which has become a "convenient truth," is a distraction from the larger political reality. "Language games…construct alternative realities."[35] They truly do.

Interestingly, Reinhart Koselleck[36] has reminded us that the notion of "crisis" is associated with the pressure of time, uncertainty, a desperate need to prevent disaster and to find a solution and salvation.[37] However,

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34 See, for instance, Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014); Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 2015).

35 Edelman, 103.

36 Reinhart Koselleck (1923–2006) was a German historian whose specialty was conceptual history. He contributed greatly to our understandings of epistemological, linguistic and anthropological issues related to history. He was one of the most influential historians of the twentieth century.

37 Reinhart Koselleck, "Some Questions Regarding the Conceptual History of 'Crisis,'" in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner and others (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 238.

he has also argued that crisis is a philosophical and historical term which can identify a "singular, accelerating process," or an intersection of an "epochal threshold," or can be understood as a permanent crisis in world history, or more broadly, as a "final crisis of all history"—self-destruction. Koselleck has theorized about the possible meanings of the term "crisis," including the economic concept of crisis. All those meanings are theoretically demanding, and are grounded in certain historical and intellectual traditions. The term "crisis" was also applied to the American and French revolutions, and Karl Marx tended to believe that the final crisis of the capitalist system would lead to tectonic social changes, such as the disappearance of the state and class differences. Koselleck has disputed the teleology of this notion, suggesting that it has always been human nature to exaggerate a particular situation and identify it as an apocalyptic one. Moreover, the misuse of this term, he believed, obscures its initial theological meaning (apocalypse; the end of the world), a semantic model of crisis as final decision for human civilization.[38] In her essay, Tamara Hundorova has shown that the apocalyptic myth constitutes an important dimension in the rhetoric of the Maidan; it also embraces an eschatological meaning. Yet, when used habitually in political and historical contexts, the term "crisis" overdramatizes and often distorts reality—sometimes innocently, often deliberately.

Many commentators on the Russian-Ukrainian war fall into the same semantic trap, describing the Russians' concealed aggression in Ukraine as Ukraine's crisis. Our preference is to omit the term from our writings altogether, and to identify the realities in Ukraine for what they are. We follow the road paved by the senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, economist and former advisor to the Putin administration, Andrei Illarionov, who on June 16, 2014 at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly session in Vilnius stated:

> You may hear statements that this is 'the Ukrainian crisis' or that this is 'the crisis in Ukraine'. It is incorrect. It is neither 'the crisis in Ukraine', nor 'the Ukrainian crisis'. This is not an internal affair of Ukraine. This is a war. This is the Russian-Ukrainian war. To be correct, this is Mr Putin's war against Ukraine. And this war is only an introductory chapter of a much larger event which can

38 Koselleck, "Some Questions Regarding the Conceptual History of 'Crisis,'" 240–47.

> be called and actually has already been called 'War', 'World War', 'the Fourth World War'.[39]

In our view, the conflict perpetuated by the Russian Federation in Ukraine should be defined as "Russia's war in Ukraine" or "the Russian-Ukrainian war" that began, formally, with the occupation of Crimea in February 2014.

Significantly, this book illuminates how the meanings of words can be transformed and how words can lose their meaning during wars, how their "weaponization" occurs and how arguments shift to the contrary over the course of 24 hours. In turn, transformed meanings and words are employed for rewriting histories, which leads to information wars and the politicization of popular memory, realities that can be observed both in Russia and Ukraine today.[40] The theme of memory politics and competing national historical narratives consistently appears in several chapters, an issue that complicates the relations between Ukraine and Russia, thwarts their peaceful coexistence and undermines their potential rapprochement. This book avoids casting rosy scenarios and is restrained in terms of offering solutions. Instead, it interrogates the procedures and complex mechanisms of constructing national historical memories, institutionalizing their premises, and defending them through legal means. This discourse demonstrates an uneasy equilibrium of national narratives, which is vulnerable, routinely threatened and in constant need of restoration to prevent the escalation of information wars that are often transformed into serious collisions, such as terrorist activities and conventional warfare.

In this anthology, special attention is paid to a fascinating aspect of Russia's propaganda machine—the work of social network "trolls," whose goal is to discredit news stories critical of Russia while promoting those

39 "Speech by Andrei Illarionov at NATO PA in Vilnius," *The Lithuania Tribune: News and Views from Lithuania*, June 16, 2014, http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/69155/speech-by-andrei-illarionov-at-nato-pa-session-in-vilnius-201469155/; also see https://charter97.org/en/news/2014/11/21/127194/.

40 For a broader discussion about memory politics, see Jie-Hyun Lim, Barbara Walker, and Peter Lambert, eds., *Mass Dictatorship and Memory as Ever Present Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); on the politics of the Russian language from Gorbachev to Putin, and the deep connection between language and politics, see Michael S. Gorham, *After Newspeak: Language Culture and Politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014).

presenting pro-Russian narratives.[41] These trolls efficiently curtail reasonable online debate and contribute to the publics' uncertainty about the realities in the region that are difficult to decipher even without their immense efforts to sow confusion. Ultimately, the discussion concentrates on unofficial government tools that play a crucial role in Russia's politics of ideological subversion designed to confuse the international community about the Kremlin's real goals in Ukraine. The process of ideological subversion and constant attempts to keep Ukraine in the orbit of Russia's influence has a long history.[42] Over the last two decades Russia perfected its strategies and the mechanisms of undeclared hybrid wars, modernizing and swiftly adapting to changing political, social and cultural circumstances in Ukraine and elsewhere.[43]

The Russian presence in Crimea and Russia's increasing control of the Black Sea basin serve as an example of such adaptations. Two essays in this anthology disentangle chronological and tactical complexities of Russia's secret operation in the peninsula in January and February 2014,[44] provide an overview of the post-annexation situation in Crimea, and analyze Russia's geopolitical project through the lens of the discursive myth of the "Third Rome," a project that considers territories far beyond Ukraine—Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Middle East. This discussion explores the degree to which the "Third Rome" myth acts as a powerful discursive formation, infiltrating and informing Russian foreign and domestic policy. This myth is often offered directly and indirectly as a

41 For more details on the work, tasks, and functions of Russian trolls and the headquarters of the Internet Research Agency in St. Petersburg (Russia), see Adrian Chen, "The Agency," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 2, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html.

42 For a discussion about the Russian secret service's tactics, including ideological subversion, see Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

43 Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

44 A year later, in a documentary, Putin admitted that the Russian soldiers were involved in a well-planned operation to take Crimea, and that the Kremlin was behind this operation. See "Putin Reveals Secrets of Russia's Crimea Takeover Plot," *BBC News*, March 9, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31796226.

rationale for Russian incursions into a host of Black Sea basin states. In this context, this discussion provides an explanation of how the Third Rome myth facilitates political concealment at home and abroad for destabilizing Turkey as a means of acquiring control over the Turkish Straits, and considers the myth's predictive value when examining future Russian actions in and around the Black Sea basin.

Furthermore, Russia's military solutions in Ukraine and its war in the Donbas bring to light one of the most tragic aspects of war—its divisiveness. We now live in a world where such a notion as "occupied territories" has become a routine description of reality. Wars divide and destroy families, organizations, unions, alliances, and religious institutions. The religious dimension of the Russian-Ukrainian war, an undeservedly underrepresented topic in scholarship on Russian-Ukrainian relations, is discussed in this anthology through the prism of new policies introduced by occupation authorities in Crimea and the Donbas. Faith communities in these territories (the focus of scrutiny is Muslims, Jews, and Baptists) are polarized for a number of reasons, among which are political loyalties, refugee displacement, and the regimentation of religious practices and organizations. However, religious communities are viewed here not only as passive observers but also as pro-active agencies, actors who creatively adjust themselves to the conditions of war, developing new survival skills and remaining socially engaged and spiritually focused. A narrative that analyzes these men's and women's difficult personal (and collective) choice, whether to remain under Russian occupation or to become refugees, invites readers to revisit complex notions, such as self-identification, moral responsibility, and faith, that are inevitably threatened and reshaped by war and violence.

We also believe that there is a pressing need to discuss the paramount issue of corruption, an intrinsic feature of most political and social operations in Ukraine. The book delivers a nuanced understanding of pervasive corruption and examines this phenomenon from theoretical and practical perspectives. In addition, it offers insight into the multifaceted interdependence of political traditions and practices, the loopholes in the legislature, and family and business connections among the political elites, factors that perpetuate the cycle of corruption which remains robust

and resilient in Ukraine.[45] Perspectives and challenges of anti-corruption policies are examined through the lens of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau's activities and other initiatives that emanate from civil society.

Another salient element of Ukraine's challenges that has been discussed in this book is the reform of the police (*militsia*). This issue has been on the Ukrainian government's agenda for so long that the current effort provoked pessimism and a storm of sarcastic comments and questions from the Ukrainian public and professionals. What is different this time? For one, it is part of an ambitious and wide-ranging program of reform of governance as a whole. For another, it is directed in part by outsiders (Georgians) who have some track record of success in reforming the police. Will this be adequate in making a wholesale transformation to democratic and European Union standards, or at least a reasonable facsimile thereof? Looking at past and present reform efforts in Ukraine, as well as comparing experiences in other post-communist states, a fairly confident assessment can be made as to the prospect of significant and fundamental change. Individual and collective identity and political will in Ukraine, as well as its sovereignty and stability, seem to endorse the effectiveness of democratic reforms.

In all, the contributors to this book engage in a shared effort to identify and analyze the challenges, problems, and difficulties that Ukraine faced in the past and continues to experience today, obstacles that impede democratic changes and the formation of mature civil society. We explore the reasons for why the difficulties of the transitional period culminated in the Euromaidan and consequent state violence, and examine the multifaceted roles of people, organizations, and governments in the dynamic Ukrainian political, social and cultural landscape from historical and legal perspectives. This endeavor helps us better understand not only the underlying currents of Ukrainian politics and change in Ukraine's and Russia's culture and society, but also provides insight into the future of the Ukrainian national project and its chances for survival in a state of war. Revolutions and wars destroy, create, and restructure states. In this context, this anthology invites readers to consider several scenarios, among

45 For an interesting discussion about corruption in Ukraine, see also Bohdan Vitvitsky, "Corruption in Ukraine: What Needs to Be Understood, and What Needs to Be Done?" *VoxUkraine,* June 5, 2015, http://voxukraine.org/2015/06/05/corruption-in-ukraine-what-needs-to-be-understood-and-what-needs-to-be-done/.

which at least two deserve public attention and provoke crucial questions: should the world community yield to Russia's military and ideological supremacy in the region, allowing further "restructuring" of geographic and political borders through erasing an independent state "at the edge of Europe," or should it protect the "gates of Europe"[46] and the nascent democratic society in Ukraine?

Ukraine, a constrained and contested space and place, is a zone of death, displacement, and suffering today, but it is also a place of hopes and dreams that are nurtured by millions of its citizens, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or religious affiliation. Ukraine may be associated with the place Andrei Tarkovskii portrayed in his 1979 film *Stalker*, the Zone that had a special room where people's dreams could be consummated.[47] The road leading to this room was hazardous and dangerous. The detours along the way brought people there faster than direct pathways. The film's main character, the Stalker, led people through the Zone to this special room for a modest fee under one condition—they had to strictly follow the Zone's rules and his instructions. Otherwise, the Zone would fail them. A member of the group, the Writer, violated the established rules. He refused to follow the Stalker and suggested that there was a shortcut which would allow them to reach the Zone's room faster. In frustration, the Stalker yelled at him:

> Don't you understand? . . . this is the Zone . . . This is a complex system of traps . . . Everything is changing here every minute . . . safe traps become mortal and vice versa . . . The Zone is treacherous and vindictive. It cannot forgive. But it is such because we made it behave like this. Everything that is happening here depends not on the Zone but on us.[48]

In actu, we rarely find places and times as we imagined them, and the seemingly fastest routes only delay the day of achievement. Going back in time, so that we could better understand what is happening now, is necessary, even if this pathway appears to be long and challenging. We

46 Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

47 Tarkovskii's 1979 film *Stalker* is based on Boris and Arkadii Strugatskii's novel *The Roadside Picnic.*

48 Andrei Tarkovskii, *Stalker* (1979), *YouTube*, Part 1, 59:00, June 20, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYEfJhkPK7o.

are stepping back and revisiting Ukraine's past and the entangled histories of Ukraine and Russia to identify the pathway to the present, and to construct a more precise narrative of today's events in Ukraine. Understanding the Euromaidan, people's identities in Russia and Ukraine, the Russian-Ukrainian war, and its geopolitical consequences without contextualizing them in the history of Russian-Ukrainian relations seems neither possible nor conceivable.

Some observers have suggested that Ukraine is a state born to struggle and lose, to struggle again and to lose once again.[49] Others have defined Ukraine's transitional experiences along the road toward a modern European state as complex, difficult, and chaotic. We characterize it as persistent, suggesting the continuity of the process, in which events such as the revolution of 2013–2014 and Russia's invasion, take Ukraine to another level, this time rather rapidly, further from corruption and chaos toward meaningful and honorable existence. We identify the hindrances that have been conditioned by internal and, most importantly, external pressures, and share our view about transnational dangers and the potential political ramifications of Russia's expansion. The ritualization and institutionalization of oligarchs' illegal activities when the Firtashs and the Akhmetovs [50] continue to drain the nation's resources constitute only a part of the problem for Ukraine. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Putin's insatiable neo-imperial appetite that grows daily present the principal threat to international security and to Ukraine's independence, dragging it

49 I am grateful to George O. Liber for reminding me about the myth of Sisyphus which would exemplify this definition. Sisyphus, a hero of Greek mythology, was condemned to repeat forever the same meaningless task of pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to see it roll down again. This myth inspired Albert Camus to ruminate about the absurdity of life, which is filled with meaningless tasks and struggles, in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus."

50 *Rinat Akhmetov* is a Ukrainian businessman and oligarch. One of the wealthiest man in Ukraine and a member of Ukraine's parliament, he is the founder and President of System Capital Management (SMC), the owner and President of the Ukrainian football club Shakhtar Donets, and the sponsor of the Party of Regions in Ukraine. *Dmytro Firtash* is a Ukrainian businessman and oligarch. He is head of the board of directors of Group DF, President of the Federation of Employers of Ukraine (FEU), Chairman of the National Tripartite Social and Economic Council (NTSEC), Co-Chairman of the Domestic and Foreign Investors Advisory Council under the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports of Ukraine, and a member of the Committee for Economic Reforms under the President of Ukraine.

into another cycle of tortuous struggle for its independence. A challenge of change and the restoration of stability in this region are indeed a global concern.

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Part One

Ukraine: Sources of Destabilization

1
The Ukrainian Revolution of 2013–2014 and the Sources of Russia's Response

George O. Liber

In February 2013, after several frustrating years negotiating with Ukraine, the European Union (EU) gave Ukraine a November 2013 deadline to sign an Association Agreement with the world's largest economy. President Viktor Ianukovych, the country's most pro-Russian president since independence since 1991, agreed to do so, despite the EU's insistence that his government free Iuliia Tymoshenko, Ianukovych's most popular political opponent, from prison.

In October 2013, Leonid Kozhara, Ukraine's Foreign Minister, asserted that

> European integration is not an end in itself but a tool. We want to modernize our country, adopt European standards, enhance our citizens' living standards. In other words, we want to build a Europe inside Ukraine, and we sincerely believe that Russia will only benefit from that.[1]

But Russia vehemently disagreed with Ukraine's European choice. The Russian government, which had long planned to bring Ukraine into the Eurasian Customs Union of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, sought to overturn this decision. In addition to critical articles in the Russian press and the media, Russia launched a brief customs war with Ukraine in August 2013, then threatened to introduce a visa regime for Ukrainians travelling to Russia. In response to these overt interventions, the citizens of Ukraine became "more sympathetic to European integration."[2] But after several visits by President Vladimir Putin to Kyiv and President Ianukovych to Moscow, Ukraine's president announced on November 21—one

1 Quoted in Yelena Chernenko, "Even Pork Fat Threat Will Not Stop Ukraine," *Kommersant*, Oct. 29, 2013; cited in *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* (*CDRP)* 65, no. 44–45 (2013): 3.

2 Tatyana Ivzhenko, "Kyiv Heads West," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, Sept. 19, 2013; cited in *CDRP* 65, no. 38 (2013): 19.

week before the scheduled EU Summit Meeting in Vilnius—that Ukraine would not sign the agreement.

Pro-EU demonstrations started the next day, leading to the overthrow of the Ianukovych government on February 21–22, 2014, to the Russian invasion of the Crimea, to a separatist upsurge abetted by Russia in eastern Ukraine, and to increased tensions between the EU and the United States, on one hand, and the Russian Federation—on the other. As of early March 2016, the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights announced that his office recorded more than 30,000 casualties (at least 9,160 killed and 21,000 injured) in eastern Ukraine since April 2014. These figures included Ukrainian military personnel, members of armed groups, and civilians.[3]

Over the past two years, Russia's power elite, those men and women closely associated with President Putin, have vehemently opposed the idea of Ukraine signing the EU agreement, which would have precluded its joining the Eurasian Customs Union, and the efforts of its citizens to determine their own political future in a globalized world. Russian state-controlled television stations and media networks, the main source of information for the residents of the Russian Federation, have disseminated and amplified their views. The Russian press is also highly critical of Ukraine's pro-EU orientation, but somewhat more nuanced.

The sources of this Russian hostility are not a recent phenomenon, but a product of long-term attitudes. The end of the Cold War, the collapse of the USSR in 1991, and the subsequent search for stability and order shifted these mental tectonic plates and made them buckle and rub against each other.

Tectonic Plate A: Ukraine as an Existential Threat

For most members of the Russian political elite, the idea of Ukraine as an independent nation-state is perceived as an existential threat to the Russian identity. In their view of the world, Ukraine cannot exist without Russia or Russian "tutelage," however one defines the term.

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3 Nick Cumming-Bruce, "Death Toll in Ukraine Conflict Hits 9,160, U.N. Says," *The New York Times*, March 3, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/04/world/europe/ukraine-death-toll-civilians.html?_r=0; and Radina Gigova, "Ukraine Crisis: Growing Sense of Despair," *CNN*, March 4, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/03/world/ukraine-un-report/index.html.

With the development of the Ukrainian national movement in the Russian and Austrian Empires in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, Ukraine as an actual or potential incubator of cultural and political separatism from Russia remained an important unspoken assumption of its elites.[4] According to official tsarist imperial interpretations, Ukrainians formed the Little Russian part of the all-Russian, Orthodox nation, which possessed three branches (the Velikorusski [Great Russian], Malorusski [Little Russian], and Belorusski [White Russian]). Members of these groups spoke East Slavic languages, which possessed many common features, and shared the Orthodox Christian faith (even the Ukrainian-speaking Greek Catholics in the Habsburg Monarchy adhered to a similar liturgy).[5]

Tsarist authorities did not discriminate against men and women of Little Russian origin who did not attempt to politicize their identity and who recognized their role within the "all-Russian" political landscape. Russian officials, historians, and public commentators interpreted the history of "Little Russia" as an integral part of mainstream Russian history; they perceived the "Little Russians" as "nashi" (ours). In contrast, the government repressed all individuals who demonstrated a distinct Ukrainian identity "in the political or in the cultural sphere."[6] The authorities considered the act of identifying oneself as a Ukrainian (instead of a Little Russian) as a political and anti-governmental act.

The tsars feared the subversion of the empire's Little Russian community by outside powers and sought "to stamp out the proto-nationalist activities of a handful of ethnically conscious Ukrainian intellectuals."[7] In light of the constant competition among the European

4 See Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001).

5 By the end of the nineteenth century, many tsarist officials recognized that the Ukrainian-speaking populations of the Habsburg and Romanov Empires were related, but considered the Greek Catholics religious renegades. In their view of the world, the Ukrainian-speaking population left the Orthodox Church in 1596 under Polish pressure and began to consider themselves separate from the Russians only then.

6 Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth Century Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 31.

7 David Saunders, "Russia's Nationality Policy: The Case of Ukraine (1847–1941)," in Serhii Plokhy and Frank E. Sysyn, eds., *Synopsis: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Zenon E. Kohut* (Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2005), 408.