



Winfried Schneider-Deters

UKRAINE'S FATEFUL YEARS 2013–2019

*Vol. II: The Annexation of Crimea and
the War in Donbas*

ibidem

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Part IV

The “Russian Spring” in “New Russia”

IV.1 Headwind from “South-East”

IV.1.1 The “Anti-Maidan” in the “Province”: Protest against the Change of Power in Kyiv

The insurgent “people of the Maidan” (Ukr.: “narod Maidanu”) did not represent the entire population of Ukraine. A large part of the people in the east and south of the country did not consider the government, that had come to power in Kyiv as a result of the victory of the “Maidan” to be legitimate; even less did they share the Ukrainian national feeling that had awakened—or strengthened—by the Maidan”. In the center, west and north of Ukraine, the “new power” had the support of the people, while in the large cities of the “Yugo-Vostok”¹ (“South-East”) of the country, where it had remained quiet during the “Maidan”, people began to protest against the change of power in Kyiv. These demonstrations looked spontaneous at first,² but soon it became clear that they were orchestrated by Russian agents who took control of the protest.

The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology³ conducted on behalf of the weekly newspaper *Dzerkalo tyzhnya/ Zerkalo nedeli* an opinion poll⁴ from April 10 to 15, 2014 in eight southern and eastern oblasts, namely in the southern oblasts of Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and in the eastern oblasts of Kharkov;

1 The Russian designation of the south and east of Ukraine as “Yugo-vostok” (Ukr.: “Pivdenno Skhidna Ukraina”) is not only a geographical designation, but also implies a politically “different” Ukraine due to the high proportion of the population that is more “pro-Russian” than “Ukrainian-patriotic” and mostly Russian-speaking. The “Yugo-Vostok” is a macroregion comprising the oblasts of Kharkiv, Dnipro (until 2016 Dnipropetrovsk), Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolayiv, Kherson, Odesa (Russian: Odessa) the Autonomous Republic of Crimea annexed by Russia and the city of Sevastopol.

2 The so-called “Anti-Maidan” organized by the “Party of Regions” in Kyiv next to the Verkhovna Rada building was “artificial”: the paid participants were brought to the capital from oblasts of the East.

3 Ukr. Kyivskii Mizhnarodnyi Instytut Sotsiologii; Russ.: Kievskii mezhdunarodnyi institut sotsiologii.

4 1476 telephone interviews, 1756 personal interviews, in 160 localities in 8 oblasts of the South and East.

Dnipro(petrovsk⁵), Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk, and Luhansk.⁶ Only 42 % of the respondents considered the Parliament legitimate, although it was the same as the one elected in 2012, and although its composition had not changed in the wake of the change of power.

The interim President Oleksandr Turchynov and the Prime Minister (equally ad interim) Arseniy Yatsenyuk were illegitimate in the eyes of half of the residents of the eight oblasts surveyed.⁷ In the two oblasts of the Donbas region, Donetsk and Luhansk, the stronghold of the "removed" President Yanukovich, 70% considered both illegitimate. The negative portrayal of the events in Kyiv broadcast by Russian television stations, which were the dominant medium in the east and south of Ukraine, strengthened the already dominant "Anti-Maidan" sentiment in these parts of the country.

The resentment of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians in Ukraine's eastern and southern oblasts towards the capital Kyiv did not mean, that the majority of them wanted to "join" Russia. According to polls, only a third of the population in the Donbas harbored separatist feelings. This explains why Putin's secession project "Novorossiya" ("New Russia") ultimately failed.

With the exception of the Donbas, the east and south of the Ukraine did not get involved in Putin's separatist adventure. And in Donbas, too, the separatists were only able to hold on to a third of the two oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk militarily, because their losses of weapons and fighters were compensated for by ongoing supplies from Russia. The Russian President Putin had miscalculated his Ukrainian venture: "New Russia" did not fall into his lap like Crimea. He had not foreseen, that with his military support of separatism in Donbas, he was igniting a fortified defensive Ukrainian patriotism.

Notwithstanding the above statement the "Maidan" was not a manifestation of a conflict between parts of Ukraine ("regions"), but of the resistance of a large part—the larger part?—of the people against the kleptocratic regime of President Yanukovich, who comes from Donbas. Politicians of his Party of the Regions had fuelled the (old) anti-Kyiv resentments, as well as the contempt nourished during the Soviet era against the population of western Ukraine, which was annexed to the Soviet Union under the Hitler-Stalin Pact—and which overwhelmingly supported the uprising against President Yanukovich's regime.

On December 7, 2013, the governor of the Kherson oblast, the mayor of the Kherson oblast capital, and deputies of the oblast council and municipal councils took part in an "anti-Maidan" event in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson. In the port city of Odessa on the Black Sea, citizens demonstrated with a "march for the federalization of Ukraine" and for "Ukraine's accession to the (tripartite) Customs Union" (Tamozhennyi Soyuz / TS of the three states of the Russian

5 In 2016 renamed "Dnipro".

6 <https://golos.ua/i/219987>.

7 Ibid.

Federation, Kazakhstan and Belarus.⁸ On December 13, 2013, demonstrations were also held in the port city of Sevastopol on the Crimea in support of Ukraine's accession to the TS. In the eastern Ukrainian oblast capital Donetsk (in Donbas) there were solidarity rallies for the "Maidan" in Kyiv, but the "Anti-Maidan" clearly prevailed there.

On February 17, 2014, the magazine *Tyzhden* (published weekly in Ukrainian language) published the result of journalistic research, according to which part of the "anti-Maidan organizations" was fictitious, that is, did not exist in reality.⁹ On February 1, a fictitious "Red Sector" (Russ.: "Krasnyi sektor") acknowledged to have set fire to the vehicle of a "Maidan" activist.¹⁰ Another virtual "Organization against fascists" propagated on a Facebook page the slogan "Against violence—only violence!" (Russ.: "protiv sily—tolko sila"), but then disappeared from the network. (The founder was a certain Nikolai Omelchenko.) On February 16, 2013, another phantom organization claimed responsibility on YouTube under the name "Ghosts of Sevastopol" (Russ.: "Prizraki Sevastopolya") for the murder of an activist of the "Auto-Maidan" on February 13, 2014, in the South Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhya.¹¹ Another virtual "civic platform" ("Hromadska platforma", Russ.: "Grazhdanskaya platforma")¹² with the name "HroMaidan" (Russ.: "GroMaidan") was founded in Odessa, as its coordinator Serhii Dubenko announced at a press conference on January 15, 2014.¹³

Under a similar name—"Civic Platform Maidan" ("Grazhdanskaya platforma Maidan"—a pseudo or clone "Maidan" was created in January 2014, which was conspicuous for its massive media presence. According to the Institute for Mass Media (Institut Masovoi Informatsii / "IMI"), 11% of the cost of covert political advertising was accounted for by this platform, which posed as the "real" Maidan, broadcast false messages purporting to be from the "Maidan", and prided itself as a platform for ideas to solve the crisis.¹⁴ The origin of the funds for this strong "media presence" was unknown. It was suspected to be the leader of the pro-Russian pseudo-movement "Ukrainian Choice" ("Ukrainskii vybor"), Viktor Medvedchuk. The "GP Maidan" appeared at the time when

8 Customs Union of the Eurasian Economic Union (Tamozhennyi soyuz Evraziyskogo ekonomicheskogo soyuza).

9 <http://tyzhden.ua/News/102073>; *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russ edition), 17.02.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/17/7014106/>.

10 *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), 01.02.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/1/7012329/>.

11 *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), 16.02.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/16/7014042/>.

12 *HroMaidan* / "Hromadskyi Maidan; Russ.: "GroMaidan" / "Grazhdanskii Maidan".

13 News Agency "Unian": <https://www.unian.net/politics/872726-v-odesse-sozdana-obschestvennaya-platforma-gromaydan.html>. <https://www.unian.ua/politics/872727-u-odesi-stvorena-gromadska-platforma-gromaydan.html>.

14 Yelena Holub, Roman Kabachyi: *GroMaidan* protiv Maidana, in: *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), February 17, 2014; http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/02/17/7014100/view_print/.

Andrii Klyuyev became the head of the President's administration. The suspicion was that it was a project of the presidential administration to discredit the "Maidan". This pseudo-"Maidan" propagated a "Maidan without politicians" (meaning: without opposition politicians); the mission was obvious: To split the "Maidan".

IV.1.2 The Kharkiv Congress of the "Party of Regions"

Coup Attempt in Kharkiv?

On February 22, 2014, on the day when President Yanukovych escaped from Kyiv, a congress of deputies of his "Party of Regions" from oblasts and municipal councils of the Eastern and Southern oblasts¹⁵ as well as of PoR's deputies of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and of the city council of the port city of Sevastopol (which, like Kyiv, has a special status) took place in the Sports Palace of Kharkiv, the second largest city of Ukraine, under the chairmanship of the head of the Kharkiv oblast state administration Mikhail Dobkin and under the protection of the riot police, "Berkut". The speaker of the congress, along with Dobkin, was Vadym Kolesnichenko, a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada and deputy chairman of the faction of the Party of Regions.¹⁶ According to the organizers, the meeting was attended by more than 3000 people. Participating was a Russian delegation, which included Aleksei Pushkov, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Gosudarstvennaya Duma (the Parliament of the Russian Federation); Vasilii Golubev, Governor of the Belgorod Oblast; Aleksandr Gordeev, Governor of the Voronezh oblast; Nikolai Denin, Governor of the Bryansk oblast; Mikhail Margelov, Senator of the Pskov oblast and Sergei Semenov, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Kharkiv.

The fugitive President Yanukovych had announced that he was flying to Kharkiv with the aim of participating in this congress; however, for unknown reasons he did not appear at the congress after landing in Kharkiv, but flew on to his 'stronghold' Donetsk. The resolution adopted by this congress stated:

We, the organs of local self-government at all levels [...] the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the municipal council of the city of Sevastopol, have decided to assume responsibility for ensuring normal conditions for the work of the people's deputies (of the Verkhovna Rada) – without extortion and threats against them and their families – observance of the law and respect for human rights throughout the territory of Ukraine, in order to restore the constitutional order in Kiev.¹⁷

15 With the exception of the two oblasts of Odessa and Mykolaiv.

16 Kolesnichenko was known for his ostentatious contempt of the Ukrainian language. He fled after the change of power to Russia, where he took Russian citizenship.

17 *Ukrainskaya pravda* (Russ. edition), 22.02.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/22/7015713/>.

The resolution was open to all organs of self-government (oblast and municipal councils), including of other oblasts that wished to join it, and also open to "amendments and additions according to the political situation." The Russian media outlet RBK (RosBiznesKonsalting) reported the decision of the Congress, that "Until the restoration of the constitutional order in Ukraine and until the legitimization of the central bodies of power the bodies of local self-administration" would take over "all power."¹⁸

When the deputy of the Party of Regions in the Verkhovna Rada, Vadim Kolesnichenko, shouted the slogan: "For friendship with Russia!" the participants chanted: "Russia! Russia!" ("Rossiya! Rossiya!"). But the delegates refrained from open separatism: this decision was "to secure the constitutional order in Kyiv", it was explicitly stated. The territorial integrity of Ukraine was threatened, declared participants in the meeting, whose separatist tendencies were well known. Although the delegates did not declare their regions independent of Kyiv, they refused to recognize the new power in Kyiv. Earlier, the organizers had declared that, in view of the anarchy in Kyiv, the city of Kharkiv was ready to become the capital of Ukraine, a status that Kharkiv had temporarily held in the Soviet Union (1918-1934).¹⁹

According to the authors of the resolution, "the events of the last few days in Kyiv led to the paralysis of the central organs of power and destabilization of the situation in the state". On the contrary, the new rulers in Kyiv surprisingly quickly overcame the "interregnum" that had arisen after the victory of the "Maidan" and the flight of President Yanukovich. Speakers of the Party of Regions declared that the (previous) opposition had not fulfilled the conditions of the agreement on the settlement of the crisis of February 21, 2014 (which was true). Furthermore, "unlawfully armed formations" had not laid down their arms (what arms?); they continued to occupy buildings of the central state administration (which was true), killed peaceful people and members of the security forces (which was a lie). The authors of the resolution affirmed that "the Verkhovna Rada is working in conditions of terror, under the threat of armed force and death threats" (which too was a lie). The decisions of the Ukrainian Parliament, taken under these conditions, raise doubts about their voluntariness, legitimacy and legality.

Oleh Charov, deputy chairman of the faction of the Party of Regions in the Verkhovna Rada, declared at the congress, that an "armed seizure of power" was underway in Ukraine—with the participation of foreign states (which was nonsense). There were 20,000 men under arms in Kyiv, he claimed, and those

18 RBK, 22.02.2013; <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/do-vosstanovleniya-poryadka-v-ukraine-vsyu-vlast-berutorgany-22022014134500>.

19 Because of the anti-Soviet sentiment in Kyiv, the Bolsheviks made Kharkiv the capital of the "USRR", the "Ukrainska Sotsialistychna Radyanska Respublika", from 1937 USRR: "Ukrayinska Radyanska Sotsialistychna Respublika".

who had seized power wanted to use these people "beyond Kyiv".²⁰ The mayor of the city of Kharkiv, Hennadii Kernes, called for a purge of defectors from the ranks of the Party of Regions.²¹ (He meant the deputies of the PdR, who had – together with the previous opposition factions – voted for the laws with which the parliament had legalized the transfer of power.

The separatists in disguise turned to the signatory states of the "Budapest Memorandum", which had "not fulfilled their obligation to guarantee the territorial integrity and security of Ukraine": the territorial integrity and security of Ukraine were in danger: the country's nuclear power plants were threatened by the extremists, they claimed – or rather, they lied. At the same time, two demonstrations took place in front of the Sports Palace, one supporting the Congress, the "Young Regions" ("Molodye regiony"), the youth organization of the "Party of Regions", and an opposing demonstration of "Maidan" supporters. Units of militia (police) separated the two camps. Evgenyi Zhylyn, the leader of the "Oplot" martial arts club, called on the delegates of the congress to arm the "anti-Maidan" activists.²² In the evening, "Maidan" activists stormed the building of the Kharkiv oblast administration without capturing it.

The Russian state propaganda channel, Rossiya 24, broadcast the "Kharkov Congress" live and showed footage of the street fights in Kyiv on February 18 and 20, showing only one side of the picture, namely how militant activists of the "Maidan" beat the shields of the regime's security forces with clubs. Immediately after the end of the "counterrevolutionary" congress, the tandem "Dopa i Gepa" – Mikhail Dobkin, the governor of the Kharkiv oblast, and Hennadii Kernes, mayor of the oblast capital, Kharkiv – went to Russia by land, as the acting minister of internal affairs, Arsen Avakov reported on Facebook and as was confirmed by the border service.

Already ten years earlier, during the "Orange Revolution" in 2004, parts of the Party of Regions had tried at the so-called "Severodonets Congress" to secede eastern Ukraine, because their "regionalist" candidate Viktor Yanukovych had allegedly had the presidency "stolen" from him by the "orange revolutionaries".

20 <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/v-ukraine-proizoshel-vooruzhennyi-zahvat-vlasti-nardep-2022014131700>. Charov, who fled to Russia, is accused of treason (Ukr: "derzhavna zrada", Russ.: "gosudarstvennaya izmena") by the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office and has been put on trial.

21 <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/kernes-prizval-k-ochishcheniyu-ryadov-pr-ot-perebezhchikov-22022014125700>.

22 <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/lider-oplota-poprosil-deputatov-harkovskogo-sezda-vooruzhit-22022014133200>.

The "Ukrainian Front"

On February 21, 2014, on the eve of the regional congress of the Party of Regions in Kharkiv,²³ the "Ukrainian Front" (Russ.: "Ukrainskii Front") of civic associations was founded—an "All-Ukrainian Social Union" of political parties and individual citizens²⁴—with a historical allusion to the "1st Ukrainian Front" of the Red Army, which took part in the reconquest of eastern Ukraine ("Battle of the Dnepr") with the declared aim of "cleaning Ukraine of occupiers".²⁵

The founding decision was passed unanimously, as the chairman of the board of the "Federation of veterans of Afghanistan" ("Soyuz veteranov Afganistana"), Volodymyr Ryzhkov informed. One of the initiators of this founding assembly and the formation of the Ukrainian Front was the Chairman of the Kharkiv Oblast State Administration (2010-2014), Mykhailo Dobkin.²⁶ The event was also attended by representatives of pseudo civil society organizations and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate ("Ukrainskaya pravoslavnaya tserkov Moskovskogo patriarkhata"), which had been committing its faithful to Yanukovych for years. The Party of Regions simulated a movement of citizens to counteract the odium, that the supporters of Yanukovych's regime were only paid demonstrators and hired thugs ("Titushky").

As Mikhail Dobkin, the chairman of the Kharkiv State Oblast Administration (and spiritus rector of the founding assembly), explained, the name "Ukrainian Front" is particularly symbolic—as is the Front's insignia, the "Georgievskaya lenta," which has a pro-Russian, separatist connotation in Ukraine. "Our Front is beginning to cleanse the Ukrainian soil of those who have come here to occupy (our country)"—namely, the "seditious nationalists who have descended from Mount Hoverla"²⁷ and who consider themselves "the only Ukrainian 'demos' and who proclaim their "national idea" in the name of the entire Ukrainian people. Dobkin called what was going on in the country a "bad theater play", that "was not written in Ukraine". "Our patience is not infinite. When we realize that peaceful methods of restoring order in our country are exhausted, we will do it in another way," Dobkin threatened.

In Kharkiv, the martial arts club "Oplot" (bulwark, fortress) joined the Ukrainian Front as a "civic organization". On January 17, 2014, members of the Kharkiv "Oplot" had blocked the "Avto-Maidan" on European Square in Kyiv

23 According to the organizers, about 6,000 people attended the meeting, delegates from 20 oblast organizations of the Party of Regions, Representatives of the Communist Party and of about 50 civic associations.

24 <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/1/7012328/>.

25 The "Maidan" denounced the regime of President Yanukovych as an internal "occupation". In classic Soviet fashion, the "anti-Maidan" adopted the terminology of the "Maidan" and filled it with the opposite content.

26 He ran for president in the early elections on May 25, 2014.

27 Located in the Carpathian Mountains, "Hoverla" is the highest mountain in Ukraine at 2061 meters. On Independence Day (on August 24) the "Hoverla" becomes a national pilgrimage destination for patriotic politicians.

with their vehicles embroidered with the " Ribbon of Saint George".²⁸ After this 'action', the leader Yevhenii Zhylyn, together with the representative of an alleged civic organization "For Order" ("Za poriadok"), Viktor Andryeyev, gave a press conference. The two groups later united to form the "Anti-Automaidan" ("Anti-Avto-Maidan"). Igor Chernoiwanov, the Ataman of the Don Cossack "Grand Army", promised the "Ukrainian Front" the support of his (allegedly) 10,000 men. The "Night Wolves" ("Nochnye Volki"), a Russian nationalist motorcycle ("biker") club, with which Russian President Putin likes to pose in a leather jacket, also joined the Ukrainian Front.

28 Ukrainskaya pravda (Russian edition), 17.01.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/01/17/7009851/>.

IV.2 Separatist Sheet Lightning in the “South-East”

IV.2.1 The Specter of Separatism

After the victory of the “Maidan”, latent separatism became virulent in the east and south of Ukraine; the “specter of separatism was haunting” the “Yugo-Vostok” (“South-East”) of Ukraine. Even before the flight of President Yanukovych, on February 21, 2014, the Ukrainian domestic intelligence service, the SBU, felt compelled to warn against separatist manifestations in a public statement: individual politicians, representatives of organs of local self-government, chairmen of civic associations, “radical-minded persons” would stir up the conflict in the country and “spread autonomist and separatist sentiments among the population”. This could lead to the “termination of the existence of our state as a unitary state and to the loss of state sovereignty,” the SBU warned.²⁹

At this time, the SBU is said to have become aware of “negotiations” on the division of Ukraine: Individual deputies of the councils of various administrative levels” (oblasts and municipalities (whether also of the Verkhovna Rada was not clear) had begun to “conduct separate negotiations with foreign states” (meaning Russia). “Consultations” were already being “held openly about a possible division of the country into several parts”, the SBU declared, and warned that strict measures would be taken to stop attacks on territorial integrity; those involved in such activities would be held criminally responsible.

Already at the beginning (!) of February 2014 leading politicians of the parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea had initiated the introduction of changes in the constitution of the Autonomous Republic and commissioned the examination of the question, whether Crimea could turn to Russia with the request “for protection”. On February 22 2014, after the flight of President Yanukovych, the Ukrainian national parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, adopted a resolution on the prevention of all manifestations of separatism with 319 votes, i.e. with a large “constitutional” majority.³⁰ The draft of this resolution was introduced by the leaders of the three (still) opposition factions Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Vitali Klitschko and Oleh Tyahnybok.

Opinion polls from February to April 2014 showed that nowhere in Ukraine—not even in Donbas and in Crimea—was there a majority in favor of seceding from Ukraine and joining Russia.³¹ The survey conducted by the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (Fond “Demokratychni initsiatyvy” im. Ilka Kucheriva) and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (Kyivskyi

29 Ukrainskaya Pravda, (Russian edition), 21.02.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/21/7015545/>.

30 By a ‘constitutional majority’, that is to say, by a majority of two-thirds (300 of the total number of votes of 450) of votes amendments to the constitution can be introduced.

31 Coynash, Halya, April 15, 2019; <http://khp.org/index.php?id=1555201258>.

mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologii / KMIS) from February 8 to 18,³² showed that only 12% of the population as a whole wanted to form one state with Russia – in Crimea, however, the figure was 41%, in Donetsk oblast 33% and in Luhansk oblast 24%. In the survey conducted by the Rating Sociological Group (Sotsiologichna grupa "Reiting") from March 1 to 7, 2014, 61% were in favor of preserving the unitary state, 24% for its "federalization"; in the Donbas, 59% of the respondents were in favor of federalization, but 87% were against the secession of the Donbas and only 8% in favor. In the survey conducted by the Ukrainian Sociology Service for the "Democratic Initiatives" Foundation from March 16 to 30, 2014, 89% of the population (including the Donbas) considered Ukraine as their motherland ("rodina"), while 8% did not. In the Donbas, 18% of the population did not consider Ukraine as their motherland. So there can be no question of a separatist wave sweeping Ukraine.

IV.2.2 The Deeper Roots of Separatism in Donbas³³

As early as 1991, when Ukraine gained its independence, there was speculation in Western media about a possible split of the country. And not only in 2014, but ten years earlier, during the "Orange Revolution" in 2004, Ukraine was threatened by separatism. The industrial and financial magnates who, after the independence of Ukraine had appropriated the heavy industry in Donbas, continued to maintain the Soviet myth that the Donbas was feeding the rest of the Soviet Union, only now the rest of Ukraine.³⁴ In doing so, they distracted the impoverished "aristocracy of the proletariat" from the current plight of the previously heroized miners.³⁵ The functionaries of the Party of Regions too strengthened this belief in the "guard of the working class",³⁶ from which the party derived its claim to a leading position within Ukraine.

Separatism in the Donbas³⁷ was already stirring in the late 1980s – before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The reasons were economic and social, not na-

32 <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=uk&cat=reports&id=236&page=1&y=2014&m=3>.

33 http://ukraine-nachrichten.com/urspruenge-donezker-separatismus_4235?print.

34 <https://www.nzz.ch/das-verletzte-staehlerne-herz-der-ukraine-ld.648153?reduced=true>.

35 In the mid-1990s, the author had the opportunity to get to know the situation on the ground in the framework of a cooperation project of the German mining union "IG Berbau und Energie" and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung with the new "Independent Miners' Trade Union of Ukraine" (Ukr.: Nezalezhna profspilka hirnykiv Ukrainy / NPHU; Russ.: Nezavisimyi profsoyuz gornyakov Ukrainy / NPGU), whose chairman at the time was Mykhailo Volynets (since 2002 deputy of the Verkhovna Rada).

36 In the "Irmino mine" (Russ.: "Irminskii rudnik") in the present-day Luhansk oblast, worked the legendary Soviet model coal miner Alexei Stakhanov, whose use of innovative working methods greatly increased his personal productivity, which became the basis for the "Stakhanovite movement" in the Soviet Union. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aleksey-Grigoriyevich-Stakhanov>.

37 The "Donetsk-Krivoi Rog Soviet Republic" ("Donetsk-Krivorozhskaya Sovetskaya Respublika"), constituted by the Bolsheviks in 1918, existed for only two months – in February, March 2018. The "DKSR" included, in addition to the present-day oblasts of Sumy, Kharkiv,

tional or ethnic. The loss of importance of the Donbas began in Soviet times. After the development of hydrocarbon resources in Siberia, the conversion from coal to oil and gas began. The mines in the Donbas fell into disrepair. At the end of the 1980s, during the period of total "deficit" of goods, the coal industry of the Soviet Union fell into a serious crisis. Hundreds of thousands of miners went on strike not only for higher wages, but simply for a better supply of food and goods for daily needs.

The Ukrainian independence movement founded in 1989, the "Ruch", the "People's Movement of Ukraine" (Narodnyi Ruch Ukrayiny), which was initially a movement to support the reforms ("glaznost" and "perestroika") of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, directed the protest of the miners in Donbas to their mills ("while we slave away here, Moscow lives like a maggot in bacon"). In the referendum on Ukraine's independence on December 1, 1991, almost 84% of the participants in the Donetsk oblast voted for Ukraine's independence – not out of "patriotism", but in the idea that the fruits of their labor would now no longer flow to Moscow but remain in the country. The "Deutsche Bank" attributed to independent Ukraine "the greatest potential of all the successor states of the former Soviet Union".³⁸

But as early as 1993 the mood changed. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought not an economic upswing, but a further decline, not only in Russia, but also in the now independent Ukraine: the striking miners demanded more independence for Donbas – this time from Kyiv. Now, for them, the parasites they supposedly kept out were not sitting in Moscow, but in the capital of independent Ukraine – and in the west of the country.

On June 7, 1993, an indefinite strike of the miners began in Donbas. In view of the possible serious consequences, the Verkhovna Rada met their demands for a 'consultative referendum' of confidence / no confidence in the President and in the Parliament, that was to take place on September 26, 1993. But on September 24, two days before the referendum, the Verkhovna Rada decided to hold early parliamentary elections on March 27, 1994 (the first since independence) and early presidential elections on June 26, 1994 (also the first since independence).³⁹ The strongest challenger to incumbent President Leonid Kravchuk was former Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, who was elected President in a runoff election on July 10, 1994. Kuchma advocated close relations with Russia, but also claimed to be a "pro-Western" politician.

Dnipro (until 2016 Dnipropetrovsk, in zaric times Ekaterinoslav) Donetsk, Kherson in the east and south of Ukraine respectively, also the territory of the Don Cossacks in the Rostov-on-Don oblast in the present day Russian Federation.

38 Karl Walter, advisor and board member of the Bavarian House Odessa (BHO), president of the German-Ukrainian Business Club at the end of May 2013 in Odessa; in: DVZ / Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung. 06.06.2013; <https://www.dvz.de/rubriken/markt-unternehmen/single-view/nachrichten/logistikmarkt-ukraine-lockt.html>.

39 The dates for the regular parliamentary elections and regular presidential elections were March 1995 and late 1996 respectively.

On March 27, 1994, at the same time as the parliamentary elections, a "consultative poll" was held in the two oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, which some politicians regarded as a "regional referendum", even though the Ukrainian Constitution does not provide for a referendum. The organization of this referendum was the responsibility of the "regional commissions for the consultative survey of citizens", which were supposed to implement the decisions of the deputies of the regional oblast council. The consultation of the citizens contained four points: Item 1 asked the residents of the Donbas whether they would agree to a federalization of Ukraine and the status of the Russian language as a "state language". According to the published results of the referendum, 80% of the inhabitants of Donbas voted for the federalization of Ukraine.

The resentment of the "inhabitants of the Donbas" ("Zhiteli Donbasa" is a smug term for the population of the oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk) against the capital (and western Ukraine) is also rooted in the contemptuous, derogatory terms used by Ukrainians in Kyiv and western Ukraine to describe the people of the Donbas: "Vatniki" (pl. "quilted jacket wearers"), "Sovoks" (literally "shovel", disdainful use of this word for the Soviet ideal of the "Soviet man", "Sovetskii chelovek", "Homo soveticus", Russ.: "Gomo soveticus") and others.

Separatist slogans were still common during the miners' strikes of the years 1996 to 1998. When Viktor Yanukovich, a native of the Donbas,⁴⁰ was appointed prime minister (for the first time⁴¹) in 2002, the blackmailing separatist agitation on the part of the Party of Regions stopped, as its leading "politiki-biznesmeni" – whose "entrepreneurship" consisted primarily in the "unscrupulous appropriation of the peoples' socialist assets" – now expected to grab the whole of Ukraine.⁴² The "Orange Revolution" against the electoral fraud of the chosen candidate of the – outgoing – President Leonid Kuchma, Viktor Yanukovich, in the presidential elections of 2004 gave separatism a new impetus. The "Maidan", the people's uprising against President Yanukovich in the winter of 2013 / 2014, reignited separatism in the Donbas – this time fueled by Russian propaganda and organized by Russian agents.

40 Ukr.: Yenakiyev, Russ.: Enakievo, then "Stalin oblast" (Stalinskaya oblast), today Donetsk oblast.

41 2002–2005; 2006–2007).

42 Denys Kazanskyi: The origins of Donetsk separatism, in: Ukraine Nachrichten, 30.03.2015; https://ukraine-nachrichten.de/urspruenge-donezker-separatismus_4235. Source: Ukrainzyskyi Tyzhden, 24.12.2014. Kazanskyi is a well-known blogger and journalist ("Donetskaya pravda") from Donetsk oblast; he ran for Parliament on the list of Vitali Klitschko's "UDAR" party in Yenakiyev, the birthplace of Viktor Yanukovich.

IV.3 Russia: The Protecting Power of the “Russian World”

IV.3.1 The “Putin-Doctrine”⁴³

One approach to understanding the “Ukraine conflict” is the ethnic-nationalist (German: “völkisch”) claim of Russian President Putin. In his message to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in 2005, President Putin already indicated the direction of his strategic goal: After the sentence, often quoted in isolation, in which he described the collapse of the Soviet Union as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the (20th) century” (not World War I nor II, let alone the Holocaust), Putin himself provided his reason: “For the Russian people, this was a real drama: tens of millions of our fellow citizens and compatriots found themselves beyond Russian territory.”⁴⁴ On March 18, 2014, two days after the ‘referendum’ on the Crimea and one day after its annexation by Russia, Russian President Putin delivered an emotional speech in the Kremlin’s George’s Hall (Georgievskii zal). Russia felt “deprived,” Putin said in his “Crimean speech”.⁴⁵ The Russian people had become the world’s largest “divided people”. What he did not mention was the fact, that Russia had previously “robbed” the countries where Russians now form a minority – and who were deliberately settled there to turn the native peoples into minorities in their own countries.⁴⁶

In contrast to Adolf Hitler’s policy, which was aimed at “repatriating” all ethnic Germans (“Volksdeutsche”) living in the occupied territories of Eastern Europe (“heim in’s Reich”, “back home to the Reich”⁴⁷) it is not the goal of Russian President Vladimir Putin to resettle abroad “ethnic Russians” living in the

43 It is not clear, who first used this term. The term “Putin doctrine” was used by Bernd Johann (Head of DW’s Ukrainian Editorial Office): Kommentar – Putins gefährliche Doktrin für die Ukraine (Commentary – Putin’s Dangerous Doctrine for Ukraine), in: Deutsche Welle, 04.03.2014. Motyl, Alexander J.: The dangers of the Putin Doctrine, in: Kyiv Post, March 5, 2014; <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/alexander-j-motyl-the-dangers-of-the-putin-doctrine-338466.html>. Alexander J. Motyl is professor of political science at Rutgers University in Newark, N.J., USA. See also Schneider-Deters, Winfried: Die “Putin-Doktrin” – das Ende europäischer Sicherheit (The Putin Doctrine – the end of European security), in: Erich Reiter (ed.): Die strategische Lage im Osten der EU, Internationales Institut für Liberale Politik Wien / IILP, May 2014, ISBN 978-3-902275-40-0, Internet book, Adobe Acrobat Reader DC, p. 73 ff. See also: Ukraine Nachrichten, 15.04.2014; https://ukraine-nachrichten.de/putin-doktrin-ende-europaischer-sicherheit_3982.

44 Prezident Rossii, Poslanie federalnomu Sobraniyu Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 25 aprelya 2005 goda, Moskva, Kreml; http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2005/04/25/1223_type63372type63374type82634_87049.shtml. The number of Russians living abroad’ is 18 million.

45 “Crimea speech” (Krymskaya rech). AN-online 18.03.2014; <http://argumenti.ru/politics/2014/03/326548>.

46 A strategy that China consistently pursues in Tibet and Xinjiang.

47 The “Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle” (VoMi) of the NSDAP was responsible for this policy; after the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union, in 1941, the VoMi became a main office (Hauptamt) of the SS. The “Heim ins Reich” policy is somewhat at odds with Hitler’s intention to colonize large parts of the Soviet Union, especially the Ukraine, to settle German ‘colonists’

Russian Federation; his goal is the "re-union" of the former Soviet republics where Russians are now living as minorities. The victory of the "Maidan" in Ukraine and the flight of Putin's 'vice-regent' Yanukovych made Russian President Putin think that the time had come to draw practical consequences from his historical judgment. The "smashing" of Ukraine (in the language of Nazi propaganda vis à vis Czechoslovakia⁴⁸) is an attempt to revise the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

For a Russian rescue loan of \$15 billion, Putin had "persuaded" former Ukrainian President Yanukovych in several secret meetings (see Volume 1, Part I) not to sign the association agreement with the European Union in Vilnius at the end of November 2013 as planned. The creation of a common "Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area" envisaged in this agreement had integrated Ukraine into the single market of the European Union in the medium term and freed it from economic dependence on Russia—and thus also removed this country from Moscow's political influence. With his "geopolitical victory" over the European Union in Vilnius, Putin believed he had brought Ukraine back into Moscow's orbit. But the victory of the "Euro-Maidan" on February 21, 2014 meant a serious "geopolitical defeat" for Putin.

The fact that the Ukrainian "Maidan" had expelled "his Man in Kyiv", on whom he had based his plan for the reintegration of Ukraine into the sphere of Moscow's influence, i.e., Ukraine's return into a state with "limited sovereignty" à la Brezhnev, must have been for Putin a personal insult, for which Ukraine had to be punished. The seemingly blind ruthlessness with which Putin proceeded after the victory of the "Maidan" in Crimea can plausibly also be interpreted as personal revenge.

Moreover, the victory of the Ukrainian people in the confrontation with the state power was certainly a nightmare for Putin, in which he probably already saw himself as a victim of a "Russian Maidan" on the Red Square in Moscow. Putin cannot see the popular uprising "Maidan" in any other way than as organized by "fascist groups" and "financed by the West"—and the formation of the new government only as an "illegal seizure of power".

Putin's Ethnic-Nationalist Claim

At the beginning of the change of course in Russia's foreign policy, i.e., its challenging confrontational course towards the "West", stood Russia's ethnic-na-

in it, and to enslave the Ukrainian population. See Snyder, Timothy: Verantwortung. Warum Deutschland die Wahrheit über die Ukraine nicht vergessen darf (Responsibility. Why Germany must not forget the truth about Ukraine), in *Lettre International*, Winter 2017, p. 38-41, here p. 40. Speech on June 20, 2017 in the German Bundestag. Translation by Rita Seuss. <http://dip2l.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/100/1810042.pdf>.

48 In analogy to the "dismemberment of the (remaining) Czech Republic" after the incorporation of the Sudetenland into the German Reich (October 2, 1938).

tionalistic claim to be the protective power of all Russians—and Russian-speaking people (!)—living in the former Soviet republics. This “limited” doctrine mutated into a global revisionist expansionist strategy with the aim of regaining the geopolitical weight of the Soviet Union—in particular the recovery of Russia’s status at “eye level” (and Putin’s personal eye level) with the USA (or with the American president respectively). (The aspired to ‘multipolarity’ also means the weakening of the European Union—in collusion with all “Euro-skeptical” (in reality anti-EU) forces within the European Union.)

Russian President Putin claims the right to intervene militarily in any country with a Russian minority population in order to “protect” it. The Federation Council of the Russian Federation had in fact given Putin carte-blanche to invade all former Soviet republics, since Russian minorities live in all “newly independent states” (“NIC”s). Referring to the “extraordinary situation” in Ukraine and the alleged “threat to citizens of the Russian Federation”, President Putin asked the Federation Council to allow him to “deploy the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine [...] until the social and political situation in this country is normalised”. The “threat” is defined by Putin himself, as is the “normalization of the situation” after the invasion.⁴⁹

The military invasion of Crimea—and a possible military invasion of Ukraine —⁵⁰ were ‘legislatively’ prepared already in 2009. After the “Five-Day War” in August 2008, the State Duma of the Russian Federation, on the initiative of the then President Dmitry Medvedev, amended the Defense Law of May 311996 (Zakon “Ob oborone”⁵¹) in order to legalize the invasion of Georgia retroactively. Since then, the changes in the law “allow” military units of the Russian Federation to conduct military operations outside Russian borders “for the protection” of Russian citizens, i.e. Russian “compatriots” abroad (“sootechestvennik”, pl. sootechestvenniki za rubezhom), as well as persons of other ethnicities to whom Russian passports have been issued. The addition to point 2.1 of Article 10 of the amended “Defense Law” reads:

With the aim of protecting the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens, maintaining international peace and security, units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation may be operatively deployed outside the borders of the Russian Federation in accordance with the generally accepted principles and norms of international law, the international treaties of the Russian Federation and applicable federal laws to perform, inter alia, the following tasks:

49 President of Russia, news, 01.03.2014; <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6751>. All 90 senators of the Federation Council granted him this request.

50 When referring to the territory of Ukraine without the peninsula of Crimea, the term “Mainland Ukraine” — Ukrainian “materyk” — is used.

51 Federalnyi zakon ot 09.11.2009 N 252-FZ, “O vneshenii izmenenii v Federalnyi zakon Ob oborone”, adopted by the Gosudarstvennaya Duma on October 23, 2009 and approved by the Federation Council on October 30, 2009, and signed by the then President of the Russian Federation Dmitrii Medvedev on November 9, 2009; http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_93467/.

- Protection of citizens of the Russian Federation outside the territory of the Russian Federation against armed assaults (point 3).
- Defense against or prevention of an armed incursion against another state, which turns to the Russian Federation with a request to that effect (point 2).

According to the amended Article 10, the decision to deploy units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation outside the borders of the Russian Federation is made by the President of the Russian Federation on the basis of the relevant decision of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

Significantly, President Putin does not invoke the increasingly accepted norm of "responsibility to protect" in international law, which imposes on the international community (in effect, the United Nations Security Council) the responsibility for coercive measures against a state that commits "genocide," "war crimes," "ethnic cleansing," or "crimes against humanity". In the case of the Russians living in Ukraine, whose rights are in no way restricted, Putin invokes the national law of the Russian Federation, which was constructed to conceal his geostrategic intentions.

The "protection of Russian compatriots" abroad is an outrageous claim, entailing the risk of a Russian invasion of Ukraine and other former Soviet republics. It is easy to find a random occasion and invent a suitable pretext⁵² such as "securing referenda" on secession from Ukraine in so-called "people's republics". Conquerors organize the necessary *casus belli*, like Adolf Hitler's fictitious "raid" on the Gliwice radio station by SS men in Polish uniforms on September 1, 1939 ("Since 5:45 a.m. we are shooting back ..."). The occupation of the Crimea by Russian military took place – like Hitler's invasion of Poland – without a declaration of war. Putin denied at the time that the soldiers in camouflage uniforms without insignia were Russian soldiers.⁵³ In the age of the Internet and "streaming" reporters, lies have short legs (meaning that lies don't make it very far). Russian equipment, Russian vehicles, troop movements, amphibious landings – cannot credibly be declared as "self-defense forces" (the term "Samoo borona", self-defense, was borrowed from the "Maidan") of the Russian population of the Crimea. In the televised event "The Direct Wire" on April 17, 2014, Putin himself admitted that these "little green men" (Russ.: "zelenyie chelovechki") were Russian soldiers, who had been deployed "behind the local people". Our goal was to guarantee free elections.⁵⁴ At this event, on the same day that the

52 On March 3, Deputy Interior Minister Mykola Velychkovych stated, that the Interior Ministry had knowledge that unknown persons were planning to kill three or four Russian soldiers in Crimea under Ukrainian cover.

53 Among others, soldiers of the 76. Air-Assault-Division (*desantno-sturmovaya divisiya*).

54 RG.RU, Rossiiskaya Gazeta, 17.04.2014: Stenogramma Pryamoi linii s Vladimirom Putinom; <http://www.rg.ru/2014/04/17/liniya-site.html>.

Ukraine conference was held in Geneva, Putin recalled that the Russian Federation Council had allowed him to deploy Russian troops in Ukraine. He hoped, Putin said, that he would not have to use this right.⁵⁵

IV.3.2 The “Big Lie”: The Russian Propaganda-Campaign against Ukraine

With a smear campaign without precedent since the fall of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich, President Putin created pretexts to destabilize Ukraine. In the Russian propaganda, “brotherly” Ukraine was occupied by fascist “Benderovtsy” (sic⁵⁶), who were out to suppress the Russians living in Ukraine. The addressees of the infamous propaganda were the Russian population in Russia (mobilization), the population in the east and south of Ukraine⁵⁷ (incitement), and politics and the media in the “West” (disinformation).

The “Putin Doctrine” is based on a lie, namely on the counterfactual assertion that Russians, who have become disenfranchised minorities due to the independence of the former Soviet republics, are being oppressed and deprived of their human rights by the titular nations, and are even threatened with danger to life and limb and therefore require the protection of the Russian Federation. The justification propagated by Putin for the military support of the irredenta in Crimea and for the threatened military invasion of Ukraine's “mainland”, namely the alleged threat to the ethnic Russian or Russian-speaking ethnic Ukrainian population in the eastern and southern parts of the country by “fascist terrorists” from western Ukraine, is a “big lie”⁵⁸ – inspired by Adolf Hitler and

55 “Ya napominayu, chto Sovet Federatsii predostavil prezidentu pravo izpolzovat vooruzennye sily v Ukraine”, in: *Ukrainskaya pravda* (Russian edition) 17.04.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/17/7022778/>.

56 Orthographically correct would be “Banderovtsy” with “a” from Bandera, Stepan.

57 An example of the self-abasement to which propagandist brainwashing can lead, was a banner that looked like a parody, but was seriously intended – to be seen at a demonstration of the “Party of Regions” in Donetsk. Alluding to the alleged “golden toilet bowl” (“zolotoi unitaz”) foisted on President Yanukovych by his opponents at his residence “Mezhyhira”; the slogan read: “Yanukovych – we are ready to live in shit – if only you live well!” (“Yanukovych – My gotovy zhit v govne, lish by khorosho zhit tebe!”) Source: http://www.espreso.tv/news/2014/04/04/yarema_yanukovych_osobysto_finansuye_separatystiv_na_skhodi_ukrainy.

58 The “Big Lie” is a propaganda technique. The term itself comes from the masters of the “Big Lie”, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels: Adolf Hitler: “One proceeded from the very correct principle that in the size of a lie there is always a certain factor of being believed, since the broad masses [...] with the primitive simplicity of their minds fall prey more easily to a big lie than to a small one [...] they cannot believe in the possibility of such a tremendous impudence of the most infamous distortion [...] but even from the most impudent lie something will always remain and stick...”, in: Hitler, Adolf: *Mein Kampf*, Erster Band, Eine Abrechnung, 10. Kapitel, Ursachen des Zusammenbruchs, p. 252. Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Frz. Eher Nachf., G. m. b. H., Munich 1939 (Jubiläumsausgabe), p. 230. Available on the Internet: 851st-855th edition, Munich 1943; <http://deutschesreichforever.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/hitler-adolf-mein-kampf-band-1-und-2-855-auflage-1943-818-s-text-buch.pdf>. Joseph Goebbels: “If you tell a big lie and repeat it often enough, people will end up believing.” Source unattested. References circulating on the Internet to Fröhlich, Elke (ed.): *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary History and with the support of the State Archive

his Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels. On July 9, 2014, at a meeting with representatives of international social and religious organisations, including the Yiddish community in Moscow, Putin himself called Goebbels a "talented man",⁵⁹ and quoted Goebbels' "insight" in a slightly modified form: "The more improbable a lie, the more quickly it is believed."⁶⁰

The (then) foreign correspondent of The New York Times in Moscow, David M. Herszenhorn, quotes a post by Russian Prime Minister Dmitrii Medvedev on Facebook – in his article for the American newspaper of April 15, 2014: "Blood has been spilled in Ukraine again. The threat of civil war looms". Herszenhorn described the "extraordinary propaganda campaign" in which a picture of chaos and danger in eastern Ukraine was painted:

And so began another day of bluster and hyperbole, of misinformation, exaggerations, conspiracy theories, overheated rhetoric and, occasionally, outright lies about the political crisis in Ukraine that have emanated from the highest echelons of the Kremlin and reverberated on state-controlled Russian television, hour after hour, day after day, week after week.⁶¹

The propaganda campaign – the "tele-massage" – did not fail to have an effect on the Russian population. According to Herszenhorn, the Russian leadership did not care how this campaign was received abroad. This is a radical change in their attitude toward the West, Liliya Shevtsova, director of the Russian Domestic Politics and Political Institutions program at the Carnegie Moscow Center,⁶² told The New York Times correspondent in Moscow. "It's all lies," she said:

To watch the television news in Russia is to be pulled into a swirling, 24-hour vortex of alarmist proclamations of Western aggression, sinister claims of rising fascism and breathless accounts of imminent hostilities by the "illegal" Ukrainian government in Kyiv [...] We can't trust anything. Even with the Soviet propaganda there were some rules. Now, there are no rules at all.

Lev Gudkov, the director of the respected independent polling institute, Levada Center (Analiticheskii Tsentr Yuriya Levada), said that in the entire post-Soviet

Service of the Russian Federation; Part I: Records 1923-1941, have not been confirmed by the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ); no such statement can be found in the diaries (full text in the IfZ). (Information from the IfZ library, 08.05.2014).

59 "On dobiavalsya svoego, on byl talantlivyi chelovek", (He prevailed, he was a talented person); video recording: LIVEJOURNAL, 10/07/2014; <http://shastya.livejournal.com/324534.html>. Cenzor.Net, 09.07.2014, citing iTAR-TASS; http://censor.net.ua/news/293175/on_dobiavalsya_svoego_on_byl_talantlivyi_chelovek_borets_s_fashizmom_putin_tsitiruet_gebbelsa. Ukrainskaya Pravda (Russ. edition), 10.07.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/photo-video/2014/07/10/7031539/>.

60 Chem neveroyatnee lozh, tem bystree v nee poveryat; ITAR-TASS, 09.07.2014; <http://itar-tass.com/politika/1307415>.

61 David M. Herszenhorn: Russia Is Quick to Bend Truth About Ukraine, in: The New York Times, 15.04.2014; <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/world/europe/russia-is-quick-to-bend-truth-about-ukraine.html>.

62 Lilia Shevtsova is an Associate Fellow with the Russia and Eurasia Program at Chatham House. Previously, she directed the Program on Eurasia and Eastern Europe of the Social Science Research Council in Washington, DC.

period he had seen nothing that equaled the intensity and aggressiveness of propaganda in the state-controlled media.

In a report based on two United Nations research missions, which were conducted between March 15, and April 2, 2014, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated, that the threats against ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine, which were used by Russian politicians as a justification for possible Russian military action, were excessively exaggerated. "Although there were some attacks against the ethnic Russian community, these were neither systematic nor widespread." Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Lukashevych called the United Nations Human Rights report "one-sided, politicized, and not objective" and "blatantly selective". According to him, the report ignored the "unchecked growth of aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism" in Ukraine.

Vladimir Grinin, the Russian ambassador in Berlin, turned the tables and accused the Western media of an "unprecedented propaganda campaign" against the Russian government, aimed at misleading the world. Germany, he said, could play a "useful role" in resolving the conflict by helping to temper the bellicose rhetoric.

At the special session of the UN Security Council convened by Russia on March 3, 2014,⁶³ Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, Vitalii Churkin, tried to convince the world that Russian military intervention in Ukraine was "necessary for humanitarian reasons": In the course of the session, Churkin read out—as a trump card, so to speak, in his argumentative chain of lies—a letter from the former President Yanukovych, in which he personally asked the Russian President Putin to send Russian troops to Ukraine in order to restore "law and order" and to ensure the "protection of the population". As the legally elected President of Ukraine, I declare: "Chaos and anarchy reign in the country. Life, security and human rights are in danger, especially in the East and South and in Crimea", Yanukovych had written. President Putin used the "legitimate president of Ukraine", who was being held in "protective custody" in Russia (it is possible that this letter was dictated to him), as a witness to justify his interference in Ukraine's internal affairs.

63 On March 15, 2014, a resolution of the UN Security Council failed due to Russia's veto. Thirteen members voted in favor of the resolution; China abstained. The resolution declared the upcoming referendum in the Autonomous Republic on the annexation of Crimea to Russia illegal.

IV.4 Bilingualism of Ukraine: Gateway for Russian Propaganda

IV.4.1 Russian: Not a “Minority Language” in Ukraine

The Resolution of the European Parliament of April 17, 2014 states in paragraph 25:

[The European Parliament] supports the efforts of the Ukrainian Government, in close cooperation with the OSCE and the European Council, to ensure due respect for the legitimate rights of the Russian-speaking population and other cultural, national and linguistic minority groups, in accordance with the provisions of the “European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages” and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.⁶⁴

In 2003 Ukraine ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,⁶⁵ and committed itself to protect the languages in question. In Ukraine, the provisions of the Charter apply to 13 national “minorities”, most of which have only a few thousand members.⁶⁶ But the European Charter does not apply to the Russian language in Ukraine, because the “Russian-speaking” population is not a “minority”, and because Russian is in Ukraine neither a minority nor a regional language (unlike Hungarian or Romanian).

The status of the Russian language has been regularly made an artificial campaign issue by President Yanukovich’s Party of Regions, and Russia is making the status of the Russian language in Ukraine a ‘casus belli’ against the Ukrainian state. According to a survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KMIS),⁶⁷ the legal status of the Russian language is important to only 1% of Ukrainians; and even in the eastern oblasts, this is the case for only 3% of respondents.

Ukraine is—for historical reasons—in fact a bilingual country. Practically all Ukrainians understand both Ukrainian and Russian, even if they use the two languages differently.⁶⁸ Ivan Patrylyak, the dean of the historical faculty at the National Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv, does not accept the concept of

64 European Parliament resolution of April 17, 2014 on Russian pressure on Eastern Partnership countries and in particular destabilization of eastern Ukraine (2014/2699(RSP), final edition; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2014-0457&language=EN>.

65 The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages was adopted in Strasbourg in 1992. Its aim is to “protect and develop the historical regional languages and languages of national minorities in Europe”.

66 Belarusians, Bulgarians, Gagauz, Greeks, Jews, Crimean Tatars, Moldovans, Germans, Poles, Russians, Romanians, Slovaks and Hungarians.

67 Kzyivskii mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiologhii.

68 “Surzhyk” is a variable colloquial mixture of both languages.

“bilingualism” for Ukraine and characterizes Ukraine linguistically as “diglossie”, i.e., the two languages Ukrainian and Russian are spoken by the same speakers under different circumstances.⁶⁹

With the expansion of the Russian Empire into the space inhabited by Ukrainians since the Agreement of Pereyaslav (Ukr.: Pereyaslavska uhoda, Russ.: Pereyaslavskoe soglashenie) in 1654, the Russian language displaced the Polish language as a “high level language”, first in the eastern and central parts of Ukraine, and then, after the annexation of the western part in the implementation of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, also there.

The fact that Russian is spoken predominantly in the eastern part of Ukraine, especially in the Donbas mining region, is due to the forced industrialization of this region in Soviet times,⁷⁰ when workers were attracted from all over the Soviet Union, for whom Russian was the lingua franca. The factory managers and administrators sent from Moscow, and not least the Communist Party of the USSR,⁷¹ ensured that eastern Ukraine became profoundly russified.

Throughout Ukraine, Russian became the standard language and the language with higher social prestige than Ukrainian. (Even today, according to Patrylzak, in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, the Russian language is considered “higher” than Ukrainian). Russian became the language of the urban population, while the rural population (also in the east of Ukraine) speaks Ukrainian. Professional advancement was possible only with the mastery of the Russian language.⁷²

Since the attainment of state independence (within the borders of the USSR, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) in 1991, the Ukrainian language has gained in importance. Ukrainian is the only language anchored in the Constitution as a “state language”. Knowledge of the Ukrainian language is now a compulsory requirement for higher education, as was previously the mastery of Russian. In 2016 in 90% of schools subjects were taught in Ukrainian.⁷³ The “Maidan” in winter of 2013 / 2014 has accelerated the change: Before this popular uprising, Ukrainian was hardly ever spoken on the streets of Kyiv; since then, passengers on the metro (subway) can be heard talking in Ukrainian. In a survey by the Razumkov Center, 68% of respondents called Ukrainian their native language in 2017; 14% Russian, while 17% reported both languages as their mother tongue.

69 Mariya Kapinos: Honest History: Where, why Ukrainians speak Russian language (and how Kremlin uses it to stoke conflict in Ukraine), in: Kyiv Post, 06.04.2017.

70 The industrialization of eastern Ukraine began as early as the tsarist era.

71 When, on February 9, 1918, Kyiv fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks for the first time, General Mikhail Muravyev had everyone shot, who spoke Ukrainian in public.

72 In western Ukraine, which was (formlly) annexed to the Soviet Union after the Second World War and was therefore less russianized, in some of the primary schools Ukrainian was the teaching language. However, the salaries of the teachers of Russian were 30 % higher than those of the teachers of the Ukrainian language.

73 Mariya Kapinos: Honest History: Where, Why Ukrainians Speak Russian Language (and How Kremlin Uses It) to stoke conflict in Ukraine), in: Kyiv Post, 06.04.2017.

Despite all this, the Ukrainian language has not yet achieved the prestige of a “high level language”: according to the Razumkov Center survey, only 59% of the respondents speak Ukrainian “at home”, although 68% of the population consider Ukrainian to be their “mother tongue”, and only 39% speak Ukrainian at work. Although Ukrainian is the teaching language at school, most pupils speak Russian in the schoolyard. Ukrainian still has a long way to go on its way from a “state language” to a real “high-level language”. In other words, in Ukraine it is the Ukrainian language that requires protection and promotion, not Russian.

Meanwhile, according to surveys conducted by the KMIS,⁷⁴ the sociological group, Reiting, and the GfK Ukraine in 2016 and 2017, about 64% of the population of Ukraine believed that the state should promote the Ukrainian language; in eastern Ukraine only 35 to 38% thought so. In general, the use of the Ukrainian language is not only a social issue, but also a political one: anyone who speaks Ukrainian in a predominantly Russian-speaking environment “outs” himself as a Ukrainian patriot.

But language is not the decisive criterion for the undeniable “division” of the population of Ukraine. Mykola Ryabchuk, one of Ukraine’s most renowned intellectuals, reconsidered his idea of the “two Ukrainians” – developed in his 2002 article, “Ukraine: One State, Two Countries” –⁷⁵ in the second year of the war in Donbas; he wrote: “The 2014 Russo-Ukrainian war, euphemistically called ‘Ukraine crisis’, has largely confirmed, on certain accounts, a dramatic split of the country and people’s loyalties between the proverbial ‘East’ and ‘West’, between the ‘Eurasian’ and ‘European’ ways of development epitomized by Russia and the European Union.” Ryabchuk does not deny that Ukraine is divided in many respects; but the main fault line is not between ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, between Russophones and Ukrainophones, or between “East” and “West”; it is ideological, between two different types of Ukrainian identity: between “non / anti-Soviet and post / neo Soviet, between European and East Slavonic”.

The Linguistic Reality

The Russian language does not require protection in Ukraine; rather, it is the Ukrainian language which, despite its constitutional status as the “state language”, requires state protection. Due to the lack of statehood and the fact, that

⁷⁴ Kyiv International Institute of Sociology.

⁷⁵ Riabchuk Mykola: ‘Two Ukraines’ Reconsidered: The End of Ukrainian Ambivalence? in: *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol.15, № 1, 2015. The title refers to Riabchuk’s idea of the ‘two Ukraines’ developed in his article “Ukraine: One State, Two Countries?” in: *Transit*, September 16, 2002; <https://www.iwm.at/transit-online/ukraine-one-state-two-countries/>. Mykola Riabchuk, publicist, writer, literary critic, honorary president of the Ukrainian PEN Club, researches (“Starshyi naukovyi spivrobitnyk”) at the “I. F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnonational Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NAN), in Kyiv. (Institut politychnykh i etnonsatsionalnykh doslidzhen im. I. F. Kurasa, NAN Ukramy).

central, eastern and southern Ukraine had been part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union for three hundred years, the Russian language became to be considered the “high-level” language, while the Ukrainian language was considered an idiom of the common (rural) people and a “South-Russian” dialect of Russian.

Since the independence of Ukraine, i.e. since 1991, the majority of the population “professes” Ukrainian as its mother tongue. According to the national census in the year 2001, the figure was 67.5%. In 1991, half of the schools taught in Ukrainian; ten years later, 82% of the schools taught in Ukrainian. However, in everyday life the Ukrainian language still does not enjoy the prestige of a “high-level language”: Two-thirds of Ukrainians consider Ukrainian their mother tongue, 80% of students are taught in Ukrainian, but only 5% of Ukrainian citizens use Ukrainian in their private communication (“at home”), and roughly only 40% at work.

There are no clear spatial linguistic boundaries between Ukrainian and Russian in Ukraine (as there are between German and French in Switzerland); the territory of a Russian-speaking “minority” cannot be clearly defined territorially; Russian is not the language of a region or of a compact settlement area of a minority (Volodymyr Kulyk, political scientist, linguist), even though Russian predominates in the *urban* centers of the eastern and southern parts of the country. In Ukraine, Russian is spoken everywhere, with the exception of Western Ukraine. The majority of the population does not consider one or the other, Ukrainian or Russian, to be “their own language”; most Ukrainians speak and use both. Many Ukrainian experts consider the inclusion of Russian in the list of regional and minority languages a mistake.

The Russian language is not “threatened” in Ukraine. In reality, the Russian language in Ukraine – still – has a prominent position; the Ukrainian language is socially discriminated against. Patriotic Kyiv citizens lament an experience that confirms their prejudices against the population of Donbas: The Ukrainian language, which was increasingly heard in the center of Kyiv during and after the “Maidan”, is (again) displaced by the Russian language (including its vulgar vocabulary) – spoken by the internally displaced persons from the Donbas.

The “Kivalov-Kolesnichenko Law”

On February 28, 2018, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine ruled that the law “On the Principles of the state language policy” (the “Kivalov-Kolesnichenko Law”) of the year 2012 was unconstitutional. The Verkhovna Rada nullified this law on February 23, 2014 – one day after the victory of the “Maidan” – in a politically imprudent “act of revenge”. For Russian propaganda, this act was a “through ball” – an act of aggression against the Russian-speaking population. However, since the repeal law was not signed by President *ad interim*, Oleksandr Turchynov, nor by President Petro Poroshenko – who was elected on

May 25, 2014—the language law of 2012 remained in force until February 28, 2018, the day of the respective decision of the Constitutional Court.⁷⁶

The language law had been pushed through parliament by the (regime) “Party of Regions” in 2012—in violation of all procedural rules—as a demonstration of political power. This law retained Ukrainian as the “state language”, but granted Russian and, for “optical” reasons, 17 (!) other languages the status of a regional language in areas, where speakers of these languages account for more than 10% of the population. Russian became an official *regional* language in 13 of the 27 territorial administrative units (oblasts,⁷⁷ A. R. Crimea, cities with special status Kyiv and Sevastopol) after this law came into force. Only in Crimea and Donbas (in the two oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk) does the Russian-speaking population exceed 50%. The Venice Commission,⁷⁸ to which the draft law was submitted for review, found that the balance between the state language as the consolidating factor of society and the protection of minority languages was not ensured. The Constitutional Court based its decision of February 28, 2014 on “systematic procedural violations” in the adoption of the law,⁷⁹ which was the rule rather than the exception in President Yanukovich’s era.

After the decision of the Constitutional Court the Parliament was required to adopt a new language law. A draft (No. 5670-D) by 76 authors had, according to Tetyana Ogarkova, the support of many politicians as well as of civil society.⁸⁰ The draft law regulates the use of Ukrainian as the state language; a separate law is envisaged for “minority languages”. The new language law is not to be applied to private communications, and not for religious rites. It requires, that candidates for state offices, teachers and medical personnel master Ukrainian and regulates the use of the state language in state institutions, educational institutions, the media, science and culture. The draft of the new law provides for procedures to ensure its implementation, including a “Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language” as well as “Language Inspectors”. On July 16, 2019, the new Law on the State Language came into force (Ukr.: “Pro zabezpechennya funkcionuvannya ukrayinskoyi movy yak derzhavnoyi”). 278 deputies voted in favor; 38 voted against.⁸¹ On November 27, 2019, the Cabinet of

76 Even with “minimal implementation”, this law had cost UAH 1.5 to 2.1 billion a year. garkova, Tetyana: The Truth Behind Ukraine’s Language Policy. Atlantic Council, 12.03.2018i <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-truth-behind-ukraine-s-language-policy>. Tetyana Ogarkova is foreign outreach coordinator at the Ukraine Crisis Media Center.

77 Kyiv (oblast), Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk (Dnipro), Zaporizhzhya, Odesa, Kherson, Mykolayiv, Sumy, Chernihiv.

78 The Council of Europe’s “European Commission for Democracy through Law” advises states on constitutional and legal matters.

79 No second reading, opposition amendments not taken into account, voting by deputies not present during the vote by colleagues sitting next to them (a common practice in the Ukrainian parliament even before Yanukovich, etc.

80 Ogarkova, Tetyana: The Truth Behind Ukraine’s Language Policy. op. cit.

81 “Kanal 24”, July 16, 2019; https://24tv.ua/rada_pidtrimala_zakonoproekt_pro_movu_hto_i_de_musitime_govoriti_ukrayinskoyu_n1042268. <https://delo.ua/economy-and-politics-in-ukraine/zakon-o-gosudarstvennom-yazyke-v-ukraine-vstupil-3557751>.

Ministers appointed Tetyana Monakhova as “Language Ombudswoman” (“Yasykovyi ombudsmen”).⁸²

In 2016 and 2017, several laws were passed to strengthen the Ukrainian language. The government has enacted a number of measures, including quotas in the mass media. However, despite the prescribed quota of 75%, Ukrainian TV-stations so far (2017) broadcast only about 40% of their programming in Ukrainian. Three times more books are printed in Russian than in Ukrainian, and twice more newspapers are published in Russian than in Ukrainian.⁸³

82 Ukrainskaya pravda (Russian edition), November 27, 2019; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2019/11/27/7233196/>.

83 Ogarkova, Tetyana: *The Truth Behind Ukraine's Language Policy*, op. cit.

IV.5 Excursus: The “Separatist International”⁸⁴

“Separatists of all countries unite” – under Moscow’s leadership. Although not under the paraphrased appeal, but under the title “Dialogue of Nations. The right of peoples to self-determination and the construction of a multipolar world”, the first conference of separatist movements from all over the world was held in Moscow on September 20, 2015 (in the President Hotel owned by the Presidential Administration), followed by a second conference on September 25, 2016 (in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Moscow).

Excluded from this call were the separatists of the multi-ethnic host state, the Russian Federation (such as the organizers of the banned “March for the Federalization of Siberia”). The Kremlin supports separatism all over the world, which it brutally suppresses in Russia (recall the two Chechen wars (1994 to 1996 and 1999 to 2009)).⁸⁵ In May 2014, a few weeks after the annexation of Crimea, the “extremism” Article 280 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, was supplemented by Point 280.1, which criminalizes separatist appeals. “Public calls aimed at destroying the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation”,⁸⁶ are punishable by up to five years in prison. So far, most of the convicted persons were “qirimli” (Crimean Tatars), who openly criticized the annexation of Crimea.⁸⁷

The organizer of the 2015 separatist conference was Aleksandr Ionov, chairman of the Antiglobalization Movement of Russia⁸⁸ (Antiglobalistskoe dvizhenie Rossii / ADR), which organized also the conference in 2016. (Ionov also poses as a “special envoy” of the Donetsk People’s Republic). “There are no separatists in Russia because we have no colonial past,” Ionov explains. Yet the expansion of the Great Principality of Moscow is a single story of conquests; the conquered territories were not perceived as “colonies” because they were not located separately overseas, like the colonies of Western European empires, but were spatially seamlessly connected to Moscow and could easily be incorporated into the “motherland”.⁸⁹

84 The term was probably first used by Julian Hans. Julian Hans was editor of the German weekly newspaper “Die Zeit” from 2006 to 2011; for the German “Siiddeutsche Zeitung” he reported as a correspondent from Moscow.

85 Julia Smirnova: Warum Moskau nun mit Separatisten aus aller Welt flirtet (Why Moscow now is flirting with separatists from all over the world; in: Die Welt”, 26.09.2016; <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article158369774/Warum-Moskau-nun-mit-Separatisten-aus-aller-Welt-flirtet.html>).

86 Statya 280.1 “Publichnye prizvyvy k osuschestvleniyu deystvii, napravlennykh na narushenie territorialnoi tselostnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii.

87 Anyone who speaks out in favor of Crimea’s belonging to Ukraine is also liable to prosecution.

88 So far, the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, the former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro have been “promoted” to “honorary members”.

89 For Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, alias Lenin, the “Russian Empire” was very much a “colonial empire”, indeed, the second largest colonial power after England” (see: “Imperialism as the youngest stage of capitalism”, Zurich 2016).

In the text of the invitation it was demanded, that in the conflict between the two principles of international law, the inviolability of the borders of states and the right of peoples to self-determination, the right of self-determination should be given priority. As a result of the conference, a draft resolution to this effect was to be submitted to the United Nations (Julian Hans).

Among the intellectual supporters of Ukrainian separatism are the former rector of the Riga School of Law, John Burke, and his wife Svetlana-Panina-Burke, who even wrote a "secessionist manifesto".⁹⁰

90 SSRN Electronic Journal, Eastern and Southern "Ukrainees" (sic) Right to Secede and Join the Russian Federation: A Secessionist Manifesto, DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2499668, January 2014. "SSRN", formerly "Social Science Research Network" (Social Science Electronic Publishing Inc.) is owned by the Dutch publishing company "Elsevier" since May 2016.

IV.6 Ukrainian Nationalism

IV.6.1 “Catch-up Nationalism” of an “Unexpected Nation”⁹¹

Many a German politician or journalist believes, that he or she must side with Russia in its completely unjustified conflict with Ukraine, because the new Ukrainian rulers are nationalists if not fascists, and the people’s uprising, through which they came to power, was – if not organized – then at least dominated by nationalists. It is the notorious “anti-fascists” who are wildly wielding the “fascism club”, propagating the devious pretensions of Russia, which is itself in a nationalist frenzy.

“Ukrainian nationalism is a consequence of the German war in Eastern Europe”, explains Timothy Snyder,⁹² who is the main authority on “Ukrainian nationalism”:

Ukrainian nationalism (must) be seen as part of the German responsibility. It is not something that could absolve the Germans of their responsibility. [...] Ukrainian nationalism was part of the German occupation policy [...] In interwar Poland, Ukrainian nationalism was a relatively insignificant force. It was financed by the German counterintelligence (“Abwehr”). The Ukrainian nationalists who were in Polish prisons, were released [...] when Germany and the Soviet Union jointly invaded Poland and destroyed the Polish state.⁹³

IV.6.2 Collaboration with the “Wehrmacht”

In all the countries occupied by the Wehrmacht (German Armed Forces), parts of the population collaborated – Russians, White Russians, Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, most of them without political motives: “They collaborated with the

91 “Unexpected Nation”, as Andrew Wilson puts it in the subtitle to his book, *The Ukrainians*. Wilson, Andrew: *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation*, New Haven and London (Yale University Press; first published in 2000).

92 Snyder, Timothy: *Verantwortung. Warum Deutschland die Wahrheit über die Ukraine nicht vergessen darf* (Responsibility. Why Germany must not forget the truth about Ukraine), in “Lettre International”, Winter 2017, pp. 38–41, here p. 40. Speech on June 20, 2017 in the German Bundestag. Translation by Rita Seuss. On June 20, 2017, a discussion on Germany’s historical responsibility for Ukraine took place in the German Bundestag. One of the invited speakers was the historian Timothy Snyder (Yale University), who gave a keynote speech. This was followed by a panel discussion chaired by the German historian Wilfried Jilge. The expert discussion was organized by Marieluise Beck (Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen), who introduced a motion on German responsibility towards Ukraine in the Bundestag. See *Deutscher Bundestag* (German Federal Parliament) printed matter 18/10042, 18th legislative period, 19.10.2016, motion by MP Marieluise Beck et al; <http://dip2l.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/100/1810042.pdf>. <http://de.euromaidanpress.com/2017/06/24/timothy-snyder-die-verlockung-der-verantwortungslosigkeit-deutschlands-verdraengtes-kolonialerbe-in-der-ukraine> (The temptation of irresponsibility; Germany’s repressed colonial heritage in Ukraine/. English version: <http://euromaidanpress.com/2017/06/23/nazi-dreams-of-an-enslaved-ukraine-the-blind-spot-of-germanys-historical-responsibility-colonialism/>).

93 Timothy Snyder: “I made my entire career writing about Ukrainian nationalism,” p. 39. Snyder has published “the first article in a western language about the role of the Ukrainian police in Holocaust and how that lead to the ethnic cleansing of Poles in 1943”.

actually existing occupying power" (Timothy Snyder). According to Snyder, more Ukrainian communists than nationalists collaborated with the Germans. And "many more Ukrainians died fighting against the Wehrmacht than on the side of the Wehrmacht. [...] More Ukrainians fought and died on the Allied side than the French, British and Americans put together." Ignorant German "Russia understanders" equate "Red Army" with "Russian Army". Due to the geography of the war, Ukraine was significantly over-represented in the Soviet Union's Red Army.

The temptation of the Germans to withdraw from their responsibility (towards Ukraine) [...] is specifically promoted by Russian foreign policy [...] which in the history of the Soviet Union distinguishes two parts: a good one – the Russian part, and a bad one – Ukrainian – part. [...] Liberation is Russian. Collaboration is Ukrainian. [...] Russian foreign policy regards the German sense of responsibility as a resource that can be manipulated.⁹⁴ Therefore, Russia promotes the confusion of the Soviet Union with Russia ... Russia [...] would like to seduce other countries into adopting its attitude towards Ukraine."

Russian diplomats deliberately equate the Soviet Union with Russia for this reason. Snyder warns of the "danger of a mental Molotov-Ribbentrop pact", meaning an agreement between Germans and Russians to blame the Ukrainians for the current "Ukrainian conflict". Russia's fight—including a possible military intervention—against "evil" Ukrainian nationalism, against the nationalist regime in Kyiv, is considered "good" by German "Russia-understanders"; so why should Germany oppose it, they ask "politically correct".

It is up to Ukrainians to face the responsibility for Ukrainian collaboration with the—murderous—German occupation policy, Snyder argues, referring to the participation of Ukrainians in the murder of Ukrainian Jews⁹⁵. And it is not up to the Germans to justify the current Russian aggression against Ukraine with reference to Ukrainian crimes in World War II, it must be added. Justified, however, can be the struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrayinska Povstanska Armiya / UPA) against the—murderous—Soviet occupation forces in the annexed West of Ukraine⁹⁶ until the mid 50s, especially against Stalin's executors, the NKVD.⁹⁷ Otherwise, Snyder's dictum holds: "Ukrainian nationalists are only a small part of Ukrainian history and only a small part of the Ukrainian present".

The "Maidan", the popular uprising against the kleptocratic regime of President Yanukovych, as well as Russia's military intervention in Donbas have greatly strengthened the national feeling of Ukrainians. However, the "new"

94 Snyder, Timothy, op. cit., p. 40.

95 It is also up to Ukrainians, "to come to terms with the Ukrainian Communists' role in Stalin's policy of terror – instead of saying, all this was Russian policy [...] it was Soviet policy in which Ukrainians were also involved."

96 In the execution of the Hitler-Stalin Pact.

97 The Soviet Marshall Vatulyn, who liberated Kyiv in 1943—his monument stands not far from the Parliament building. He died a year later in the fight against the "Ukrainian Insurgent Army".

Ukrainian nationalism is predominantly civic rather than ethnic in nature; it essentially implies loyalty to Ukraine as an independent and democratic state.⁹⁸ According to a survey conducted by the Razumkov Center in 2015, for 56% of Ukrainian citizens the Ukrainian nation consists of all citizens of the country.⁹⁹ Undeniably, there is also ethnic “blood-and-soil” nationalism in Ukraine.¹⁰⁰ And, of course, radical groups are more visible and vocal than others, especially in public, but they do not have a broad support among the population. According to a survey, 3% would vote for the nationalist party, Svoboda, and only 0.3% for the radical-nationalist Right Sector.¹⁰¹ Ukrainian nationalism is democratic – just as German nationalism was in the first half of the 19th century – in the “Vormärz”.¹⁰²

IV.6.3 “Ukrainian Fascism”: A Russian Bugaboo

In order to discredit the new Ukrainian government in the Western world, the Kremlin is wielding the “fascism club”: the new government in Kyiv is dependent on fascist, Nazi forces, the Russian side claimed – and continues to claim. In all his talks with his counterparts in the European Union, the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov repeated (in Goebbel’s style) the lie, that the new “interim government” in Kyiv came to power through an “armed coup”. In reality, it came to power through two factors: through a popular uprising, not through a coup by politicians – and with the parliamentary help of the opportunists of the Party of Regions, which until then had supported President Yanukovych as the “regime party”: it was the deputies of the Party of Regions who helped the ‘revolutionary government’ to achieve an overwhelming “constitutional” (two-thirds)

98 Thus, the resettlement of many (Muslim) Tatars from Crimea to other parts of Ukraine is seen positively, “because the Crimean Tatars support the territorial integrity of Ukraine ...”, said the expert of the Ukrainian Congress of National Communities Vyacheslav Likhachev. Ruslan Minikh: Nationalism Is on the Rise in Ukraine, and That’s a Good Thing, in: Atlantic Council, April 4, 2018; <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/nationalism-is-on-the-rise-in-ukraine-and-that-s-a-good-thing>.

99 Material of the project: “Formuvannya spilnoyi identychnosti hromadyan Ukrayiny v novykh umovakh” (supported by the MATRA program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, SIDA of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Konrad Adenauer Foundation), in: *Natsionalna bezpeka i oborona*, № 3–4 (161–162) 2016, edited by: Ukrayinskyi Tsentr Ekonomichnykh i politychnykh Doslidzhen imeni Oleksandra Razumkov; http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/journal/ukr/NSD161-162_2016_ukr.pdf.

100 Ruslan Minikh (Analyst at Internews Ukraine and Ukraine World): Nationalism Is on the Rise in Ukraine, and That’s a Good Thing, in: Atlantic Council, April 4, 2018; <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/nationalism-is-on-the-rise-in-ukraine-and-that-s-a-good-thing>.

101 Hromads’ka dumka, hruden 2017: vyborchi reitynhy i reitynhy doviry, a survey conducted by the “Fond Demokratychni initsiatyvy imeni Ilka Kucheriva” in cooperation with the Sociological Service of the Tsentr Razumkova from December 15 to 19, 2017; <http://dif.org.ua/article/rejtingijfojseoj8567547>.

102 From 1830 (“July Revolution”) to 1848 (“March Revolution”).

majority for the laws, by which the parliamentary takeover of power was legalized. After the massacre on Instytutska Street,¹⁰³ it was primarily the group of deputies controlled by the oligarch Rinat Akhmetov within the faction of the Party of the Regions and the “people” of the former Deputy Prime Minister Serhii Tihipko, who became conscious of whom they had been serving.

After the last meeting of Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov with his American counterpart Kerry before the referendum in Crimea on March 14, 2014 in London, Lavrov said at the – separate – press conference, that the different view of things had made an agreement impossible.¹⁰⁴ Lavrov reiterated his concern that the necessary measures were not taken in Ukraine to stop the activities of radical nationalists. In reality, it is not a different perception of ‘things’, but a deliberate misperception on the part of Russia. Aggressive propaganda needs an image of the enemy; where the “enemy” is missing or behaves rather defensively, an offensive enemy must be “made”.

The nationalist Right Sector (Ukrainian and Russian: Pravyi sektor)¹⁰⁵ is portrayed in the Russian media as a wild bunch spreading fear and terror. Rumours have it,¹⁰⁶ that the Right Sector is a “special operation” of the Russian secret service (the FSB), and that its leader Yarosh acts as an “agent provocateur” – which has not been confirmed. There is no doubt that after two months of peaceful protest on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the Right Sector was the first to use violence against the riot police “Berkut”. But its members are respected by the other “fighters” against the Yanukovych regime as comrades, as brave fighters, as “brothers” (sing. pobratym, pl. pobratymy).

Since a significant influence of the extra-parliamentary Right on the new government (the “right sector” is not represented neither in Parliament nor in the Government) does not exist in reality, Russian propaganda focused on Oleh Tyahnybok’s right-wing Svoboda (“Freedom”) party, which was represented in parliament, as the image of the enemy. It is vilified as ultra nationalist, fascist and Nazi, anti-Semitic, xenophobic and Russophobic, attributions which are summed up in the word “Banderovets” (pl. banderovtsy), devotees of Stepan Bandera – the highest level of political and moral disgust. This word was used in Soviet times as an insult to the partisans who were still fighting in Western Ukraine against the Soviet annexation after the Second World War. Even today,

103 The snipers did not seek their victims on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, but in the Instytutska vulytsya (Institute Street) leading down to the Independence Square.

104 *Ukrainskaya pravda* (Russian edition), 14.03.2014, citing RIA Novosti and Interfaks-Ukraina. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/03/14/7018823/>.

105 The Right Sector is a union (in the period of the “Maidan”) of primarily three nationalist organizations, the party UNA-UNSO (Ukrayinska natsionalna asamblea-Ukrayinska narodna samoborona, founded in 1990), and the two “civil society” organizations “Tryzub” (trident, coat of arms of Ukraine) and “Patriot Ukrayiny. After the victory of the “Maidan” the “Right Sector” registered as a political party – on the basis of UNA-UNSO.

106 The renowned journalist Serhyi Rachmanin took up the issue and dealt with the suspicions in an article in the weekly newspaper *Zerkalo Nedeli* / *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*. Serhyi Rachmanin: “Svoi”, in: *Zerkalo nedeli* (Russian edition), No. 10 (156), March 22-28, 2014, pp. 1 and 2).

Russian propaganda and pro-Russian Ukrainian politicians still abuse all Ukrainian nationalists, as well as Ukrainians, who are considered to be nationalists, as “banderovtsy”.

After the “parliamentary seizure of power”, the “Svoboda” party provided four ministers in the transitional government: Oleksandr Sych, one of the Deputy Prime Ministers; the Minister of Defense, Admiral Ihor Tenyukh (until 2010 Commander of the Ukrainian Navy)¹⁰⁷; the Minister of Agriculture, Ihor Shvaika; and the Minister of Ecology, Andriy Mokhnyk. The function of the Prosecutor General, which was important for the “lustration” of the state sector from corrupt officials (as well as for the fight against separatism and for the restoration of public order), was given to Oleh Machnitskyi, who until his appointment belonged to the faction of the Svoboda party – a questionable appointment indeed. This office would have been more credible in the hands of a non-party lawyer.

One of the reasons for the relatively strong presence of the Svoboda party in the new government is, that Vitali Klitschko’s former opposition party UDAR (Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms, Ukrayinskyi demokratychnyi alians za reformy) did not participate in the new government. The participation of the Party of Regions in a new government of “national unity” would certainly have been rejected by the “Maidan”.

The Svoboda party is undoubtedly a nationalist party; since this characterization is propagandistically ‘insufficient’, its nationalism is qualified as “radical”, “extremist” or “ultra” by its opponents in the east – and the west. This ignores the fact that “nationalism” in a young nation with an unestablished national identity is quite different from the anachronistic neo-nationalism in the “old” nations of Europe – and from the official, aggressive, i.e. imperialist nationalism in Russia. Defensive Ukrainian nationalism was a “liberation movement” when it emerged. The fact that it was less democratic than the German liberation nationalism in the first half of the 19th century is due to the time of its birth: in the interwar period, anti-democratic, fascistoid ideologies were attractive throughout Europe.¹⁰⁸

Today, the Svoboda party may not be an exemplary democratic party, but it is certainly not a “fascist” or even a “Nazi” party. Its alleged “Russophobia” is not “Russophobia” in the sense of a general rejection of the Russian people or Russian culture; it means rejection of Moscow’s imperial policy towards Ukraine or Ukrainians, regardless of whether it is of Tsarist, Soviet or, more recently, Putinist provenance. This, however, ignores the fact that the Sovietization of Western Ukraine after World War II, although it originated in Moscow, was not

107 Tenyukh resigned after 14 days in office due to fierce criticism for his passivity during the Russian occupation of Crimea.

108 See, for example, Sir Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists (BUF). The USA too were not immune to fascism and national socialism.

a "Russian" project, but a Soviet one, in which Ukrainian communists played a significant role.

Anti-semitic slogans were not heard on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, neither from the Tribune nor from the crowd. From the ranks of the party "Svoboda" no anti-Semitic tones were heard. But it has been proven that fascist and anti-Semitic tendencies existed in the predecessor organization. But these were not covered up by the change of name, but eliminated. In an interview with the "Deutsche Welle" (DW-TV) the Chairman of the Association of Yiddish Organizations and Communities ("Vaad"¹⁰⁹) in Ukraine, Josef Zissels, called the accusation, the "Maidan" movement, in which the "Svoboda" party was present with a strong contingent, of being fascist – and thus implicitly anti-Semitic – Russian propaganda. Many members of the Yiddish communities supported the "Maidan" movement. To make this truth known, his association published daily portraits of the Yiddish "Maidanivtsi", Yiddish participants of the "Maidan".

Regarding the alleged xenophobia of the Svoboda party, Polish President Bronisław Komorowski said in a live broadcast of Polskie Radio,¹¹⁰ that right-wing parties in Ukraine, notably the Svoboda party, do not conduct a xenophobic or anti-Polish policy. There is no danger from Ukrainian nationalism, Komorowski said. The fact is that the Svoboda party, together with the many other (former) opposition parties, i.e. *Batkivshchyna* ("Fatherland") and UDAR, demonstrated on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti "for a European Ukraine" ("za Yevropeisku Ukrainu!"). On the Independence Square, the Svoboda party was a factor of order, which was not afraid to discourage radical groups from provocations.

In the parliamentary elections of October 2012 the Svoboda party was elected in the capital Kyiv primarily by the educated middle class – not because of its nationalist ideology, but because of its uncompromising opposition to the regime of President Yanukovych. Other enemy images of Russian propaganda were Vitalii Yarema and Andrii Parubii. Yarema, retired Lieutenant General of Militia,¹¹¹ was in the Interim Government (since February 27, 2014) First Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for the entire "security bloc"¹¹² (*silovyi blok*, *silovie struktury*), i.e. the ministries and institutions of state power (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defense, Prosecutor General's Office). Yarema was elected to the Verkhovna Rada as a direct candidate in October 2012.

109 Assotsiatsiya evreiskikh organizatsii i obshchin (Vaad) Ukrainy.

110 Polskie Radio.pl, 03.02.2014; <http://www.polskieradio.pl/7/129/Artykul/1039607/Bronisla-w-Komorowski-Polska-powinna-wesprzec-Ukraine-w-przeprowadzeniu-reform>.

111 He resigned on March 12, 2010 after the appointment of Mykola Azarov as prime minister by the new President Yanukovych.

112 These include all internal and external security institutions, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the secret domestic intelligence service "Security Service of Ukraine", the "Border Guard Service", the Disaster Service and several other "specialized" organizations.

Parubii was appointed “secretary” of the National Security and Defense Council / SNBOU¹¹³ on March 27, 2014. Until this appointment Parubii was a member of the parliamentary faction of (Yuliya Tymoshenko’s) party, Batkivshchyna. Parubii was “commander” of the “Maidan” (coordination of daily life in the barricaded tent village on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti and “commander” of the “Self-defense” (“Samooborona”) of the “Maidan”.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the accusation of “nationalism” addressed to Ukraine coming from the mouths of raging ethno-nationalist, neo-imperialist Russian politicians and propagandists is the height of absurdity.

113 (Ukr.: Rada natsionalnoyi bezpeky i oborony Ukrayiy; Russ. Sovet natsionalnoi bezopasnosti i oborony Ukrainy / SNBOU). The chairman of the SNBOU is the president himself.

114 For his services in the Orange Revolution in the year 2004, Parubii was awarded the commemorative medal “To the outstanding participant of the Orange Revolution”.

IV.7 Putin's Secessionist Project "New Russia"¹¹⁵

IV.7.1 Operation "Russian Spring"

"Novorossiya" is the historical name of the area north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, which was annexed to the Russian Empire in the middle and late 18th century, and which today largely belongs to Ukraine. In separatist propaganda, this South-East (Yugo-Vostok) of Ukraine is inhabited by Russian-speaking "nationals" of the Russian Federation. With this propaganda concept, Russia is attempting to justify the arrogated "protective function" of the Russian state for its compatriots ("sootechestvenniki") in Ukraine, in concreto the annexation of Crimea and the military intervention in Donbas. The concept of "New Russia" was already developed in the late 1990s by Russian and pro-Russian Ukrainian ideologues as a secessionist concept, as Wilfried Jilge (DGAP) pointed out.¹¹⁶

In the highly industrialized and densely populated east and south of Ukraine, Russian is the predominant language in the urban centers. The population in the cities is composed of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians and people with Russian-Ukrainian 'dual ethnicity' as well as descendants of people who immigrated from non-Russian parts of the Soviet Union. President Putin justified Russia's support for pro-Russian separatists of eastern and southern Ukraine not only with the Russian-speaking population there, but also historically, as in the case of Crimea: "After the revolution, the Bolsheviks [...] ceded large areas of the historic Russian South to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR)," Putin said in his "Crimea speech" on March 28, 2014. After the "Ukrainian winter", the pro-Russian forces in the south and east of Ukraine wanted to ignite a separatist "Russian spring" (Russ.: "Russkaya vesna") with Moscow's support – along the lines of the "Maidan".

Since March 16, 2014 – the day of the "referendum" in Crimea – a wave of separatist, pro-Russian rallies has been rolling through many cities in the south-east of Ukraine. On weekends, pro-Russian activists gathered in the central squares of large cities such as Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Donetsk. The spectrum of demands varied from the overthrow of the "Kyiv junta" to local referendums on the annexation of individual oblasts by Russia.

115 "Governorate of New Russia" (Novorossiiskaya guberniya) was the historical name (from 1764) for the area from which the Russian Empire had ousted the Ottoman Empire. It included the south and parts of the east of today's Ukraine (as well as the Azov and Black Sea parts of the South of today's Russia and the historical Bessarabia).

116 Wilfried Jilge (DGAP Berlin), Lecture: Novorossija (New Russia): Historical Genesis and Political Relevance of an Imperial Identity Claim. Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin, 12.01.2017. (Lecture Series: Revolutions and their Impact on Modern Eastern and Central Europe). <https://www.dgo-online.org/kalender/berlin/2017/novorossija-new-russia-historical-genesis-and-political-relevance-of-an-imperial-identity-claim/>.

The demonstrations often ended in bloody clashes with supporters of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, who gathered in the same places. Another component of the "Sunday program" was the raising of the Russian flag above local and regional government buildings. These actions were attributed to Russian "male tourists" – a civilian analogy to the military "little green men" with whom Moscow occupied Crimea.

The Russian spring wind blew particularly violently in Donbas. The separatists there claimed that 90% of the population was behind them and supported secession from Ukraine. It is likely that the majority of the population did not want the Donbas to join the Russian Federation. The repeated accusation – "they (the new government in Kyiv) do not listen to us! The South East is being ignored" – is probably more in line with the mood of the population in Donbas, i.e. the people of Donbas were frustrated by Kyiv's abandonment – after four years of rule by "Donetsk President" Yanukovych and his "Party of Regions". One of their demands was the permission to conduct official correspondence throughout the region in the customary Russian language. This problem is comparatively easy to solve, namely legislatively," said Serhyi Taruta, head of the Donetsk oblast administration.

Russian television gave its viewers the impression that "annexation" to Russia was the will of the overwhelming majority of the population of Donbas. But until these events, the pro-Russian movement in the Donbas was a marginal political phenomenon. In the parliamentary elections of 2012, only 0.4% of the population of Donetsk oblast voted in favor of the "Russian Bloc" (Russkii Blok)¹¹⁷ Neither in the city council of Donetsk nor in the oblast council were representatives of openly pro-Russian parties. Pro-Russian sentiments gained momentum only in the aftermath of the "Maidan" and after the 'fall' of President Yanukovych. According to a poll conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KMIS) from February 8 to 18, 2014, i.e. during the violent final phase of the "Maidan", only 33% of the population of Donetsk oblast thought that Russia and Ukraine should unite "into one state".¹¹⁸

The majority of the population of Donbas did not want the Donbas to be annexed to the Russian Federation, or to secede from Ukraine, i.e. to become an independent state. According to a survey conducted by the prestigious Razumkov Center in December 2013, i.e. at the beginning of the Maidan (before the outbreak of violence in Kyiv) only 14% were in favor of the east and south of Ukraine being detached from Ukraine and annexed to Russia; 18% wanted Ukraine to become a federal state. However, only 20% of the population in the east and south of the country viewed the change of power in Kyiv (after the flight of President Yanukovych) positively, according to a survey conducted by GfK Ukraina¹¹⁹ in March 2014, while in other parts of the country the figure was 57%.

117 In Sevastopol in Crimea, the home-port of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, it was 5.5 %.

118 In Crimea, the figure was 41%. The party was banned on May 13, 2014.

119 "GfK": Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung".

During the three months of the “Maidan” the people of the “South-East” remained passive. For the “Anti-Maidan” organized by the Party of Regions in Kyiv, East and South Ukrainians were brought by train and buses for a “salary” of 200 hryvnia (at that time about €20) for an eight-hour day on the square next to the parliament building. Only after the victory of the “Maidan” in Kyiv did a movement of “pro-Russian” citizens emerge in eastern and southern Ukraine – incited by Russian propaganda – similar to the “Maidan” (slogan: Rossiya! Rossiya!), who had learned from the “Maidan” in the capital: they called for “people’s assemblies” (Russian “veche”), occupied administrative buildings and raised the Russian flag on them. The “uprising” in the Donbas shared certain features with the “Maidan”. Among the pro-Russian demonstrators there were many communists who showed their still intact Soviet mentality with Soviet symbolism (including pictures of Stalin) – with banners like this: “USSR I long for you” (“SSSR, ya po tebe skuchayu”).

Most of the “separatist demonstrators” were certainly genuine, i.e. not paid and not smuggled in (from Russia). They had never seen a “banderovets”, but firmly believed in the existence of this spectre. And they firmly believed in the Russian propaganda, according to which these “fascists” would come and force them to speak Ukrainian and to pray in Ukrainian (i.e. to visit churches other than those of the Moscow Patriarchate).

The storming of regional and local administrative buildings on April 6, 2014 followed the same script in all places of the Donbas – i. e., it was coordinated: People with Russian flags attacked the buildings; where they managed to capture them, they raised the Russian flag on the roof. Participants of such actions declared themselves defenders of the allegedly threatened Russian language. Their demands also corresponded to the direction of the Kremlin: the urgent holding of a referendum on secession from Ukraine and on joining the Russian Federation – on the pattern of the annexation of Crimea.

The acting Minister of Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov held Russia and President Putin personally responsible for the separatist riots in Donbas (on his Facebook account). Not many people had gathered, he claimed, but they had behaved aggressively. The crowd brought women and children to storm administration buildings, in order to provoke a bloodbath, Avakov claimed.

Certainly, the riots were instigated and directed by Russia, but without parts of the population susceptible to separatist propaganda and a latent separatism in Ukraine’s south-east, the Kremlin would not have succeeded.¹²⁰

120 In the (annual) ‘Great Press Conference’ on December 19, 2019, Russian President Putin resumed his New Russia” project of 2014 under the new (actually old, tsarist) name “Prichernomorie” (Black Sea coastlands) – alluding to the “Österreichische Küstenlande” (Austrian coastlands, ital. Litorale Austriaco, slow. Avstrijska Primorska, croat. Austrijsko Primorje), which had been Habsburg possessions on the Adriatic since the 14th century). In addition, he referred to the “Western Russian lands” (“Zapadnye zemli rossiiskie”, “Zapadnaya Rossiya”), an unofficial designation for today’s Eastern and Central Ukraine and Belarus. In his answer

The true extent of support that the Russian secessionist agents received from the population in 2014 is practically impossible to determine—even less so the support that the “proxy” regimes in the secessionist territories have today (mid-2019). The head of the press service of the armed formations of the so-called DNR, Daniil Bezsonov admitted, that the majority of the population of Donbas did not support separatism and that only 0.28% of the male population was ready to fight for the secession of the region from Ukraine. Bezsonov quoted this figure in an article titled “Who is for Donbas” (“Kto stoit za Donbass”), which was published in the “Analytical service of the Donbass” (“DNR”).¹²¹

The issuance of Russian passports to residents of the secession territories (“people’s republics”) is an indication of how big (or small) the desire to join Russia (still) is after five years of Russian occupation. It began in June 2019, two months after Russian President Putin issued a decree (April 24, 2019) allowing holders of DNR and LNR passports to obtain Russian citizenship in a simplified manner. On August 15, 2019, the Russian Interior Ministry announced that it had received more than 60,000 applications and had already issued more than 25,000 Russian passports on the basis of this decree. The authorities of the so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic” announced, that as of August 31, 2019, more than 12,000 Russian passports had been issued to residents of the DNR. Both in Ukrainian and Russian media it was assumed that these passports were issued mainly to official of the two “quasi-states”, employees of their “security services” and fighters of armed formations. The share of the population of the “People’s Republics” which has accepted Russian passports—since 2015 –¹²² is estimated to be 15% (in 2019).¹²³

to the question of journalist Andrei Kolesnikov (Kommersant newspaper) about his relationship with Lenin, Putin said: “When the Soviet Union was created, ancestral Russian territories (‘iskonno russkie territorii’), such as the coastlands of the Black Sea (Prichernomorie’) and the ‘Russian western lands’ (‘zapadnye zemli rossijskie’), which never had anything to do with Ukraine, were assigned to Ukraine”—with the aim of “increasing the share of the proletariat in Ukraine,” the TASS agency quoted Russian President Putin as saying. This territorial arrangement was Lenin’s idea, which Stalin initially resisted, but finally accepted and implemented. “And now we have to see how we can cope with it”. (“Eto vse nasledie gosudarstvennogo stroitelstva Vladimira Iliche Lenina, u teper my s etim razbiraemysya.”) <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/7378977>. See also: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366>; Ros-siyskaya Gazeta /RG.RU, 20.12.2018; <https://rg.ru/2018/12/20/polnyj-tekst-bolshoi-press-conferencii-vladimira-putina.html>. See also: <https://delo.ua/economyandpoliticsinukraine/putin-nazval-prichornomore-i-vostochnuju-ukrainu-362345/>; and <https://nv.ua/world/geopolitics/putin-onlayn-ob-ukraine-prichornomore-i-vostochnaya-ukraina-iskonno-russkie-territorii-poslednie-novosti-50060195.html>.

121 Vostochnyi Variant (Lugansk), Aug. 13, 2019; <https://v-variant.com.ua/tema/84714-spiker-boevikov-dnr-bezsonov-priznal-chto-lish-928-zhitelej-Donbasa-hoteli-voevat-za-otdelenie-ot-ukrainy.html>.

122 Already since 2015, residents of the “people’s republics” could apply in neighboring Rostov-on-Don (Russian Federation for Russian passports).

123 Nikolaus von Twickel, Newsletter 56, in: Civicmonitoring. (“Monitoring of civil rights violations in Eastern Ukraine”), Developments in “DNR” and “LNR”: April 26 to May 12, 2019; <https://civicmonitoring.org/newsletter56/>.

IV.7.2 “Federalization” of Ukraine: Disguised Separatism

Ukraine will bring to justice all separatist propagandists who, under the protection of Russian automatic rifles, try to destroy Ukraine's independence, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said at an extraordinary meeting of the new government in Kyiv. Since open separatist propaganda is punishable by law, Russia indirectly boosts separatist tendencies by calling for the “federalization” (“federalizatsiya”) of Ukraine. Moscow and Ukrainian politicians of the Party of Regions declared that the solution of the “crisis” in Ukraine could only be achieved through its federalization. Pro-Russian demonstrators and militant separatists are played down as “supporters of federalization” (“storonniki federalizatsii Ukrainy”).

The federalization of Ukraine, as much as it may appear to be a viable solution to the “conflict” in the eyes of politicians of federal Germany, is in fact a perfidious trick of the Kremlin: it is intended to facilitate Russian access to the eastern and southern regions and destabilize the country as a whole. The separatist governor of Kharkiv oblast, Mikhail Dobkin, promoted this Russian “solution proposal” with the words: “Federalization = does not mean fear, does not mean separatism, does not mean treason; it is (only) another form of administration.”¹²⁴ According to Dobkin, Ukraine had failed as a unitary state, so another form should be sought. A referendum could circumvent the reluctance of the Verkhovna Rada.¹²⁵ At a conference on “Socio-economic and political processes in Ukraine after the crisis” held in Kharkiv on February 12, 2014, Dobkin called for “not being afraid to talk about the federalization” of Ukraine.¹²⁶ According to a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology¹²⁷ on behalf of the renowned weekly newspaper *Dzerkalo tyzhnya* / *Zerkalo nedeli* from April 10 to 15, 2014 about 25% of the population of the South-East sup-

124 http://zn.ua/POLITICS/dobkin-prizval-k-federalizacii-ukrainy-v-obhod-verhovnoy-rady-138612_.html.

125 *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), 29.01.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/01/29/7011849/>.

126 ZN.UA, 12.02.2014; https://zn.ua/article/print/POLITICS/dobkin-prizval-k-federalizacii-ukrainy-v-obhod-verhovnoy-rady-138612_.html.

127 Kievskii mezhdunarodnyi institut sotsiologii.

ported the idea of a federal structure of the state; somewhat less than 20% declared themselves in favor of the status quo; for a unitarian—but “decentralized”¹²⁸ state pleaded 45% of the people questioned.¹²⁹

In Donetsk oblast 38.5% were in favor of federalization, 10.5% for the status quo and slightly more than 40 % for the “decentralization” of the unitary state. In the other Donbas oblast, in Luhansk oblast, 42% were in favor of federalization, 12.5% for the status quo and 34% for a decentralized unitary state. In Kharkiv oblast, 32% favored federalization, 23% the existing unitary state, and 39% favored a unitary but “decentralized” state.

The call for “federalization” is in fact tantamount to the demand for the (peaceful) detachment of the eastern and southern provinces (oblasts) from Ukraine. It has a propagandistic foreign policy component, because an important member state of the European Union, namely the Federal Republic of Germany, is a federally constituted state which, because of its own good experience with federalism, is inclined to fall for this devious trick of the Kremlin.

128 The “decentralization” of the state administration, i.e. the strengthening of local self-government, is propagated by reform-oriented politicians and civic groups as a counter-concept to “federalization” —and has been implemented with relative success. This fundamental reform was politicized by its linkage with the military conflict in Donbas in the Minsk Agreement (Minsk II). A reform of the constitution would, among other things, give a special status to the two self-proclaimed “people’s republics” (DNR and LNR) in Donbas. But while the reform of the constitution is not making any progress, decentralization moves forward.

129 3232 persons over 18 years of age were interviewed—1476 of them by telephone, 1756 in a personal interview in 160 cities and towns in 8 oblasts of the East and South of Ukraine. *Ukrainskaya pravda* (Russian edition), 19.04.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/19/7023006/>.

IV.8 Separatist Agitation: Russian Fire Accelerant

IV.8.1 Russia: Party to the Conflict

On March 8, 2014, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that Moscow was prepared to engage in dialogue with Kyiv on the condition, that no attempt was made to portray Russia as a “party to the conflict” — “as some of our partners are doing”.¹³⁰ The “crisis” was not caused by Russia, President Putin himself stressed at the meeting of the Russian Security Council on March 13, 2014. Russia was not to blame for the “events” in Ukraine and Crimea, and the Russian Federation was only “somehow involved” in them.¹³¹ It was above all an “internal Ukrainian crisis”. In reality, the Kremlin is the cause of these “events”; the conflict “over Ukraine” was instigated by Russia. The alleged “internal Ukrainian crisis” is a hybrid Russian aggression.

The strategy of the Kremlin was obvious: destabilization of Ukraine, in order to be able to install — in the “Smuta”, in anarchy, a willing government. What Putin wanted was “regime change” in Kyiv — a grotesque claim to interference in Ukraine’s internal affairs, analogous to the relationship between the Soviet Union and its satellite states. To this end, the new government in Kyiv was denounced as illegitimate, having allegedly come to power in an “armed coup d’état”. The obvious reason for Moscow’s non-recognition of the new government in Kyiv (the “Government of People’s Trust”, as it called itself) was to dismantle it. The agreement between President Yanukovych and the three leaders of the (then) Opposition of February 21 2014 was used as a pseudo-legal lever. Russia declared itself ready for dialogue with Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said, if Ukraine fulfils the commitments made by “those who now claim to lead the country”.

The cause of the “events in Ukraine” was also to be seen in the fact that the western “partners” had not fulfilled their obligations under the February 21 agreement, the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed. They (Foreign Ministers Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Laurent Fabius, and Radosław Sikorski) had pledged to “bring the other side (the then parliamentary opposition) back to reason, and not to allow, that radical nationalists control the political process. The fact, that the Russian ‘mediator’, Vladimir Lukin, the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation, had not been allowed to sign this agreement, was discreetly ignored. An “International Support Group” was brought into play by the Russian Foreign Ministry; it was to ensure the implementation of the agreement of February 21 2014, in order to overcome the “internal conflict”. The agreement of February 21 provided for the formation of a “government of national unity”.

¹³⁰ Interfaks, Moscow, 08.03.2014.

¹³¹ “My okazalis tak ili inache vovlechenymi v eti sobytiya”, Kremlin press service, 13.03.2014; <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/20523>.

President Putin and his Foreign Minister Lavrov called for the formation of a “broad coalition government”, that would “also represent the East and the South”.¹³² This was about the participation of “pro-Russian” politicians in the government, with whom the Kremlin hoped to regain influence on Ukrainian politics, in order to prevent the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union—and above all a “rapprochement” with NATO. But it is precisely Putin’s attack on Ukraine’s territorial integrity and the latent threat of war, that is driving the Ukrainian population, which until now had been overwhelmingly opposed to Ukraine’s accession to NATO, into NATO’s arms. During the “Maidan” NATO was never an issue.

Quite apart from the fact that the formation of the Ukrainian government is none of Russia’s business, the accusation of illegitimacy as a justification for refusing to recognize the new government is absurd. The composition of Ukraine’s parliament had not changed since its election in October 2012. Thus, the Verkhovna Rada was a constitutionally legitimate body, unaffected by the “Maidan Revolution” in its composition.¹³³ The law by which the current President Yanukovych was removed from office, as well as the law by which the Deputy Chairman of the Batkivshchyna party, Oleksandr Turchynov, was elected as the new Chairman of the Parliament—and thus, according to the constitution, as the interim President—was adopted by four fifths of the votes of the Verkhovna Rada. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the leader of the Batkivshchyna faction, was also elected Prime Minister with more than four fifths of the votes. The democratic legitimacy of the new government in Kyiv was therefore beyond doubt.

IV.8.2 Russian Support for Militant Separatists

The “Male Tourists” from Russia

Fedor Lukianov, the editor-in-chief of the journal, *Russia in Global Affairs*, claimed that Moscow was only morally supporting the separatists; that it was only calling for the “federalization” of Ukraine. In reality, the Kremlin has been organizing and directing the latent separatism in the East and the South, which flared up in several cities after the victory of the “Maidan”.

After the landing of the “little green men” —Russian soldiers in uniforms without insignia—on Crimea, the Kremlin sent male ‘tourists’ to the east of Ukraine to reinforce and control the ranks of local pro-Russian demonstrators—as a civilian counterpart, so to speak, to the military “green men”. Some partici-

132 At the press conference on March 8 in Moscow, the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov once again insisted on this point.

133 Parliament has a total of 450 seats; 226 votes constitute an absolute majority, 300 votes constitute a two-thirds (“constitutional”) majority, and 338 constitute a three-quarters majority.

pants in the demonstrations had come from Russia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed in a report published on April 15, 2014.

Ukraine defended itself against the infiltration of 'diversants'—agitators and provocateurs—with a ban on the entry of male Russian "tourists". Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, speaking at a press conference in Geneva, called the Ukrainian ban on Russian men entering the country "outrageous".¹³⁴ Russian agents played an important role in separatist agitation in "New Russia". As early as the second half of March, the SBU noted that Russian "moles" were acting as "instigators" in pro-Russian rallies in the "Southeast". Radical Ukrainian separatists, instructed and financed by Russian agents, carried out the orders of their Russian "commanding officers" on the ground. From time to time, suspected Russian citizens were arrested by the SBU.

The "Glazev Tapes"

How Moscow has fanned the flames of latent separatism in the east and south of Ukraine (and in Crimea) is revealed by the so-called "Glazev Tapes". Sergei Glazev was Putin's "commissioner for integration issues in the framework of the Customs Union". In 2013 he openly agitated in Ukraine against the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union by Ukraine and for Ukraine's accession to the trilateral "Customs Union" ("Tamohzennyi soyuz" Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan).

On August 22, 2016 the Prosecutor General of Ukraine Yurii Lutsenko published recorded telephone conversations between Sergei Glazev and his agents in Ukraine in the periods of February 27-28 and March 6-17, 2014. Glazev instructed the leaders of the pro-Russian protest movement in eastern Ukraine (Kharkiv) and southern Ukraine (Odessa), on how to organize violent demonstrations and occupy administrative buildings. With Konstantin Zatulin, a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Russian Parliament (Duma), Glazev discussed financial matters of Russian agitation in Ukraine.¹³⁵ Glazev spoke directly with leaders, who were addressed only by their first names; he instructed them on how to organize demonstrations and how to occupy administrative buildings. On March 1, he spoke with a local leader named Anatolii Petrovych:¹³⁶ "Why is it so quiet in Zaporizhzhya (the capital of the oblast of the same name)? Where are they? There should be 1500 men. You must

134 *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), 17.04.2014; <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/17/7022861/>.

135 <https://twitter.com/VeraSudakova34S>.

136 The leaders of the protests against the "new power" in Kharkiv and Odessa were mentioned only by their first names.

force the inhabitants to rise and ask Russia to protect them from the 'Banderovtsy'."¹³⁷ Petrovyc was to see to it that the Banderovtsy were thrown out of the municipal councils, that pro-Russian authorities were formed, and that control over the local militia was secured. "I have direct orders from above (can only mean from Putin) to make people rebel wherever we can. We use force only to support local protests [...]. If there are no local rebels, then there will be no support." Keeping up appearances is an essential trait of Russia's hybrid aggressions.

A violent intervention by Russia presupposed—for "optical" reasons—a violent internal conflict in Ukraine; the appropriate scenario for the Kremlin was a "civil war": The international community was warned of this as a precaution: Thus, President Putin told German Chancellor Merkel in a telephone conversation on April 15, 2014, that Ukraine was on the brink of civil war.

On March 1, 2014, as the so-called "Russian Spring," the pro-Russian, anti-Ukrainian protest against the new government in Kyiv turned violent in eastern and southern Ukraine, Glazev discussed plans for an invasion by Russian troops with a person identified as "Anatolii" Petrovych ?).¹³⁸

Also on March 1, Glazev telephoned leaders of the protests on the streets of Odessa: The pro-Russian activists should take the building of the oblast administration as soon as possible. "The Council must meet, declare the Kyiv government illegal and ask Russia for help." If a deputy does not want to participate, "drag him into the council and force him to vote," Glazev said to a man he called Denis.

Prosecutor General Lutsenko started investigations against 18 Russian citizens on suspicion of "crimes against national security and territorial integrity of Ukraine", namely against Sergei Glazev, the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu, two of his deputies and 10 army generals. According to the Ukrainian prosecutor's office, the recorded telephone conversations proved that the Kremlin is guilty of attacking the territorial integrity of Ukraine and sparking a war of aggression against Ukraine.

The revelation of the "Glazev tapes" went unnoticed by Western media and politicians—possibly because of the questionable manner in which the tapes were presented to the public. Instead of publishing independent verification or simply the originals of the taped conversations, the Prosecutor General's Office unprofessionally "packaged" the tapes into consumable form, i.e., cut and edited the audio recordings. The material published by the Prosecutor General's Office consisted of recorded conversations mixed with recordings of simultaneous

137 Adherers of the (dead) leader of the Ukrainian independence movement Stepan Bandera, demonized in Soviet times (1909–1959). Bandera was murdered by a KGB agent in Munich in 1959.

138 Between February 27 and March 17 Glazev issued instructions on how to conduct the referendum on independence of Crimea to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Serhii Aksonov.

events in Ukraine. As a rule, Western journalists do not allow themselves to be served “prepared documentation”. The YouTube entry in question has been deleted. Instead of focusing on the investigation of facts, the Prosecutor General’s Office felt called upon to join in the propaganda war. The voices were well understood, but it was obvious that the material had been manipulated, said Andreas Umland, a German political scientist and expert on Eastern Europe. “As so often in the last 25 years, Ukrainian dilettantism has defeated Ukrainian patriotism,” wrote Andreas Umland.

The “Surkov-Leaks”

In October 2016, the Ukrainian hacker group, “CyberHunta”, released over a gigabyte of e-mails and other documents of the “advisor” to President Putin and “Council of State” (Deistvitelnyi gosudarstvennyi sovetnik Rossiiskoi Federatsii I-go klassa) Vladislav Surkov.¹³⁹ Among the e-mails published, 2,300 came from Surkov’s inbox, revealing the coordination of Russian plans with leaders of secessionist territories in the Donbas to politically destabilize Ukraine—including a letter from the former “Chairman” of the “People’s Council” of the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People’s Republic” / “DNR”, Denys Pushilin. As was to be expected, the Kremlin called the documents fakes.¹⁴⁰ Already before their publication, Radio Svoboda was able to look at some of the mails from Surkov’s correspondence—on November 3, 2016 according to the Ukrayinska / Ukraineskaya pravda.¹⁴¹ In 2016, “Shatun”—a Russian plan to destabilize the political situation in Ukraine between November 2016 and March 2017—was reported, which also mentioned the destabilization of the Transcarpathian oblast.

On April 2, 2018—four years after the separatist ‘events’ in eastern Ukraine—The Times in London reported, that in 2014 the administration of Russian President Putin had come up with a plan to destabilize another Ukrainian oblast, i.e., the Zaporizhzhya oblast.¹⁴² The Times got a glimpse of a report of the Russian government, which was based on letters (e-mails) from the electronic mail box of President Putin advisor, Vladislav Surkov, which were sent to the newspaper by Ukrainian hackers (the Association of Ukrainian Hackers, Cyberhunta). The author of the article “Operation Troy: Russia’s blueprint for spreading chaos in Ukraine”, which was published in The Times, Tom Parfitt (Moscow) wrote, that in November 2014 a certain Alexei Muratov, a former deputy of the Russian oblast of Kursk and “representative” of the Donetsk People’s

139 Surkov is the inventor of the concept of “sovereign democracy”. In 2012–2013, he served as Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation.

140 Kyiv Post, 15.04.2014: Russian paramilitary leaders in eastern Ukraine caught on tape communicating with Moscow. The code names “Nose”, “Eagle”, “Shooter” and “Agath” appear in the telephone conversations, which were intercepted by the Ukrainian domestic intelligence service “SBU” between the agents on the ground and their coordinators in Moscow.

141 Ukrainskaya Pravda (Russian edition), 03.11.2016; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2016/11/3/7125704/>.

142 Tom Parfitt (Moscow): Operation Troy: Russia’s blueprint for spreading chaos in Ukraine, in: TheTimes, 02.04.2018; <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/operation-troy-russia-s-blueprint-for-spreading-chaos-in-ukrainex2bqv7hbg>.

Republic in Russia, communicated to the Kremlin a plan called “Troy”. According to it, the population of the Zaporizhzhya oblast should be mobilized for a pro-Russian uprising, which Muratov called “liberation”. The plan named the instigators of the separatist unrest; a network of Russian agents had already been established on the ground. The plan of “Operation Troy” estimated \$180,000 for the uprising. Contacts with the local militia and the oblast administration of the SBU were foreseen. The plan was not carried out; whether it was taken seriously in the Kremlin is impossible to say.

Orthodox Clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate: Incitement to Unchristian Hatred¹⁴³

The Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is the Kremlin’s most effective “Fifth Column” in Ukraine, because its clergymen not only wash the brains of their believers politically, but also sow hatred in their “souls” against their patriotic Ukrainian countrymen. An example of the hatred that clergymen of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine sow, was delivered by the military pope Danil Krichko, who openly rejoiced: “how gloriously we have beaten up this pig gang (Ukrainian soldiers in battle) at Ilovaisk” (see Volume II, Chapter VI.7).¹⁴⁴ Danil Krichko, who calls himself a patriot and monarchist, posed with a Kalashnikov in the social medium, VKontakte. In his sermons he quoted the “Catechism of the Russian People” (“Katekhizis russkogo naroda”), a pathetic confession of faith of Russian nationalists of unknown authorship. After the “liberation of Ukraine”, Ukrainian journalists—together with the “Yaroshi” and “Avakovy”¹⁴⁵ (all the Yaroshes, all the Avakovs)—will be hanging on the gallows. They were not to be regretted under any circumstances, for they were the “root of all evil” and had to be “exterminated with fire and sword”.

The “religious extremist” Krichko’s position is certainly not representative of the “Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate” (Russian: “Ukrainskaya pravoslavnaya tserkov Moskovskogo patriarkhata”), but the UPTs / MP undoubtedly functions as the Kremlin’s “propaganda congregation”. It has always sided with Viktor Yanukovich in political disputes and has been ostentatiously absent from the “Maidan” tribune, when all the other spiritual leaders of Ukraine’s various faith communities (including the Muslim ones) prayed for internal peace and called for non-violence.

143 In Ukraine, the popes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (Ukrainskaya pravoslavnaya tserkov – Moskovskogo Patriarkhata / UPTs-MP) incite their Ukrainian followers (Sing.: prikhozhanin, Pl. prikhozhane) against the government in Kyiv, which supports the efforts of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (Ukrayinska Pravoslavna Tserkva – Kyivskiy Patriarchat / UPTs–KP) for recognition of its “autocephaly” by the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. In the past, they supported former President Viktor Yanukovich in his election campaigns and agitated against the “Maidan” that expelled him.

144 Obozrevatel, 23.11.2014: “Kakzhe slavno myi razdolbali etikh skotov pod Ilovajskom”; <https://www.obozrevatel.com/crime/93562-kak-slavno-myi-razdolbali-etikh-skotov-pod-ilovajskom-pop-na-Donbase-stal-posobnikov-terroristov.htm>.

145 Dmitro Yarosh, former leader of the nationalist Right Sector; Arsen Avakov, Minister of the Interior and supreme commander of the National Guard.

IV.9 A Crimea-Scenario for Ukraine's South-East Deployment of Russian Troops to the Ukrainian Border

Large-scale maneuvers on the Russian-Ukrainian border—as in 2008 in the North Caucasus on the Russian-Georgian border before the invasion of Georgia—were designed to intimidate Ukraine. The concentration of troops on the border raised fears that Russia was planning a “blitzkrieg”, a new “five-day war” (as in Georgia in 2008) against Ukraine. On the night of March 3 to 4, 2014, many people fled Kyiv or prepared to flee to the countryside. The military threats on the border, the simultaneous hostage-taking of Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea, the kidnapping of their commanders, the storming of their facilities and their ships by Russian troops could have led at any moment to the ‘incident’ Putin wanted, which would have “allowed” him to openly invade Ukraine. On the peninsula, Ukrainian soldiers had orders not to open fire under any circumstances, and even permission to abandon military objects and lay down their arms.

An invasion of the “mainland” (“materyk”) would hardly have been as bloodless as the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula. In the capital Kyiv and in the centre of the country, invading Russian soldiers would have found no support among the population; in western Ukraine a new “UPA”, a “Ukrainian Insurgent Army”,¹⁴⁶ had probably formed and unleashed a partisan struggle against a Russian occupation. In the east and south of Ukraine, however, there may have been enough separatists, ethnic Russians, and Russian-speaking Ukrainians to give the Russian invasion army the appearance of a “protection force”.

The Ukrainian mining area, Donbas, in eastern Ukraine, is not economically attractive for Russia because of its industrial dinosaurs from Soviet times. By contrast, the South of Ukraine, whose seizure would give Russia the entire northern coast of the Black Sea, a belt stretching from Abkhazia to Moldova, is very much attractive. Its annexation would turn the rest of Ukraine into a landlocked country. A landlocked Ukraine would not be viable and would therefore be at the mercy of Russia.

Putin himself described what the invasion of Ukraine could look like: At the press conference at his residence in Novo Ogarevo on March 4, 2014, President Putin reacted with visible nervousness to the disbelief, with which the 14 other (permanent and non-permanent) members of the Security Council (including China)¹⁴⁷ had received the claim of the Russian Ambassador Vitalii Churkin,

146 The historical UPA fought in World War II against the Red Army (and the German Wehrmacht)—and until 1954 against the NKVD.

147 The Chinese ambassador to the UN, Yi Liu Jie, explained that China, which had hitherto always taken the Russian side in similar situations, would not be a party to the conflict. China has

the lives of Russian compatriots in Ukraine were in danger (Putin's "Big Lie"). At times, Putin gave the impression that he was not in his right mind: "Listen to me very carefully," Putin barked at a (female) journalist. "I want you to understand me very well", and then he squeezed the following insane sentence out of himself: "If we take a decision to invade Ukraine, it will be for the protection of Ukrainian citizens. Should Ukrainian soldiers then try to shoot at their countrymen, *behind* them we will stand! Not in front of them, but *behind* them! Then let them try to shoot at women and children!"

He had already demonstrated in Crimea, what this perfidious tactic would look like: During the siege of the Ukrainian navy headquarters, the Crimean Russians' 'vigilantes' let women and children run in front of them, while Russian soldiers stood in the background—just as Putin had "foreseen". Russia's long-delayed agreement to send a mission of 500 OSCE military experts to eastern and southern Ukraine was seen as a preliminary 'all-clear signal'.¹⁴⁸ The Russian representative to the OSCE, Andrei Kelin, gave up his opposition to this mission, when the other OSCE members renounced the observation of Crimea. The exclusion of Crimea reflected the new "geopolitical realities", Kelin explained. In a telephone conversation, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu assured his American counterpart Chuck Hagel that Russia did not intend to send troops to eastern Ukraine.

Russian President Putin succeeded in annexing Crimea without serious opposition from Ukraine. The attempt to repeat the Crimea scenario in the east and south of Ukraine failed: Ukraine resisted—against all expectations, and the project was not completed. The "New Russia" strategy of secession of oblasts, which proclaimed themselves independent "people's republics" (from Kyiv), failed—except for one third of the territory of the Donbas around the two oblast capitals Donetsk and Luhansk.

Whether the Kremlin—ultimately President Putin—actually intended to annex the southeast of Ukraine—the Donbas and the oblasts Odessa and Mykolayiv—to the Russian Federation is not certain, nor even likely. The Chairman of the Foreign and Defense Policy Council, Sergei Karaganov,¹⁴⁹ called such a project "unrealistic and expensive": Karaganov advocated an undivided but federalized Ukraine—excluding of course the annexed Crimea.¹⁵⁰

consistently supported the principle of non-interference and respected the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

148 Namely, into the oblasts Donetsk, Luhansk, Charkiv, Dnipropetrovsk (East) and Odesa, Kherson (South) and—because of the "political balance"—Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi in Western Ukraine.

149 Karaganov is the Dean of the Faculty of World Economics and Politics at the National Research University of Moscow (Fakultet mirovoi ekonomiki i mirovoi politiki, Natsionalnyi issledovateskii universitet "Vyshaya shkola ekonomiki" / NIU VSE).

150 <http://izvestia.ru/news/568861>.

IV.10 From “Anti-Maidan” to Secession in Donbas

IV.10.1 “Maidan” and “Anti-Maidan” in Donetsk and Luhansk

The “Donetsk Maidan”, like the “Maidan” in Kyiv, began on November 21, 2013, with half a dozen people gathering at the monument to the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko. By March 2014, the gatherings had swelled to several thousand demonstrators. Initially the protest against the kleptocratic regime of President Yanukovych dominated the themes of the “Donetsk Maidan”, but after Yanukovych’s flight and the emergence of virulent separatism, the “Donetsk Maidan” turned into a “pro-Ukrainian” movement for the unity of Ukraine.

The “Russian spring” moved into the Donbas in a particularly aggressive manner: March 13, 2014 was a turning point in the conflict between pro-Ukrainian supporters of the “Donetsk Maidan” (Russ.: “Donetskii Maidan”) and pro-Russian separatists. On that day, thousands of people demonstrated in the centre of the city “for the unity of Ukraine! (Ukr.: “za jednist Ukrany!”; Russ.: “za edinstvo Ukrainy!”). They were routed and dispersed by separatist militants; one young pro-Ukrainian man (Dmitro Chernyavskyy) was killed; officially 36 people were injured, some seriously.¹⁵¹ The hitmen were obviously men unfamiliar with the area – “titushky” from Horlivka and other towns who had arrived by bus, and Russians who were recognizable by their pronunciation, as refugees from the Donbas told. The Donetsk militia had known where they were coming from: from Rostov-on-Don and from Belgorod oblast in Russia. The Donetsk militia stood by and watched as they beat the pro-Ukrainian demonstrators with clubs and chains. The militia had even given them the addresses of pro-Ukrainian football fans so that the hitmen could ‘visit’ them at home. The first ‘interrogations’ of pro-Ukrainian citizens were carried out by Russian secret service agents. Each of these pro-Russian gangs had its own ‘prison’, specifically its own torture cellar. From March 13, 2014 on it became perilous in Donetsk to demonstrate for the unity of Ukraine.

At the end of April 2014, another large public pro-Ukrainian rally took place; during their march through “Artem Street”, the central street in Donetsk, the demonstrators were beaten bloody with clubs. The people had overcome their fear; it was important for them to show to the whole country, that there are people in the Donbas too, who took to the streets to defend the unity of Ukraine, as refugees told. By the end of summer 2014, pro-Ukrainian Donetsk citizens

151 On March 13, 2014, refugees (“internally displaced persons” / IDP in the terminology of the United Nations) from the Donbas gathered on Independence Square in Kyiv (the Maidan) under the slogan “Donetsk belongs to Ukraine! (Russ.: “Donetsk – eto Ukraina!”). They also remember the two “heroes”, Volodymyr Rybak and Dmitro Chernyavskyy, who were killed by separatists in Donetsk, and “joined the ranks” of the “Heavenly hundred” of the defenders of the “Maidan” shot in Kyiv.

held a “prayer marathon” (Russ.: “Molitvennyi marafon”). The participating clergy (of the Kyiv Patriarchate) were beaten and imprisoned.

Their town had been occupied by foreigners; they, the native citizens, felt they were strangers in their own city. The local rulers, who were all of the “Party of Regions”, could not make up their mind, could not decide between one side or the other, for the movement “United Ukraine” (“Edina Ukrayina”) or the so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic”. They had completely lost control of the city.

In Luhansk, on April 17, 2014, about a thousand students demonstrated for the unity of the country with Ukrainian flags next to the Luhansk National T. G. Sevchenko University.¹⁵² A clash broke out in front of the oblast administration building between pro-Ukrainian activists and members of a pro-Russian “socio-political movement” called the “Lugansk Guard” (“Luganskaya Gvardiya”). Three people were hospitalized with gunshot wounds.

A significant part of the citizens of Luhansk sympathized with the separatists. A large crowd of people stormed and occupied the building of the domestic intelligence service “SBU” after attacking it with stones and other projectiles; a Russian flag was planted on the roof. On April 12, the SBU had announced the arrest of 15 men, who allegedly wanted to seize power in the Luhansk oblast by force of arms. Investigators found 300 assault rifles, hand grenades and a bazooka in their possession. The governor of the Luhansk oblast (from March 2, 2014 to May 10, 2014), Colonel General Mychailo Bolotskykh, and Volodymyr Huslavskiy, the head of the oblast headquarters of the Interior Ministry, allegedly went to the occupied building to negotiate with the occupiers. Six of the detained separatist leaders were released at their request, Interfaks-Ukraine reported.

IV.10.2 Seizure of Power by the Separatists in Donetsk

The occupation of public buildings was the prelude to secession. On April 12 and 13, 2014, militant separatists led by Russian agents occupied the state and municipal administrative buildings in a dozen cities of the Donetsk oblast—in the oblast capital Donetsk itself, as well as in Slovyansk, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Horlivka, Makiyivka, Yenakiyev, Druzhkivka, Krasny Lyman and others—as well as in the capital Luhansk of the oblast of the same name, also located in Donbas. In Slovyansk (Russ: Slavvansk), police stations were captured on April 16, 2014 by armed men, who had arrived from Kharkiv and Luhansk the day before. The SBU claims to have proven beyond doubt their affiliation with the Military Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation (GRU).¹⁵³ The Russian

152 <http://cxid.info/laquo-mi-za-dn-st-ukra-ni-raquo-v-luganske-mitingovali-studenty-foto-n113751>. Ukrainskaya pravda (Russian edition), 17.04.2014i <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/lnews/2014/04/17/7022806/>.

153 Main Intelligence Department, Russ.: Glavnoe Razvedyvatelnoe Upravlenie / GRU (“Voen-naza razvedka”), “Main Intelligence Department” of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the

GRU agent Igor Girkin, alias "Strelkov", made Slovyansk the temporary "headquarters" of his operations.

The first massive pro-Russian rallies took place in Donetsk on March 1 and March 3, 2014. On March 3, pro-Russian activists broke into the Donetsk Oblast Council meeting room. One of their leaders was Pavel Gubarev, who called on the deputies to support the holding of an oblast-wide referendum on the secession of Donetsk oblast from Ukraine and its accession to the Russian Federation. Pavel Gubarev, a Ukrainian citizen¹⁵⁴ – and a former member of the neo-Nazi movement "Russian National Unity" ("Russkoe Natsionalnoe Edinstvo"¹⁵⁵), attempted to lead the separatist movement in the Donbas and appointed himself governor of Donetsk oblast. He was arrested on March 6 on the charge of carrying out a violent overthrow of the constitutional order. On March 16, in Donetsk, about one thousand pro-Russian activists seized the building of the Oblast Prosecutor's Office and demanded Gubarev's release.

On this April 6, 2014, pro-Russian crowds simultaneously stormed state administrative buildings in several major cities in Donbas.¹⁵⁶ Ukraine's interim President Turchynov cancelled his planned trip to Lithuania on April 6 to deal with the situation in eastern Ukraine himself. The "oligarch of the Donbas", Rinat Akhmetov, also rushed to Donetsk for "negotiations". None of them was able to achieve anything. In the city of Donetsk, the capital of the oblast, a group of about 200 men armed with clubs and calling themselves "Russian Sector", defeated the few police officers guarding the oblast administration building and occupied it. They secured the building with rolls of barbed wire and barricades made of car tires, in order to ward off attempts to recapture the building by the militia – and pro-Ukrainian activists.

A crowd of about 2000 separatist and pro-Russian minded people, many with Russian flags, 'secured' the action with women and children, according to the direction of Russian President Putin, in order, on the one hand, to simulate a "peaceful" seizure of power, and to deter the authorities from violent intervention. Acting Ukrainian Interior Minister Avakov declared that brute force would not be used to deal with the unrest. "The situation will be brought under control without bloodshed," he said: "The Interior Ministry will not shoot at people, at this gang of paid provocateurs. Among the demonstrators there are many who have been deceived and many who have been paid."

From the balcony of the building, where a banner with the inscription "Donetsk Republic" was displayed, speakers demanded the holding of a referendum

Ministry of Defense: "Glavnoe upravlenie Generalnogo shtaba Vooruzhennykh sil Rossiiskoi Federatsii".

154 Born in Syevyerodonetsk, Luhansk oblast.

155 The founder and leader is Aleksandr Barkashov. The badge of this movement is a modified swastika.

156 <http://www.recorder.com/Archives/2014/04/APDAVE-UKRAINE-GR-040714>.

on the accession of Donetsk oblast to the Russian Federation.¹⁵⁷ The occupiers invited the population to come to the oblast administration building with food and water, but only a few people accepted the 'invitation'.

The pro-Russian occupiers issued an ultimatum to the Oblast Council: they demanded that it convene and set a date for a referendum on Donetsk Oblast's independence and annexation to Russia by midnight. For four weeks they had been trying in vain to get the (elected) oblast council to meet with this aim, a spokesman for the separatist occupiers was quoted as saying by local media. If the Oblast Council did not meet their demand, they would dissolve the Council on April 7, with a "mandate from the people"; each city would delegate a new representative, who together would form a 'new, legitimate representative body'.¹⁵⁸

IV.10.3 Proclamation of the so called "People's Republics" of Donetsk and Lugansk

On April 7, 2014, a "Republican People's Council" (Russ.: Respublikanskii narodnyi sovet), composed of separatist and pro-Russian deputies from the "Oblast Council" (Russ.: Oblastnoi sovet, abbr. Oblsovet; Ukr.: Oblasna rada) issued a "declaration on sovereignty" of a so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" (Russ.: Donetskaya Narodnaya Respublika / DNR). Furthermore, this so-called "Republican People's Council" decided to hold a referendum on the self-determination of the DNR and its annexation to the Russian Federation before May 1, 2014.¹⁵⁹ Journalists were denied access to the building. The occupiers themselves put a video recording of their meeting in the meeting room on YouTube on the Internet. In the video an activist on a podium shouts in Russian: "I proclaim the foundation of the independent state of the Donetsk People's Republic."¹⁶⁰

The declaration of independence was read out by the photo reporter Aleksandr Khudoteplyi on radio: "The people of the Donetsk People's Republic have the exclusive right to their land, airspace, water and other natural resources". The Russian-language Ukrainian newspaper Segodnya quoted Khudoteplyi as saying: "if we are prevented from holding the referendum, we will ask Russia to send troops." Outside the building, which was secured with rolls of barbed wire, hundreds of demonstrators sang the Russian national anthem and waved Russian flags. At the same time, All broadcasting installations were stormed. Ukrainian stations were switched off; the population was – now

157 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/aplarticle-2598051/Pro-Russians-storm-Ukraine-government-buildings.html#ixzzSDOqOVwa8>.

158 At 4 a.m. on April 7, armed members of the organization "People's Militia of the Donbas" (Russ.: "Narodnoe opolchenie Donbassa") broke into the building of the Security Service of Ukraine / SBU.

159 <http://www.dw.com/de/ukraine-donezk-übt-den-aufstand/av-17549666>.

160 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8nretvdoBE>. Katya Gorchinskaya: Donetsk separatists declare independence, set May 11 as date of referendum, in: Kyiv Post, 07.04.2014.

exclusively—exposed to Russian television propaganda. Until April 13, 2014, pro-Russian separatists, who were supported by a part of the local population—and the militia, occupied administrative buildings in several other cities of the Oblast Donetsk and declared these places under the control of the Donetsk People's Republic. Checkpoints (Russ. and Ukr.: "blokpost") were set up on some of the access roads against the security forces approaching from Kyiv in armored vehicles—and the first volunteer units.

On April 28, 2014 separatists in the Luhansk oblast proclaimed the so called "Luhansk People's Republic" (Russ.: Luganskaya Narodnaya Respublika, Ukr.: Luhanska Narodna Respublika / LNR) after a 'referendum' on April 11, 2014. On May 11, 2014, a 'referendum' on self-determination was held in the two self-proclaimed "people's republics", and on May 12, 2014, the state sovereignty of the "Donetsk People's Republic" and the "Luhansk People's Republic" was proclaimed. The "DNR" turned to Russia with the request for admission to the Russian Federation.

Moscow's Puppet States "DNR" and "LNR"

The two "people's republics" are puppet states, in which citizens of the Russian Federation not only hold military command, but also sit in key civilian positions. The local separatists could make few decisions for themselves. Moscow's de facto control over the "people's republics" was total; all important decisions were made in Moscow. Job and budget plans were sent to Moscow for approval; Russia financed the 'ministries', a former insider told the reporter of the German "Süddeutsche Zeitung", Florian Hassel. "We local people are only talking puppets".¹⁶¹

The "visible" posts of the puppet governments of the "DNR" and "LNR" were filled by local separatists during the summer of 2014: In the "DNR", Ukrainian-born Aleksandr Zakharchenko¹⁶² replaced the Russian citizen Aleksandr Borodai as "Prime Minister". Borodai, the former "prime minister" of the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic", was a PR-adviser to the Russian oligarch Konstantin (Valerevich) Malofeev. The founder and manager of the international investment fund "Marshall Capital Partners" Malofeev (estimated assets: \$2 billion) is a "collaborator" of the Russian military intelligence (GRU) and co-finances (according to information from the Ukrainian Interior Ministry) the separatists in eastern Ukraine.

"Head of State" ("glava gosudarstva") of the "Luhansk People's Republic" was since November 4, 2014 the Ukrainian born (Luhansk) Ihor Plotnitskyi. His

161 Florian Hassel (from Mariupol): Separatists, caught in the chain of command. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung. March 24, 2015; <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/separatisten-in-der-ost-ukraine-gefangen-in-der-befehlsskette-1.2406228>. Hassel relies on the report of informant (for good reason unnamed), who had left the "DNR" in fall of 2014, when he 'realized the truth' behind the "DNR".

162 Zakharchenko died on August 31, 2018 as a result of an explosive attack.

predecessor in this post was the Russian citizen Valerii Balotov (from May 18 to August 14, 2014).¹⁶³ He was one of the leaders of the violent separatists in the Luhansk oblast; on April 5, 2014 he called for open resistance against the new Kyiv government. Igor Girkin, alias "Strelkov," until August 2014 "Defense Minister" of the "DNR," served in Chechnya as a colonel in the Russian domestic intelligence agency, FSB; he was identified in 2014 as an active GRU officer.¹⁶⁴

From the Russian occupied Moldovan secessionist region of Transnistria (Pridnestrovie)—Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR)¹⁶⁵—the Russian General Vladimir Antyufeyev, "First Deputy Prime Minister" of the "DNR," brought former officers of the Transnistrian KGB into the "People's Republics". One Oleg Beroza became "Minister of the Interior" in the "DNR" and one Andrei Pinchuk "Minister of State Security" in the "LNR". Five years after their declaration of independence on May 12, 2014, the two self-proclaimed "people's republics"—"DNR" and "LNR"—are de facto Russian exclaves, comparable to the de facto status of Transnistria, the Russian-occupied part of Moldova.

On February 5, 2020 (!) the "prime minister"¹⁶⁶ of the "Donetsk People's Republic", Aleksandr Ananchenko, was deposed.¹⁶⁷ He was succeeded by his deputy, the Russian citizen Vladimir Paskov (until then Ananchenko's "mentor"¹⁶⁸ Paskov was until 2014 Deputy Governor of Russia's oblast Irkutsk. The spokesman for the Kremlin, Dmitrii Peskov, commented on February 6: "Russia has absolutely nothing to do with this conflict," repeating his standard lie for the umpteenth time. Paskov was not officially delegated (to the "DNR"). In this case, we can only speak of the actions of a "natural person", who is simply acting "in his capacity as a citizen of the Russian Federation", the Kremlin spokesman lied.¹⁶⁹

The Failed "Confederation" of the "People's Republics"

On May 24, 2014, the "DNR" and "LNR" united to form the "Confederation of New Russia" (Russ.: Konfederatsiya Novorossiia); a month later, on June 24, 2014, they formed the "Confederative Union of People's Republics" (Russ.: Konfederativnyi Soyuz Narodnykh Respublik), which declared itself open to the inclusion of further "People's Republics".

163 As "State President" of the "LNR", Balotov initiated the creation of a KGB (Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopastnosti) with a subdivision "SMERSH" ("Smert Spionam!", "Death to Spies!", named after the Soviet Union's military counterintelligence service during the Second World War).

164 At an earlier stage of his biography, Girkin was the head of the security service at Marshall Capital Partners, the investment fund of Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev. Malofeev is on the EU sanctions list for financing separatism in Crimea and the Donbas.

165 Russ.: Pridnestrovskaya Moldavskaya Respublika, Rum.: Respublika Moldovenjaskie Nistrjane.

166 The post of "Prime Minister" was created in the "DNR" in October 2018.

167 <https://novosti.dn.ua/news/298937-v-dnr-yschez-premer-mynystr>.

168 <https://novosti.dn.ua/article/7224-zagadochnyy-premer-dnr-kto-takoy-ananchenko>.

169 <https://ukraina.ru/news/20200206/102660S010.html>.

A year later, on May 20, 2015, the leaderships of the two so-called "People's Republics", the "DNR" and the "LNR", announced the abandonment of the project "Novorossiya", i.e. the planned confederation of "People's Republics" from Kharkiv to Odessa. The "Minister of Foreign Affairs" of the "DNR", Aleksandr Kofman, admitted that the idea had not found sufficient support outside the territory held by the separatists in the Donbas. Oleg Tsarev, the "spiker" of the "United Parliament of New Russia" (Russ.: Obedinennyi parlament Novorossii), gave a different explanation: work on the structures of "Novorossiya" had been suspended, because the project was not compatible with the 'Minsk Agreement' of February 12, 2015 ("Minsk II", see Chapter VI.14). The "declaration of renunciation" certainly came about under pressure from Moscow.¹⁷⁰

IV.10.4 Failure of the Project of "New Russia"

The Failed Formation of a "People's Republic Kharkov"

On March 15, 2014, one day before the referendum in Crimea (illegal under Ukrainian law), pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian demonstrators clashed in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. In the official propaganda of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the militant pro-Russian activists, who included hundreds of "agitation tourists", who had travelled from Russia, were described as "peaceful demonstrators" who "only want to express their opinion about the new power (in Kyiv)" and were attacked by "armed right-wing radical" groups. (In Donetsk, a pro-Ukrainian demonstrator was stabbed to death by a "peaceful demonstrator who only wanted to express his opinion about the new power in Kyiv".)

That same evening, after a demonstration in Kharkiv, pro-Russian activists shot at a building, where allegedly "right-wing extremist" demonstrators had barricaded themselves, killing two men. The Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it was "outraged by the lawlessness in eastern Ukraine" and accused the "extreme right-wing, paramilitary" organization Right Sector of "conspiring" with the new government in Kyiv. The events (in Donetsk and Kharkov) showed that the Kyiv authorities were not capable of controlling the situation in the country. Russia did receive many calls for help, which were carefully considered. Russia had a responsibility for the lives of its compatriots in Ukraine and reserved the right to protect them, Sergei Lavrov had the Russian Foreign Ministry declare.¹⁷¹

On April 6, 2014, violent clashes broke out again in Kharkiv between thousands of "pro-Ukrainian" and "pro-Russian" demonstrators, in the course of

170 In his weekly column for the information agency "New Russia" the "neo-Eurasist" Aleksandr Dugin" passed the rumor circulating in Moscow, that a deal "Crimea against New Russia" would be negotiated with the USA.

171 ITAR-TASS, Moscow, 14.03.2014.

which the building of the Kharkiv Oblast State Administration (Kharkivska oblasna derzhavna administratsiya) was captured by separatist activists. In the evening militant separatists broke up a demonstration "for the unity of Ukraine"; many participants were injured.¹⁷²

On April 7 (the same day that separatist militants in Donetsk proclaimed a "sovereign people's republic"), at a meeting of separatist-minded activists held next to the Kharkiv oblast state administration building, the entire Oblast Council was called upon to resign. A list was read out with the names of "alternative deputies" who intended to hold a meeting with the aim of deciding on a referendum on the secession of Kharkiv oblast from Ukraine. The alternative "Council of Deputies of the Kharkov Territorial Municipality" (Russ.: "Sovet deputatov kharkovskoi territorialnoi gromady"), as the self-styled separatist "deputies" had called themselves, adopted the decision—"in execution of the duties of the Kharkov Oblast Council"—to create a sovereign state called the "Kharkov People's Republic" ("Kharkovskaya narodnaya respublika"), which would establish relations with other states "in accordance with international law". This decision would come into force after its confirmation by an oblast-wide referendum, the separatists declared. Furthermore the decision was adopted to ask the "President of Ukraine", Viktor Yanukovich, to legitimize their assembly and its decisions. The separatist "deputies" in Kharkiv turned to the government of the Russian Federation with the request, to "act as mediator to ensure the peaceful holding of the referendum",¹⁷³ quite in accordance with the scenario programmed by the Kremlin.

The Kyiv government ordered the forcible expulsion of the separatists from the occupied building of the Kharkov oblast state administration by the militia (police) on April 7. Acting Interior Minister Avakov himself took charge of the operation on the spot. During the clearing of the building, two police officers were injured by the explosion of a hand grenade, according to his ministry; 70 people were arrested for "separatism" and for participating in riots. The interim president Alexander Turchynov announced in Parliament a determined prosecution of those arrested. The secession of the Kharkiv oblast failed.

The "Oligarch of Dnipropetrovsk": Reward for the Fight against Separatism

The "governor" ("glava", head of the state oblast administration) of the Dnipropetrovsk oblast, the oligarch Ihor Kolomoiskyi offered—on large posters in the name of his "Privat bank"¹⁷⁴—to all those who fought against separatism in his oblast \$10,000.¹⁷⁵ The Vice-Governor of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Borys Filatov,

172 Ukrainskaya pravda (Russian edition); 07.04.014; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/7/7021671/>. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/7/7021673/>.

173 Ibid.

174 The "Privat Bank" belonged to the two (USD) billionaires Ihor Kolomoiskyi and Hennadii Boholyubov.

175 Kyiv Post, 17.04.2014, Kolomoiskyi promises cash rewards for fighting pro-Russian separatists.

promised on Facebook 500,000 hryvnia (over \$50,000) to the members of the Ukrainian National Guard, who had repelled the separatist attack on the port city of Mariupol (see below and Part VI, Chapter VI.8.3); he called on the commander of this unit to come forward. (As the acting Minister of Internal Affairs and head of the National Guard Arsen Avakov announced on Facebook, three separatists had been killed in Mariupol and thirteen wounded.) For the capture of one Russian saboteur in Dnipropetrovsk oblast a reward of \$10 000 was offered: "10,000 dollars for a Moskal".¹⁷⁶ For the disarmament of separatists a reward of between one and two thousand dollars was offered.

On February 22, 2014, the oligarch Kolomoiskyi had already called on his colleagues in the eastern and southern oblasts to oppose the division of the country. Addressing the governor of Kharkiv, Mykhailo (Russ.: "Mikhail") Dobkin, he called the opening of a separatist "Ukrainian front" a "mistake". About the Russian President Putin Kolomoiskyi made the following remark on March 3, 2014: "Short-sized schizophrenic. He is absolutely inadequate, wholly insane. His messiahship, reviving the Russian Empire of 1913 or the USSR, may push the world to a catastrophe."

Mariupol: Seizure by the Separatists Repelled

The port city of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov (with 500,000 inhabitants the second largest city in the Donetsk oblast) is largely "russified". Ethnic Russians make up only half of the population, but 90% of the population is Russian-speaking. For this very reason, the capture of the city by militant separatists with the support of the population seemed most conceivable. But in Mariupol, of all places, the attempts to capture the city by separatists, which were undertaken from mid-April to mid-May 2014, failed.

The industrial and administrative "nomenklatura" was firmly in the hands of the Party of Regions. Despite a strong separatist wing, the party opposed secession. The governor of Donetsk oblast appointed by the Kyiv government, the steel magnate Serhiy Taruta, made Mariupol the provisional capital of Donetsk oblast – that is, the capital of that part of the oblast which was not held by separatists.

There were several attempts by the Mariupol separatists to take the city. The local police was wavering; not only was it probably riddled with Russian agents, but many of their Ukrainian officers may have been confirmed separatists themselves. On April 16, separatist militants who had gathered outside the gate of a military base demanded "the surrender of weapons". After being refused, they attempted to storm the barracks with automatic weapons, grenades and Molotov cocktails. On the same day, on April 16, 2014, soldiers of the Dnipropetrovsk Airborne Brigade near Kramatorsk had actually surrendered their weapons and armored vehicles to the separatist militants blockading them.

176 "Moskal" derogative for pro-Russian Ukrainians.

In Mariupol the defendants of the barracks shot back. As interim president Oleksandr Turchynov informed that evening, three attackers died, 13 were injured and 63 were arrested.¹⁷⁷

The local steel company "Metinvest" organized patrols of unarmed workers to restore order in Mariupol, undoubtedly on the orders of its owner, the oligarch Rinat Akhmetov, the main 'sponsor' of the Party of Regions and Viktor Yanukovych's supporter.¹⁷⁸ Akhmetov had openly opposed the referendum announced by the separatists for May 11. Participation in the presidential election on May 25, 2014 was low in Mariupol, but proceeded without incidents.

The National Guard entered Mariupol only on June 13, 2014. The battalion "Azov" (a National Guard unit), as well as industrial plants, the city police department, and the city administration, which was run by the Party of Regions, stood together under the leadership of oblast governor Taruta to avert the capture of the city by the separatists. The city administration organized pro-Ukrainian rallies and appealed to volunteers to undergo paramilitary training; hundreds followed the call. The television station controlled by "Metinvest" called on the population to persevere.¹⁷⁹

Between August 26 and September 5, 2014 (ceasefire, "Minsk I", see Chapter VI.13), regular Russian troops threatened Mariupol: By capturing this city, Russia would have secured a strip of land along the northern coast of the Sea of Azov up to the annexed Crimea.

177 *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), 16.04.2014; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/04/16/7022727/>. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/04/16/7022729/>.

178 Managers of his various steel plants had founded in the era of President Kuchma the "Industrial Party of Ukraine" ("Partiya Industrialnaya Ukraina").

179 *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (Russian edition), 16.04.2014; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/04/16/7022727/>.

IV.11 The Beginning of the “Anti-Terrorist Operation”

The Ultimatum

The proclamation of a “People’s Republic of Kharkov” in the east of Ukraine failed;¹⁸⁰ and the attempt to create a “People’s Republic of Odessa” in the south of Ukraine, suffocated in the burning of the Trade Union House on the “Kulikov pole (see below). In the two oblasts Donetsk and Luhansk, the separatists were able to hold on to a third of the territory of the Donbas. The “Crimea scenario” did not work in “New Russia”; the “breakup”¹⁸¹ of Ukraine did not take place.

The new government that came to power in Kyiv after the victory of the “Maidan” did not take forceful action against the pro-Russian separatists for a long time, for fear of Russian military intervention; the Kremlin had warned Kyiv against action against the separatists. The Ukrainian government initially did nothing, probably because it lacked the means to suppress the separatist uprising and could not rely on the local police (militia). In some cities of the Donbas, the militia and the domestic intelligence service cleared out their separatist-occupied buildings without a fight. Whole stockpiles of weapons fell into the hands of the insurgents.

Finally, in the second week of April 2014, the government in Kyiv declared that it would take tough action against the violent occupiers of administrative buildings. The head of the National Security and Defense Council, Andrii Parubii, announced on April 9 on Facebook, that the first battalion of the “National Guard” had been sent to Donbas. The National Guard, which was formed after the change of power and subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior, replaced the “Internal Troops” (Ukr.: Vnutrishni Viiska, Russ: Vnutrennie Voiska), which had also been subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior. Initially, the Guard consisted mainly of volunteers who had previously defended the “Maidan” against the Yanukovych regime’s riot police force. The acting interior minister, Arsen Avakov, made a grandiose promise: An “anti-terrorist operation” (ATO) had begun in the east of the country and that the problem would be solved within the next 48 hours.

But the new government in Kyiv had underestimated the resistance of the insurgent separatists – just as President Yanukovych had underestimated the insurgent “defenders of the Maidan”. On April 10, Ukraine’s interim president, Oleksandre Turchynov, promised (of necessity) not to punish the pro-Russian occupiers of state buildings, if they would lay down their arms and clear the occupied buildings. His appeal remained unheeded. On April 17, 2014, acting

180 <http://ru.tsn.ua/ukrayina/u-harkovskih-separatistov-izyali-pistolety-i-6-yaschikov-s-kok-teylyami-molotova-359433.html>.

181 “Zerschlagung” in the language of Adolf Hitler referring to “rump Czechoslovakia” (after the “amputation” of Sudetenland) – placed under German administration as the ‘Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia’ March 1939.

Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk called on the “extremists” and “terrorists”, who had occupied administrative buildings in eastern Ukraine, to lay down their arms and clear the buildings. “Leave the buildings. Your time is up”.¹⁸² The government was ready for dialogue. He promised an amnesty to peaceful demonstrators and to those who laid down their arms. Only those who had committed serious crimes would be prosecuted; murder would not be forgiven under any circumstances. It was all a real *déjà-vu* of two to five months ago—not a false memory.

When the “ultimatum”—as was to be expected—passed without being heeded, Kyiv got serious. “The anti-terrorist operation in the north of the Donetsk region has begun”, President ad interim Oleksandr Turchynov announced to Members of Parliament on the morning of April 17, 2014. Because of the steady supply of the militant separatist with Russian military armament, which was physically conducted via the joint border with Russia not controlled by Kyiv, the separatist insurgency could not be suppressed by police means alone. On April 15, 2014, the Ukrainian army was deployed against the separatist militants in the Donbas.¹⁸³ Moscow had assumed that Kyiv would not dare to use the army and warned of a civil war. After the victory of the “Maidan”, confrontation between government and insurgents was repeating itself—in *reverse*; this time at a higher, a military level of violence.

Civilians against the Army

Civilians gave in Donbas a hostile reception to the Ukrainian army. Thus, the citizens of Kramatorsk were outraged, when paratroopers from Dnipropetrovsk drove into their city on armored vehicles on the morning of April 16, 2014. Civilians blocked the 18 troop transporters and took six of them to Slovyansk, where insurgents had been occupying administrative buildings since April 12. Allegedly, dozens of Ukrainian soldiers also surrendered and defected to the side of the separatists. (They were, however, held prisoner in an inaccessible building.

Civilians caused more problems for the Ukrainian military than the armed separatists, said General Vasyl Krutov, who commanded the operation. Incited by Russian propaganda, they confronted Ukrainian soldiers as the violent clashes continued—entirely in line with Russian President Putin, who had announced this tactic of civilian shields. At first, the Ukrainian army achieved success. The military airfield near the city of Kramatorsk (80km north of Donetsk) could be recaptured, as the President Turchynov himself told the Verkhovna Rada. The operation will be gradually continued—“responsibly and prudently”. The goal is to “protect the citizens of Ukraine”.

182 Ukrainskaya pravda (Russian edition), 17.04.2014j <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/1717022869/>.

183 <http://www.dw.com/de/ukrainische-truppen-riicken-gegen-separatisten-im-osten-vor/a-17568136>.

IV.12 “Mai 2” in Odesa: The Tragic Culmination of the “Russian Spring”

IV.12.1 The “Tragedy of Odesa”: “Kulikovtsy” versus “Maidanovtsy”.

Before “May 2” (2014), the south of Ukraine had remained quiet compared to the east, but after the separatist attacks on the territorial integrity of Ukraine in the east of the country, the political atmosphere in the port city of Odesa on the Black Sea became also highly tense. It was feared that Odesa, due to its large Russian-speaking population, could become the next hot spot after Donetsk. On May 2, 2014, these fears came true – worse than expected: 48 people lost their lives that day.

Since February 2014, the opponents of the “Maidan” had set up a field camp of military tents on the “Kulikovo pole”, the “Kulikovo field” in front of the House of Trade Unions, a representative building standing alone in the middle of the square.¹⁸⁴ The “Anti-Maidan” in Odesa chose the “Kulikovo pole” in analogy to the Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kyiv; in the tent village lived constantly several hundred people.¹⁸⁵ Under the name “Kulikovo pole” the various pro-Russian groups of the “Anti-Maidan” in Odesa, from the “federalists” (supporters of the federalization of Ukraine) to the separatists formed a common movement. Observers of the events on May 2 referred to them with the name “Kulikovtsy”, while they called the activists of pro-Ukrainian organizations “Maidanovtsy”.

On March 16, 2014 on Kulikovo pole¹⁸⁶ a demonstration with several thousand participants in support of the secession of the Crimea took place, combined with the demand to hold a referendum on secession of Odesa oblast. The demonstrators chanted “Odesa and Crimea together!” (Odessa, Krym – vmeste!) and “Russia, Russia!” They waved Russian flags, flags of the Communist Party, including some with Stalin’s portrait.

On March 30, 2014 a “March for the Unity of Ukraine” (Ukr.: Marsh za Yednist Ukraïyny, Russ.: Marsh za Edinstvo Ukrainy”) took place in Odessa; thousands of Odessa’s citizens paraded with the slogan: “Oдна yedina svobodna

184 Former oblast seat of the Communist Party of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine.

185 The pro-Ukrainian camp at the Odesa city hall was destroyed by trucks. Not destroyed were the barriers in front of the entrance to the area, they were opened by pro-Russian officials in the city hall.

186 Ukr: Kulikove pole, named after the “Kulikovo pole” near Tula in Russia, where the “Battle of the Snipes’ Field” (Russ.: Kulikovskaya bitva) took place, in which the Mongol-Tatar army under the leadership of Emir Mamai was annihilated by the Great Prince of Moscow, Dmitrii Donskoi on September 8, 1389. A large square in the historical centre of the Primorsky district of Odesa is named after this battlefield.