ISSN 2083-7372 Bimonthly November-December
Price 19 PLN (w tym 5% VAT) 10 EUR 12 USD 7 GBP

New Eastern Europe

No 5 (XIV)/2014 www.neweasterneurope.eu

UKRAINE: ONE YEAR AFTER THE EURO-MAIDAN

Mustafa Dzhemilev

Crimea is our homeland

INSIDE THE HYBRID WAR

Russia is redifining modern warfare

NATO needs to stop its wishful thinking

Donetsk is creating its own reality

ECS european solidarity centre

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The Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe in Wrocław

ISSN 2083-7372

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Dear Reader,

One year ago, on the pages of this magazine, we were analysing how the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius would affect the future of the region of Eastern Europe. While many had predicted that the former president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, would in the end not sign the Association Agreement with the European Union, no one could have expected what followed immediately thereafter.

On November 21st 2013, Ukrainian journalist Mustafa Nayem (now politician) posted on Facebook: "If you really want to do something, do not just 'like' this post. Let us meet at 10:30 pm near the monument of independence in the middle of the Maidan." The sequence of events that followed changed the course of history for Ukraine, Europe and the world. The costs of this change were high (and continue to increase). Over 125 people lost their lives during the EuroMaidan Revolution which ousted Yanukovych. Russia used new tactics, which have been put in the framework of a hybrid war, to annex Crimea and support separatism, or even at times intervene, in Ukraine's east where thousands have been killed and many more displaced. Meanwhile, Ukraine elected a new president, promised to undertake serious reform, battle corruption, signed the EU Association Agreement and set the stage for new parliament elections in October 2014.

This issue of *New Eastern Europe* attempts to summarise the situation in Ukraine on the one year anniversary of the start of the EuroMaidan. Included articles aim to provide a deep perspective on Ukraine today. Their authors ask questions like: is Ukraine more democratic? Is there more media freedom in Ukraine today? And what is the role of the oligarchs in a post-Maidan reality? Finally, the issues of "special status" for Donbas and the recent lustration law are put under an analytical microscope. In addition, authors of this issue expose the characteristics of Russian actions in regards to Ukraine and agree with the statement that Kremlin tactics have not only hurt Ukraine but also divided Europe.

Undoubtedly, one year is a short time to give definitive answers to such complex issues. However, it is the first moment when we can use a time perspective to start putting a broader picture together. This magazine is committed to analysing and further interpreting the events in the region, so that you will continue to get this perspective in the months and years to come.

Wishing you a more peaceful 2015.

The Editors

Erratum: We want to make a small correction to the previous issue. On page 29 we had erroneously edited the text to read that Moldova's main produce exports go to Ukraine, when in fact that is not the case. We apologise to the authors and readers for this error.

Contents

Opinion and Analysis

Interviews

Reports

History

People, Ideas, Inspiration

Books and Reviews

Special Section – Kraków: A City of Literature

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New Eastern Europe is co-financed by the Polish Ministry
of Science and Higher Education.

Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Poland

New Eastern Europe is co-financed by the
Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy
of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the
framework of the grant programme:
"Co-operation in the field of public diplomacy 2014".

The Special Section on Kraków, the City of Literature is co-financed by the City of Kraków.

Circulation: 5000

Printing: Drukarnia Kolejowa Kraków Sp. z o.o.

International Distribution: www.pineapple-media.com

Printed in Poland

Together for Eastern Europe

Crimea is our Homeland

An interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev, leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement. Interviewer: Giuseppe D'Amato

GIUSEPPE D'AMATO: Reflecting on the situation in Ukraine, would you ever have expected that such events as the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation or the war in Donbas could have been possible?

MUSTAFA DZHEMILEV: Throughout the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many powerful people in Russia maintained their claims to Crimea and Sevastopol. Fairly influential politicians often came to Crimea and made statements that this was Russian land, although the official position taken by Vladimir Putin, and previously by Boris Yeltsin, was that any revision of the borders was out of the question. I viewed such permanent tension as a means of influence over Ukraine, in order to keep it on edge and to prevent it from pursuing independent policies.

Do you believe that Putin and the Russians acted in accordance with a pre-arranged plan, or did it all happen gradually as the situation developed?

I believe that the Russian security services had different plans prepared for different scenarios. Among these, they had an aggressive plan to annex Crimea. Of course, it is the head of state that chooses which strategy to implement. Indeed, there is speculation that apparently an agreement with Viktor Yanukovych was reached regarding the surrender of Crimea. When Crimean military units began surrendering one after another, we were simply overwhelmed.

Who came up with the initiative for you to speak with President Putin?

Half a month prior to the invasion by Russian troops, I was requested to attend a meeting with a fairly influential figure of the Russian federal security service. This person was permanently based in Sevastopol. We met at the border of Sevastopol and Yalta and spoke briefly. I was told that he was instructed to let me know that Putin wanted to meet with me. When I asked what Putin would like to discuss, the answer was: "You will meet and talk." I replied then that this was not my level and there was a head of the state for this.

At that time, we already had strained relations with Russia, the pro-Russian powers had suddenly become active and it was obvious that Russia strongly supported them in every way possible. In this situation, it did not strike me immediately that some horrid events were on the horizon and Putin would like to meet in order to gauge the position of the Crimean Tatars.

In a word, I did not agree to the meeting and I said that I did not think this meeting was necessary. At the same time we discussed a possible meeting with Mintimer Shaimiev, a Russian Tatar and former president of the Tatar Republic, concerning business relationships between Crimea and Kazan. After a while, when the turbulent events had already started, I received a call from Moscow and was told that Shaimiev would like to meet with me. We agreed to meet in Kazan.

Prior to the meeting, I was called again and told that Putin had learned that I was going to Kazan, and that after the meeting with Shaimiev he would also like to meet with me. I said that I had nothing to discuss with Putin, as the occupation was already in progress. There were talks about a referendum and Crimea's unification with Russia. I again said that Putin should meet with our leadership. But, in any event, I said that I would talk with our leadership and if they agreed then I could possibly meet with Putin.

When I arrived in Russia, I was welcomed very pompously and brought to Shaimiev. We spoke at lengths about the situation in Crimea and how Tatarstan could help its brothers – the Crimean Tatars. I said that Russia was making a huge mistake and that it should promptly withdraw its troops from our territory and that bloodshed was in the air. Shaimiev replied, "You will talk about this with Putin over the phone."

How would you describe Putin during that discussion? Was he sincere, acknowledging your concerns?

It is difficult to tell over the phone. I said to him that I came to Russia in order to voice the view of the indigenous people of the peninsula where Russian troops were being stationed. I argued that Putin was making a big mistake, and that Ukraine is a fraternal country, and that you do not do such things to your brothers. I asked that the troops be withdrawn from the territory of the country as soon as possible and that all controversies be resolved at the negotiating table. Putin replied that the responsibility lies with the bandits, the Banderovites, who came to Kyiv.

I was surprised with this response. It is one thing to say this for propaganda purposes and it is quite another to say this to a person that came from the Maidan. I did not try too hard to convince him. I argued that it was not quite so, that we had got rid of a corrupt regime. Putin countered, saying that the toppling of Yanukovych was illegal and the agreements between him and the opposition were not being observed. The extent of the conversation came down to Putin's promise to do a lot for the

Photo: Katarzyna Czerwińska - Senat Rzeczypospol[illegible]olskiej (CC) co[illegible]wikimedia.org

Mustafa Dzhemilev is the recognised the leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement. On May 7th 2014, Dzhemilev was awarded Poland's "Solidarity Prize".

Crimean Tatars and that Russia, within a very short time, could do much more than Ukraine had managed during the whole 23 years of its independence. In essence, he said that Russia would resolve all the social problems of the Crimean Tatars and that Russia had plenty of opportunities that Ukraine lacked.

How did he react to your arguments?

In truth, there was no harshness in his words. However, I suppose that he did not expect such a tone from me. Nevertheless, his central message was: "I fear that the Crimean Tatars could be involved in various acts of provocation". I said that our views were identical here and that we Crimean Tatars had struggled to return to our homeland for decades and that we were proud that during all those years we had not shed a single drop of blood, neither ours nor anyone else's, and that we had won our rights solely by peaceful means. But now, when our land was occupied, it was very difficult to promise that there would not be a single bloody event. Nobody could guarantee that.

Putin replied that he ordered the military units to be cautious so that there would be no unlawful acts committed against the Crimean Tatars. I said that there were the so-called "self-defence" forces, which were difficult to control, and that provocations could occur at any moment. In response, he made a harsh statement: "They had better not!"

Now that Crimea has been annexed, what do you see as its future? Will it ever return to Ukraine again, and if yes, in what way?

The attitude of the Ukrainian leadership and the president, Petro Poroshenko, in particular, is the following: to never and under no circumstances agree that Ukraine will become a part of Russia. This is also the point of view of the overwhelming majority of Crimean Tatars. Of course there are some people who support the Russian action, as is usual in any country under occupation. But even those people who were actively running around with Russian flags now understand that they have fallen into a trap. There are no democratic freedoms; everything is just as it used to be during the time of the Soviet Union.

The economic situation in Crimea is also deteriorating. The main source of income in Crimea – tourism – no longer exists because there is practically no way to fly there. The only way to get to Crimea is through Russia. Previously, Russians made up only 30 per cent of tourists while Ukrainians were 60 per cent with the last 10 per cent from various countries. Products were almost twice as cheap as in Russia. They had promised us to raise salaries and pensions, which was done; however, prices have increased even more.

Primarily, we expect that the sanctions should be so effective that Russia would be forced to abandon the territory. After my discussion with Putin, I headed to Brussels to the NATO headquarters, where we discussed the situation. I was the main speaker there. We discussed the rounds of sanctions against Russia that would force it to leave Crimea. I was told that sanctions were also imposed in 1979, when Russia occupied Afghanistan. But we had to wait for more than ten years until the Soviet Union dissolved. Do we have to wait that long again to see Ukraine liberated? It is unlikely that I will live for so long. In Brussels, they said no. Events now move so dynamically that one does not have to wait so long.

To what extent can you rely on the West? The overall appearance of their policies is not very persuasive. What is your opinion?

Certainly our wishes are one thing and the reality is something else. We all understand the connected nature of trade and the gas industry between Russia and Europe. We understand that such abrupt moves also cause damage to the economies of western states. However, if this price for peace and security is not paid now, then later they will have to pay ten times more. I discussed this issue in great detail with the prime minister of Turkey. We are grateful to Turkey for taking a very clear position and not recognising the referendum and annexation.

However, when it comes down to specifics and I asked him to close the Bosphorus Straits so that naval warships could not pass, he said that they could not do this, that Turkey had to comply with the Montreux Convention. I asked him how they could comply with obligations

in relation to a country which itself did not abide by its agreements, such as, for example, the Budapest Memorandum (according to which the US, Great Britain and Russia guaranteed Ukrainian security and territorial integrity in exchange for Ukraine's abandonment of nuclear weapons). His response was "We are not Russia, we have the rule of law". Turkey would only close the straits in case of a unanimous NATO decision, but it was not possible as a unilateral act.

There are rumours that the Crimean Tatars are considering abandoning the peninsula and building a town in the Kherson oblast of Ukraine?

We appeal to our compatriots and ask them not abandon Crimea however difficult it may be – Crimea is our homeland! Of course, due to the difficult circumstances, many people have left this territory. According to our estimates, nearly 7,000 Crimean Tatars have already left. The principal motivation of those who have left is that the new regime is even worse than the one during the Soviet times.

The leaders of the Crimean Tatars are not allowed to enter the country and your own son has been transferred to mainland Russia facing enhanced criminal charges. What does life look like for your fellow citizens? Can we call this a comprehensive terror campaign? Or are there only targeted actions?

I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of people who claim to have adjusted to the new reality and have no problems with Russia. What is more it is not just the Crimea Tatars who have to deal with this new reality; there are also Russians and Ukrainians. The problem is that now their attitudes cannot change anything. There will be no more referenda, and even talks about the need to hold a referendum are considered a criminal offence and regarded as a call for "separatism".

Of course, serious violations of human rights are taking place. International organisations must monitor the situation and cases should be brought before court. I also said this in Strasburg because as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I am able to speak there. Observers are needed, but they are not allowed in Crimea. The radical solution to this issue is that the population of Crimea be liberated from occupation. Otherwise this will turn into another frozen region where there will be no normal life, like in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh or Transnistria. Crimea now risks becoming a decaying region. We will become a North Korea isolated from the civilised world.

If you now had the chance to speak with Putin again, what would you tell him? Would you even speak to him at all?

Recently the agent that supervised the organisation of the telephone conversations with Putin told me that Putin would like to meet and talk with

me once again. I said that they had a strange state: I was not allowed on its territory and now their "tsar" wanted to talk to me. If I agreed, I was told, then immediately after a conversation with Putin my son would be released and I would be allowed to enter Crimea. The head of state was keeping my son as a hostage to dictate terms to me? Naturally, I refused.

Afterwards I met with the Ukrainian ombudsman, Valeriya Lutkovska, who suggested that maybe I should meet with Putin. But what would I tell him? He wants me to accept the occupation, to be happy within Russia. If I do not say this, he will have a legitimate question: "So why did you come?" The European Court of Human Rights ruled that my son should be released from custody. It came to the point that the head of security services suggested exchanging my son for captured terrorists. I said that my son was not a terrorist. When the exchange was suggested, 13 for 13 from each side, if I recall it well, they struck my son off the list. So this matter is under Putin's personal control.

We witnessed the civil courage of the Crimean Tatars who stood on the streets holding Ukrainian flags before and during the referendum in Crimea. How can you explain that such a small group of people has such strong political features?

I would not say that the Crimean Tatars are so special. As a people, we have the experience of living under the rule of the Russian Empire. We know what it means. Whatever problems we have with the Ukrainian leadership, we know that life under Russia's rule is much worse. And when they say that Russia will guarantee this or that, I answer: We do not put our homeland for sale and secondly, we know what Russia's promises are worth. Russia promised us territorial integrity and security and during a difficult situation decided to grab back Crimea for itself. NEE

Translated by Olena Shynkarenko

Mustafa Dzhemilev is a former Soviet dissident, former chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars and recognised as the leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement. On May 7th 2014 Dzhemilev was awarded Poland's "Solidarity Prize".

Giuseppe D'Amato is an Italian journalist and historian based in Moscow who specialises in Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union.

On the Edge of Change

IGOR LYUBASHENKO

Since the EuroMaidan Revolution, Ukraine has declared itself to be on the path of reform, greater democratisation and more transparency. While it may be too early to definitively say whether real change will take hold in Ukraine, an assessment of the authorities' current narratives will help us better understand the key challenges that still lie ahead.

In his famous 1940 speech, widely known as "Time to Dare and Endure", Sir Winston Churchill admitted that the United Kingdom, being a country ruled by public opinion, democracy and the parliament, appeared to be not as well prepared for war as authoritarian Germany. At the same time, he expressed confidence that democracy would be the asset that would eventually lead his country to victory. History proved Churchill right. Now, in 2014, the geopolitical situation on the European continent once again begs the question: does democracy still have the appeal and will it be an asset for a country facing external aggression?

The desire to change the quality of life in the country was one of the most important motivations for Ukrainians who protested on the streets of Kyiv and many other cities between November 2013 and February 2014. The notion of "quality of life" that was used in opinion polls then is of course quite vague and can be interpreted in many ways. But due to a high level of frustration within Ukrainian society, the symptoms of which had been widely signalled by a number of surveys, we can say with some certainty that the problem that actually stood behind this notion of "quality of life" was a lack of political efficacy – an extremely important element of a genuinely democratic political system. Indeed, Ukraine was officially regarded by the West as a democratic state, despite growing concerns. Inside the country, however, the picture was much clearer – Ukraine was on the road towards autocracy. The wide social protests known as the EuroMaidan put a

stop to this evolution and triggered a new political process, the outcome of which is yet to be determined.

In order to understand the political future of Ukraine, it is necessary to analyse the first steps of this country's declared democratisation after the "revolution of dignity", evaluating some assertions that can often be heard in the debate on Ukraine.

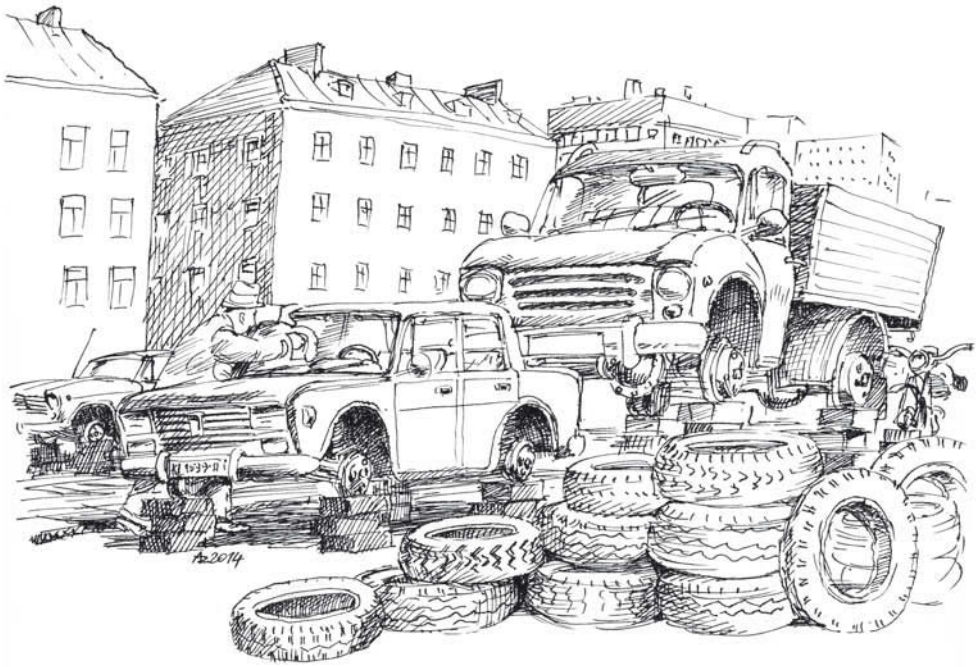
Assertion one: In autumn 2014, the institutional mechanism of the Ukrainian state is more democratic than in autumn 2013.

This is definitely true. A return to the 2004 constitution has rolled back all the efforts undertaken by Viktor Yanukovych during his term, which were aimed at concentrating as much power as possible in the hands of the president. At the moment, Ukraine is a parliamentary republic, in which power is distributed between the president, the government and the parliament in a much more balanced way than before February 2014.

The public debate on constitutional reform has been paused in the face of a more urgent problem, the conflict with Russia.

However, this institutional setup cannot be regarded as stable. The return to the 2004 constitution automatically brings back the doubts that were expressed by international institutions assessing the quality of Ukraine's democracy before Yanukovych's presidency. An ineffective system of checks and balances that was unable to prevent a sharp conflict between the head of state and the head of government and led to permanent governmental instability was the most significant pitfall of Ukraine's political system, as highlighted by the European Commission. The need to introduce an electoral code setting up predictable, clear and transparent rules of the game for those willing to enter the race for power on any level (local or national) as well as the need for the state's decentralisation (by increasing the competence of local governments) are other important issues that have regained their relevance in the post-Maidan Ukraine. Since February, they have evidently become a part of the political agenda, but none has found a solution yet.

In June 2014, Ukraine's president, Petro Poroshenko, presented his project of a new constitution, which has been sent to the European Commission for Democracy through Law, (better known as the Venice Commission) for assessment. Inevitably, the debate on the formula of the country's decentralisation collides with Russia's narrative on the need of Ukraine's federalisation (which de facto means equipping some parts of Ukraine with a veto right on key political decisions taken by the central authorities). As a result, the public debate on constitutional reform has been paused in the face of a more urgent problem, the conflict with Russia.



At the same time, the early parliamentary elections held on October 26th 2014 were held in accordance with the electoral law passed in 2012, when the then-ruling Party of Regions managed to distort the society's electoral preferences as half of the MPs were elected in majority-rule (winner takes all) constituencies. Financial support and the so-called "administrative resources" appeared to be enough in 2012 to form a pro-governmental majority in the parliament, despite the fact that the opposition parties gained more support in total. Hence, the most significant change that was introduced in 2014 was to allow party blocs to take part in elections. This, in turn, opened the way for the pro-presidential bloc of political parties to base their campaign on the high popularity of Petro Poroshenko and thus provided the president with a strong influence in the parliament.

The further democratic development of Ukraine requires more change in the institutional mechanisms of the state. However, one of the key goals of the EuroMaidan, "reforming the state", is still out of reach. The extraordinary circumstances of Russia's de facto aggression undoubtedly provide a strong argument for decision-makers not to rush with institutional reform at a time of war. The main challenge is thus whether the logic of ad hoc political necessity will outweigh the logic of creating a strong institutional framework supporting democratic development of the Ukrainian society in the long run.

Assertion two: The Ukrainian state is making progress in regards to the rule of law.

It is difficult to agree with this statement unequivocally. Obviously, it would be almost impossible to talk about genuine democracy when the rules of the game are not applicable for everyone or if some people or groups have an unjustified possibility to change the existing rules to their own advantage. These, in fact, are the problems that have so often characterised Ukraine.

Corruption is a chronic disease that Ukraine has suffered since independence. In 2013, Transparency International placed Ukraine in 144th place on its Corruption Perception Index. Not surprisingly, one of the commitments of the post-EuroMaidan government was the fight against corruption. A symbolic gesture was then made with the appointment of a well-known investigative journalist, Tetyana Chornovol, as head of a newly created governmental anticorruption bureau. The International Monetary Fund resumed its co-operation with Ukraine and granted a 17 billion US dollar credit. Again, a symbolic move as the fight against corruption was one of the prerequisites of gaining the IMF's support.

There are numerous signals confirming that existing corruption habits have survived the EuroMaidan Revolution.

However, we currently lack any real and objective signals indicating that Ukraine is following the example of Georgia – a country that made prominent progress in the field of fighting corruption after the Rose Revolution in 2003. At the same time, there are numerous small signals confirming that existing corruption habits have survived the EuroMaidan Revolution. One of the issues widely discussed in Ukrainian media are the bribes paid by citizens to avoid military service during mobilisation. The most worrisome signal was sent in August 2014 by Chornovol herself when she resigned from the government and published an open letter accusing the government of not providing her with the tools necessary to do her job. Understandably, the task of eliminating (or at least significantly limiting) corruption in Ukraine cannot be accomplished within six months. Yet, the key indicators of progress, such as the establishment of working institutions aimed at fighting corruption and the authorities' readiness to change their habits, have yet to fully materialise.

Oligarchy is another trait of Ukraine's deficiency in regards to the rule of law. According to the classic definition, the Ukrainian oligarchy is made up of a specific informal caste of citizens who are above the rest of society. The events of 2014 have brought about significant changes on the scene of Ukrainian oligarchy, but they did not eliminate its privileges. While tycoons closely linked with the Party of Regions and the former president have all but disappeared, those who work closely with the former opposition are now playing central roles. The most prominent example is

The heart of the new ECS building is a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of the Solidarity movement.

EXHIBITION

HISTORY DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BORING

The exhibition includes a reconstruction of a grocery store from Communist Poland. A shipyard gantry crane cockpit serves as a place to view footage with accounts from the organisers of the August 1980 strike. The round table – a symbol of dialogue – has empty chairs so that the visitors can get a sense of the events that took place there.

The history of the Solidarity movement and the changes that it led to in Central and Eastern Europe is presented in seven exhibition rooms on the first and second floor of the new ECS building – on a total of almost 3000 square metres.

Some 1800 exhibits are on display, many of them in an interactive format. There is a very broad range of exhibits, including: memorabilia, photographs, video footage and audio recordings, archival documents, manuscripts, maps, underground publications, newsletters, underground art etc.

Room after room tells the story of the birth of Solidarity, the powerlessness of the oppressed people, the war waged by the Communist regime against its own people, the roads to freedom that had to be traversed and finally the triumph of freedom. The last room – named after Pope John Paul II – is a place of meditation and reflection.

The ground floor will have a children's room, where the youngest visitors can learn and play.

ecs.gda.pl

Photo: Grzegorz Mehring / ECS Collection

The new ECS building is becoming a meeting place for people who hold the world's future dear. Here, they are going to get to know each other better, they learn and grow.

ECS

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CENTRE JUST OPENED

ECS is an institution of a new form: it is not only a museum, but also an education and scientific establishment aimed at providing a greater understanding of Solidarność and the anti-communist movements in Poland and Europe.

ECS organises events addressed to many different communities from Poland, Europe and the entire world, with conferences, debates, theatre productions, film screenings (including in 3D) and temporary exhibitions. Its goal is to provide factual support to organisations who work for the common good, freedom and human rights. A creative workshop centre is set up, not only for children and young people from our region, but also for school and holiday groups from all over Europe. It teaches the core values of freedom, responsibility and democracy.

ECS will run a research centre. Every academic and tourist will be able to use the library and the collection of archival photographs, films and audio recordings.

ECS does not cease to expand its collection. It continues to publish books and produce documentaries.

A winter garden is opened all year round to serve artistic endeavours, meetings and leisure. There will also be an observation deck on the roof, with a beautiful panoramic view of the post-Shipyard area, Gdańsk's Old and Main Towns.

Photo: Grzegorz Mehring / ECS Collection

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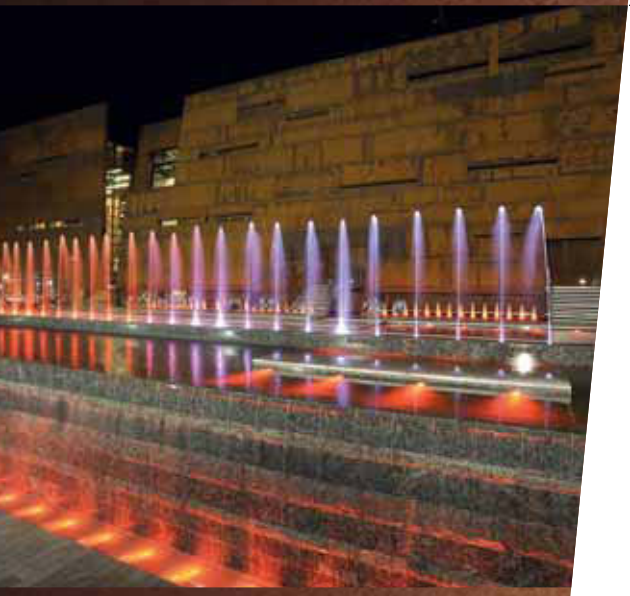

European Solidarity Centre

Gdańsk | Poland

1 SOLIDARITY SQUARE

The European Solidarity Centre (Polish: Europejskie Centrum Solidarności | ECS) is being developed in a place that is very important to Polish and European history alike. It was here, in Gdańsk's former Lenin Shipyard, that the events which ultimately led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the return of freedom across Eastern and Central Europe, began.

The nearby Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers commemorates the bloody events of December 1970, when the regime opened fire on innocent people. Next to the Monument is Gate No. 2 of the former Lenin Shipyard, which in the 1980s became an icon in the struggle against the Communism regime. And last but not least, the nearby BHP Hall, where on August 31, 1980 the Inter-Factory Strike Committee signed an agreement with the Polish Communist government, which was so disruptive to the status quo that the dream of freedom became reality. Not even a decade went by before the world changed out of all recognition and Solidarity Square played a leading role in its transformation.

ecs.gda.pl

Photo: Russianname (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

The outcome of the October 2014 Ukrainian parliamentary elections will be the first genuine opportunity to assess any real change.

Petro Poroshenko himself. Other significant cases include the nominations of Ihor Kolomoyskyi and Serhiy Taruta for the positions of governor to the Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk oblasts respectively.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine Ukraine's successful transition towards democracy without the "de-oligarchisation" of its political system, meaning the elimination of privileged and non-transparent schemes of decision-making. The outcome of the October 2014 parliamentary elections will be the first genuine opportunity to assess any real change in this regard.

Assertion three: After the EuroMaidan, the Ukrainian state became more responsive towards the expectations of society.

Similarly to the previous assertion, this statement is only partially true. One of the obvious positive outcomes of the EuroMaidan and, paradoxically, the subsequent

Russian aggression against Ukraine, is an increase of mutual trust between the state and the society. The most prominent exemplification of this change is seen in the volunteer movement. In other words, in recent months Ukraine has seen an unprecedented abundance of volunteers willing to join the army (a phenomenon which can be regarded as opposite to the aforementioned cases of bribery to avoid military draft) or the newly created National Guard and battalions of territorial defence. The most astonishing aspect of the conflict in the east of Ukraine is the logistical support for Ukrainian forces provided by grassroots civic initiatives. These are perfect examples of civil society organisations supplementing the weak state in a crisis situation. The state, in turn, has taken some steps to facilitate these activities, such as tax exemptions.

In order to survive, Ukraine will have to walk a path that is generally unknown to it – the path of democratisation.

Petro Poroshenko's victory in the first round of the presidential elections in May 2014 along with the positive support for the pro-presidential political parties confirm the assertion that the society has given the new leadership a very strong mandate of trust. This mandate, however, is limited and conditional. Already in July 2014 opinion polls conducted by the Razumkov Center showed that the state authorities were not among the most trusted social institutions, well behind the church, media and the army. Thus, the high support for pro-presidential parties that can be seen in the post-Maidan Ukraine should be more interpreted as a prevalence of the old habit of a strong electoral commitment to the political leader, not the content of political programmes – a phenomenon that opens the way for political populism.

At the same time, it is difficult to assess how ready and able the new Ukrainian authorities are to adequately meet social expectations. As stated before, the armed conflict within the borders of the state has been used as an excuse for not undertaking painful reforms, which raises further dilemmas. The most serious problem is the perception of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) conducted by the Ukrainian authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions as a response to the rise of Russia-sponsored separatist movements in these two regions. An August 2014 Kyiv International Institute of Sociology survey revealed that a significant number of Ukrainians (31.5 per cent) do not support the continuation of the operation. Among the 56 per cent of those who support the ATO, nearly half agree that the operation should be concluded as soon as possible.

More importantly, regional differences are still deep and significant. In other words, the closer respondents live to the ATO zone, the higher their support is for a ceasefire at any cost. Despite vast media reporting on the conflict in the east, Ukrainians still seem to feel that they lack information about what is actually

happening in the ATO zone. This reluctance and uncertainty should be seen as a key reason for the lack of more decisive actions by the Ukrainian authorities, such as an introduction of martial law. Even though the supporters of hard action have become more vocal, such decisions would most likely not generate universal support and thus would be politically too risky.

When we read these facts in the context of another important figure – 90 per cent of Ukrainians supporting the country's independence – it is easy to see a picture of a nation that is certain about its identity, but deeply divided in regards to finding solutions to current problems. These are the new cleavages that will dominate Ukrainian politics in the near future.

Unlike Churchill in 1940, Poroshenko in 2014 has faced much less unity inside the nation he leads. Such a situation increases the risk of going down either one of two well-known paths of political development. The first one is correlated with reactive, highly populist politics that would eventually lead to a new alienation of the authorities from the society. The second is more authoritarian, motivated by the need of a strong leader leading the nation through difficult times. Both are highly unfavourable for a democratic development and neither provides a guarantee that Ukrainian statehood as we know it will survive the upcoming years.

A need for a third path

Quite unexpectedly, in 2013-2014 Ukraine appeared in the very centre of global politics. For the second time in the last ten years, the country has had a chance to become an example that democracy is not an empty word in the 21st century. Even though Ukraine has passed through tremendous changes over the last year, it is still at the beginning of a much longer road of political transition. Choosing the right destination will be crucial for how it will respond to the extremely difficult problems of today. In order to survive, Ukraine will have to follow a path that is generally unknown to it – the path of democratisation.

Although it is always tempting to criticise Francis Fukuyama's old thesis about the end of history, Ukraine's example shows that this American scholar of Japanese origin is right in at least one regard – that humanity has not managed to produce any promising alternative to a liberal democracy based on the market economy. It is the only known system that (if well managed) provides the state with the sufficient resources to exist and protect itself and at the same time does not discount the value of the individual. The path of democratic development appears to be the only option that would allow Ukraine to survive and renew its territorial integrity in the long run. The three prerequisites for this include: the development of a new social contract in the form of a constitution based on a wide debate and consensus; the

de-oligarchisation of the country; and the development of institutions that would exclude the possibility of discrimination of any social group, especially when it comes to critics (genuine, not propaganda-driven) of the Ukrainian authorities.

Today, unlike the years following the Orange Revolution, Ukraine's choice of the challenging path of democratic development may be seriously hampered by the external threat posed by Russia's military intervention. It is worth keeping in mind that without significant support from established democracies, the temptation of choosing one of the easier paths of political development will only increase. This leads to the simple yet important conclusion that the fate of Ukrainian democracy may also become an indicator of whether the world still believes in democratic values. NEE

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Toppling Lenin and his Legacy

TATYANA PUSHNOVA

The phrase "Ukrainian nationalists" has become very trendy. For readers, it is easy to be attracted by it and click on a link with it in the headlines. I would like to remind journalists, however, that this phrase did not just appear. It has been propagated by Russian media and is being picked up and used by international media without second thought.

I watch how the giant bronze statue of Lenin in the centre of Kharkiv comes crashing down from its pedestal, practically jumping from the place it had been anchored to the ground for so many years, and I really want to be present there, with all these people who had gathered and to watch the death of our idol. Just like them, I feel pain. It is hard. Lenin has been rooted in our perception of the world since we were young and all these years I have tried to get rid of him from my consciousness. Growing up, each home had a picture of Lenin on the wall. In every fairy tale book, there was Lenin. In kindergarten, we were forced to finish our tasteless porridge only because *Volodya* (Lenin) ate up every crumb, creating an impressionable childhood where Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was always present.

And now I am jealous of the people on the square in Kharkiv because I am watching the events unfold on a live stream at home and they get to be there in person. They are taking revenge against Lenin for this hated porridge that was forced on them and for the fact this old man would not allow our country to become a "country" in the beginning of the 20th century. Because of this man, we must go through the process of liberation in the beginning of the 21st first century. I turn off the live stream and switch on the news.

Who toppled Lenin?

"Ukraine nationalists tear down Kharkiv's Lenin statue," writes the BBC late in the evening on September 28th 2014. I notice two things about this headline.

First, it seems to me that journalists in the United Kingdom have finally learned how to write the names of Ukrainian cities in the Ukrainian transliterated form, not the Russian. They use Kharkiv and not Kharkov. This small nuance is evidence that BBC journalists are no longer sitting in their warm Moscow bureau offices with views of the Kremlin, just copying and pasting pieces about this big senseless country. At least, that is how they regarded Ukraine before the revolution. At least the reporter that wrote this story visited Kharkiv and the BBC has finally sent several crews to Ukraine.

Anything that happens in Ukraine which Moscow does not like is labelled as "nationalism".

During the last year, a lot of international journalists have started to understand not only Ukrainian city names, but Ukrainian life in general. I am afraid, however, that few of them could, at first sight or even at second glance, distinguish a Ukrainian nationalist from an ordinary citizen. How did the BBC journalist know that Ukrainian "nationalists" toppled the Lenin statue? Even I, a citizen of this country, could not say exactly who toppled Lenin. Were they nationalists, liberals or centrists? Despite their political orientation, each Ukrainian has something to say about Lenin. It is good that Ukrainians are beginning to recall their memories of his legacy. But the disappointing thing is that British journalists sometimes forget their own standards, which are often couched as democratic values and freedom of speech.

According to the BBC article, these Ukrainians were "Ukrainian nationalists". That title appears to be nothing more than a value judgment or a stereotype which has systematically been promoted by Russian propaganda channels and is being picked up and used by the international press. As has been the trend in Russian media, anything that happens in Ukraine which Moscow does not like is labelled as "nationalism". And the Kremlin's propaganda machine slowly and masterfully takes this "nationalism" and transmogrifies the word so it soon does not just mean nationalism, but "fascism", as they go about imposing their paranoia on the world audience.

As a media person, I realise that this phrase "Ukrainian nationalists" is trendy. It is easy to be attracted by it and click on the link. But I would like to remind British journalists that this word did not just appear after the event, it has been propagated by Russian media and is being picked up and used by international journalists.

The facts tell us a different story. First, the decision to topple the Lenin monument was approved by the regional government, not a political party or organisation. Second, there are not many nationalists in Ukraine. In fact, there were more votes for a member of the Jewish Congress than for two right-wing candidates in the

last Ukrainian presidential election. So, it is at least incorrect to ascribe all the activities of Ukrainians to nationalists.

Signalling Russia?

The day after the Lenin statue was toppled in Kharkiv, I read another article. This one was published in the *Washington Post*, "Ukrainians just pulled down a massive Lenin statue. What does that signal for Russia?" The article calls Ukrainians, Ukrainians. Kharkiv is Kharkiv, which is good. But then the editor apparently reminds us that first and foremost, the toppling of the Lenin statute must mean something for Russia. Of course, how could Ukraine be without Russia? Ukraine always has something to prove to its big neighbour.

"This is a message for Russia," writes the *Washington Post* editor. Do the people who gathered on the square in Kharkiv understand that toppling the Lenin statue is a message to Russia? I am not sure. This is more a message for you, dear editors: beware, this spread of Russian propaganda appearing in the international press is barely noticeable, but it will spread very quickly.

It appears that it is very hard for the international community to believe that Ukraine is not Russia.

I understand that it is very hard for the international community to believe that Ukraine is not Russia. For many Ukrainians it's also hard to believe. But over the last year, Ukrainians have done much for their country to make Ukraine worth loving. But, as it was written by Umberto Eco, "love of country is subject to a bloody tribute."

Ukrainians are paying for their love of their country every day. And they are fighting not only for their country, but for the values that BBC journalists and the editor of the *Washington Post* share.

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On the Road to Collapse?

WOJCIECH KONOŃCZUK

The ongoing conflict with Russia, the war in Donbas and snap parliamentary elections make the gloomy economic condition of Ukraine less visible. Meanwhile, it is the economy that will have a prevailing influence on the future stability of the country and will shape Ukraine's statehood.

In spite of the common belief, the reason for the current economic crisis in Ukraine is not the turbulent situation in the country's east, which generates around 16 per cent of GDP. The recession has been taking place in Ukraine since 2012 and the events in Donbas have just deepened it. When Viktor Yanukovych was in power, negative economic figures were a result of several factors which have not changed since. First, is the poor situation on the metallurgic and chemical products markets, which are the basis of Ukrainian exports. These exports make up 60 per cent of Ukraine's GDP. Second, there is a decrease in domestic demand and a decrease in foreign investment. This has triggered mass corruption and the expansion of the business syndicate linked to Yanukovych, the so-called "family". Third, there is a growing limitation of access to the Russian market, which for years has the most important importer of Ukrainian goods. Last but not least, the Ukrainian economy model adopted in 1991 faces a systemic crisis. This model was based solely on the dependence of a few branches of industry (metallurgy and chemicals sectors), while other branches of the economy have remained totally undeveloped and severely unreformed.

Economic downfall

Undoubtedly, rising gas prices is what hit the Ukrainian economic model most painfully in recent years. As a result of the disastrous gas deal with Russia signed in 2009, Ukraine had to pay one of the highest prices for gas in Europe. The Ukrainian economy, energy-intensive and dependent on Russian gas, could barely manage. In

2005, Ukraine's gas bill was 3.1 billion US dollars (3.5 per cent of GDP), three years later it was $9.5 billion (5.3 per cent of GDP) and in 2012 it was $14 billion, making up more than eight per cent of Ukraine's GDP. Having in mind the state's generous energy subsidies to private and public consumers and the high price of gas, it is no wonder that the Ukrainian economy has been severely damaged.

The political crisis that started in November 2013 and the continuing unstable situation in Donbas catalysed the downfall of the economic indicators. The post-Maidan government of Arseniy Yatsenyuk inherited an enormous budget deficit as well as other major economic problems. Since the very beginning of the new government, it became clear that repairing the economy was crucial to the survival of the new government and to the country's continued existence.

One of the first decisions made by Yatsenyuk was to enter into negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on an emergency loan package. Yet, in April 2014, the IMF gave the green light for Ukraine to receive $16.6 billion. The first tranche of credit ($3.2 billion) was transferred to Kyiv one month later. Among the bailout's conditions were obligations to conduct key reforms in the financial and energy sectors. The IMF's loan was also a significant political support for Ukraine, as it served to fill major budgetary gaps.

The IMF loan saved Ukraine from complete bankruptcy, but it did not prevent a further escalation of the economic crisis.

The loan saved Ukrainian public finances from complete bankruptcy, but it did not prevent the further escalation of the economic crisis. The conflict in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions played a key role here because a large part of Ukrainian industry is located there. The majority of Donbas's factories were shut down, badly affecting industrial output. Between January and August 2014, production in light industry and chemical sectors decreased by 50 and 45 per cent, respectively. The rise in unemployment and the further impoverishment of the region are some of the immediate effects felt as a result. Donbas's famous coal resources and mining industry have also suffered a critical blow due to the conflict. Currently, 69 out of 93 coal mines in the Donetsk region suspended operations. Some of them were damaged due to clashes between the Ukrainian army and pro-Russian separatists while others were flooded or lost access to electrical power supplies.

Disastrous consequences

The full consequences of the exclusion of Donbas from Ukraine's economic bloodstream still remain unknown. On the one hand, the region provided 15 per cent of the state's budget revenues and the co-operation with Donbas's enterprises

was profitable for many companies around the country. On the other hand, the region, which is perceived as "feeding the nation", had received more subsidies from the state budget (for unprofitable mines) than it was sending back. According to cautious estimates, the restoration of the region will cost at least one billion US dollars, perhaps several times more. But the war must end first.

In the first half of 2014, Ukrainian GDP dropped 4.6 per cent, but chances are that it will be followed by an even more drastic drop in the coming months. Russia's economic sanctions against Ukraine also have destructive consequences for the Ukrainian economy, particularly on the mechanical and food industries. Exports to Russia – Ukraine's most important trade partner – decreased by 23.7 per cent within the first seven months of 2014. Overall export of Ukrainian goods decreased by 5.3 per cent.

Reform of the Ukrainian gas sector is the key to success of the modernisation of Ukraine.

However, Ukrainian goods are becoming more and more competitive on the European market. It is mainly a consequence of granting Ukraine the status of Autonomous Trade Preferences (ATP) on April 23rd. The ATP resulted in the reduction or even elimination of the EU's customs duties on goods originating in Ukraine. Another factor fostering trade between the EU and Ukraine is the devaluation of the hryvnia, which has been around 70 per cent since the beginning of the year. At the same time, exports of Ukrainian products to the EU increased by an unprecedented 32.6 per cent. Exports to Russia decreased by 20 per cent reaching its lowest level since 1991. The Ukrainian crisis has also seriously hit economic relations with Belarus and Kazakhstan. The geography of Ukraine's foreign trade changed considerably and it is most likely going to change even further in the near future.

It is also worth noting that one of the most promising sectors of the Ukrainian economy is agriculture which, in 2013, made up 20 per cent of overall foreign trade. In 2014, profits from the export of agricultural goods were higher than from export of metallurgic products. The importance of the Middle East and North Africa is also growing as Ukraine's trade partners. The overall Ukrainian export to these countries in the first half of 2014 was higher than to Russia.

Gas is the key

The future of Ukraine's economy in the next few months will be mostly dependent on the gas sector. On June 16th 2014, Gazprom cut off its gas supplies to Ukraine. The decision was a result of disagreements on Ukraine's debt and the price of gas. Since then, gas has not been flowing to Ukraine, although both sides of the

Photo: European People's Party (CC) www.flickr.com

One of the first decisions made by Arseniy Yatsenyuk was to enter into negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on an emergency loan package.

conflicts have returned to the negotiating table. Kyiv is determined to renegotiate its extremely unprofitable gas deal. Ukraine primarily wants to reduce the high gas price and reject the "take or pay" clause. Moscow, on the contrary, wants to keep Ukraine's dependence on Russian gas supplies, which have been a key to maintaining influence over Ukraine over the last two decades.

The accumulation of natural gas in Ukrainian storages (around 16.7 billion cubic metres at the beginning of October), its own extraction and imports from Slovakia, Hungary and Poland could help Ukraine survive winter without supplies from Russia. However, this scenario can be successful only if Kyiv respects a radical austerity plan aimed at dropping energy deliveries to individual receivers by 20 per cent and by 30 per cent to industrial receivers as well as being strictly dependent upon supplies from the West, which has indicated that it may not be so easy for them to reverse their gas flows (primarily due to Russian pressure or low supply).

Shortages in gas deliveries will cause serious damage to Ukraine's chemical industry, one of the most energy-consuming branches of the economy. In spite of the on-going Russian-Ukrainian negotiations, chances for a real compromise seem to be very small. Kyiv offered signing a temporary agreement for the wintertime, but Gazprom refused the offer unless Naftogaz withdraws its gas suit from Stockholm and accepts the price of $385 per 1,000 cubic metres. In case Ukraine and Russia do not reach an agreement by April 2015, many branches of Ukrainian industry

will simply have to stop production. The Kremlin is perfectly aware that time is in its favour and – despite the EU, which is increasingly worried about problems with transit of Russian gas – does not plan to give way.

Reform of the Ukrainian gas sector is a key to success of the modernisation of Ukraine. The reduction of energy intensity (one of the highest in the world), an overhaul of Naftogaz, an increase of domestic extraction of hydrocarbons and an effective fight against corruption are the basic conditions without which positive changes in Ukraine's economy will be impossible. These recommendations have been repeated for years in reports issued by numerous international organisations. Reform of the gas sector is also at the very heart of IMF's conditionality. However, in the face of increasing pressure from Russia, which perceives any reforms in Ukraine's energy sector as a threat to its interests, such reforms seem extremely difficult to implement.

Reformed state or failed state?

The post-Maidan government faces a handful of problems, including the total reconstruction of the economy and looking for a solution to the military conflict in the country's east. However, it requires decisive policy bearing in mind that the liberalisation and de-monopolisation of the economy, the creation of an independent judicial system and the limitation of oligarchs' influences will not be easy tasks. In the months before the recent parliamentary elections, the government did little – if anything – to improve the country's economic conditions and implement necessary reforms. On the one hand, this was a result of the ineffectiveness of the Ukrainian parliament. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether Ukrainian politicians have new ideas on how to reform the state. In fact, the only agenda connected to deep economic reform is the Association Agreement with the EU, in particular the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Although its formal implementation has been delayed until the end of 2015, Kyiv has declared that it will comply with the majority of provisions of the agreement even earlier.

Ukraine is facing now a serious dilemma: start building a modern economy or sink deeper into economic chaos and count on western aid.

An optimistic dimension of the current economic crisis in Ukraine is that society has no acceptance towards a "do-nothing" policy. Additionally, society is aware that reforms may not bring visible improvement to the situation. Quite the contrary, people are prepared to bear the negative consequences of deep reforms. The scope of the future modernisation will, however, depend not only on political will and the

shape of the newly-elected parliament, but also, to a large extent, on relations with Russia. The Kremlin is certainly not interested in a stabilised Ukraine, but rather in restoring its influence in Kyiv and spoiling Ukraine's rapprochement with the EU. The democratisation and economic modernisation of Ukraine are major threats to the continuation of the Kremlin's policies. Therefore, we may expect that Russia's gas pressure on Ukraine will be continued. A permanent stabilisation in Donbas is also a highly unlikely scenario. Moscow's determination and Kyiv's military weakness are contributing to the further "Transnistrianisation" status of the region.

Thus, it is reasonable to ask: is it possible to implement deep economic reforms in the circumstance of an undeclared Ukrainian-Russian war and Russia's attempts to make Ukraine a failed state? Ukraine is facing now a serious dilemma: whether to start building a modern economy or sink deeper into economic chaos, postpone crucial reforms and count on western aid. The scale of Ukraine's problems and challenges are reminiscent of the old adage that "there is never a proper time for reforms". NEE

Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

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The Media's Missed Opportunities

OLENA KUTOVENKO

After the EuroMaidan Revolution and the end of the Viktor Yanukovych regime, many speculated that it was a time for the liberation of the media. It seems, however, that the pressure on the media from the authorities has been replaced by business interests and political projects. Most evidence indicates that the Ukrainian media are just as dependent on their owners, editors and the authorities as they were before the EuroMaidan.

After November 30th 2013, our country changed, as confirmed by the politicians who tend to remind us of this fact daily. Of course, many ordinary Ukrainians also agree with this sentiment. After the dramatic events that occurred and continue to take place in our country, we realised how unprotected we were before and how strong we can be when we unite against a common enemy.

However, not all of us have the same enemy: in the east of Ukraine many people still believe in the myth about a frightful group of Banderivets, who came to kill and loot. They believe in starting a new independent state such as the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) or the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) to protect themselves against Kyiv and to bring them the peace and prosperity that is associated with Russia. Why did it happen that the citizens of one state see and live in completely different realities?

Multiple truths

In today's Ukraine, perspectives and problems are fuelled by the media, behind which stand pro-Kremlin owners, Ukrainian oligarchs, businessmen and politicians. The misrepresentation of information in the Russian-speaking and pro-Russian

media, which are preferred by the inhabitants of eastern and southern Ukraine, is an effective weapon since it worked effectively during the last half of the year. Nearly every Ukrainian can give an example where relatives and friends quarrelled with each other or even stopped speaking with each other because of different opinions. This is not because of common sense or a sensible evaluation of the facts, but as a result of strategic brainwashing and subliminal messaging by corrupt journalists who do not represent the voice of truth.

During the EuroMaidan, the Ukrainian media divided into those supporting either the EuroMaidan or the anti-Maidan. Everyone worked proactively, telling their truth as quickly as possible. Yet, in this situation it was omitted that there cannot be several truths – there is only one. In journalism, the truth should be filtered by categories of ethics, including a balance of ideas, verification of information and the credibility of sources, and stories need to be presented in an unbiased way. The media in Ukraine, during the uncertain political situation (December 2013 – February 2014), did not fare well in this regard according to Ukrainian media watchdogs. The evidence indicates that the Ukrainian media are directly dependent on their owners, editors and the authorities.

The current media market is dominated by oligarchs with business and political interests.

When Viktor Yanukovych fled to Russia, the pressure on the media decreased almost immediately. This can be seen in the content of Ukrainian national media, which were no longer afraid to report more openly. Already in April 2014, according to data from the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), the level of compliance with journalist standards in printed nationwide press reached its historic maximum. However, in May, right before the presidential elections, there is evidence of poor adherence to journalist ethical standards, indicating a strong bias without counter-balancing: "Some questionable materials were published with a lack of balance and incompleteness of facts," wrote IMI expert Roman Kabachiy in one of the institute's reports.

According to media watchdog organisations, the regional media often stand out as breaking media standards and norms. Many small, local publications in Crimea and the east of Ukraine, funded substantially by local businessmen or politicians, were responsible for sowing the seeds of discord between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking populations. Audiences were bombarded with one-sided articles promoting the idea of "us" versus "them".

A report published by the Ukrainian Educational Centre of Reforms (UOCR) in July 2014 shows that the amount of political materials, which show signs of being sponsored by politicians and businessmen, was half as much as compared with April.

At the same time, the amount of inappropriately marked advertisements increased almost twofold. Electronic media also demonstrated that in July 2014, the amount of materials that were politically sponsored decreased. However, journalist and media expert Svitlana Yeremenko noted that although the general level of sponsored materials decreased by half in July, as compared to April, one should not be that optimistic. Some regional media continue to publish promotional materials or demonstrate total blindness by suppressing tragic events and presenting an image of a worry free life to their readers.

Honesty check

The results of the research on nationwide television are also bleak. The Ukrainian media are exposed to changes in the political sphere of Ukraine and are subordinated to preferences of their owners, ready to neglect ethical journalistic standards even at the moments that are most critical to their country. Furthermore, experts from Telekrytyka, an NGO that monitors professional standards in TV media, noted that the period of May-July 2014 revealed the negative phenomenon of the oligarch wars on the Ukrainian media scene. The example here was the open political and commercial battle between *Inter* and *1+1* channels in the news programmes.

Taking into account the research by various watchdog groups, an unequivocal conclusion may be drawn that no fundamental change has really occurred in Ukrainian media.

Telekrytyka noted that from the beginning of the EuroMaidan till the end of July 2014, the undisputed leader among all other channels is *Inter*, which is owned by Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash and Serhiy Lyovochkin, the ex-head of the presidential administration during Yanukovych's rule. Since *Inter* is very popular among the population of the east and the south of Ukraine, this channel took great lengths to broadcast biased materials in support of the Yanukovych perspective and poisoned the minds of a significant number of people against the EuroMaidan and its participants. But to a strong degree, each channel contributed to the distortion of reality during this difficult period for Ukranians.

Another opportunity for an honesty check with the Ukrainian media market was the pre-election period. Unfortunately, the situation proved that there was not a change for the better: according to preliminary results, which have not been published yet, the amount of materials prepaid or pre-ordered in the printed press, internet and on TV increased significantly as compared to July 2014. The

top-ranked television channels and regional media demonstrated their loyalty to certain political parties and their leaders, and openly speculated on many topics (especially in relation to the war in the east of Ukraine and the economic situation).

According to Otar Dovzhenko, a journalist and media expert: "with the collapse of the Yanukovych regime, the system of voluntary-compulsory media loyalty to the central authority, which existed since 2010 and was organised in a manner that more or less resembled the Russian example, was abandoned. However, the current media market, compared with that situation, is even more dominated by the oligarchs. In a matter of months after the EuroMaidan, media owners began using their organisations to pursue political and business interests. Economic difficulties, which are growing, and the substantial losses in the advertising market resulted in an even deeper dependence of the media on pre-election money."

New players, new standards?

During the EuroMaidan, two new projects emerged on the Ukrainian media scene – the internet-based television hromadske.tv and StopFake. Both achieved mass popularity in a relatively short period of time. Hromadske.tv, as a Ukrainian internet television station, was announced in June 2013 by 15 journalists and registered itself as a non-profit organisation. It began operations in November 2013 as a response to the unexpected decision of the Ukrainian government to cease preparations for signing of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. During the EuroMaidan protests, the number of viewers of hromadske.tv substantially increased.

A high profile scandal in July 2014, however, has led to some concern about the standards at hromadske.tv. Danylo Yanevsky, a well-known presenter for the channel, was dismissed for his alleged biased attitude during his interview with Tatyana Lokshina, a researcher with the Moscow office of Human Rights Watch. Since the scandal and Yanevsky's departure, the ratings of hromadske.tv began to drop. What's more, since then, journalists have begun speaking out about censorship and disagreements in political views inside the team of hromadske.tv. The announcement by journalists Mustafa Nayem and Sergii Leshchenko of their intention to run for parliament in September 2014 further undermined the credibility of hromadske.tv. A focus group research conducted by the Mohyla School of Journalism revealed that people now watch hromadske.tv much less. Respondents indicated that they mostly watch news via the TV's Facebook feed rather than actually visiting the web site.

> An adequate media sphere that would function in accordance with the standards of journalism will only emerge when the market is no longer dominated by oligarchs.

Another important project created under the influence of the EuroMaidan events is www.StopFake.org. As a fact-checking website, it was launched on March 2nd 2014 by alumni and students of the Mohyla School of Journalism and the Digital Future of Journalism professional programme for journalists and editors. The main purpose of the project is to check facts, verify information and refute propaganda about events in Ukraine covered in the media. The website is mostly run by volunteers, who are journalists and translators. Initial indications show that StopFake.org's ratings are rapidly growing not only in Ukraine but also abroad. Starting in September 2014, StopFake programmes are also being broadcasted regularly by hromadske.tv.

Taking into account the systematic monitoring undertaken by various Ukrainian watchdogs as well as the opinions of experts, bloggers and journalists, an unequivocal conclusion may be drawn that no fundamental changes for the better have really occurred in the media scene of Ukraine. In March and April of 2014, there were discussions about the "liberation" of Ukrainian media after Yanukovych left. It seems however, that the pressure on the media from the authorities has been replaced by specific business interests and political projects.

Social media portals remain perhaps the only open zone of access for alternative information – both true and fake. The EuroMaidan Revolution proved that social media could be both a productive sphere of exchange of ideas and a reliable source of information.

"When most of the TV channels were hesitating whether they would cover events, social media presented information from journalists and people who were there as participants or observers of events," said Annna Poludenko, a journalist and researcher. Social media were also used as a crowd-sourcing tool where dozens of groups organised money and resources.

Yet, at a time when a media war continues and elections are a chance for new configurations of power, it would be too early to say that the media have contributed to the democratisation of the state. In fact, the media have rather pitted the people against one another. In reality, an adequate media sphere that would function in accordance with the standards of the journalist profession will only emerge when the media market in Ukraine is no longer dominated by oligarchs. For now, a substantial number of Ukrainian journalists continue to face censorship, work in conditions of self-censorship and editorial pressure or have to resign and look for another job. NEE

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8TH Russian Film Festival in Poland

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Pro-forma Lustration

ROMAN KABACHIY

The law "on the purification of government" was adopted in Ukraine and signed by President Petro Poroshenko, notwithstanding reservations made by a number of human rights activists and governmental officials. How successful and relevant is this law for the country?

Ukraine is one of those countries of the former Soviet Union that balances on the edge of democracy and autocracy. This group of countries is located between those that adopted democracy: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia; and those who have resisted: the countries of Central Asia, Russia and Belarus. This group includes Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The fact that these countries occasionally demonstrate their willingness to change and move towards the West can be explained not only by the current situation, but also for historical reasons.

As my friend who was engaged in opposition activities put it simply: "Ukrainians are fortunate to have Galicia," (which can be interpreted as a lack of the Russian cultural code) and "Ukrainians are fortunate that there are so many of them," (which can be interpreted as "you are different and you have pluralism"). Moldova without Transnistria is itself like "Galicia" and Georgians were fortunate in other ways, including a quick realisation of the delusion of "fraternal" relations with Russia (due to the alienation of Abkhazia), Saakashvili's team and, in general, a millennial history of a proud hill people.

Background context

At the same time, these countries did not take the path of the Baltic states. Why? Because they did not have their independence during the interwar period (being a part of either the Soviet Union or of other states – Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia), and because they failed to quickly purify their state apparatus after independence and introduce a new system of authority. In this respect, the example of Ukraine

is a perfect illustration. Ukraine managed to proclaim independence on August 24th 1991 during the Moscow August Putsch, hold presidential elections and a referendum in support of independence on December 1st of the same year. However, there were no parliamentary elections that could overturn the parliament elected in the Soviet Union in 1989.

Yet, even if this had happened, a drastic renewal of the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) would not have taken place considering the public mood. The key figure here is not the 92 per cent in support of independence, but the votes given during the elections in favour of the pro-western candidate Viacheslav Chornovil and the ex-communist Leonid Kravchuk. Chornovil gained a majority only in three Galician oblasts. Ten years later, during the Orange Revolution, the border of the pro-western electorate moved to the former borders of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, dividing Ukraine in half. The centre and the west opted for the western, pro-European and pro-Ukrainian development, while the east and the south supported the pro-Russian, post-Soviet position of the state. It took another ten years, along with the Russian aggression of 2014, for pro-Ukrainian attitudes to spread to other major parts of the country's territory. The division now lies between most of Ukraine and the pro-Russian, anti-European depressed Donbas region, controlled by mercenaries, as well as Crimea (which is occupied by Russia).

The 52-million strong Ukraine has not had a sufficient voice to openly demand the purification of the government from its communist past.

What does this this long explanation have to do with lustration in Ukraine? It illustrates that the 52-million strong Ukraine (at the moment of gaining independence) has not had a sufficient majority to voice an open, social demand for cardinal purification of the government from the communist layers. Over the course of time, the people staying in power did everything so that this social demand would emerge as late as possible. And now, Ukraine has passed a law on the purification of government in the face of Russian intervention – the law that should have been adopted 23 years ago, along with the prohibition of the Communist Party.

Why was there no such demand? As is now, the inhabitants of Donbas towns, manipulated first by the media during Viktor Yanukovych's tenure and the Maidan and later by Russian television, are scared of the mythical *banderivets*. Similarly to 1991, the press controlled by the ex-communists created a negative image of the "rukhivets" (the name of the first democratic party of Ukraine – the People's Movement, *Narodnyi Rukh*) that, upon gaining power, would force everyone to speak only Ukrainian with a diaspora accent and dismiss everyone who was a member of the party or wrote reports to the KGB.

Let me give a concrete example. In 2000, I asked my neighbour in a village in the Kherson oblast to sign for a candidate from the People's Movement. He refused outright, although he himself was a migrant from Khmelnitsky oblast and, in my belief, should have supported a pro-Ukrainian person. It is difficult to overestimate the role of the media in intimidating the population with spectres of different dangers.

People's lustration

When it came to the adoption of the lustration law, for which the social demand finally emerged after the shootings of the peaceful people at the Maidan and the adoption of the dictatorship laws on January 16th 2014, it turns out that this law is imperfect. On September 16th, under pressure of the people crowded outside the parliament building, one of the five draft laws registered with the Rada was adopted – the one prepared by three deputies: Yuriy Derevyanko (unaffiliated), Leonid Yemets (Batkivshchyna) and Oleh Bondarchuk (Svoboda). It will, firstly, deal with the top and mid-level officials during the Yanukovych regime, along with the party and komsomol functionaries, employees and agents of the KGB. This is the attempt to consolidate two lustrations into one – the post-communist, which was not conducted after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the one directed against the supporters of Yanukovych's regime.

According to the law, elected officials will not be lustrated, and this is what angers the society the most. That is why the abhorrent deputies of the Party of Regions who stood behind the draft laws on censorship and criminal responsibility for defamation became targets of the so-called "people's lustration". Some examples of this includes Vitaly Zhuravsky being thrown in a rubbish bin and Viktor Pylypyshyn being doused with paint as he tried to register as a parliamentary candidate. Nestor Shufrych, a deputy from Zakarpattia where in 2004 hired thugs known as "titushky" were used for the first time, one of the most loyal to Yanukovych, was beaten in Odesa. Of course such "lustration" is resented not only by the "lustrated", but also by the representatives of civil society who fear that this may stir up an uncontrolled wave of violence and discredit Ukraine in the eyes of the civilised world. However, there is an understanding that the failure of the government to act engenders such aggression.

This lustration law is an attempt to consolidate two lustrations into one – the post-communist and the supporters of the Yanukovych regime.

On the other hand, the law on lustration was criticised by officials and human rights activists. The head of the Kharkiv human rights group Yevhen Zakharov

circulated a text in which he indicated four reasons why the president should not sign this version of the law. First of all, the law was adopted practically blind, without observing the procedural rules for the second parliamentary reading, nor considering nearly 400 amendments (it should be noted that the text was publicly circulated a week after its adoption by the parliament). Secondly, there is an abundantly wide range of people (some estimate one million) that should be lustrated. Zakharov remarks that there was no such massive process in any Central or Eastern European state. He is supported by Prosecutor General Vitaly Yarema who predicts that the legal system would be so overwhelmed that it could lead to a total collapse.

Thirdly, there is a lack of an appropriate authority responsible for lustration. Yemets, one of the drafters of the law, has said that, "the procedure of lustration is totally automatic. In reality it would look like this: the head of the authority where the lustration inspection takes place shall send the copies of statements by his employees to the Ministry of Justice and to the authorities that have information on the lustration demands, particularly the Security Service of Ukraine and the tax authorities. The procedure of filing documents and the list of authorities that will hold the lustration inspections shall be determined by the Cabinet of Ministers at the suggestion of the Ministry of Justice." The lustration committee, established after the victory of the Maidan and chaired by one of the lobbyists of lustration Yehor Sobolev, will somehow vanish. Lastly, Zakharov notes the extreme violation of the right to privacy.

Ukraine had waited for 23 years and, in my belief, in this situation could have waited a little longer so that this process would be conducted right and without any "tricks". One of the authors of the lustration process in the Czech Republic, Pavel Žáček, has warned: "The appropriate anti-corruption system shall be created because the current lustration initiative does not allow to fully implement a transparent inspection procedure." Hence, it is still remains a rhetorical question as to how sincerely the Ukrainian government is interested in lustration.

Translated by Olena Shynkarenko

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Special Status is not the Answer

VOLODYMYR VALKOV

The granting of a special status to the areas controlled by pro-Russian rebels is a decision with very unclear consequences. The draft law on the "special order to local self-government in certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions" adopted on September 16th 2014 by 277 Ukrainian members of parliament is perhaps the most opaque law Ukrainian society has ever seen. Its potential consequences and possible meanings for Ukraine's future remain unclear.

The now infamous Ukrainian law granting a "special status" to parts of Donbas was voted for on the same day as other significant pieces of legislation, including amnesty for the "participants of the events on the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions", the ratification of the Association Agreement with the European Union, an anti-corruption strategy for 2014-2017, a law on lustration and a resolution on the European choice of Ukraine. This legislative context gives an important insight for understanding the potential consequences of the "special status" law for portions of the Donbas region as well as the mood that is currently dominating in Ukrainian politics.

All of these legislative initiatives were adopted by the parliament on that day, except for the anti-corruption package of legislation. The fact that it is so difficult for the Ukrainian parliament to agree on a plan to curb corruption, even after the EuroMaidan and in such trying times for their nation, compellingly shows that if you do not fight corruption, you will soon start fighting on the real battlefield. The lack of will to curtail corruption bears a sad symbolism for Ukraine, where corruption is the true root cause for the country's stagnation and inability to thrive on its abundant natural, human and geographic resources. On October 7th

the anti-corruption legislation finally passed the first reading by the parliament on the third attempt.

Unprecedented steps

The law on lustration, which is meant to keep those complicit in the crimes of the Viktor Yanukovych regime and the communist party away from the government for the next ten years, was approved only after the seventh attempt. The lustration law was surely an antidote, a sort of requisite sedative that had to be passed in order to appease another potential uprising from the Ukrainian people, many of whom, while weary of the war, are strongly opposed to any concessions to the pro-Russian separatists and "Russian volunteers" operating in the east of Ukraine. The ratification of the Association Agreement was supported by an overwhelming majority of 355 votes, which could be explained by the fact that the agreement will not go into force until the end of 2015 as a trade-off among parliamentary factions for the vote on the "special status" law. It is difficult to say if Ukraine will still be politically independent from Russia a year-and-a-half from now, considering Ukraine's economic conditions and low level of enthusiasm in the West to tackle Vladimir Putin's policies.

The only opportunity for Ukraine to survive in the current scenario is by exercising full control over its foreign policy priorities, and insisting on NATO and EU membership.

The only opportunity for Ukraine to survive in the current scenario, where Russia is trying to anchor Ukraine in its orbit of influence by creating a zone of either a hot or frozen conflict, is by exercising full control over its foreign policy priorities and insisting on NATO and EU membership. The resolution on Ukraine's European choice, adopted during the same session as the "special status" law, was a meaningless gesture for popular consumption for two reasons. First, the European direction of the foreign policy was given a weak, non-binding status. Second, the declaration omitted NATO as a foreign policy priority. President Petro Poroshenko made the same calculated misjudgement during his address to the United States Congress on September 18th 2014, during which he never once made a reference to NATO. Taken together, this illustrates that despite the current Ukrainian government's strong pro-European rhetoric and eloquent calls for political, economic and military support from the EU, the US and NATO, the Ukrainian leadership has so far delivered little on the changes that had been demanded during the Revolution of Dignity on the Maidan: practical steps for the EU Association have been postponed, lustration has still not taken off, the neutrality

status of Ukraine has not been amended, Ukraine's border with Russia has not been secured and anti-corruption measures are still not being implemented.

The law on the "special status" of certain regions of Donbas can rightfully be called a monumental, historic and unprecedented piece of legislation in terms of its theoretical and practical implications for the territorial composition of Ukraine. It is telling that the law was adopted in less than six minutes, during a closed parliamentary session, without a voting record or any prior consideration of the bill by the pertinent committees of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's parliament). The parliamentary committees reviewed the law on September 17th, one day *after* it had been adopted. Critics of the legislation call it a gesture of Ukraine's capitulation in the Russian non-linear war against Ukraine. Indeed, the law provides virtually no political control over the territories in question and the provisions for amnesty of the separatists, a creation of a local police, a deepening of co-operation with Russia, and the appointment of prosecutors and judges, are just statements that confirm the existing reality. The Ukrainian government has no means of bringing the Russian-backed separatists to justice, and the latter have already started their invented nation-building process.

Proponents contend that the law enables Ukraine to solve the Donbas problem politically rather than militarily while, at the same time, allowing Ukraine to regroup its defences and avert an even greater defeat. On September 21st 2014, Poroshenko stated in an interview that around 65 per cent of the Ukrainian army had been destroyed in the course of the Anti-Terrorist Operation. According to an anonymous member of the UDAR party, during the closed meeting of the Rada on September 19th, Poroshenko allegedly stated that 58 per cent of Ukraine's military equipment had been destroyed since April 2014. Throughout the month of July and until the illegal entry of the Russian humanitarian convoy into Donbas on August 22nd, Ukrainian troops managed to reduce the terrorist-controlled area to half of its original size. To prevent Ukraine from winning the war against the Russian separatists, Russia stepped up its supplies of soldiers and equipment, replaced the figureheads of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) and opened a new front in the direction of Mariupol, revealing its hopes to construct a land link to the annexed Crimean peninsula. The "special status" of Donbas needs to be critically assessed in light of all of these events, spanning from the fictitious referendum on the "status" of Crimea in March and the beginning of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (Ukraine's internal legalistic euphemism for the Russian-Ukrainian War) on April 13th.

Without significant aid to Ukraine, the "special status" will provoke further expansion of separatist-controlled areas in Ukraine.

It is telling that the "special status" law was adopted in less than six minutes, during a closed parliamentary session without a voting record or any prior consideration by parliamentary committees.

Numerous questions

The special status for Donbas is an important milestone, like the referendum on the status of Crimea. Both events have brought unprecedented changes to the territorial composition of Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea, which took Russia about three weeks to accomplish, was a straightforward military operation with a clear goal, even if by means of "unmarked soldiers", or "little green men". The result of the Crimean scenario is a creation of a powerful Russian military base on the peninsula. The difference with Donbas is that the consequences are not as clear and immediate. This raises numerous questions: What is going to be the exact geographic extent of the "special districts"? Will the boundaries shift over time? Will separatist-controlled chunks of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts be able to eventually merge, proclaiming the creation of the so-called Novorossiya? Will Ukraine be ever able to roll back the special status from these areas? What will be the influence of these regions on Ukraine's policymaking in both foreign and internal affairs? Some of these questions will be answered once Ukraine finally adopts a new military doctrine by the end of 2015, as announced by the Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers on September 17th.

Ironically, the actual outcome of this "political" solution in Donbas, which powerful western leaders advocate for, will ultimately depend on military conditions,

including the continued increase in western economic sanctions against Russia. Without significant military aid to Ukraine, the "special status" will provoke further "enlargement" of the separatist-controlled area in Donbas, which now has already gained access to stretches of seashore near Mariupol and is most likely headed in the direction of Crimea. If Ukraine continues to decline militarily and economically, it is not going to be too long before Russia exploits any possible provocation to grab more territory. It must be remembered that physically Russia is going to face increasing problems in the management of the Crimean peninsula without a proper land link through Ukrainian territory and therefore a powerful strategic motivation still exists. Thus, Ukraine desperately needs a deterrent against Russia and this means that the political peace is directly dependent on military capability.

The Ukrainian army has limited resources and we have to understand that by granting a "special status" to parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the Ukrainian leadership is trying to stop the conflict that it did not start, never dreamt of and was unprepared for. But the unavoidable, unintended consequence of the "special status" is a creation of a breakaway republic. It is difficult to call it a frozen conflict because it will most likely remain a hot spot waiting to explode even further. The amount and intensity of propaganda that was injected into the minds of the pro-Russian population and the mercenaries deployed in Donbas will continue to exert a profound negative influence on the attitudes and actions of the local population. Putin's Russia is a net exporter of radicalism. Crimea, which professes to have three official state languages – Russian, Tatar and Ukrainian – has virtually made the peninsula a "no-go zone" for native Ukrainian speakers and a dangerous place for the Crimean-Tatars.

The success of the Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine has sent a clear signal to various armed groups with violent ambitions of political power and territorial claims.

Global ramifications

It is highly likely that once the "special status" takes hold, the Ukrainian army pulls away, and pro-Moscow rebels and the so-called "Russian volunteers" take control of all vital services in the area – animosity, purges and possibly ethnic cleansing toward the pro-Ukrainian segments of the local population will proliferate in the DNR and LNR. On September 18th, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees reported 257,695 registered internally displaced persons from eastern Ukraine, while noting that the actual number is estimated to be far greater. According to the assessment, the main triggering factors for the movement of persons are

extortion, harassment and an uncertain future. The areas of Donbas present an assembly of acute political, military and humanitarian threats, each of which has to be addressed accordingly. There can be no genuine political solution to this multi-faceted conflict because at its core lies Kremlin's expansionist, revisionist and anti-democratic ideology.

The "special status" of the separatist-controlled areas unwillingly gives recognition to the self-proclaimed authorities of the DNR and LNR. From a security point of view, this is a blow to Ukraine, Europe and the US. The progress of Putin's Novorossiya project and the Kremlin's brazen resistance to international economic sanctions is already galvanising international conflict in a variety of hot spots around the world. It is not purely coincidental that the aggression of ISIS against the United States and its allies in the Middle East heightened around the time of the worsening of the crisis in Ukraine. The success of the Putin-backed separatists in Ukraine and, in turn, the helplessness of the West in defending Ukraine from Russia, has sent a clear signal to various armed groups with violent ambitions for political power and territorial claims.

While Ukraine needs to mobilise its resources to win the war, every effort must be made not to slip into a dictatorship.

The jihadist cause for the establishment of a caliphate for the Islamic State and Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Levant region in order to bring together all Muslim-inhabited regions of the world is comparable to the ephemeral politico-religious-cultural expansionist idea of building a *Russkiy mir* (Russian world) to "protect" Russian-speaking populations, especially in the former Soviet bloc region. ISIS as well as Novorossiya are jihadist and expansionist concepts, respectively, that destroy borders, fragment states and propagate radicalism and extremism in strategic regions. For Europe, the problem of Ukraine is much more immediate and dangerous. Europe and its "community of values" is under threat because the DNR and LNR, even if left unrecognised, are centres of anti-Western influence and anti-democratic ideology that spread violence and propaganda and promote such distorted, anachronistic pretexts for their military aggression as "historical justice" and "historical rights".

In addition to the conclusion that the political solution can be attained only, or at least primarily, with military support, another critical assessment that we can draw is that despite Ukraine's weak military compared to the Russian one, the decisive battle that Ukraine lost was the informational confrontation. Until the Revolution of Dignity on the Maidan and the Russian occupation of Ukraine, relatively few people around the globe were aware of Ukraine as an independent country with its own language, rich culture and centuries-old identity. For a very long time, Ukraine

was generally considered a part of Russia, or that unknown "somewhere" close to Russia. Before Ukraine confirms its independence with military force, it still has to confirm its existence in the minds of Europeans, Americans and many other nations.

Quintessential problem

The general ignorance about Ukraine explains the basic lack of will by western political leaders to stake their political credit on risking the economic well-being of their society's lifestyle for supporting a country that their societies do not know much about. The crisis, therefore, has to some extent filled the gap in the global knowledge about Ukraine. It also has exposed the nature of Putin and his circle. Besides propaganda, the crisis and the war have generated a lot of useful information, highlighting all of the country's major weaknesses. And yet again it became obvious that Ukraine's quintessential problem is corruption.

There is no doubt that Russia is to blame for the awful terror it has committed against Ukraine, but the successive generations of Ukrainian political elite cannot be excused either. The Ukrainian government shares responsibility for what has happened to Donbas and Crimea. There have been absolutely no efforts to foster contact and exchanges between the different regions of Ukraine and counteract the remaining Soviet stereotypes. The Ukrainian political elite underestimated the size, diversity and intellect of their own state, as they were busy plundering the nation's natural resources for generations. In his address to the US Congress, Poroshenko put it well: "The Soviet Union has collapsed too quickly, creating the illusion that this chapter in history was closed." Indeed, it is only now that we are witnessing the disintegration of the Soviet regime's remnants in Ukraine.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has also clearly delivered a preview of the bleak future that awaits Russian society under Putin. The informational firewall in Russia is rising quickly: the Russian government took over the Russia's largest social network VKonakte, forcing its founder, Pavel Durov, out of control on April 21st 2014. As of July 31st, Russian bloggers with more than 3,000 daily readers have been required to register as mass media with the state agency Roskomnadzor; Alina Kabaeva, allegedly Putin's mistress, was reported on September 16th to head Russia's biggest media holding; the owner of the largest Russian mobile operator MTS was arrested on September 17th and is now under criminal investigation; on September 23rd the Russian Duma voted for a bill that puts a 20 per cent cap on foreign ownership of Russian media properties; and on September 26th the world's largest social media and internet services like Facebook, Google and Twitter were ordered by the Russian government to relocate their servers to Russia and make the records of user activity accessible to the Russian authorities.

Clearly, once the Kremlin gains full command over the channels of information distribution in Russia, the Putin regime will have achieved total control over Russian society. This modern level of control will ultimately surpass that of Soviet totalitarianism in its sophistication because it will include authority over both conventional and unconventional means of communication, encroaching on the privacy of everyday thoughts and habits.

Long-term solutions

The shaky ceasefire has led to the adoption of the "special status" for the areas controlled by the pro-Moscow separatists. This could become Europe's largest illegal breakaway region whose potential for further violence and instability will be a hundred times that of Transnistria. Even worse, if a future "Novorossiya" and Transnistria are left to tighten their regimes, they will rather soon merge with the Russian Federation by means of similar fake referenda. Unfortunately, the "special status" law, on its own, actually brings us closer to the reality of increased confrontation rather than a political solution.

The best long-term solution for Ukraine to defend its independence and assert its sovereign right to determine its own future is to adopt a new foreign policy and military doctrine that would include the goals of EU and NATO membership. Ukraine must recognise Russia as a source of permanent threat to its national security in the foreseeable future. Ukraine must also immediately define all of its borders with Russia. NATO membership is the only achievable and cost-effective deterrent for Ukraine against external aggression. Since Russia has just moved its nuclear arsenal closer to Europe by converting the annexed Crimean peninsula from a tourist riviera into a military base, NATO's stabilising role in Europe will not work with Ukraine as a "grey area" between the Alliance and Russia.

The doctrine must also recognise that Ukraine is suffering from massive corruption and that transparency is required to overcome it. The legislative procedure that was used to pass the "special status" law is unacceptable for a democratic Ukraine. The voting acrobatics of September 16th were reminiscent of the adoption of the anti-protest laws (commonly called the dictatorship laws) of January 16th 2014. While Ukraine needs to mobilise its resources to win the war, every effort must be made not to slip into a dictatorship.

By the time the three years of the "special status" for certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions expires, a reintegration plan for these areas must enter into force. The plan must include a pre-reintegration step to organise trust-building educational initiatives, mobility scholarships and cultural and academic exchanges for secondary and tertiary studies. In the three years, Ukraine also needs

to receive the necessary technical support to satisfy all of the NATO membership criteria. Without NATO membership Ukraine will never have enough stability to work safely on EU membership.

The West should not limit itself to political solutions such as the "special status" law as an answer to Russia's military invasion. Ukraine's momentum has to be preserved. It can bring a lot more positive change to the post-Soviet region and for the world. Protesters in Hong Kong are already challenging the oppressive Chinese communist government. The good examples, just like the bad ones, are connected in the international relations and have a tendency to replicate. NEE

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LAW ON SPECIAL STATUS

The law on the "special status" of Donbas, as it has become popularly known, spans about four pages of text and is made up of 10 articles. In short, the provisions of the law grant, for the duration of three years, the following increased authority to the local self-governments of "certain districts in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions":

The release of separatists from administrative responsibility and criminal prosecution.

A guarantee of the right of every resident to use whatever language he or she considers native.

A "special" procedure for the appointment of prosecutors and judges by the local authorities.

The powers of the deputies of the local councils and civil servants of the local governments elected during the pre-term local elections set by the parliament on December 7th 2014, cannot be prematurely terminated.

The central government of Ukraine and its various agencies can conclude agreements with the local authorities for the economic, social and cultural development of certain districts.

Social and economic development of "certain districts" funded by the state budget of Ukraine.

The facilitation of the "deepening of good-neighbourly relations with the Russian Federation" through cross-border co-operation.

The creation of the "people's police" under the command of the local authorities.

Debate: Eastern Europe in World History and Politics 1914-2014

MARK VON HAGEN, YAROSLAV HRYTSAK, ANDREAS KAPPELER AND FRANK SYSYN

Generally, most people have come to understand what is meant when we refer to "Eastern Europe". But if one is to actually contemplate the question "Where exactly is Eastern Europe," then the inconsistencies surrounding this concept slowly begin to emerge. In fact, in the 21st century, the question as to the exact location of Eastern Europe can be answered in many different ways. In Poland and other Central European countries, Eastern Europe is today believed to exist somewhere east of the EU borders. However, if you go further west (still within the European Union) you can easily find Europeans who see Eastern Europe starting somewhere east of Germany. Hence, Eastern Europe is not easily geographically defined; it comes across as a region without borders, which, in turn, begs the question – is it still correct to use the term "Eastern Europe"?

The etymological meaning of Eastern Europe shows us that a re-conceptualisation of a geographical and political concept is a process that is most often not undertaken consciously and requires time. Clearly, referring to Eastern Europe as a bloc of countries situated to the east of Germany (or Poland) is inaccurate – economically, politically, geographically and socially. It has become outdated to use the term "Eastern Europe" to refer to as "otherness", or something that is between Europe and the orient.

Today, in the context of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it has become even more obvious that we need to find a new framework to understand our common reference points when describing the region. History does not allow us to consistently label this region. The question is: would it not be too difficult, even impractical, to stop using the term altogether?

The debate titled Eastern Europe in World History and Politics 1914-2014, which was held in Lviv on September 12th 2014, was meant to deliberate this concept from various perspectives: historical,

political and geographical, in the context of Ukraine. Obviously, this debate did not answer the question of "Where is Eastern Europe?", but its record may provide some reference points for anyone who wants to better understand the greater meaning of Europe.

"Eastern Europe" – An outdated concept

Andreas Kappeler: Until the beginning of the 19th century, the division between east and west was not of much importance on the European mental map. In fact, the division was one between north and south. The south encompassed the civilised world; the countries that were rooted in ancient Greece and Rome and which included Italy, Greece and Spain. On the other side were the "barbarians" who lived in the north: Sweden, Poland, Russia and so on. It was only in the first half of the 19th century that the new use of "Eastern Europe" as a backward antipode of the "civilised west" became more common.

In the German-Swiss-Austrian branch of the academic world, we have a long tradition of understanding the term "Eastern Europe" as referring to all the regions east of Germany, all the way to the Urals. In fact, we include Russia in this notion of Eastern Europe, unlike in other academic traditions such as the United States. For a long time now, we have divided Eastern Europe into three sub-regions: East-Central Europe; South-Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe in a narrow sense. Seemingly, for historians, this notion is only an instrument of research. Therefore, I would argue for this pragmatic use of the geographic understanding; and not the normative terms "East" and "Eastern Europe". In this sense Eastern Europe includes Russia. Clearly, we have to divide Europe into more than west and east. At the same time, however, we have to be aware that these divisions are fluid, as they permanently change with time.

Frank Sysyn: We have more than just one concept of Eastern Europe. The idea of East-Central Europe, as mentioned, could be seen as a part of "Central Europe", which in the Polish understanding stretches to Białystok. The North American tradition is largely influenced by Oskar Halecki's book, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe*, written in 1950. Halecki, whose family roots can be traced to Volhynia, was very interested in showing that those territories which might be called the eastern territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, that is Ukraine and Belarus, were not a part of the same civilisational sphere as Russia. It was because of Halecki that the term "East-Central Europe" took hold in the United States, above all by the formation of an institute at the Columbia University called the Institute on East Central Europe. If we look elsewhere, we see Jaroslav Bidlo – a Czech historian – who gave a very different vision of Eastern Europe pointing to religious civilisational blocs. In my view, the issue of Central Europe is essential to any

vision of what we are going to do with the term Eastern Europe.

A key part of this debate is whether the Russian-Ukrainian war has changed our vision and understanding of the region. It has clearly shown us that we need a more nuanced view of regions. Even our understanding of regions inside regions needs to be reconsidered. For example, the northern part of Luhansk Oblast is Slobozhanschyna (Sloboda Ukraine), and we have learned that Slobozhanschyna behaves very differently from the southern part of that region. This example shows us that the most eastern oblast of Ukraine has a certain social and cultural tradition that unites it with territories to the rest of Ukraine.

Halecki had proposed the concept of a "Central Europe", consisting of its eastern and western parts. But the idea of West-Central Europe never took hold (that would have been Germany). Conversely, East-Central Europe did take on a life of its own. It now equates to being in a privileged club that gets you into the European community.

Yaroslav Hrytsak: It is true that the idea of Eastern Europe is based on perception. A key argument made by Larry Wolff, author of *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, is that this concept was invented and since it was invented, it does not exist.

I do not particularly agree with this point of view. It takes a reading of Herodotus to understand that the "East-West" division is as old as the "North-South" division. It is just that until modern times, the former did not matter that much as the latter. Secondly, Eastern Europe is something that is very tangible. Ask any driver crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border if Eastern Europe exists. The moment you cross the border, you immediately see the difference in the quality of the roads. That is why the most visible criteria that could be used nowadays to determine where Eastern Europe starts would be GDP per capita or other related indices that reflect standards of living. I realise that similar criteria with similar consequences could be applied to other European peripheries, like Portugal or the Balkans, and discourses on Eastern Europe smacks of Orientalism. Still, when it comes to tangible criteria it does not make Eastern Europe less "Eastern".

In many ways, the reason why "Eastern Europe" is seen as a pejorative term is because, as Larry Wolfe noted, it refers to underdevelopment and backwardness. This negative association with the term is thus now a challenge for countries such as Ukraine.

Mark von Hagen: There is an earlier version of the concept of a "New Eastern Europe"; a British invention by historian Robert Seton-Watson in the early 20th century. Seton-Watson was an advocate of Czechoslovak and Polish independence and helped influence Woodrow Wilson's ideas about Eastern Europe after the First World War. This means that the last time we heard about a "New Eastern Europe" was at the end of the First World

War and the Treaty of Versailles, which came to be seen as not just as peace, but rather as a continuation of empire which eventually led to the Second World War.

It was then in 1989 when Mikhail Gorbachev called for a common European home stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. This brings us to reflect on what Europe really means today and the competing ideas of what Europe is. Europe has always been an ideal, a utopia, a project and a work in progress. What we have seen recently in Ukraine illustrates these competing notions of a European order. On the one hand, there is a Europe based on social democratic values that is cosmopolitan, with open borders and an inclusive democratic idea. On the other hand, there is the new right-wing understanding, which is not so new if you go back to the world order of fascism and Nazism. This idea is based on conservative values and the preservation of order and discipline. These competing "Europes" overlay all of the regional differences. The EuroMaidan Revolution and the Russian-Ukrainian war illustrate that Ukraine is now a battleground of these two visions of Europe.

Nationalism in the context of Ukraine and Eastern Europe

Mark von Hagen: Nationalism is different in every country. The West has its own forms of nationalism. If we look at the more global problems of defining nations in the European Union – the issue of migration and refugees are now challenging the notions of nationalism. The nation-state as we know it has always been a stabilising force. But today, with global capitalism which makes the states less in control of their own borders and what happens inside these borders, as well as less able to satisfy the welfare needs of their populations, we see that states are no longer efficient as a result of broader global forces. This is a very new feature of the world and this explains why nationalism takes different forms, as well as why it is not enough of an explanation to understand our context.

Andreas Kappeler: We do have to admit, however, that the understanding of nationalism is very important to the Ukrainian context. We have a strong stereotype of Ukrainian nationalism and antisemitism in Western Europe, which has its roots in the early 20th century and was spread by the Soviet propaganda. Admittedly, this stereotype is alive today. It is used by Russian propaganda in order to prove the so-called fascist character of the current Ukrainian regime.

Today, extremist far-right nationalism can be found in almost all European countries. It is present in France, the Netherlands, Austria and Ukraine. Therefore, we can assume that approximately 10 to 20 percent of the European population are adherents of an extreme nationalism. Considering the present situation in Ukraine, the growth of extremist nationalist groups becomes more explicit, mainly because of the conditions of war. I am deeply concerned by the growth of these extremist groups on both the Russian and the Ukrainian

sides. My fear is that if these extremist groups in Ukraine are accepted as partners in the government, it would be very difficult to get rid of them. For Ukraine, this would become a big obstacle for Europeanising that country. Europe will never accept these groups in power.

Frank Sysyn: However, Europe accepts them in power in Hungary, and it accepts them in running provinces in Austria. I agree that the issue of nationalism is very important in the context of Ukraine's acceptance in Europe. But we need to clearly define what is meant by nationalism. There are many ways to understand nationalism, from radical, extremist, xenophobic, intolerant groups as opposed to groups who believe that their nation is an important part of their value system. When describing Ukraine, we have established a category called "Ukrainian nationalists". This category means that if you think Ukrainian is a language, you are a Ukrainian nationalist. And you get the same title as a person who might be xenophobic, antisemitic and authoritarian.

Yaroslav Hrytsak: It is better to use the term nationalism in plural rather than in singular form. I believe that separating nationalism based on an east-west divide is counterproductive. Hans Kohn, with his book on nationalism, was probably the first to create this division between nationalisms. Kohn argues that western nationalism is apparently civilised, versus a Ukrainian or eastern nationalism which is bloody, xenophobic and antisemitic. I believe that this division is not valid anymore in contemporary academic discussions.

However, we have to discuss the role of nationalism seriously, as it played a critical role in Ukraine. If we compare the EuroMaidan Revolution to other mass protest movements, such as the Occupy movement, we realise that in many ways these are similar phenomena. What is more, it is more justified to compare the EuroMaidan with the Occupy movement than to compare it with the 2004 Orange Revolution. The reason for comparing Ukraine's last revolution with the western protest movement is because similar groups were active in these events – the new middle class and the younger generation. The major difference between the EuroMaidan and the Occupy movement, or even the Gezi Park protests in Turkey and the Bolotnaya protests in Moscow, is that the EuroMaidan managed to win. The main reason for this victory, which makes it very distinctive from other protests, is the national dimension of the EuroMaidan. Without nationalist groups like Pravyy Sektor (the Right Sector) or Svoboda, the EuroMaidan could have continued endlessly and have suffered the same fate as the Occupy movement or the Bolotnaya protesters. We cannot discount the role of the nationalist groups in the EuroMaidan Revolution. However, their political popularity shows that they do not have mainstream appeal. In the recent presidential elections in Ukraine, the two nationalist candidates, Oleh

Lviv, September 12th 2014. In order from left to right: Adam Reichardt *(New Eastern Europe)*, Andreas Kappeler, Frank Sysyn, Yaroslav Hrytsak and Mark von Hagen.

Tyahnybok of Svoboda and Dmytro Yarosh of Pravyy Sektor, faired very poorly – they even fell behind the leader of the Jewish Congress in Ukraine. Here is the irony of the situation that has been noted by a Russian observer: nationalists can make a revolution succeed – but they cannot win over a revolution.

Mark von Hagen: It is not just Ukrainians who have a nationalist trait; Russians are also regarded as nationalist. There is concern, for example, among the Tatars in Russia that the increasing Russian nationalism is affecting Russian-Tatar relations. There will be some backlash to Putin because of the strong nationalism that he has encouraged.

Outlook for post-war Ukraine using history as a guide

Andreas Kappeler: Looking at the Russian-Ukrainian war, I think the example of Yugoslavian wars can be illuminating. The Bosnian war, for example, had disastrous consequences and there has been no modernisation since.

We can look also at other conflicts in the post-Soviet space, such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These conflicts have remained frozen and have not become an opportunity for post-war modernisation. So, I would not agree with the thesis that the Russian-Ukrainian war has any positive impact on the Ukrainian society. The war, instigated by Russia, led to the destabilisation of Ukraine, to the death of thousands of people and to a rise of extremist groups. It continues to divide the Ukrainian society living in different parts of the country.

Frank Sysyn: I would not say that war is a good thing or that death is a good thing, indeed these are terrible things. But when we observe what is happening in Ukraine, perhaps it is possible to identify some positive outcomes. First, there is the consolidation of parts of the south and

east of Ukraine, as some of them have chosen Ukraine over Russia. We have had an expansion of what Ukrainian identity is and finally a recognition that Russian speakers in Ukraine can be a part of the Ukrainian identity and the acceptance of this by people in the western and central parts of the country. We see tremendous growth in the number of people who believe in Ukrainian independence and statehood. The war has played a role in all these.

The other issue is relations with Russia. The EuroMaidan Revolution and the war in eastern parts of the country illustrate that the Ukrainian society has rejected the idea of Eurasia as its civilisational sphere. Similarly, the idea of religious civilisation or the Orthodox Church as somehow in opposition to Europe has been rejected by considerable groups of followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church that is under the Moscow Patriarchate.

Yaroslav Hrytsak: We could talk about a Serbian-Croatian scenario in Ukraine, if Kharkiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk would be on the other side. Then, we would have the country split in two. Luckily enough, this scenario has collapsed. If you go to Dnipropetrovsk you will see the flags and pro-Ukrainian atmosphere which is very reminiscent of Lviv of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Recent surveys show that the strongest support for the "anti-terrorist operation" in Donbas is in the neighbouring Dnipropetrovsk region. An irony is that nowadays the most divisive line in Ukraine now seemingly runs along the border between the Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions.

The comparison of the situation in Ukraine to the Serbian-Croatian scenario can be made only in terms of a warning about what could happen in the east of Ukraine. But we have to be careful in regards to this comparison. The territory that is trying to separate from Ukraine is only a part of Donbas, not even the whole region. There is no region in Ukraine that favours the idea of separation from Ukraine. The largest support for separatism is registered in Donbas. Still, even there those who want to separate make up a minority of 30-33 per cent. This confirms the conclusions reached by many scholars that despite all odds, Ukraine has been relatively stable. It calls for a shift of focus on our discussions in and on Ukraine: we need to care more on political and economic reforms than on issues of identity. In fact, the Ukrainian nation does not need to be built because it already exists. It just needs to be modernised.

Mark von Hagen: If we draw some parallels from 100 years ago and today; Ukraine was one of the first states to benefit from the new doctrine of national self-determination proclaimed by Woodrow Wilson and confirmed by most Europeans after the First World War. Ironically enough, it was Ukraine that became one of the first victims of that policy as well. We have a similar situation today. The EuroMaidan has become a symbol of Ukrainians challenging Europeans and the EU to stand behind

what they claim as "European values". The EuroMaidan activists have demonstrated that they were, in some ways, more European than the Europeans. NEE

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Belarus – A role model for the region?

WITOLD JURASZ

Belarus recently celebrated 20 years of Alyaksandr Lukashenka's presidency. This anniversary was obviously overshadowed by the war in Ukraine, but, if one were to think calmly, it was something which should have raised a few eyebrows in the West. Compared to the warmongering Russian president, Lukashenka, once famously called the "last dictator in Europe" appears to be merely a mild-mannered authoritarian.

Since the war in Ukraine, it has become clear, that the West, despite the Russian threat, is highly unlikely to stand up to the Kremlin. It seems, that the West would have to overcome its psychological weaknesses, which are the main reason for which it usually backs down when faced with Russian bullying. This, by the way, is a phenomenon in itself, given the fact that it is the West which is clearly the stronger party. Russia might be similar to the Soviet Union on the psychological level, but not so much when considering its economy or armed forces. In fact, Russia is actually a weak country. Its successes in the war with Ukraine are a result of Ukraine's dire condition rather than Russian strength.

The Russian economy had been running smoothly until quite recently. However, that was almost exclusively due to high oil prices. The situation is now starting to look sour for Moscow. The state is so corruption-ridden that it took the oil price to go down just slightly to cause serious trouble. Technologically, the Russian economy is in tatters. The army under Vladimir Putin, apart from just a few elite units, is in desperate need of modernisation. Birth rates are dramatically low and Siberia is depopulating. People seem willing to emigrate and, unlike any other country, it is the "haves" who are the first to leave. Logically, the above should lead to a change in the country's relations with the West, as it is the West which can be a source of

modernisation for Russia. But this path is not pursued for one simple reason: it is not the state's well-being which is at the top of the agenda for the Russian upper class. For the elite it is rather their newly found wealth, which seems to matter the most. Given the fact though, that both the oligarchs as well as the ruling class seem to prefer to invest their fortunes in the EU and in the United States, rather than in Russia itself, the West could easily, albeit assuming it finds the will to do so, stand up to Russia.

Respect

A face-off with the Kremlin would require a no-nonsense approach on the one hand, and respect for the partner on the other. It takes years for a person, and generations for a state, to come to terms with the loss of power. A country which is in fact a fading power craves respect. Respect, however, is something which comes only when it is mutual. The Kremlin often says that NATO enlargement was a sign of a lack of respect on behalf of the West. Some in the West seem to agree, forgetting that stability in Central Europe and the success of "old Europe's" companies in the region are based on the understanding that the former Central European Warsaw Pact members and the Baltic States are a part of the transatlantic security architecture. Should a feeling of insecurity prevail as a result of Russian actions, none of these achievements could be taken for granted. Respect for Russia is something that has to be addressed, but the West should not accept the notion that, by enlarging eastwards, it has somehow disrespected the Kremlin as it was merely adhering to the very principle it was built upon – respect for the free choice of nations.

> The world is not a chessboard, as it used to be in the 19th century, and people's choices cannot be ignored.

Some in the West have argued that any kind of increased ties with either Minsk or Kyiv amount to provoking Moscow. This argument is inherited from a bygone era, when great powers divided continents as they saw fit. It is also wrong for another, probably more important, reason though. The Soviet Union was as powerful as it was secretive about its intentions, whereas Russia – quite the opposite – is rather blunt about its goals (but often too weak to do what it intends). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, even in the early 1990s, Moscow made it clear that regaining control over the post-Soviet sphere is merely its mid-term objective. The long-term was and still is dismantling the entire European-NATO and EU based security and political architecture. Giving up on Belarus and Ukraine would therefore neither win over nor even appease Russia; it would merely make it more willing to bring its revanchist agenda to our doorsteps.

It is possible that those in the West who preached EU integration as the right path for Ukraine and Belarus already lost the fight. Others wouldn't mind both countries becoming a part of Russia's "sphere of privileged interests", as they would prefer that the whole issue of facing Russia go away quickly. However, as long as Russia has to concentrate on regaining control over Minsk and Kyiv, it will most likely steer clear of an all-out conflict with the West itself. Therefore, it is in the West's best interest to keep Moscow busy in Kyiv and Minsk.

Drifting West

The Kremlin might despise the West, but as George Kennan famously wrote, "[the Soviet Union] can easily withdraw, and usually does, when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-engaging showdowns." Kennan's words apply to Russia as if they were written today, rather than over half a century ago.

The West should try to work out new ways of working with Belarus and Ukraine – finding a way of doing so which would not further alienate the Kremlin surely won't be easy. One could argue that it is Moscow's task to mend what has been broken. Indeed that is the case, but given the nationalist (or better – chauvinist) fervour in Moscow, it is unlikely that will ever happen. The only compromise there can be should be based on a mutual understanding that both Ukraine and Belarus have the right to co-operate both with the West and with Russia, without making a final choice though and therefore steering clear from any sort of a "prestige-engaging showdown". It might have been naive to assume that Moscow would accept Ukraine's sudden shift towards the West. It is naive, though, to assume that Ukrainians would ever accept being told their dream of becoming a part of what most of them see as a better (honest, democratic, not corrupt) world will never come true. The world these days is not a chessboard as it used to be in the 19th century, and people's choices cannot be ignored. Russia might believe that NATO and the EU are the main architects (or rather culprits) of the Maidan, but there is no reason the West should ever subscribe to the logic where things never happen without the West's sinister meddling. It's high time for Moscow to face the reality, that what it offers does not meet the ambitions of other nations.

> History in this region shows that it is the elite, and in some cases even the regime's henchmen, who instigate change.

Both Ukraine and Belarus in recent years have been drifting closer to the West. The percentage of their foreign trade with Russia has been declining, whereas trade

with the EU was on the rise. On the other hand, there was substantial Russian investment in Ukraine and Belarus. People from both countries travelled to Russia to work, as it was easier to find a job in Moscow than to get a visa and travel to the West. And yet, more and more people were dreaming that one day their countries would be like the ones in the West. It seemed as if there was a certain balance. The bloody events in Kyiv triggered an angry response from Russia, which buried this balance. It can be argued that the Maidan was morally right, but politically wrong as it unleashed forces in Russia which made Ukraine lose control over a part of its territory and, by revealing the West's weakness, undermined the EU's Eastern policy. On the other hand blaming freedom fighters in the streets of Kyiv for dreaming of a better future would be foolish too.

Perhaps Belarus could become the testing ground for a solution, which if proved successful could become a model for Ukraine.

I would suggest that a more conservative and cautious approach, albeit one which does not accept Russian claims for exclusive rights in Eastern Europe, would surely be a safer path. Perhaps a return to the status quo ante is a plausible fix to the situation we have now. Such an approach is a long-term undertaking. Therefore it ought to be based on hard realities.

Addressing the elite

First of all, the war in Ukraine showed how weak its state institutions really are. However, that gives no right to doubt the existence of Ukraine as a state. Ukraine might be weak, but it remains a state which just went through a democratic election, unlike the terror-ridden satellites Russia created on the territories it occupies. Ukraine lost some territory but managed to, up to a certain moment, put up a proper fight. It was in fact winning the war with Russian-backed mercenaries, which forced Moscow to send its own troops over the border. Only then did Kyiv show its weakness. Calling Ukraine a "failed state" is therefore absurd. The situation, however, raises the question as to whether the West was right to concentrate its efforts in Eastern Europe on promoting democracy, rather than supporting the process of strengthening the states. In a peculiar way, the lack of democracy in Belarus means that Alyaksandr Lukashenka, should he ever face a Russian onslaught, would be far more able to put up a fight than Ukraine ever was.

Secondly, the West cannot ignore the fact that championing democracy and transparency means that the local elite has no option but to choose co-operation with Moscow rather than with the West. Most of the local upper class are party to financial schemes which are in no way acceptable in a democratic society.

If we were to imagine Belarus in 20 years – with full domination of Russian capital (including in the media), heavily influenced by Russian culture and language and with Russian linked elites in power – then even a free and fair election would result in a pro-Russian rather than pro-western political party winning the election. Promoting democracy at this stage ensures quite the opposite, as there is still a large chunk of state-owned property which is up for grabs. With the Belarusian jet set eager to get as wealthy as the Russian and Ukrainian ones, the regime has no other option but to relinquish its grip on the economy, thus buying the elite's loyalty. The battle for the souls of the upper class (and not of the whole nation) is crucial to the direction of Minsk's evolution. In Ukraine's case, after the Maidan, the local oligarchs are even more powerful than they ever used to be.

Eastern policy must therefore be addressed to the elite. The history of all democratic revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe show that it is the elite, and in some cases even the regime's henchmen, who instigate change. The upper class, just like the ones in the former Warsaw Pact countries, would gladly welcome a western leaning government, but only if they were to receive sufficient guarantees that the wealth they have accumulated is to remain in their hands.

A mild authoritarianism

There is no doubt that the West cannot accept a regime in Europe which uses heavy handed tactics against the opposition and throws former presidential candidates behind bars. Hence, the only way to build a measure of trust between the West and Belarus would be for the regime in Minsk to free all remaining political prisoners. A compromise would have to be based on an understanding that Belarus would stick to mild authoritarianism and never turn to repression again. The West on its part would have to learn to live with the regime as it is, just as it has been with the regime in Moscow.

Until recently, there could have been no doubt that Moscow would do its best to undermine such a solution to the stalemate between Minsk and Brussels, just as it has done so many times in the past. Moscow was actively fighting any improvement of relations between the West and Minsk or even any serious western investment in Belarus. Notwithstanding the close relations between Minsk and Moscow, Russia has, till now, always been keen to see Belarus isolated, as this guaranteed its role as the sole guarantor of A. Lukashenka's regime. The President of Belarus is certainly an ally of the Kremlin, but not one which the latter really trusts. On the other hand Belarus, unlike Ukraine, is not divided and Moscow would find ripping it apart an impossible undertaking. The regime, partly due to its authoritarian nature, seems very much in control of the situation.

A compromise between the West and Russia is something hard to imagine. However, the lack of a compromise is something even more unimaginable. Perhaps Belarus could become the testing ground for a solution, which if proved successful could become a model for Ukraine. The solution would be for the West and Russia to agree that Minsk would play a balancing act between the two parties. Lukashenka would surely agree, as this has been his policy for the past 20 years.

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An Unforeseen Brussels Takeover

PAWEŁ ŚWIEBODA

The election of Donald Tusk as president of the European Council reflects both Poland's successful transition and Tusk's personal success in proving to be a pragmatic and flexible politician. The challenge now will be how Tusk will manage to switch frames of mind from being a national politician into that of a European statesman.

Donald Tusk's election as president of the European Council caught many people by surprise. The function itself has only existed for the past five years and Tusk is now becoming the institution's second successive president, after Herman van Rompuy. For Poland, this is a clear recognition of the country's record of achievement in its first ten years of EU membership. It is also a personal victory for Donald Tusk, both as a skilful political operator and a charismatic leader. He will now have to zoom out in both of these roles in order to be able to forge compromises in Brussels and gain traction with the European electorate.

All this is not just Poland's ascent, but also that of Central Europe. Donald Tusk has spared no effort throughout his term as Polish prime minister to work together with other countries of the region, especially in the Visegrad Group. In spite of the different political profiles of the region's governments, he always believed that Central Europe has an interest in aligning its positions.

Old habits die hard

It now turns out that not only will Tusk lead one of the EU's most powerful institutions, which provides for the collective voice of the member states, but the

European Commission will count four Central Europeans among its seven vice-presidents as well. Altogether, this is a much greater role than the one that would result from the region's demographic and economic weight.

Some observers are dismissive about these developments, pointing to the dominance of the managerial functions in Tusk's job description as president of the European Council or alluding to the experimental fashion with which Jean-Claude Juncker, the new president of the European Commission, has constructed his team, implying that the manoeuvring room of the Central European vice-presidents will be limited. While there is no question that the nominations are only the beginning and the weight of the roles assigned to the new EU leaders will have to be tested in real life, there is no doubt that the EU's centre of gravity has shifted eastwards. Needless to say, much of this has been crafted in Germany. As the country's centricity in European affairs continues, it pays off to be on good terms with Angela Merkel. In the case of Donald Tusk, what matters is not only his cordial relationship with the German chancellor, but also the fact that both countries see eye-to-eye on most issues and make a conscious effort to keep down potential disagreements, especially on Russia.

There is no doubt that the EU's centre of gravity has shifted eastwards.

Old habits, nevertheless, die hard. Lorinc Redei, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, has suggested that through their decision to appoint Donald Tusk as the President of the European Council and Federica Mogherini as the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, European leaders "collectively rendered the EU irrelevant to global affairs". Tusk and Mogherini, the article suggests, will make the EU more inward-looking and less able to defend its interests. "Ignorance or cowardice" is what had led EU heads of state and government to this decision, the author claims. In a somewhat softer tone, the FT's Gideon Rachman has written about "a certain amount of bafflement" which the appointment of Tusk has created in Brussels. "He is not someone who is renowned for his interest in detail or his patience with committee work," Rachman continues.

The reality is that Donald Tusk has been one of the old hands in the European Council. He has served there for seven years as Poland's prime minister, much longer than many of his counterparts from other member states. His term has coincided with the economic and financial crisis, followed by the deterioration of relations with Russia. It is difficult to say that any of it has given him an easy ride. Tusk's stewardship of the Polish economy, which has grown by 20 per cent since 2008, has also given him additional credibility. Inside Polish politics, Tusk has achieved the unimaginable, presiding over the longest period of stable rule since

the changes of 1989. He proved to be a pragmatic and flexible politician, valuing compromise but also preserving a firm grasp on his government.

Catching up

Naturally, the biggest question Tusk will face is about whether he will be able to enlarge the picture and switch from the frame of mind of a national politician into that of a European and global statesman. Sitting at G20 summits or presiding over summits with the president of the United States will surely require a degree of diplomatic savviness which exceeds what is normally expected of a medium-sized country's prime minister. Admittedly, Tusk has not shown much interest in the past in world affairs beyond the matters of Europe's Eastern neighbourhood. He is not well versed in EU-China relations or the state of the negotiations around the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). On the issue of climate change, he has been an outright sceptic when it comes to the wisdom of EU's policy of targeting emission reductions. He has a lot of catching up to do. Nevertheless, his asset will be that he will epitomise what is best in Europe's experience in the past 25 years. He will showcase how Europe has been able to turn countries around and how it has succeeded in being a transformative project. This is worth many times more than the rare ability to indulge in official briefing notes and memos.

The stronger presence of Central European politicians in Brussels will be consequential in shaping the forthcoming EU agenda.

The stronger presence of Central European politicians in Brussels will also be consequential in terms of how the EU agenda is going to be shaped in the forthcoming period. The great majority of countries in the region are not members of the Eurozone. As a result, their main interest will be two-fold: first of all, to preserve the cohesion of the EU at large and prevent a two-speed Europe; secondly, to advance the growth agenda, which is essential for the region to bridge the gap with the most advanced EU economies. We can therefore expect, at least in the initial period, the EU to move away from its strong focus on matters of the Eurozone, which has been the case in the past few years. Sooner or later, tough decisions on completing the Eurozone's reconstruction will have to be made. However, the period of the first 1-1.5 years is likely to be devoted to organic work on economic recovery, helping investment and stimulating structural reform. A more holistic reform, including treaty change, is more likely in the second half of the new institutional period.

The new set-up in Brussels will bring about a consolidation of the EU's position towards Russia and its approach to the Ukrainian conflict. The untold assumption

among many Brussels officials is that a division of labour will emerge between Donald Tusk as president of the European Council and Federica Mogherini as the high representative for foreign affairs. As part of that informal arrangement, Tusk would lead on policy towards Russia and Eastern Europe while Mogherini would take charge of the EU's engagement in the Middle East. Partly, this would logically result from the fact that the question of the right approach to dealing with Moscow has been elevated to the top political level. It is during the summits of EU heads of state and government where the debate and decisions are made on sanctions against Russia. The tendency for the top level to devote more time and attention to foreign policy is only likely to grow as world crises multiply and evolve.

Parallel approach

One interesting initiative which Tusk might undertake is to invite foreign ministers back into the room when external affairs are on the agenda. In the Lisbon Treaty reform, foreign ministers, who had been instrumental in advancing European integration, lost their seats at European Council sessions. There is no point in reversing that set-up, but having foreign ministers take part in some of the strategic, long-term discussions would make a lot of sense.

Contrary to many fears, having both the former Polish prime minister and the former Italian foreign minister at the helm of the EU can help generate cohesion in the EU's position towards Russia. Both Tusk and Mogherini have a stake in demonstrating that they work closely together and do their best to avoid disagreements. Neither is Mogherini likely to prove misty-eyed about Russia, nor is Tusk going to join the chorus of anti-Russian hawks. One should recall that Tusk was both able to architecture a rapprochement with Moscow from 2009 onwards, and then led calls for sanctions against Russia when the situation became untenable. His rich experience of dealing with Russia should make it possible for him to pursue a parallel approach – punitive in reaction to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, but constructive when it comes to global issues of common concern.

The reaction to the Russian challenge will require the EU's own consolidation, primarily in the field of energy security.

The reaction to the Russian challenge will first and foremost require the EU's own consolidation, primarily in the field of energy security where far-reaching plans have been laid down. Tusk himself has been personally involved in designing the Polish proposal on the energy union, which has now been largely taken on board by the European Commission. It is fairly likely that one of the first crises he will have to

deal with as President of the European Council will be the EU's overdependence on Russian energy supplies.

Much of Europe's homework will also have to do with exposing the extent of Russian meddling in the European public discourse through various techniques of subversion and propaganda that the Kremlin has mastered. For a number of reasons, Europe has been unwilling to expose the true extent of Russian influence in the member states' parliaments, media and business as well as at the European Parliament. When designing the EU's future Russia policy, a clear reading of the scale of that phenomenon will be necessary as well as a range of measures to make the EU more impregnable to Russian pressure, including in the field of cyber-security. Should the situation stabilise to such an extent that the lifting of the sanctions would come onto the agenda, Tusk is likely to look after a clear set of conditions which Russia would need to fulfil before that happens. The EU's procedure, which requires unanimity for the lifting of sanctions, means that Russia will need to genuinely demonstrate good will and a clear determination to undo its wrongdoing before sanctions are lifted.

More than one issue

As someone who has been around in Polish politics for almost three decades, Tusk will have a good sense of the necessary ingredients in the transition that Ukraine now needs to undertake. In the spring of 2014, he made an unprecedented tour of European capitals, galvanising support for Ukraine. No European leader has ever embarked on a project of this magnitude, visiting his counterparts to discuss one foreign policy question. He will now understand that the prerequisite of the moment is to create conditions for preventing Ukraine's insolvency and softening recessionary pressure. Just as Central Europe's transition was very much driven by the inflow of foreign direct investment, Ukraine will also need to become an attractive business destination. Stability is the necessary prerequisite for that, as no foreign investor would want to make a long-term commitment in the context of the current existential challenge facing Ukraine.

Tusk will understand well that he has not been elected to the post of the president of the European Council only in order to become the EU's top envoy on Russia. He will need to lead on several other EU dossiers on which the EU's global position hinges. Relations with the US stand out, both given the on-going TTIP negotiations and the recalibration of NATO's posture in Europe following the events in the East. He will also need to devote much of his political capital to building relations with Europe's strategic partners around the world who expect closer alignment and a more engaging attitude from Brussels.

Apart from Tusk, Central Europe is sending to Brussels a number of other former prime ministers (such as Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia) who will take over as vice-presidents of the European Commission. Although the format of having more political leadership at the Commission is itself an experiment, the four nominees are all capable individuals who have led their countries through difficult times with notable success.

The jury is out on how the new Brussels institutional set-up will work in practice. If it succeeds, it will anchor Central Europe ever more closely at the heart of the European Union and will help the Union's internal cohesion. It may also make it more difficult for Russian President Vladimir Putin to indulge in his usual exercise of divide and conquer.

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No More Wishful Thinking

DOMINIK P. JANKOWSKI

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has confirmed that Eastern Europe remains a volatile space. In this regard Europe received its first wake-up call in 2008 during the Russian-Georgian War. In 2014, Europe received a second wake-up call – presenting an opportunity that cannot be missed.

In 2013, Eastern Europe was on the path of fading into oblivion. For some western countries, it had become an "unwanted child", being neither a source of political and economic success nor a strategic security zone. It was more convenient to assume that the status quo would prevail. Some had fallen into this strategic trap while others warned that history in Eastern Europe had not yet ended. Less than twelve months ago, on the pages of this magazine, I warned with my colleague that: "The West's willingness to consider security issues in Eastern Europe as second-tier is premature. There is one more important factor co-defining the situation in the region: Russia. Unfortunately, its role cannot always be described as constructive. A turning point in Russia's policy towards Eastern Europe was undoubtedly the 2008 war with Georgia and the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The conflict confirmed that Russia has set its own 'red lines' in Eastern Europe, and recognised the area as lying within its 'zone of privileged interests'" ("The Eastern European Winter", *New Eastern Europe*, No 1(X)/2014).

A forgotten word

The current Russian-Ukrainian conflict has once again altered the fate of the region. It should now be considered a game changer in the area of European security as the forgotten notion of war has once again been restored into the political discourse. The entire European security architecture has trembled as the eastern flank of the continent has become destabilised. If the conflict cannot be used to unify the transatlantic community, it could well spell tougher times down the road.

This danger would become particularly acute if we start believing that NATO has lost its credibility to deter threats and the EU has lost its ability to be a normative power that stimulates change in the international environment. Therefore, to contain potential future threats and challenges for the old continent, five lessons should be learned from the war that is currently taking place in Ukraine's east.

Lesson one: This conflict has confirmed that Eastern Europe remains a volatile space. Europe received its first wake-up call during the 2008 Russian-Georgian War. Nonetheless, the negative trends stemming from the Middle East and North Africa – being both direct and indirect consequences of the Arab Spring – have led many western countries to simply forget about Eastern Europe. In reality, the belt of instability stretching from the Caucasus to Transnistria has never disappeared. Indeed, the regional security gap that was opened has triggered more assertiveness on the part of Russia. The protracted conflicts in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region), as well as Moldova – the illegal stationing of a Russian contingent in Transnistria with neither a United Nations mandate nor Moldovan consent – render the strategic situation even more fragile.

Russia's allies in Europe include anti-liberalism, anti-Americanism, lack of knowledge about Eastern Europe, fear of conflict and economic interests.

Lesson two: Winston Churchill was wrong when he depicted Russia as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma". Russia has unfortunately confirmed its predictable status of a revisionist power. The Kremlin's principal foreign policy goal is to maintain Eastern Europe in its sphere of influence by stopping, or at least hampering, the political aspirations of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to strengthen their ties with both the EU and NATO. The other Kremlin goal is to influence, or even intimidate, some EU and NATO members and to call into question the western political system based on democracy and the rule of law. To achieve these objectives, Moscow uses hybrid warfare and other tools that come from current and previous centuries, including the 19th century use of pure military force, the 20th century breach of international law, the use of propaganda, political and economic pressure, and the 21st century use of cyber-attacks.

A dangerous mix

The Russian hybrid approach to conflict has become visible with its extensive combination of special operations forces ("little green men"), security forces, intelligence agencies and Russian-speaking minorities as the primary tools for justifying and enflaming conflict. As a revisionist power, Russia seeks to secure

its military might and signals its readiness to use conventional forces just as easily as it applies other, softer means. The Kremlin can afford such tactics; in the past decade the federation's military capability significantly increased and its defence budget is set to grow even further. A creeping militarisation of the Kaliningrad Oblast, the Crimean peninsula and the areas near the borders of the Baltic states, as well as the positioning of troops in Belarus, pose a major threat to the stability of the EU and NATO.

Lesson three: Russia has five major allies in Europe: anti-liberalism, anti-Americanism, lack of knowledge about Eastern Europe, fear of conflict and economic interests. This dangerous mix of political, economic and social factors weakens the ability of the western elite to take bold, strategic decisions which go beyond an electoral cycle. Having this in mind, Russia has keenly used its trump card to consolidate its gains in eastern Ukraine as well as achieve a growing leverage over the West's ability to move towards political confrontation.

Military instruments are still valid in the twenty-first century and diplomatic tools need to be strengthened by necessary military potential.

Lesson four: defence still matters. Until very recently, one of the best deterrents for small- and medium-sized states – provided they could not join NATO, the EU, or both – was embedded in international law. However, the erosion, or even the blatant breach of international legal commitments, have severely undermined their deterrent character. That is why, military instruments are still valid in the 21st century and the effective diplomatic tools that European countries have at their disposal need to be strengthened by necessary military potential. Europe should once again be able to negotiate out of a position of strength. The well-known phrase "trust but verify" needs to be applied once again.

Lesson five: the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has created a pivotal moment for European security. The security conditions in Central and Eastern Europe have in the last months considerably worsened. The European security architecture, which was inclusive and in fact co-created by Russia, has been altered. Thus, a revisionist Russia can no longer be treated as a "strategic partner", at least not in the foreseeable future. Such a privilege should be reserved only for those countries which do not put at risk the health of the liberal international order based on democracy, self-determination, the rule of law, a market economy, free trade, respect for human rights and mutual trust. The existence of this order must not be taken for granted and needs to be protected and defended. In fact, the West's unity will likely be tested and undermined by Russia again. If Russia is successful, other rising powers (especially Brazil, China, India and Iran) might see western inaction as an incentive to foster their own alternative visions of world order.

Long-term action

Unfortunately, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict could be effectively deescalated by tactical, ad hoc measures, which, for the West, seems less costly from a political and economic perspective. Consequently, it would be a mistake for European policymakers to pursue a policy that exacerbates the tensions between sustainable economic policy and security policy exclusively in favour of economic interests. Going in this direction could bring tragic consequences. The forbidden "W" word (that is, "war") could strike back, and not on the outskirts of Europe, but in its heart.

Europe, therefore, needs to forge a concrete, united and long-term action plan in response to the current conflict. Above all, Europeans must embrace a "Ukraine first" policy, which should be translated into a more balanced approach to the neighbourhood policy in general. The stabilisation of eastern and southern Ukraine based on the 15-point plan for the peaceful settlement of the crisis presented by President Petro Poroshenko remains a prerequisite for any further steps.

Over the next months and years, the West's unity will likely be tested and undermined by Russia.

Russia should withdraw its forces from Ukraine and stop financial and military support to the separatists. Simultaneously, the EU and the United States, along with the International Monetary Fund, should continue to support Ukraine economically, which could be the best incentive for Kyiv to implement the necessary reforms. While the importance of the driving force that could alter the long-term fate of Ukraine, its politically conscious and proactive civil society, should not be overlooked.

Europe must also come to the understanding that there can be no return to "business as usual" with Russia. This is one of the lessons from 2008 that was not learnt. Instead, the West must strategically reassess its relations with the Kremlin. In 1967, the *Harmel Report* reasserted NATO's basic principles and introduced a two-track strategy of deterrence and dialogue. Under the current circumstances, the West – especially NATO – needs a similar intellectual exercise to build a consensus in regards to its relationship with Russia, which has been fundamentally altered. Agreeing to establish a high-level commission tasked with developing recommendations on how to re-engage Moscow diplomatically will prevent NATO, and more broadly the West, from reaching premature conclusions (one of them being Russia's willingness to return to the currently undermined international legal framework).

NATO's overall relevance is back and it is high time that all Europeans fall back in love with it. The NATO summit in September 2014 in Wales addressed the new security reality. The Alliance has started to refocus on its core mission: securing

peace through defence and deterrence. Clearly, NATO must be strategically enhanced, especially on its eastern flank. There must be regular military exercises participated by the actual forces and which encompass all potential scenarios, including the implementation of NATO's fundamental principle that an armed attack on one member state is an attack against all members.

A strategic enhancement of the eastern flank would cover both infrastructure, including a proper high readiness command on the basis of the Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin (Poland) and equipment storage sites prepositioned for the arrival of major forces in the case of conflict, as well as "boots on the ground". Additionally, NATO could, in the future, introduce standing defence plans which would be a more precise extension of its contingency plans. Finally, Europeans should become more responsive to the US's current requests to reverse the negative trends in military spending. In other words, the requirement to spend two per cent of the country's GDP on military should no longer be seen as a rule of thumb and stricter roadmaps should be developed so that countries could reach this goal.

"If you want peace, prepare for war," the old adage goes. And indeed, Europeans need to start thinking about rearmament. Luckily, there seem to be a few good forerunners on the horizon with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Norway, to name a few, where military expenditures are set to grow. Poland in particular has given a constructive example recently with its commitment to spend 1.95 per cent of GDP on defence. With an objective to spend at least 20 per cent of its growing budget on procurement, and thanks to the recent announcement of its military budget increase to at least two per cent of the GDP in 2016, Poland is fast becoming one of the frontrunners of European military strength.

If one could name one unique, novel element in the Polish strategy, it would be the recurrence of deterrence. Once a backbone of many national security strategies, with time deterrence has almost vanished from the vocabulary of strategic debate. From the Polish perspective, however, this concept still provides a viable solution to the current strategic problems. Indeed, it is a strategy for addressing two competing goals: countering a potential enemy (or threat) and avoiding war. The goal of the "Polish Fangs" initiative, announced in 2013, is to develop the essential military capabilities necessary to implement a deterrence strategy. In practice, "Polish Fangs" will consist of cruise missiles for both the F-16 fleet and potentially submarines, combat drones, special operations forces, as well as the Polish Navy Coastal Defence Missile Battalion system. It is likely that this project will be supplemented by both defensive and offensive cyber-weapons, as cyber-defence capabilities will become a priority in the next strategic planning cycle.

Concluding, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has confirmed that most Europeans have been wrong in their assessments, as they have become intellectually and emotionally dependent on wishful thinking, namely that they no longer worry about their own security and Moscow's actions, even if Russia falls short of European democratic standards. Simply put, the world will neither be safer nor more just if Europe disarms. On the contrary, it would increase the chances that future generations of Europeans would live in an international environment which is less amenable to both their socio-economic and security needs. In 2014, Europe received its second wake-up call – a chance that must not be missed. Anyone who fails to see this is strategically blind.

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Hybrid Warfare: The challenge of our time

ANNA MARIA DYNER

While not an easy concept to define, a hybrid war is mostly based on unconventional means of combat that go beyond the understanding of military conflict put forward by Carl von Clausewitz in the 19th century. The case of Ukraine perfectly illustrates the reality of a 21st century conflict and at the same time presents the dangers of the many dimensions of hybrid warfare.

The term "hybrid war" has become a buzzword in 2014. It is being used to describe not only the conflict in Ukraine, but also the wars in Syria and Iraq. Regardless of the location, a hybrid war is used to define a new type of war – one that combines conventional military techniques, the latest technological achievements in the military industry and up-to-date expertise from the areas of psychology and social engineering.

The idea of such a war, however, is not a 21st century invention. Historians and researchers of military doctrines note a similar term, "insurgency war", was invented in the 1960s by Evgeny Messner – a military theorist and former officer of the Imperial Russian Army. His books, such as *Mutiny, or the Name of the Third World War* and *Mutiny World War*, present a picture of future wars as conflicts waged by small terrorist cells and guerrilla warriors.

Unconventional means

Defence studies and the language of politics have not yet precisely defined what is meant by the term hybrid war. This lack of precision is especially problematic for NATO in regards to the war currently taking place in eastern Ukraine. As a consequence, the Alliance is unable to aptly assess exactly how this conflict

threatens NATO members and what should be its reaction to the events that have taken place in Crimea and Ukraine's east.

To put it simply, there are as many different hybrid wars as there are military conflicts of this new type in the world. This situation also explains why it is so difficult to find a "one size fits all" approach to this concept. Traditional warfare is more dominant in some conflicts, while in others the key to success hinges on the information war, whether its main aim is to drum up the support of the locals or to intimidate them. Undoubtedly, hybrid wars are mostly based on unconventional means of combat and they go far beyond the understanding of military conflict put forward by Carl von Clausewitz in the 19th century. Thus, its main features include a lack of a clear battlefront and irregular military actions such as diversion, rebellion, reconnaissance or disinformation. Perfectly trained special forces units are often in charge of these tasks. A hybrid war is also a form of civil war which includes separatist activities such as terrorism. Another important component of the hybrid war is cyber warfare, which is not only about spreading propaganda, but also about attacking an enemy's IT infrastructure.

Defence studies and the language of politics still cannot exactly define the concept of a hybrid war.

Analysis of modern military conflicts shows that they are characterised by having elements of both classic and modern wars that coexist with each other. Therefore, in many cases, the national armed forces have to face irregular military units and paramilitary groups which are usually much worse equipped. The main target of hybrid wars, as in the case of traditional conflicts, is land and resources. However, an additional element is the fight for the people's hearts and minds.

Each side of the hybrid conflict seeks victory by mobilising the civilian population and demoralising the enemy. The more political, economic, social and territorial damage done to the antagonist, the better. The key to success is to create chaos in what is being called the enemy's information space as well as in the economy and the legal system. These activities are often a consequence of the violation of international agreements, national law, various assurances and peace treaties.

Interestingly, although not labelled as "hybrid", such a concept of war appears in the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation. The document places emphasis on means which are usually used in asymmetric conflicts, including elements of cyber warfare, information warfare and irregular warfare. At the same time, the Russian military doctrine stresses that the fight against small, highly-trained and well-equipped troops run by former or present special service officers would be a very difficult task for an army. When it comes to the classification of hybrid war, the main problem is to assess the proportions between its components as

they appear in specific conflicts. That is why it is so difficult to predict further developments as well as to evaluate the real potential of an ongoing hybrid war. However, based on existing experiences, certain observations can be made with preliminary conclusions.

Dark images

The conflict in Donbas started with understanding the psychological profile of the local people. First, the EuroMaidan revolution in Kyiv and the abolition of the law allowing the country's eastern regions to make Russian a second official language turned out to be perfect ingredients for Russian propaganda. As its result, the new Ukrainian authorities were quickly labelled fascists and nationalists, whose goal is to persecute Ukrainian Russians and Russian-speaking citizens. Another popular myth put forward during this war was that the Ukrainian state had ceased to exist.

The main features of a hybrid war are the lack of a clear battlefront and irregular military actions such as diversion, rebellion, reconnaissance or disinformation.

To enforce its message, Russian media played on people's emotions by making comparisons between the current war and the Great Patriotic War instrumentally using a deeply rooted fear of fascism. The creation of such dark images of Ukraine not only discredited the EuroMaidan protests, but also served as an explanation of the need for the annexation of Crimea in order to protect the Russian minority in Ukraine. The Kremlin began pushing the idea of federalisation of Ukraine, which would allow the Ukrainian Russians (who live mostly in eastern parts of the country) to function freely. Kyiv's refusal to participate in any talks in this regard was quickly used as a justification of the pro-Russian separatists' activities in Donbas.

The information war was soon followed by military action. The annexation of Crimea was a masterwork of Russian diplomacy mainly because the Ukrainian army, which had been stationed on the peninsula, was unable to react. The actions that were then carried out by the so-called "little green men" (unidentified and unmarked soldiers who had access to the advanced military equipment and command) did not fit into any known concept of war. They puzzled many both in Ukraine as well as in the West, which allowed the aggressors to successfully oppose the Ukrainian army and conduct a wide-scale military operation. The unprecedented nature of this action remains as difficult to understand as the rhetoric of Putin's famous Crimean speech: "They keep talking of some Russian intervention in Crimea, some sort of aggression. This is strange to hear. I cannot recall a single case in history of an intervention without a single shot being fired and with no human casualties."

Photo: Artem Tkachenko (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

The main target of hybrid wars, as in the case of traditional conflicts, is land and resources. However, an additional element is the fight for the people's hearts and minds.

This strategy, however, failed in eastern Ukraine where the "little green men" also appeared with similar demands as those formulated in regards to Crimea. Nonetheless, upon overcoming the Crimean shock, the new government in Kyiv decided to fight back the separatists and engaged its armed forces in the anti-terrorist operation. Naturally, Kyiv could not quell the rebellion quickly, thus the conflict between the Ukrainian army and the separatists had a more traditional military characteristic.

Power of a quasi-state

In the meantime, another element of a hybrid war has materialised, namely the quasi-state. Quasi-states are actos in international relations that effectively influence inter-state relations, even though they have no international recognition or legal basis. The Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics are typical examples of such structures. With no features of classical states, these two self-proclaimed republics became inevitable elements of the peace process. The protocol of the ceasefire in Ukraine, which was signed during peace talks in Minsk on September 5th 2014, was co-signed by representatives of the breakaway republics, Aleksandr Zakharchenko and Ihor Plotnytskiy. Despite the lack of international recognition, these representatives sat down at the negotiation table with Ukrainian officials. Their talks resulted in a ceasefire binding both sides of the agreement.

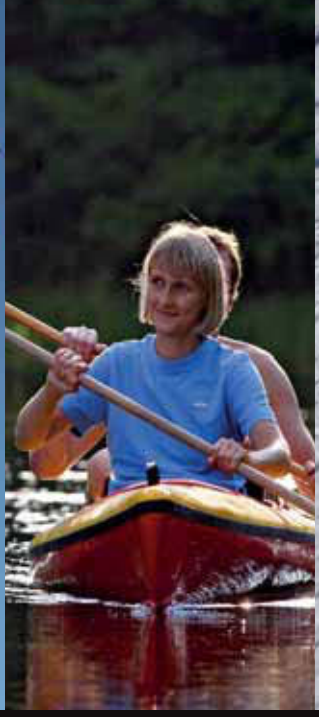
Before the ceasefire was signed, the regular information war was carried out not only by Russia, but also by Ukraine. Both sides of the conflict declared atrocities committed by the enemy, suffering of civilians and the tragic fate of refugees and prisoners of war captured in the eastern part of Ukraine. The convoy with humanitarian aid sent to Ukraine by Russia was a propaganda masterpiece. It caused a serious image problem for Kyiv. Many wondered why the Ukrainian side did not send such a convoy. An even bigger problem for Ukraine was the content of the hundreds of white trucks heading to the Russian-Ukrainian border. Ukrainian authorities and some observers claimed that the main aim of the Russian humanitarian convoy was to smuggle weapons for the separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk. Interestingly, neither Ukraine nor Russia ever fully explained as to what happened to the part of aid which did not reach the Ukrainian territory.

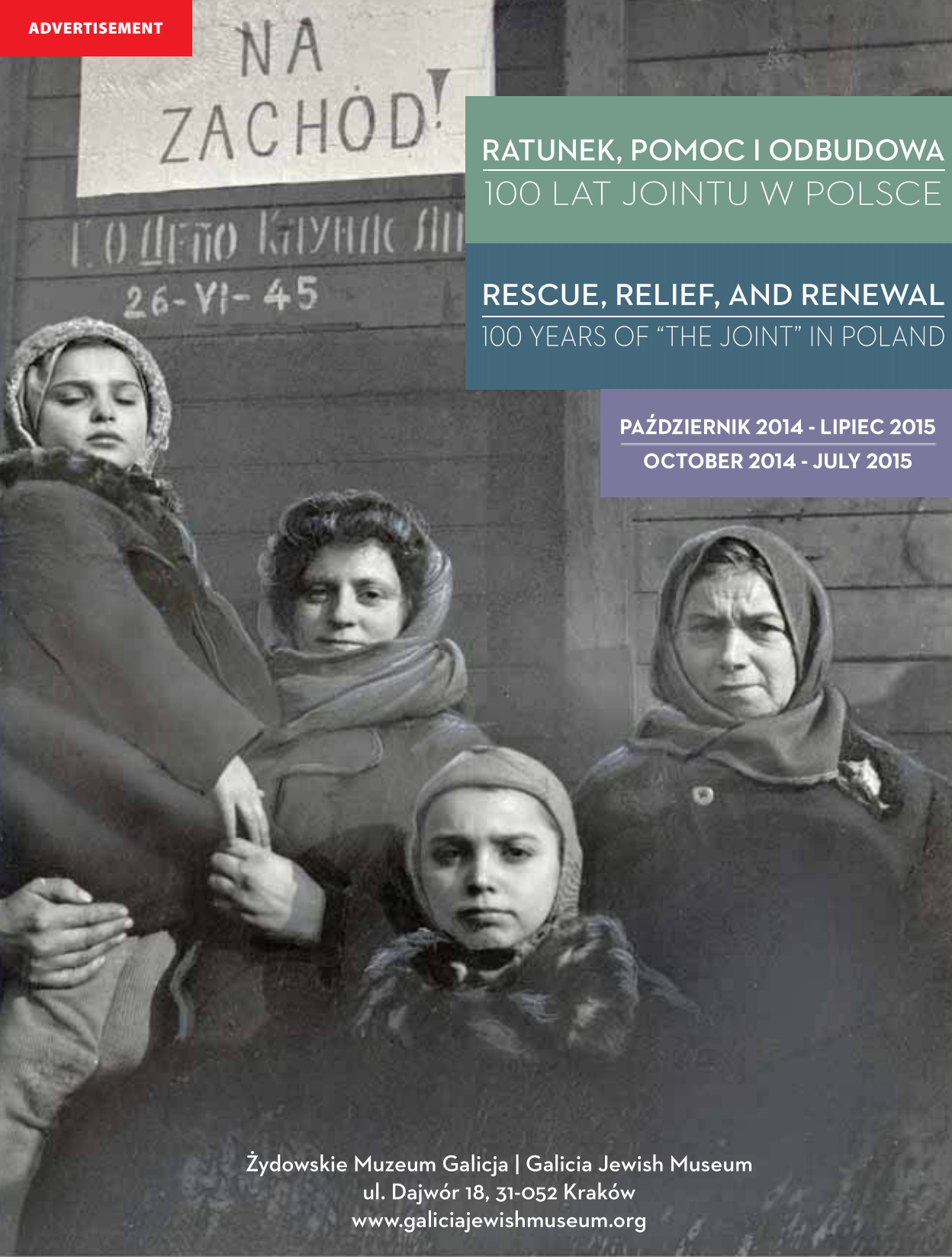
The situation for the civilians in eastern Ukraine became particularly difficult as they fell victim not only to ordinary military actions, but also to an increasing street crime, which is also an integral part of a hybrid war. Looting (the seizure of cars by separatists for military purposes), maltreatment of prisoners of war and persecutions of pro-Kyiv citizens became a part of everyday life. The destruction of the urban infrastructure, the lack of water, supplies and salaries which makes normal life impossible are other key indicators of a hybrid war. Simultaneously, residents of Donbas have become a target of Russian and Ukrainian propaganda, forcing them to choose to support either the separatists or the Ukrainian army.

Never-ending war?

It is increasingly visible that the war in Ukraine, which has been taking place since March 2014, will be immensely difficult to end. What distinguishes hybrid wars from other types of war is a stand-off or a freezing of the conflict. Furthermore, the situation in Donbas clearly demonstrates all the weaknesses of the Ukrainian army: shortages in equipment, unreformed command structures as well as an outdated system of combat training. This was most visible at the early stage of the conflict when the Ukrainian army enjoyed a great advantage over the separatists both in the number of soldiers and arms. The situation changed with subsequent defeats of the Ukrainian army while the pro-Russian rebels, building momentum with these successes, felt more and more confident in their positions, gaining a psychological advantage. Nevertheless, the ultimate goals of the separatists from Donbas remain more and more unclear as Russia, unlike in the case of Crimea, did not express a readiness to annex these regions.

This has allowed for another component of the hybrid war to emerge. Namely, it cannot end with a complete victory for one of the sides. This scenario may also





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happen in Ukraine where even now, during the ceasefire, it is visible that this war will not have a winner. Neither side will be able to take full control over Donbas and bring it back to a normal state of affairs. Thus far, Ukraine has more assets, as it is the only actor able to rebuild the devastated infrastructure. However, it is difficult to imagine that the separatists would completely give up their aims and agree to all conditions put forward by Ukraine.

What is more, Kyiv's refusal to declare total amnesty for pro-Russian rebels will generate further social conflict and the acts of terror. A presumptive Ukrainian victory will not likely bring peace and stability into the region either. We can most likely assume that groups of separatists will still operate in Donbas and the situation will remain unstable. Although wide-scale military actions may cease, single acts of terrorism will still be effectively engaging the Ukrainian army and keeping potential investors away. Thus, the future governance in the region will have to combine efforts focused on the restoration of the economy with the fight against separatists.

The conflict in Donbas clearly demonstrates all the weaknesses of the Ukrainian army.

Another variant of the post-war order which implies broad autonomy for Donbas, full amnesty to the rebels and their inclusion into Ukraine's state apparatus, does not guarantee stability in the east. This scenario, which would be in fact an implementation of Russia's aims, is not going to be accepted by the Ukrainian political elite. Clearly, these scenarios will have their opponents and the locals will not trust new authorities, no matter who they are. Thus, the most crucial problem of Ukraine today is that the war in the east is a threat to the functioning of the state as a whole. It is not only about spending large amounts of money on the army, but also about weakening the morale of Ukrainian society. Kyiv's efforts do not focus on its necessary economic reforms, but rather on the fight for territorial integrity. Altogether, it could lead to another explosion of social dissatisfaction.

The case of Ukraine shows how dangerous a hybrid war may be in its many dimensions. Every single component of a hybrid war is a threat to stability of a state (and sometimes to neighbouring states as well). Therefore, the more complex such a war is, the more difficult it will be to make effective decisions. The experience of the hybrid war so far has taught us that there is a need for a new understanding of this war and the risks which are different than classic conflicts. NEE

Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

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Guaranteeing the Status Quo

CHRISTOPHER TOOKE

A near-total lack of alternatives to the status quo belied the record-high number of parties competing in regional elections held at various levels across Russia on September 14th 2014. The gubernatorial and municipal polls in St Petersburg constitute a particularly striking example of how the regime used the elections to consolidate its grip on power and suppress dissenting voices.

Reintroduced in 2012, ostensibly as a concession to the supporters of the unprecedentedly large-scale protests against irregularities in the State Duma elections in December 2011, the system of direct elections for regional governors and city mayors has done little to restore local democracy in Russia. Even the holding of elections for 30 governors and three mayors this year was the result of an order from above, aimed at consolidating rather than inviting competition to test the status quo. All but 11 of the gubernatorial polls took place a year or two early, with the president, Vladimir Putin, ceremoniously engineering the resignation of the Kremlin's favourites and giving them his blessing by wishing them success in the poll. The eventual victory of the acting governors, all of whom belonged to or were supported by the ruling party, United Russia (UR), was therefore predictable well in advance.

Grave implications

The central authorities believed the original scheduled dates of the regional elections were too close for comfort to the parliamentary elections, due in December 2016, and risked allowing opposition forces to coalesce. Disturbed by its poor performance in recent elections, notably in the 2011 parliamentary polls, United Russia wanted its governors and those belonging to other pro-Kremlin parties

firmly ensconced in their regions so that they could be deployed to mobilise local votes for the party ahead of the 2016 Duma elections.

Putin calculated that it was a good time to capitalise on his unprecedented popularity, mainly due to his defiant stance against the West and the ecstatically received annexation of Crimea. Furthermore, the economic situation in many regions is worsening, with the effects of a stagnating economy adding to the burden of squeezed budgets. The fact that 14 regional legislature elections and over 5,000 municipal elections also took place on September 14th allowed the authorities to maximise their gains from the patriotic fervour sweeping the country before there was any chance of the populace losing faith. At these levels, too, Putin's party dominated the elections. For example, no non-systemic opposition candidates were elected to the Moscow City Duma.

Although the state-owned media made much of the record-high number of candidates and parties in the gubernatorial elections (137 and 24 respectively), these figures are essentially meaningless. Many of the parties were only nominally in opposition, and many non-United Russia candidates secured the ruling party's support in their campaigns. In a trend that has grave implications for the development of a genuine party system in Russia, the campaign showed that it was not one's party and its professed ideology that mattered so much as one's ties with those in power; indeed, the presence of nominally independent candidates backed by UR suggested that some were even trying to hide their allegiance with this corruption-tainted party. The importance of personal connections to the powerful in attaining success was demonstrated also by the application of the so-called "municipal filter", whereby prospective gubernatorial candidates had to secure the signatures of local municipal deputies in support of their candidacy.

The 2014 local elections showed that it was not party affiliation and ideology that mattered as much as ties to those in power.

Tellingly, prominent opposition figure Alexei Navalny had only been able to secure his candidacy in the September 2013 Moscow mayoral election through gaining the endorsement of municipal deputies from United Russia. Although he put up a decent fight, he ultimately failed to beat the incumbent, Sergei Sobyanin, suggesting that the apparently level playing field was a ruse intended to legitimise Sobyanin's victory. This year, the regime largely dispensed with the illusion of following democratic procedure, with leading liberal opposition parties such as the Republican Party of Russia-Party of People's Freedom (RPR-PARNAS) and Yabloko failing to register a single gubernatorial candidate anywhere. Civic Platform was a notable exception among the non-parliamentary parties, managing to put forward four candidates, while opposition party Civil Force's Vladimir Petrov almost forced a

second round against his UR opponent, Aleksandr Berdnikov, in the Altai Republic. Even in last year's trying circumstances, two genuine opposition mayoral candidates had emerged victorious: Galina Shirshina (supported by Yabloko) in Petrozavodsk and Yevgeny Roizman (nominated by Civic Platform) in Yekaterinburg.

A trying battleground

St Petersburg was a particular concern for the regime. The fiscal and administrative powers of the Petersburg governor and Moscow mayor are significantly higher than those of other city heads. UR took a mere 35.4 per cent of the vote in Petersburg in the 2011 Duma election and the city was one of the main centres of mass protests in late 2011 and early 2012 against electoral irregularities. Pro-democracy protests have continued (albeit with much-reduced attendance) despite having died out in most urban centres. The presence of a genuine opposition force in the city legislative assembly was borne out in March 2014, when 12 of the 50 legislators voted against a proposal to allow troops to be sent to Ukraine. Those opposed to the measure included members of Yabloko, Civic Platform and the social-democratic A Just Russia, a traditionally obedient "systemic" opposition party that has nevertheless produced members prepared to challenge the regime.

The regime largely dispensed with the illusion of democracy with key liberal opposition parties failing to register a single gubernatorial candidate anywhere.

Oksana Dmitriyeva, A Just Russia's firebrand Duma deputy and local party leader, made clear from the outset her determination to unseat the Kremlin-backed acting incumbent, Georgy Poltavchenko, a former KGB officer and close ally of Putin. According to a poll commissioned by the Petersburg city administration in May, although Dmitriyeva's popularity was only 16 per cent, with 41 per cent being Poltavchenko's share of the vote, it would have been enough to force a second round of voting.

Until now, Dmitriyeva, an economist and member of the State Duma Budget and Tax Committee, could hardly have been described as unruly. Her challenge to the regime has largely been limited to criticising the government's financial policies and drawing up alternative budgets. Nevertheless, she enjoys respect among the opposition and could add some diversity of opinion to debates on urgent issues such as how to deal with increasingly tight public finances as economic stagnation sets in.

The obstacles that the Petersburg authorities erected for Dmitriyeva testify to their fear that she would pose a real competition if they had let her through. They set the municipal filter at the highest permitted level (ten per cent) and ensured

that there were no deputies left for her and other members of the opposition once Poltavchenko and four "dummy" candidates had snapped up the signatures.

For many, then, the removal of Dmitriyeva from the race on July 17th meant the end of the September elections. Commentators who asserted that Dmitriyeva should have concluded a deal with United Russia to secure its support missed the point: Dmitriyeva wanted to maintain her credibility and not acquiesce to UR domination of the electoral system. Nevertheless, she claimed to have collected the signatures of some deputies not only from her own party but also from members of UR, Yabloko and the (Kremlin-loyal) Communist Party of the Russian Federation, as well as self-nominated municipal election candidates. However, Dmitriyeva asserted that the local authorities harassed municipal deputy candidates who wished to support her, refusing to register them as candidates and threatening those employed by the state with expulsion from their workplaces.

The Maidan that never was

Dmitriyeva called on voters to ruin their ballot papers as a form of protest against the irregularities, an initiative backed by Yabloko. The aim was to force a second round and prompt Putin to remove Poltavchenko from the race on the basis that he had failed to secure the trust of his electorate. This apparently desperate move is symptomatic of the plight of the Russian opposition, which has been deprived of pursuing more conventional means of righting injustices.

Dmitriyeva's calls to sabotage the election won her little sympathy among the general public, however (about three per cent of the ballot papers were spoiled), and her attempts to prove that Poltavchenko had coerced municipal deputies into supporting him only resulted in his supporters taking legal action against her for making false accusations. The authorities' counterattack also included accusing Dmitriyeva of attempting to buy deputies' signatures and of indirectly calling for a "Maidan" in Petersburg. Dmitriyeva turned the tables, reporting to the security services what she described as posts on blogs advocating extremism.

> "The authorities make the process so difficult for independent candidates because they're afraid of any kind of initiative from below."

In order to hold at least some of the poll without the oversight of independent election observers and to weaken the ability of the opposition to influence the outcome through ruining ballots on the official election day, the authorities "allowed" early voting for both the gubernatorial and the municipal polls starting on September 3rd in various districts. This also helped to increase the turnout with a view to boosting

the legitimacy of the outcome: 9.5 per cent of voters cast their ballots early. The initiative flouted electoral legislation, which stipulates that early voting is permitted only for those who for sound reasons are unable to vote on election date. Moreover, as has occurred in previous elections, state employees were reportedly coerced into voting early en masse and for the "right" candidates – on threat of losing their jobs. On the official voting day, while the Central Election Commission declared that there had been only minor irregularities, independent election monitoring bodies such as Golos and Nablyudateli Peterburga, together with members of the opposition and journalists, reported mass falsifications. Dmitriyeva lodged 1,500 complaints with the local and central election commissions and Yabloko joined her in preparing to contend the gubernatorial and the majority of the municipal results. Official results put Poltavchenko in first place with 79.3 per cent of the vote and the CPRF's Irina Ivanova in second place with 9.4 per cent. Turnout was at 36.7 per cent – a figure also disputed by Dmitriyeva, who put it much lower.

It may be significant that Dmitriyeva put all the blame for the electoral violations on the local authorities, suggesting that the Kremlin had nothing to do with them. Indeed, she called on the president to investigate the irregularities, despite Putin's bias towards Poltavchenko and own poor record on respecting electoral norms. At a plenary session of the State Duma on September 19th, Dmitriyeva went so far as to demand that the results of the municipal and gubernatorial elections be annulled and that the people who were responsible for their falsification be punished. While it is true that the Kremlin wished to avoid blatant violations during the gubernatorial elections and the Petersburg authorities may have overstepped the mark, Dmitriyeva can hardly expect a sympathetic ear. At the broader, federal level at least, Dmitriyeva seems to wish to continue to challenge the system from within, not pose an outright threat to it.

However, it is not only because of her ambiguous relation to the central authorities that mass demonstrations, peaceful or otherwise, in support of Dmitriyeva or against electoral irregularities were never likely and that rumours of violent upheaval amounted to another attempt to tarnish the opposition. Turnout at regional elections has traditionally been very low and voters on the whole are currently far more concerned about the prospect of Russian soldier deaths in Ukraine, the perceived war with the West and the effects of sanctions than the constraints on their ability to choose their local leaders. The sense that much of the outside world is united against Russia, together with the demonstration effects of the crisis in post-EuroMaidan Ukraine, has made many previously liberal-minded Russians lose any faith in western ideals of democracy and prompted them to support the status quo as a guarantor against instability.

Weeding out the grassroots

Meanwhile, the Petersburg authorities took no chances with aspiring municipal deputies unaffiliated with the regime. Although some independent and opposition candidates eventually managed to register, many found that, on reaching the relevant Municipal Formation Electoral Commission office, registration papers in hand, the building was mysteriously vacant or guarded by menacing bouncers. Unsurprisingly, UR deputies dominated the results at this level, too.

Municipal deputies' limited authority and apparent distance from central power might be expected to allow them the freedom to bring about positive change, albeit on a small, local scale, without having to pander to powerful vested interests. However, in reality, corruption is rife at this level and, as we have seen, the regime uses municipal deputies to buttress its power and maintain close control over the gubernatorial election process. As Inna Sergiyenko, a pro-democracy activist and member of Nablyudateli Peterburga, explains: "They make the process so difficult for independent candidates because they are afraid of any kind of initiative from below. Even seemingly insignificant acts have to be controlled and directed from above."

One independent candidate, Nataliya Bakatina, sees local self-government as potentially sowing the seeds for the eventual formation of a healthy civil society capable of exactly the kind of initiative the authorities fear. Positions in local administration have also served as springboards for young political leaders' careers. Having been falsely accused of errors in her documents, Bakatina tirelessly battled through the courts and eventually managed to register as a candidate. However, she did not win enough votes to become a member of the local council.

The authorities have not only further impoverished Russia's political culture through not giving a chance to people with ideas that challenge the status quo, they have also deprived themselves of the opportunity to measure the actual degree of support leaders have through testing them against genuine competition. In the case of the gubernatorial elections, this has involved effectively turning the elections into referendums, thereby increasing the dependence of governors on the federal authorities and exacerbating regional leaders' alienation from their electorates. As the post-Crimea elation wanes, the Kremlin may therefore have to contend with the frustration of local populations dissatisfied with incompetent leaders reinstalled by the authorities. NEE

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How Democratic is Poland?

MICHAŁ KOTNAROWSKI, MICHAŁ WENZEL AND MARTA ŻERKOWSKA-BALAS

The first edition of the Democratic Audit of Poland is a pilot test aimed at understanding the dynamics of particular aspects of Polish democracy and shows that while Poland is in good standing compared to the rest of the region, it is still far from the ideal.

Democratic audits in the world have an established, if not long, tradition. They were created not so much as scientific studies, but rather as policy analyses covering the macro-democratic perspective both in its normative visions and its functionality and practical diagnosis. Particular national traditions of audits differ greatly; in some, the performance of democracy is assessed in detail, while in others it is evaluated with reference to a set of principles. Some believe that the quality of democracy cannot be discussed without earlier precisely defining what democracy means, while others ignore this issue altogether. Some assessments were created when concerned citizens and social science professionals noticed grave deficiencies in the functioning of democracy or were afraid about its future. Others are the outcome of scholarly reflection and the consequence of collective and public discussions concerning political order as a necessary condition for democracy's success.

The first and best known such audit is the Democratic Audit of the United Kingdom (conducted since the 1990s), which its authors define as "a comprehensive and systematic assessment of a country's political life from the viewpoint of the key principles such as citizen control over the decision-making process and political equality in the exercise of that control".

Democratic health check-up

Therefore, such an audit can act as a test of the "health" of a country's democracy. Currently, in many countries, democracy audits significantly contribute to citizen

self- reflection and their findings always become a media event. Internationally, there have been some attempts to combine various states' efforts and compiling the data from each audit. The Stockholm Institute IDEA has decided to take these dispersed projects from different countries under its wing with the aim to encourage comparability of the analyses.

The quality of democracy cannot be discussed without precisely defining what democracy means.

At the same time, together with the global spread of democracy as a system of governance and with the increasing quest for democracy, a range of institutions systematically dealing with its quality assessments emerged alongside long-standing projects such as Freedom House or Polity. For instance, there are initiatives by the Bertelsmann Foundation, such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index or the Sustainable Governance Indicators. They focus on aspects of democracy, the state and the market economy relevant in democratising countries, i.e. the attributes we do not usually analyse in traditional stable democracies of Western Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world. Another new and interesting initiative is the World Justice Forum, which publishes systematic global assessment of state performance known as the Rule of Law Index. It assesses selected aspects of functionality of the state and the law, elections, as well as fundamental civil and political rights. In 2012, a project complementing the previous ones was initiated, called the Varieties of Democracy (VoD). After many years of criticism of the abovementioned initiatives for assuming a "linear" or one-dimensional model of democracy, this study indexed the various types and models of democracy

Finally, in this necessarily short description of national traditions of "democracy audits", it must be stressed that these are comparative projects in substance, but comparative in terms of time rather than space. New initiatives and actions by IDEA will be moving towards the comparability of these projects on the international level. This line of action is correct, even though, at the same time, these projects should always consider the national contexts. In other words, they should be case studies instead of classic studies.

Piloting-testing Poland's democracy

This edition of the Democratic Audit of Poland (DAP) is the first one (as it is planned to be a repeated in subsequent years) and, in our intention, the "pilot" test of many dimensions, since it tests what Polish institutions can offer scientists who want to thoroughly assess them. The DAP brings an innovative approach to the interpretation of both existing data and mass studies of Polish society. Last but not least, this DAP covers quite a wide range of material. We realise that not

all aspects we cover are considered as constructive elements by the theories of democracy.

The aim of the study is to pay special attention to the dynamics of change of particular aspects of democracy. It is not only as scientists, but also as engaged citizens, that we would like to live to the day when we could end our research and claim that this political system needs no more improvement. However, we remain realistic and know that democracy is characterised by immanent contradictions and crises fall within its essence. Therefore, we should understand that improvement is necessary and can be done in the framework of the audit's analyses and recommendations. An important goal for this study is to create a significant reference point and guidance for decision makers on what to do, how to improve the law, how to change our politics and politicians, as well as how to encourage citizens to act for democratic public good.

The results of the Polish audit confirm similar studies conducted by other international institutions.

The methodology of the Polish study is based on the principle of triangulation. Our evaluations are based on three pillars: expert opinions concerning the aspects of democracy, a study of existing (official) statistical data, including the secondary analysis of public opinion polls which provide information on democratic awareness of Poles. The data used in this report are in most cases public. The objective data come from such sources as GUS (the Central Statistical Office), ministry offices, etc. The data from public opinion surveys are primarily drawn from studies by CBOS – Poland's public opinion research centre. The third pillar of our audit is the "expert survey", which is complementary to the public data. Our experts were selected according to their recognised competences in selected areas of public life. We generally treat their assessment as "quasi-objective" descriptions of the Polish democratic reality. It often occurs that expert opinions do not fully coincide with the statistical data, the latter occasionally being quite contrary to the citizen assessment.

This audit does not aim at resolving this conflict, as it is not a scientific study *per se*. We are aware that professional perception of reality often differs from assessment of a given phenomenon or a problem seen through the eyes of citizens who are non-professionals. This report is meant to demonstrate these discrepancies; however it is not supposed to determine which party is right.

In the report, we analyse ten areas of democracy which make up a large number of more detailed aspects. Among them, we distinguish such fundamental issues for democracy as the rule of law, party system, as well as accountability. There are also less fundamental issues including the assessment of public administration. The order of chapters is not accidental; we start with the fundamental issues, namely

the political community and the rule of law. We finish with feedback mechanisms such as elite accountability and responsiveness. One of the chapters, regarding Poles' attitude towards democracy, their opinions, positions and values related to democracy differs from the other ones as it constitutes a description of the condition of the Pole as a democratic citizen.

Assessment of Polish democracy

The state of Polish democracy of 2012–2013 is assessed as satisfactory, or even good, especially when analysed against other Central European states. In this respect, the results of our audit are in accordance with numerous international projects assessing similar issues such as the Freedom House Ranking, the Bertelsmann Transformative Index and the Rule of Law Index. In these indices, Polish democracy has found itself in the honourable second or third place behind the safe leader, Estonia. The position itself, however, is less important than the dynamics of changes in time; even at the beginning of the current millennium, Poland was behind the regional leaders in many aspects.

The table below is an overall assessment of a given area, taking into consideration all the aspects, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 equals the state of ideal democracy in a given area. It must be noted that this assessment is realistic in the sense that we are trying to assess Polish democracy from the perspective of what is possible in a young democracy and the main reference points are the countries of the former Eastern Bloc.

FIELD OF ASSESSMENT	RESULT
General assessment of democracy in Poland	7-8
Political process	9
Political community	8
Corruption	7
Democracy in society	7
Party system	7
Authority responsiveness	7
Media	6
Public responsibility and accountability of politicians	6-7
Rule of law	5-7
Administration	5-7

Some of the areas of interest, such as political process and political community, do not raise much objection. The political process in Poland is conducted in accordance with democratic norms and citizens exercise their rights freely. The most important institution of a modern democracy, electoral representation, is well organised and there is every reason to assess this aspect of Polish democracy as close to the ideal. International agencies share this opinion when evaluating this aspect of our democracy. However, in the future, more consideration should be given to non-representation, the situation of disadvantaged groups, and political influence of groups which have been kept away from the decision-making process.

As far as the Polish political community is concerned, the rights of Polish citizens are respected to a satisfactory degree. However, there are problems with the representation of selected minority groups and individuals who are not Polish citizens but permanently resident in the country. In the four areas of corruption, democracy in society, party system and authority responsiveness, we noticed some failures which do not impair the functioning of democracy, but there is still room for improvement, such as untackled corruption, nepotism and patronage on the local level. Other areas that emerged included a negative assessment of the functionality of democracy and its institutions and a lack of trust; a low level of social capital; a low legitimacy of the party system in the eyes of citizens who are reluctant to identify with parties, as they believe they are not effective enough when representing them; numerous faults of the system of financing political parties; and poor communication between MPs and their electorate.

Many aspects have improved but, according to Poles, the reality of public bureaucracy has changed only slightly.

One of the areas that requires many improvements is the functioning of the media, which in Poland are free and ensure access to information concerning the public sphere, but the level and objectivity of the news might in some cases raise some doubts. The problems of the mass media in Poland resemble those in other countries of Central Europe and in most developed countries as well. Some issues identified include economic weakness of print media, de-professionalisation of journalists and the tabloidisation of information. Public media are being weakened by politicisation, whereas private media by economic dependency.

There is a lot of ambiguity as far as public responsibility and accountability of politicians, rule of law and the functioning of administration are concerned. In these areas the study notes on one hand areas which work really well, and serious failures on the other.

The practical use of interpellations and parliamentary questions by MPs can be positively assessed. The situation is much worse, however, when it comes to

the government's response. The activities of parliamentary commissions are also criticised. There are irregularities in procedures for public tenders (violations of the public procurement act), although in recent years the number of recorded irregularities is decreasing. Real access to public information is still a significant problem, despite numerous innovations in this area. We have also noted negative evaluation of public consultation conducted by the central authorities.

The quality of the rule of law in Poland is also ambiguous. It seems that, similarly to some other aspects, formal systemic solutions may be evaluated higher than the practise of the institutions. The judiciary is well funded and has adequate levels of human resources; however, they are often not used effectively. Serious problems include a low level of legal culture in society as well as an inefficient functioning of the judiciary. Democracy is weakened by the low quality of law-making, its massive inflation, as well as the courts' slowness to act.

Public administration in Poland is top-heavy and relatively costly. Unfortunately, this does not translate into efficiency. Other concerns include its rationality – public offices are at risk of politicisation, procedures are complex and lengthy, and unprofessional officials are not liable for the decisions taken. Many aspects have improved in recent years but, according to Poles, the reality of public offices has changed only slightly.

It must be stressed that Polish democracy at the beginning of this second decade of the 21st century is assessed quite well. Such evaluation is obviously relative so it should be stated that our democracy looks quite well in relation to its state several years back and favourably against the countries of the region with a similar level of development. However, we are far from the quality of democracy noted, for instance, in Scandinavia. Numerous detailed, technical aspects of our democracy require urgent intervention. We elaborate on them in the corresponding chapters of our report.

Michał Kotnarowski, Michał Wenzel and Marta Żerkowska-Balas are members of the project team "Democratic Audit of Poland" conducted by the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw.

The Democratic Audit of Poland was made possible with support of its main sponsor, the Polish Confederation Lewiatan. The project was also supported by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation and the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland.

The Democratic Audit of Poland is directed by Radosław Markowski.
The complete report prepared by Michał Kotnarowski, Radosław Markowski, Michał Wenzel and Marta Żerkowska-Balas, supported by Krzysztof Iszkowski and Borys Markowski, is available at http://dap.swps.pl.

The End of Homo Sovieticus

A conversation with Myroslav Marynovych, Ukrainian human rights activist, founder of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and vice-rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. Interviewer: Olesya Yaremchuk

OLESYA YAREMCHUK: At the time of your exile, you participated in numerous human rights actions, went on hunger strikes and wrote chronicles of the camp. Looking back, nearly 40 years later, how do you reflect on your memories from that period when you observe the situation in Ukraine today?

MYROSLAV MARYNOVYCH: I still hold a strong conviction that communism is evil. An evil that has not yet been punished and no one has repented. This means that all the consequences of this evil have stayed with us. It is still here and hurting the human and social conscience. The Vladimir Putin regime emerged in Russia because the crimes of communism had not been investigated and adequately punished. Unless we change that, we will not find a solution to Putin's challenge.

Here we perceive the situation as follows: Russia is an aggressor and Ukraine is a victim. I agree with this interpretation. However, a closer look at history allows us to say that communism was not only fuelled by Russians. We also fuelled communism by our obedience and fascination with socialist ideas. Thus, we also have to accept a part of the guilt for communism. We have to understand that not only Putin is marked by the "red October". So is Viktor Yanukovych and the whole generation of people from Donbas who still want to live in the Soviet *sovok*, the rule of the communist ideals. The past remains ignored, and today we see the consequences of that negligence.

Without a doubt, human rights are a very helpful mechanism to establish a normal order in a country. I am happy that the EuroMaidan protesters stood for dignity, values and human rights. I see this revolution as a logical bridge between the new generation of Ukrainians and the dissident movement. These two movements share the same orientation towards values.

What do you think Ukrainians can learn from their past? What shall be done to finally get over the past so that it does not stand in the way of our future?

Let me put it this way, Leonid Kuchma's crimes were possible because the communist crimes had not been punished. In the same vein and disregarding what was said during the 2004 Orange Revolution, Kuchma's crimes were not punished either, which allowed Yanukovych to pursue his crimes. The question that we should ask today is: will the crimes of the Yanukovych era be punished now? I am not a bloodthirsty person and I do not dream of revenge, but I can tell you one thing: unless we draw conclusions from our past mistakes, we cannot create a normal society. That is why I will find real joy when I see that a fair trial was carried out and that a court found guilty those former leaders who committed crimes. Only then will society understand that there are consequences to bad actions.

I still remember the moment after the Orange Revolution when the Yanukovych's camp panicked in fear of punishment. One day they even began saying that they were "persecuted as political opponents", turning the criminal situation into a political one. To prevent such situations in the future their actions, as well as the actions of others who were like them, should be deemed criminal. We need this to break the vicious circle.

What did the EuroMaidan Revolution mean for you?

I admit that I am impressed by the effects of the EuroMaidan Revolution. In my view, this protest was truly our last chance to save ourselves from ruin. Had we waited just a few weeks longer, Ukraine would have ended up in the Russian-led Customs Union. We would have been buried in the Russian sphere of influence for ages. When the EuroMaidan began, we ourselves had not realised how threatening the situation was.

I am extremely grateful to the young people who gathered on the Maidan in late November 2013 and did what the political parties had failed to do. Overall, I perceive the EuroMaidan as the emergence of a new and long-awaited generation of people who are not *homo sovieticus*. This era has ended. The new generation that was born in independent Ukraine does not know the taste of slavery. I am not idealising them in any way as this generation has also its own problems, but it is still different from the previous ones. The problem is that the youth does not participate in decision-making. Young people speak about values, but their voice is barely heard.

The new generation is said to be better adjusted to technology and characterised by its immense individualism. Ironically, however, this individualistic generation created the collective phenomenon of the EuroMaidan. How would you explain that?

The EuroMaidan found a solution to the eternal problem of *otamanshchyna* in Ukraine (*otamanshchyna* refers to the dominance and rule of various armed partisan groups in the absence of a real government – editor's note). What is

happening now is a phenomenon of our ethnopsychology. However, the energy that the EuroMaidan revolution generated was so potent that it enabled solidarity between these groups. The EuroMaidan was a conglomerate of small, affinity groups, but there was a possibility to somehow co-ordinate their activities and make joint actions under the principle of the flash-mob.

This same effect needs to be achieved on the political level. Forcing young people to join the "imperial" parties would only hurt their nature. I think that the modern world can find a solution. We have a generation which has realised its nature. It has its own identity, but in order to act in the public sphere with different identities, it has to co-ordinate its actions to be a single monolithic power.

In May 2014, Ukraine elected Petro Poroshenko as its new president. Today, however, many people in the country have rather controversial attitudes in regards to some of his political steps, including the ceasefire. What is your evaluation of the president?

I trust the president I voted for. This trust has a margin of safety and guarantees some capital to the president. Even if I find some of his actions wrong, I maintain confidence. I understand that Poroshenko has to accept compromises and respect the will of Europe. But let us be pragmatic in regards to Europe. We expect Europe to help us financially. I do not want this help to resemble what we were receiving during the rule of the previous presidents, when it was unclear how the European money was used. I want Europe to set forth clear and specific conditions on which it provides funding to us and I want it to control our spending of it.

I am only afraid that Europe could mandate reconciliation between Ukraine and Russia as a priority, no matter what the conditions are. All to stop the shooting, which would allow the Europeans to sleep calmly. Such an egoistic attitude, however, is dangerous to Ukraine as reconciliation will not last unless it is based on certain principles and the truth. It is clear that in order to gain the advantage, Putin will pretend to accept Europe's proposals. But the next day he will come up with a new idea on how to attack Ukraine again. There are several elements in Europe's position with which I cannot agree or I view them as potentially dangerous to us.

Many European politicians might be simply afraid of a further aggravation and even larger threats from Russia…

Together with Russia we got used to living in the world of powerful hands, powerful technologies and methods of force. We treat this world as real and we see that it works. For us, the European soft power is a *terra incognita*. It seems too slow, too weak and ineffective. But we are not accustomed to seeing effectiveness in something that is long term.

We criticised the second level of sanctions too much. We believed that it was necessary to strike Russia, and only

Photo courtesy of Myroslav Marynovych

Myroslav Marynovych: a Soviet dissident, a Ukrainian human rights activist, a religious studies scholar and currently vice-rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.

then would Russia come to its senses. But now we see that the sanctions have taken effect; even Russian politicians openly say that.

One of the EuroMaidan activists, Oleh Matsekh, suggested that the events in Ukraine are a great purification. He said that the Kyiv protests were a purification of western Ukraine, while the war is purification of eastern Ukraine. Despite the tremendous sacrifices that the war takes, do you believe it could bring any benefits?

The late 1980s and early 1990s was a period of turbulent transformation for Eastern Galicia. There were inter-church clashes as well as ideological passion that was seething in Galicia while the east was sleeping. This phenomenon was clearly demonstrated during the 1990 elections when the division line went through the Zbruch River. Galicia was then passing through its period of transformation. The others just sat by and watched.

Later, this line began shifting east. During the 1996 elections, it passed through the Dnieper river. Then, the right bank of Ukraine began its period of transformation. In 2004, the line crossed the Dnieper and the north of Ukraine opted for democracy. Thus, the so-called "south-east" was created, which was ideologically uniform. The time has now come for the "south-east" to pass through its transformation. The transformation brings, however very painful experiences which are related to the trauma of the war and which was not the case at the previous stages. But this is also the case because the democratisation process has been belated in the east.

All of Ukraine is already prepared to live in the other, democratic, world. Only this small zone has not been able to make up its mind. That is why it now has to go through pain and misery. In this context, the war will bring positive effects, as it will force people to make up their minds. Those who want to live in the Soviet system revived by Putin will leave for Russia. Those remaining in Ukraine will have to take responsibility over their own fate.

Several weeks before the city of Donetsk became occupied by terrorists, I spoke at a literary festival there. I recall my impressions from the conversations I had during this event with young people. They were speaking Russian, but they were Ukrainian-thinking people. They are people born in Ukraine. The new eastern Ukraine already exists and it is absolutely different from what it used to be. But again, this youth is not a decision-maker.

Speaking of value systems, Vladimir Putin says that Russian traditional values based on the concept of a strong family are in direct conflict with European values. Sometimes, however, these arguments take absurd forms as in the case of the law prohibiting women from wearing underwear from man-made fabrics because "this interferes with health". Would you

consider this to be a reflection on tradition or a distortion?

Any attempt to take away personal freedom is a distortion. God created people free and wise so that they can analyse the consequences of their activities. Unquestionably, western civilisation has its own problems, also in the spiritual sphere. People in the west have achieved great things and continue to do so. But I cannot help to feel that they have overstepped the boundaries of common sense. They ventured to replace old ethics with new ones. This I find wrong.

I accept tolerance to deviant patterns of behaviour because I want to respect the image of God in human beings. That is why I respect other people who think differently than I do. Only when these people are criminals will I fight against them and seek punishment. However, if a person does not resort to criminal actions, I will respect him or her, even when I do not fully accept their ideological convictions.

Russia's recent behaviour is nothing else but pure manipulation. And one which is aimed at its own people. The purpose of today's Russian authorities is to persuade people that a form of authoritarian rule is a way to implement the so-called classical conservative values. These values are lost because the people are coerced. There is one very correct thesis in ethics theory: when a person is forced to perform something he or she is relieved from ethical responsibility for their actions. A responsible citizen has to have freedom of choice. The meaning of freedom is devaluated in Russia and people are generally relieved from responsibility for their actions. Thus they are transformed into slaves. And a slave bears no responsibility.

How have the values of Ukrainians changed now?

I see a very important change, which nonetheless carries some threats. On the one hand, I am very happy to see that the society actively strives to control their authorities and criticise them. This is indeed necessary. We have fought for this change and the people are entitled to criticise their government. On the other hand, this activity, which was suppressed during Yanukovych's rule, sometimes takes exaggerated forms. People do not want to hear all sides of the story and immediately call for someone's head. If we want to be citizens in a democratic state we have to learn to approach a problem from all sides.

Translated by Olena Shynkarenko

Myroslav Marynovych is a Ukrainian writer and intellectual. He is the vice-rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.

Olesya Yaremchuk is a Ukrainian journalist based in Lviv.

An Icon of the Holocaust

A Conversation with Andrzej Żbikowski, Polish historian and researcher with the Jewish Historical Institute and professor at the Centre for East European Studies at Warsaw University.
Interviewer: Krisztián Stummer

KRISZTIÁN STUMMER: In your book about Jan Karski you wrote that when we think about Karski, we can speak about more than one man. How would you introduce this Polish Second World War fighter to those who have never heard anything about him?

ANDRZEJ ŻBIKOWSKI: First and foremost, Jan Karski was a man who wanted to stop the Holocaust. During the war, he worked as a member of the underground Polish state. We remember him as the messenger of the Jewish extermination, but his job was to inform the Polish government-in-exile, which first was stationed in France and later in England, about what was happening inside the Polish underground state under German occupation. There were several internal problems with rival parties, such as Jewish parties, ultra-nationalist parties, as well as the communists, all of whom were quite strong within the system.

Hence, Karski's role was to report on what was happening in the homeland and the force of resistance that was being built. It was in 1942, when a representative of the Bund (the Jewish socialist party) and a member of the Zionist movement, who lived beyond the ghetto walls hiding amongst the Poles, reached out to Karski right before his second mission to England. This was the period of the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. The hope was that Karski could help inform the Polish government-in-exile, as well as the Jewish Diaspora, about what was happening to the Jews in Poland and about the unbelievable decision of the Germans to kill all the Jews in the occupied territories.

In order to be well informed, they prepared Karski to visit the ghetto. The part of the ghetto that Karski visited in secret was the so-called "small ghetto". He later reported what he had seen. He spoke with key decision-makers in England, at first with Polish policymakers and later with Englishmen like Anthony Eden, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom. In 1943, Karski was sent to the United States where he met with many different people including Franklin D. Roosevelt, the US president. Karski brought up the tragedy of the Jews, but people were not yet interested. They were more

interested in the situation in Poland and the problems with the Soviet partisans.

Do you believe that the history of the Holocaust would be different without Karski?

I think it is a very complicated question. It is true that inside the Polish underground state there were only a few people who wanted to inform the outside world about what was happening with the Jews. The majority of them were in the ghetto and the communication between them and the underground organisation was very limited. Honestly, no one was really interested in the Jewish issue until the Germans started executing them, not to mention the strong antisemitic views among some of the Poles. But when they had realised what was taking place in the concentration camps, it changed everything. Both the Polish and the Jewish underground tried to inform the free world, but not so much information filtered through. Officially, Karski was the first who talked about this. After visiting the ghetto, the Jewish underground snuck him into the Izbica camp near Bełżec. In his reports, he described what he had seen.

After his first mission in 1939, Karski wrote a report on Polish-Jewish relations under the German occupation. It was a very important contribution because it was written quite early on. At that time, before the decision about establishing the death camps, the Germans tried their best to pit the non-Jewish population of Poland against the Jews. Karski wrote about the laws which were created against the Jewish population in 1940 and he described them very honestly. That was his first encounter with Jewish issues. Before his mission, Karski had never been inside a ghetto.

After the war and after the success of his book *The Story of a Secret State*, which was published in 1944, Karski was not out much in public. Instead, he focused on his academic career at Georgetown University. Do you think that the topic of the Holocaust is the main difference between the young and the older Karski?

This is very true. He began his new career only after the screening of Claude Lanzmann's documentary, *Shoah*, which was released in 1985. Immediately following the war, there was a particular problem for the Jewish survivors. These years were characterised by a silence about the Holocaust. During the Cold War, other problems became more important on the world stage. But something happened in the 1980s and the Holocaust began to become a very significant issue for the Western world.

For Karski, he had completed his mission of reporting on the Jewish and the Polish situation at the end of the war. He wrote his book in Washington in 1944, during the Warsaw Uprising. The book is generally about the Polish underground state, but there are three chapters dedicated to his Jewish mission as well. The book was a bestseller, but years later Karski became forgotten. He settled down in Washington and graduated

from the Georgetown University in the department of Foreign Affairs.

It was not until after *Shoah* that Karski became an icon of the Holocaust. Nowadays he is known in the West because of this new chapter of his career. Lanzmann interviewed him in 1979, but *Shoah* was released six years later. Karski also had a good relationship with Elie Wiesel, a man who witnessed the Holocaust first-hand and was one of those that spoke often about it, taking part in countless events and conferences. With time, the mood towards the importance of the Holocaust changed. Karski began speaking more openly and freely about his experience. A lot of people wanted to hear his stories. Now, unfortunately, there seems to be less interest in this period of history, at least here in Poland.

Why do you think that is? After all, 2014 has been called the year of Jan Karski in Poland…

It is a complicated matter which is connected to the problem of the Jewish tragedy. In Poland, people want to remember the war as a great time of Polish heroism. The Jewish issue overshadows this heroism. I am not saying that Karski would be unpopular here. For example the recent exhibition in Łódź, Karski's hometown, which was opened by the Polish President Bronisław Komorski, was very popular. It attracted a fair share of visitors, but not in the numbers you would see in countries such as the United States.

We are also living in a time of changing attitudes towards the Holocaust. By saying this I am not referring to the problem of the denial of the Holocaust, but rather to the fact that many people share the opinion of Jean Marie Le Pen from France, who once said that the Holocaust was an insignificant period of the war.

Despite being partly based on the interviews with Karski, the film *Shoah* was very controversial in Poland. What sparked this controversy?

Shoah dealt only with the Jewish tragedy and did not talk about people who were trying to help the Jews. I remember very well when the Polish television broadcasted a shorter version of the documentary, only 50 minutes out of the ten hour-long film. People were furious. They said that the Polish society was presented in a bad light; that they were shown as being against the Jews. *Shoah* is an excellent film, but it is true that Lanzmann showed only the first day of the interview with Karski when he described the details of his visit to the Warsaw Ghetto, even though in the following days he talked about his missions, the underground state, his conversations with President Roosevelt and other important figures. Even Karski himself protested against showing the shortened version of the material.

You once wrote that many Poles could ask why there were plenty of heroes but not enough like Karski. What did you mean by saying that?

During the occupation, the Jews were alienated from the Polish citizens. But citizenship was not important at that

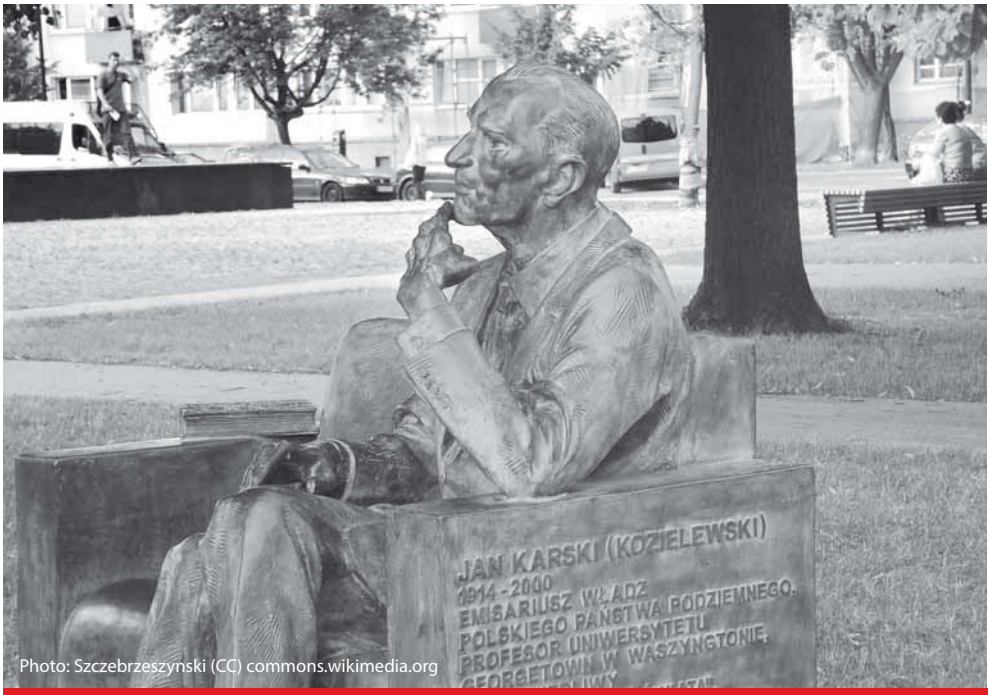


Photo: Szczebrzeszynski (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

A monument to Jan Karski in Warsaw.

time. The divisions within the society were based on nations. Different nations were living next to each other. Today, the situation is totally different; citizenship is the most important thing in a state. During and before the war, we were separated from each other. Assimilation was not so vital for the Jewish people. They were a separate nation living in Poland, especially in small cities. They lived next to Poles, they knew each other, but had the position of an outsider. Karski was exceptionally able to abandon this separation based on nations and see that the Polish and the Jewish tragedies were intertwined.

Is this the point where we are can see both Karski the patriot and Karski the critical thinker?

I would say yes. He was very patriotic, but he was against the extreme right movements, which were quite an important power within the underground Polish state.

You have met Karski personally. How would you describe him after this experience?

I worked with him for three months in 1998, helping him to send personal items for the museum in his hometown of Łódź. After *Shoah* he became very popular and very well-known. The museum asked for his help to create a Karski room. Even though we worked closely then, I would not characterise our relationship as one of a close friendship, I was 45 and he was 85 years old.

Of course I would ask him about his past and he willingly answered. He was very open, clever and interesting, definitely old-fashioned and noble. He had a strong Polish accent, but his command of English was impressive. Unfortunately, he was already ailing at that time, suffering from rheumatism. He quit smoking at the age of 85, so there were times where he came across as quite nervous. But the thing that I admired the most was his memory – it was impeccable.

Karski wrote his book like a novel. Was this proof of his photographic memory or the intention of an artist?

It is difficult to say for certain. As I said, his memory was excellent, but he often repeated what he had written in his book *The Story of a Secret State.* If you watch and read the interviews with Karski throughout the years, you see that he told the same stories with practically no difference in the details.

Andrzej Żbikowski is a professor at the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw. Since 1985, he has been a researcher with the Jewish Historical Institute and in 2004 he became the chief specialist in the Bureau of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland.

Krisztián Stummer is a freelance Hungarian journalist currently based in Poland.

Ukraine's East Is Shaping Its Own Reality

MATTHEW LUXMOORE

With access to Ukrainian-language media cut off in areas under rebel control, local pro-separatist and Russian media outlets continue to expand their campaign on the information front of the war. Most of those living in rebel-controlled territory have been successfully persuaded that Kyiv is to blame for the city's destruction.

The driver of the decrepit Soviet-made Zhiguli blares his horn as he approaches the intersection, in a last-minute warning to oncoming traffic before he cuts the red light at breakneck speed. The man sitting in the back seat in full camouflage gear makes frantic calls for information, the Kalashnikov between his legs rattling from side to side. Eventually the creaky little car enters onto the main thoroughfare heading out of Donetsk, in east Ukraine. Noticing a group of men standing outside a shop, the driver stops aggressively alongside them.

"Where did the shell land?" he shouts. "Over there, about 400 metres that way," they answer, pointing southeast towards the outlying district of Tekstilshchik.

The car turns off the main street and speeds down a narrow, shabby road flanked by large grey residential blocks. Eventually, it pulls up outside the local secondary school, narrowly missing a large crowd that has gathered at the scene. Three men and one woman climb out of the vehicle and stroll authoritatively past the group of startled onlookers, entering the large white building through a massive hole in the wall where the entrance door once stood.

Ripped to pieces

The team belong to Sut Vremeni DNR, one of about ten television channels that have sprung up in Donetsk since Kyiv's "anti-terrorist operation" against the rebels

who overran the regional capital back in April. Despite the imposition of a shaky ceasefire on September 5th 2014, following a surprise counter-attack by the pro-Russian separatists, bombs continue to drop on Donetsk. The strategic city of one million and capital of the rebels' self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) has become an epicentre of the military conflict.

The "reporters" for the TV station – rifle in one arm, camera in the other – are there to document the damage and catch shocked locals on camera cursing the "fascist" Ukrainian army and the "murderer" from whom it takes its orders: Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. While one of the men sets off to photograph the classrooms, another unfolds a cheap handheld camera and begins recording.

The third man approaches the school's director, who is pacing its glass-strewn corridors in shock, crying. He tries his best to calm her. She and other members of the teaching staff have spent two weeks renovating the school "with their own hands" in preparation for the start of the new academic year, she says. Now, it will take months to make the building operational again. A rogue mortar has ripped the school to pieces, its walls have caved in or collapsed entirely and shards of glass are scattered everywhere.

After 20 minutes, the team receives reports of another shelling in Tekstilshchik and drives off to locate the scene. It does not take long to find. Some 300 meters further down, across the main road from the school, a body lies sprawled out before a bombed-out apartment building. It has been covered by a blanket, but a pool of blood is visible on the ground. Parked alongside is a shiny police vehicle decorated in black, blue, and red: the ubiquitous colours of the DNR. No ambulance has arrived and only a few people are on the scene. One of the reporters begins to question witnesses, while another records the interview.

"Is this a separatist hideout?" the reporter asks a middle-aged man in a black shirt. "No, only innocent civilians live here," the man answers. "So they were firing upon peaceful civilians?" the reporter asks. "Yes, exactly," comes the response.

Suddenly, a blonde woman in her thirties appears and begins cursing the government in Kyiv. The reporters quickly turn their attention to her. "What direction is Poroshenko looking in? That man who sits there [in Kyiv] and sees nothing. As if he has no kids of his own," she says, speaking as if on cue.

Free reign

The next day, Sut Vremeni DNR uploads its coverage to the internet. The photos and videos are posted to its YouTube account and on VKontakte, the Russian-language social network, supplementing a series of reports from that day's fighting already online. Sut Vremeni's work and the narrative it promotes fits well with the

general information offensive staged by pro-Russian rebels and their supporters. As the ceasefire collapses and Kremlin-backed forces continue in their attempt to regain lost ground, pushing back government forces positioned around the Donetsk airport, a parallel war is being waged against all sources of information opposed to their version of events.

With all Ukrainian-language media cut off in the territory under rebel control, local pro-separatist and Russian outlets are given free reign. Donetsk and Luhansk, the insurgency's two major strongholds, have a combined peacetime population of almost 1.5 million people. Although some estimates suggest around a third of the region's residents have left, the rebel states are still able to restrict information access to a vast swathe of Ukraine's population. Most rebel outlets have close connections with Russian state-owned media. Russia's Channel One, which has over 250 million viewers worldwide, embeds video clips from Sut Vremeni DNR and affiliated outlets in its daily reports of events in Ukraine. LifeNews, a 24-hour news channel described by Ukraine's Security Service as a "militant sub-unit for informational special operations," has had its YouTube account terminated after widespread claims of copyright infringement. Both are among the 14 Russian channels which Ukraine has banned for "spreading war propaganda."

Separatist media outlets enjoy direct support from various groups within Russia, ranging from political movements to channels with similar angles of coverage.

The separatist outlets also enjoy more direct support from various groups within Russia, ranging from political movements to channels with similar angles of coverage. One of them is ANNA News (Abkhazian Network News Agency), whose reports of shelling in rebel-controlled territory regularly appear in the news roundups on Russian TV. The channel is from Abkhazia, the Georgian breakaway republic recognised by only a handful of states, including Russia, and it has a strong pro-separatist slant. Its website contains various links to organisations collecting financial aid to support the insurgency.

Sut Vremeni DNR is the Donetsk branch of Russia-based Sut Vremeni (Essence of Time), a major nationalist movement led by pro-Kremlin scientist Sergey Kurginyan which sends regular supplies to the pro-Russian rebels in Donetsk and Luhansk. The movement advocates re-establishing the Soviet Union and "bringing to account" those who caused its fall.

"We suffer the Soviet Union's collapse as a defeat for our nation and our own personal defeat. But we have not capitulated. We are ready to continue the fight and be victorious," says the Sut Vremeni manifesto, which is published online. Sut Vremeni has branches in all major Russian cities and former Soviet republics.

Alongside a large online presence, it publishes a weekly newspaper and has its own central TV station, which mainly broadcasts political lectures by Kurginyan.

The movement also stages regular demonstrations in support of the Russian government's policies. In 2011 and 2012, its members were active in counter-protests against anti-government demonstrations in Moscow. A Sut Vremeni march earlier this year in Moscow, denouncing the February ouster of Ukraine's pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych and expressing solidarity with that country's Russian-speaking population, gathered around 15,000 people. At a time when mass demonstrations in Russia are banned, the Sut Vremeni march was sanctioned by the Russian government, albeit only for 2,000 participants.

Television for the people

With three civilians killed and five wounded in a shelling attack of north Donetsk on September 29th, and nine Ukrainian army casualties reported in fierce fighting that has raged around the city airport, the ceasefire that had raised hopes of a swift end to the violence in Ukraine has all but collapsed. In the meantime, Sut Vremeni's Donetsk branch continues to expand its information campaign. Several of the videos it uploads on a daily basis have received over 150,000 views, including an interview in early August with Aleksandr Khodakovskiy, commander of the separatist Vostok (East) battalion.

On September 8th, the channel posted coverage of an event staged on Saur-Mogila hill to commemorate the 1943 liberation of Donbas from Nazi occupation. The hill was the location of intense fighting between German and Russian soldiers during the Second World War and was eventually recaptured by the Soviet army in August 1943. It has exchanged hands several times recently between government and rebel forces, finally returning under rebel control on August 26th.

A September 12th posting to the channel's YouTube account shows rebel fighters thanking the Russian Communist party for its delivery of humanitarian aid to residents of Donbas, as they stand before a white truck filled to the roof with sacks of sugar. However, the channel prides itself primarily on being first to publicise the Ukrainian army's purported atrocities. Its profile on YouTube provides a running archive of military developments, with the aftermath of each round of shelling in rebel territory posted under a headline listing the date and location of the attack.

"We definitely beat everyone to it today. Not even RT was there yet," says one of the reporters as we leave the scene of a shelling, referring to Russia's international news channel. He goes by the *nom de guerre* Feldscher – a German word meaning army surgeon, also used in Russian. Feldscher is in his early twenties, wearing full

camouflage gear and equipped with a Kalashnikov rifle. A Russian speaker, he came to Donbas from his home in central Ukraine to "be with my own people."

"I was livid when they tore down the Lenin statue in my town. Who asked my opinion? No one," he says, referring to monuments to the Communist revolutionary which have been toppled across Ukraine since last winter's EuroMaidan Revolution. On September 28th, an enormous statue of Lenin in the centre of Ukraine's second largest city, Kharkiv, was pulled down to cheers from the crowd, reflecting the wave of anti-Russian sentiment that has swept over large parts of the country.

Sut Vremeni DNR and other pro-separatist TV channels are closely affiliated with DNR TV, the official mouthpiece of the breakaway state. Its studio is located in the headquarters of the Donetsk regional broadcasting service, now one of the most heavily protected buildings in the city. Sandbags are piled up on either side of the entrance gate to the guarded compound and between the pillars that adorn its Stalinist neo-classical façade. Outside, barricades of tyres line the driveway.

In an interview with Russian state-owned NTV, which recently profiled the channel, DNR TV's producer Viktor Petrenko said the project was launched shortly after pro-Russian protests broke out on the streets of Donetsk in March to counter false reports in pro-Kyiv outlets.

"People see only Ukrainian propaganda, telling them that terrorists and separatists live [in Donbas] and not people that three months ago stood on the streets in the hope that someone would at least listen to them. That's why we took things into our own hands … and created a TV channel for the Donetsk Republic," he said.

Multi-front campaign

The rebels' information campaign is not confined to the television screen, however. At its headquarters in the old city administration building in Donetsk, the People's Republic publishes two irregular newspapers: *Novorossiya* (New Russia) – named after the state envisioned by the separatists – and *Golos Naroda* (Voice of the People). The papers are handed out for free at various locations in the city. A recent edition of *Novorossiya* charges Kyiv with instating a cruel regime in the former rebel stronghold of Sloviansk, a city of 130,000 recaptured by government forces on July 5th.

"What is the regime of the Kyiv junta doing on the temporarily occupied territory of the DNR? It's clear – it is engaging in persecution, harassment and acts of terror against all those who disagree with it," one article reads.

Another issue carries an emotional appeal to those fighting on Kyiv's side: "What will you tell those close to you if you survive, Ukrainian soldier? How you

successfully fired at the window of a nine-storey building and killed an entire family? What are you actually fighting for, soldier?"

Golos Naroda claims a circulation of 70,000, although it has only published three issues. On the cover of the most recent issue, published on July 2nd a group of smiling female graduates shows off their Russian university diplomas. The headline reads: "Russian schools have thrown open their doors for graduates from Novorossiya."

"Our newspaper's task is to bring people true information about the activities of the DNR government … Ukrainian media publish only lies, they are incapable of operating even by Goebbels's methods," *Golos Naroda* editor Gennadiy Dubovoy said in emailed comments.

Most of those living in rebel-controlled Donetsk have been persuaded that Kyiv is to blame for the city's destruction.

Within Donetsk, at least, this multi-front information campaign is succeeding. Backed by media reports from Russia, most of those living in rebel-controlled territory have been persuaded that Kyiv is to blame for the city's destruction. Even western outlets overwhelmingly refer to "Ukrainian government shelling" in their coverage of the battle for Donetsk, and most sources content themselves with such conclusions without looking beyond the purely logical deductions upon which they rest. Two days after the school in Tekstilshchik was demolished, a number of residential blocks in a leafy district of downtown Donetsk were hit. A mortar shell also landed inside the central Vishnevskiy hospital, whose patients were immediately evacuated to the basement when the shelling began. Half an hour after the bombing ceased, the basement was filled with around fifty terrified patients.

Walking through the basement past the shivering men, women and children huddled on narrow wooden benches was like walking through an exhibition of human misery. Exposed light bulbs lined the airless corridor, casting light on the patients' faces in a way which projected their sense of helplessness. Not everyone had made it to the basement, however. One patient died and two had been badly wounded, hospital staff said.

It was only the second time a central part of the city, a more sparsely populated district home to many of its wealthier residents, had come under fire. Almost all those who arrived on the scene to survey the damage – most were local journalists and residents – claimed that it had been Ukrainian forces who were targeting the former headquarters of Ukraine's Security Service, which was taken over by the rebels on April 7th.

But in a makeshift bomb shelter beneath a six-storey apartment building located some 500 metres away, where its residents rushed as soon as the deafening explosions began, an elderly couple refused to conform to this view. They were convinced that

it was in fact the separatists who were deliberately shelling civilians to bolster the anti-Kyiv narrative they rely upon for their political survival.

"Ukrainian forces are positioned 20 kilometres from the city centre. These artillery pieces only have a range of four kilometres," said the husband, who did not want to be identified by name for fear of retribution by the rebel government.

The man is not alone in his view, and suspicions of rebel provocations may be more widespread than the rebels themselves may think. Although many of the city's residents are afraid to voice opposing views, some are similarly convinced that the shelling of Donetsk is a separatist tactic designed to implicate the Ukrainian army.

Growing local support

Several videos have also appeared on YouTube purporting to show rebel fighters firing on residential areas, some recorded by the rebels themselves and others by local residents. The authenticity of the videos cannot be confirmed, and most are taken down soon after being uploaded. One such video, uploaded in September, claims to show separatists firing mortar shells next to a country road.

"We are sending gifts to our friends," one of them jokes in the clip. In another, which surfaced in early August, a man in camouflage is shown squatting over a case of mortar rounds lying alongside a row of howitzer guns. "This one is for Tsaritsyno," he writes on one of the shells with what appears to be a marker. Tsaritsyno was a separatist base in the town of Krasny Liman which was destroyed by Ukrainian army forces in early July. If genuine, such proof counters rebel claims that only Ukrainian forces are using heavy weaponry against civilians. Kyiv, meanwhile, consistently denies the accusations.

> Sometimes a loaf of bread is enough to gain the loyalty of someone who otherwise has nothing.

It is difficult to prove if this is indeed a tactic used in the separatists' information offensive. Who is really bombing the city – like many other questions surrounding this conflict – remains unclear, and proof of this may only emerge once the fighting is over. Nevertheless, the rebels' effort to publicise the shelling in a way that incriminates the Ukrainian army is a major element of a broader campaign to gain local support.

In addition to the scathing portrayal of Kyiv in print and video coverage of events on the ground, the breakaway republics have also placed a heavy focus on the provision of humanitarian aid by the rebel government to the residents. The initiative is well-publicised by Sut Vremeni DNR and other media operating in the region. As shelling in Donetsk began to intensify and the city centre was coming under fire for the first time, the DNR's leadership posted notices across the city

directing residents to its official centre for humanitarian assistance, located in the city administration building which the DNR uses as its base. At the centre's official opening on August 6th, DNR parliamentary speaker Oleg Tsaryov – a former member of the ousted Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych's Party of Regions who is wanted by Kyiv on charges of inciting separatism and violence – handed out financial aid to residents of Donetsk and the surrounding towns. The few journalists who had turned up were from pro-Russian or Russian state-owned outlets.

Ministers of the self-styled government also conduct press tours to nearby towns located on the frontline of the conflict, bringing locals food supplies and promises of financial aid.

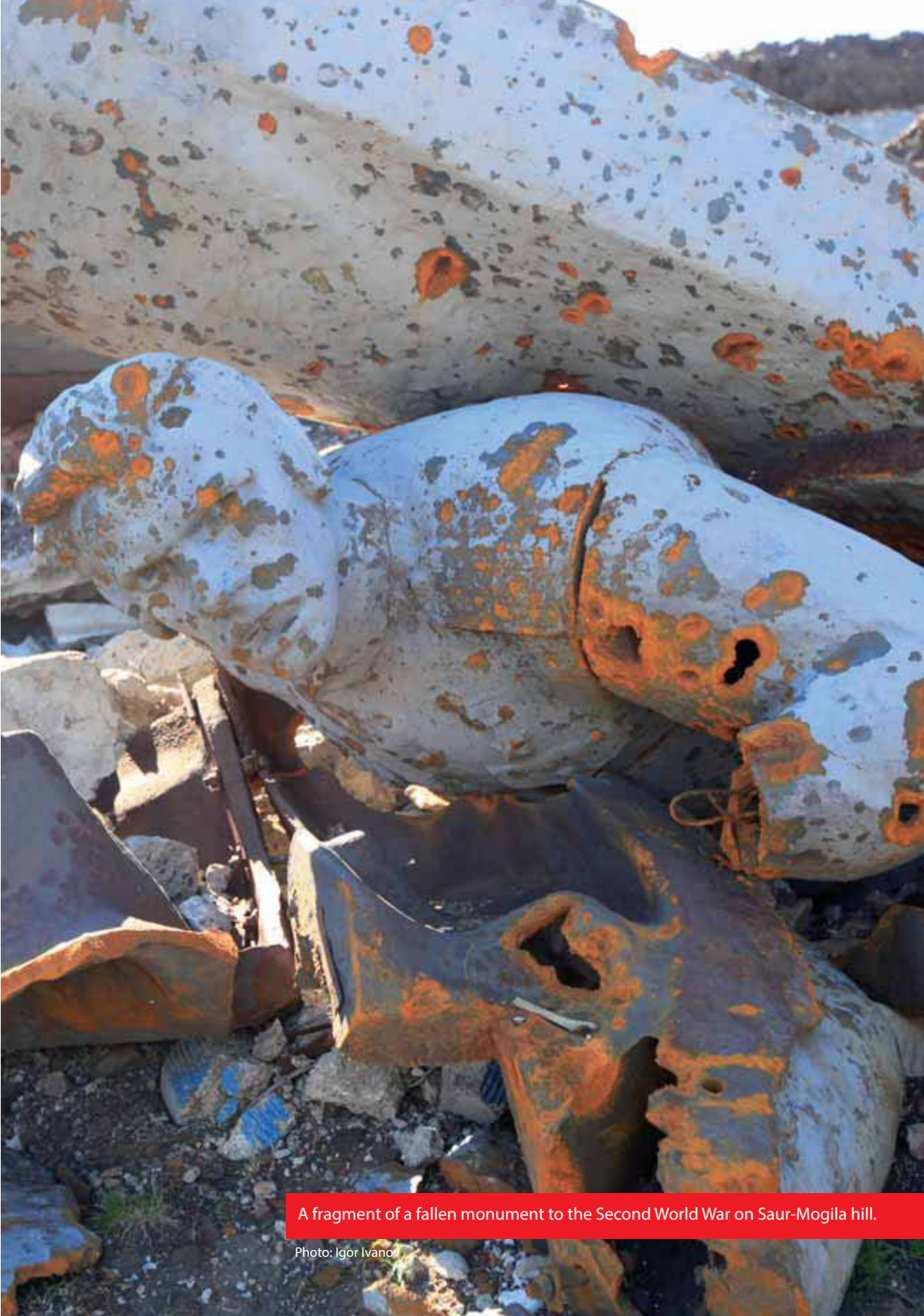
"Whatever people may say about it on TV, the Donetsk People's Republic is helping us," a pensioner in the bombed-out city of Shakhtyorsk, 35 miles east of Donetsk, said on one such tour. She was among a crowd of locals who had flocked to the central square to receive food supplies and pay their respects to Tsaryov, who headed the delegation. Sometimes a loaf of bread, it seems, is enough to gain the loyalty of someone who otherwise has nothing.

Ukraine's recent offer of limited self-rule for the rebels and plans for the creation of a buffer zone to facilitate the planned ceasefire come as the insurgency and its accompanying information offensive are becoming entrenched. A narrative framing the Kyiv government as a "fascist coup" waging "genocide" against its own people continues to be perpetuated within Donetsk and Luhansk. The very same morning that President Poroshenko announced the proposal for greater autonomy in the east, a mortar shell hit a passenger bus making its way towards Donetsk's central bus depot. Of the ten people on board, one woman was killed and another heavily wounded by shrapnel.

Shortly after the incident, *Novorossiya TV*, one of the newer separatist news channels, uploaded its graphic coverage of the aftermath. Yevgeniy Medvedev, a 39-year-old man interviewed at the scene who claims to be a former employee of Ukraine's Interior Ministry, says the 57-year-old victim of the attack was his mother.

"I'm now alone," he says, with no shred of emotion, "my mother was all I had." Now, he tells the camera, he is forced to join the pro-Russian separatists in their fight against Kyiv. "My mother is dead. What choice do I have?" he says.

Matthew Luxmoore is a freelance journalist who has written for *The New Republic, Evening Standard* and *Kyiv Post*.



A fragment of a fallen monument to the Second World War on Saur-Mogila hill.

Photo: Igor Ivanov

A Russian matryoshka doll lies on the pavement outside a bombed-out store in Donetsk.

Photo: Igor Ivanov

Representatives of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic deliver aid to locals.

Photo: Igor Ivanov

Putting Hysterics Aside

WOJCIECH WOJTASIEWICZ

Any indication of the western sanctions, such as empty shelves in the shops which were reported widely by some media, was difficult to find in Russia this summer. However, there are still many Russians who are sceptical about Vladimir Putin.

While spending two weeks in August in Moscow and St Petersburg it was difficult for me to notice any tensions related to the events in eastern Ukraine and the sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union and the United States. The Red Square was swarmed by tourists. People were queuing to see the "eternally living" Lenin resting calmly in his tomb. It was equally crowded at the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. Both the Moscow and St Petersburg metro systems were overflowing with commuters as Russians hurried to work and other duties.

On the streets of the present and former capitals of Russia, there were no propaganda posters or billboards attacking the "fascist" government in Kyiv or a call to fight and liberate the people of eastern Ukraine. Demonstrations of antipathy towards Brussels and Washington were few and far between. It was quite the contrary. The McDonald's restaurants in Moscow and St Petersburg were swarmed by thousands who needed to get their fix of hamburgers, cheeseburgers, French fries and Coca Cola. Locating a vacant table was almost a miracle. The customers of American brand fast food restaurants were primarily Russians and not, as we would expect, tourists.

In search of empty shelves

The only sign of the changes taking place in Ukraine that I observed was on the way from St Petersburg to Tsarskoye Selo, a palace and park complex. There I saw a billboard encouraging Russians to spend their holidays in the now Russian Crimea (unfortunately, the statistics from this summer season clearly indicate that the number of tourists who chose the annexed peninsula as their holiday destination

has decreased significantly). Besides that, there were no organised demonstrations, rallies or marches where Russians would "spontaneously" affirm the actions of Vladimir Putin in Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

One sign of support for the Russian authorities that I did come across was a long queue of Russians in the famous State Department Store (GUM) located by the Red Square in Moscow. Those people were interested in purchasing t-shirts featuring their president. My first thought when I saw such a long line of people was that there must have been a special offer or a specialty tasting. To my surprise, these Putin t-shirts were not a bargain. They cost several dozen roubles. Another, although not a significant political accent, were the street posters which informed on the upcoming September regional elections in Russia, although they were rarely visible in Moscow and St Petersburg. Overall, the election campaign seemed quite sluggish. Only in Moscow on New Arbat Avenue did I encounter several agitators handing out brochures for a female candidate running for a councillor's office who, needless to say, was a candidate of the only proper political party of the authorities: United Russia.

On the streets of Russia, there were no propaganda posters attacking the "fascist" government in Kyiv or calling to fight and liberate the people of eastern Ukraine.

An indication of the sanctions, such as empty shelves in the shops – which were reported widely, almost hysterically, by some Polish media – was difficult to find. If I had not known anything about the conflict in Ukraine when I was heading for Russia, I would not have noticed any signs of worry in Moscow or in St Petersburg. Even the Russian press was not 100 per cent dominated by reports from Ukraine or filled with articles concerning the sanctions. There were obviously reports from Kyiv, Luhansk or Donetsk, but there were also articles on the upcoming early presidential elections in Abkhazia, an investigation of the July accident in the Moscow metro that resulted in over 20 deaths, as well as the relations between the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church.

If there were articles on the EU and US sanctions, they concentrated on the future losses for the member states of the EU resulting from a suspension of imports into Russia. They did not mention the problems that could affect Russia in this respect. The states on which Moscow imposed its embargo were listed along with the estimation of potential loss due to the embargo. This group obviously included Poland with the infamous apple embargo.

Even though in recent months the Russian authorities have often been attacking Poland for its involvement in training the EuroMaidan protesters and sending soldiers to fight against the separatists in eastern Ukraine, not even once did I

meet reluctance when I mentioned my country of origin. On the contrary, an elderly man at the GUM department store, upon learning that I come from Poland, politely informed me that he knew our country: "In 1945 as a soldier of the Red Army, I liberated Poland and marched to Berlin," he did not hesitate to boast with a radiant face.

Weak and inefficient

Even though opinion polls in late August reported that 84 per cent of the Russian society supported their president, there are still many Russians who are sceptical about Putin. One of them is my friend Denis. We met three years ago in Gdańsk during an international educational project called the Solidarity Academy. Denis frankly told me that Russia's authorities are weak and inefficient in reforming the state, which explains Putin's focus on the demonstration of power. The Kremlin has been trying to channel the social dissatisfaction from late 2011 and early 2012 by initiating conflict in Ukraine. He estimates that what is happening in eastern Ukraine is bound to hang over Russia, whereas the sanctions imposed by both the West and Russia on each other will not bring any good.

Russia is caught in a trap. Putin is not a good president, but there is no alternative to him.

"Sanctions only generate unnecessary tensions," Denis said over dinner which we had, curiously enough, at a Ukrainian restaurant. He added that Russia had been caught in a trap. On the one hand, Putin is not a good president and many young Russians are dreaming of leaving Russia to search for a better future. On the other hand, there is no alternative to Putin at the moment.

"Who could be an alternative to Putin? [Gennady] Zyuganov? [Vladimir] Zhirinovsky?" he asked rhetorically. Denis, who is a graduate of management studies at the Moscow State Financial University, is starting a five-year PhD programme in Lausanne, Switzerland. He does not know himself what will be his next step, whether he will stay in the West or return to Russia.

"It is difficult to make an academic career here [in Russia]. With my educational background, I could get a job in finance or banking, but the education itself is poor," he stressed during a stroll in the very popular and crowded Gorki park in Moscow. He noticed that it is unfortunate that the education system in Russia at all levels is becoming weaker every year. After the Soviet Union was dissolved, numerous private schools were established on a very low level and it has been very difficult to find any jobs for their graduates. He added that in his hometown, Voronezh, located less than 500 kilometres south of Moscow with a population of approximately 1.3 million, there are already 15 private universities.

"However, during the presidency of Vladimir Putin a lot has changed for the better. After many years of road work and renovation of buildings Moscow presents itself gracefully," stressed Denis. Indeed, both the centre and the particular districts are clean and well kept. In Moscow there is a very high number of modern and high-class restaurants and bars.

"There is also another side of the coin, namely the very high cost of living: especially food and housing. Moreover, taking out a mortgage in the capital is not far from madness", Denis laughs.

Russians think well of Poles

"Average Russians think well of Poles. The reactions of my family and friends was positive when I told them a few years ago that I was going to study the Polish language," said Vladimir, who accompanied me during a sightseeing tour of the historical district of Moscow, Kitay-gorod. We met for the first time in Poland, only two weeks prior to my trip to Russia, during the Europe of Youth-Europe of Peace International Youth Meeting organised to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War in Wapienne, near Gorlice, where the greatest and longest battle of the eastern front took place.

Vladimir was not so eager though to discuss politics. He repeatedly stressed that it was not his cup of tea. Nonetheless, I managed to engage him in a discussion. His perception of Russia's activities on the international scene turned out to be quite different from what we hear or read in Poland and the West. By no means does he consider Russia's actions to be aggressive. He is aware of the lack of objectivity of the Russian press and that is why he does not read it.

Similar to Denis, Vladimir has plenty of reservations towards Putin, but also sees no alternative to the current leader. Many of those who had protested on the Bolotnaya Square in Moscow in 2011 had supported billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov who ran in the 2012 elections as an independent candidate against Putin. He came in third, with less than eight per cent of the vote.

"It cannot be ruled out, however, that [Prokhorov] was only a figurehead appointed by the Kremlin," wondered my interlocutor. "As a matter of fact, Russia is ruled by several individuals. The oligarchs control natural resources." In his opinion, in order to change anything in Russia two things are necessary: time and a mental change of society. People must stop thinking only about money and their private lives; they should get interested in public matters too.

"As a result of the situation in Ukraine and the tense relations between Russia and the West, cultural issues also suffer. The Polish Year in Russia and the Russian Year in Poland have already been cancelled. I am worried that the Sputnik Over

Poland Russian Film Festival might also be cancelled," Vladimir told me, concerned specifically about relations with Poland.

Double standards

To my surprise, in the hostel where I stayed in St Petersburg, I met an Ossetian named Alla. Alla, originally from Tskhinvali, is a student of history at a university in Moscow. She was visiting St Petersburg for a few days during her summer holidays together with her Russian friends, also students of history. Alla's parents and relatives still live in Tskhinvali (the capital city of the breakaway Georgian territory of South Ossetia). Our conversation soon changed to matters relating to Ossetia, Georgia and relations with Russia. She stressed that South Ossetia wishes to join North Ossetia and in this way become a part of the Russian Federation. She also believes that Ossetians do not want to live with Georgians.

"Even though after the 2008 war we received financial support from Moscow, the economic situation in our country is difficult. We practically have no economy," she says and adds that she will not be able to visit Georgia (in fact, she has never been there nor anywhere outside of the Russian Federation) anytime soon, since after the August 2008 war the border between South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia has been closed. As Alla pointed out herself, she does not know Georgia, but she has read articles and watched programmes about how this country had changed under the rule of Mikheil Saakashvili.

> In order to change anything in Russia two things are necessary: time and a change in the mentality of the society.

Despite the fact that she definitely opted for South Ossetia to join its northern neighbour, she had a realistic outlook on the role of Moscow in the Southern Caucasus. She stressed that she was very well aware of the fact that Abkhazia and South Ossetia are only puppets in the hands of Russia in its relations with Tbilisi and are tools for pressure on the Georgian government.

"Nevertheless, I still wish for us to live with Russians rather than Georgians. Our problems with relations with Georgians started in the days of Zviad Gamsakhurdia [the first president of Georgia after the fall of the Soviet Union]. His nationalist policy led to all those misfortunes," she added.

Our conversation was joined by one of the Russians. Natasha began asking me what Poles thought of the situation in Ukraine and what was their attitude towards Vladimir Putin. When I noted that in Poland the anti-Russian and anti-Putin feelings were dominant, she responded by saying that as long as Putin was the president, Russians need not worry about their future.

"Putin, who is a strong and effective politician, has no replacement." According to her, politicians such as Zyuganov or Zhirinovsky are clowns and a part of the pseudo-opposition. When I asked her if she did not think that Putin applied double standards when on the one hand being in favour of sovereignty of Abkhazia, South Ossetia or eastern Ukraine and on the other hand opposing aspirations of independence of such entities as Chechnya or Tatarstan, she agreed with me stating that it was the right policy of bringing the Russian interests to fruition. She added that the West had done exactly the same thing recognising the independence of Kosovo.

"The sanctions will first of all affect the US and Western Europe. Russia can find new markets to import grocery products, such as the African market. But Europe has to buy energy from Russia. It gives Russia stability, strength and a position," Natasha added with visible pride. Then she referred to the situation in eastern Ukraine stating that we cannot speak of the war between Russia and Ukraine. According to her, the conflict between the separatists and Kyiv is the outcome of the mess that emerged as a result of the policy of the "neo-fascist government".

"Russians and Ukrainians are brothers. How could we wage a war against our brothers?" she asked with surprise. She believes that Ukrainians and Russians are subjected to media propaganda but Ukrainians to a greater extent. She argued that the conflict really takes place over control of oil and the possibility of using the Russian language by the inhabitants of eastern Ukraine, which – in her view – is forbidden by the new government in Kyiv.

"We are afraid of a new global war. It is in fact taking place already. So far it has been more of a diplomatic and economic nature, but in the future it might turn into a full-blown military conflict," the student from Moscow sadly concluded.

Translated by Justyna Chada

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An Unfinished Reunification

An interview with Wolfgang Templin, German essayist, leader of the democratic opposition in East Germany. Interviewer: Bartosz Marcinkowski

BARTOSZ MARCINKOWSKI: You were a leader of the democratic opposition in East Germany and actively participated in the events that brought an end to the communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe 25 years ago. How do you assess these events from today's perspective?

WOLFGANG TEMPLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel once said: "Reunification of Germany has been successful, but it has not finished yet." This is of course a very diplomatic statement, but it has some truth to it. To me, even before 1989, it was clear that the truly deep and peaceful changes would require a long-term process. In East Germany, we had hoped that the changes would finally come, but we were sure they would not come immediately. In the late 1980s, we received a strong impetus from Poland, from the Solidarity movement and also some signals from other former Soviet Bloc countries that allowed us to believe that the end of communism was coming. Eventually, even in my country something happened. The democratic opposition in East Germany was very weak and there were just few of us, but it existed. Year after year, the pace of events quickened. However, we did not know when exactly the breakthrough moment that we were all waiting for would come.

What did Angela Merkel mean exactly by saying that "reunification is not yet finished?"

Evidently, Merkel's words reflect a German perspective. The goal of the reunification was that people in the country's west and east have similar living conditions. When we compare the former East Germany to other countries of the Soviet Bloc, we do not have reasons to complain. However, within our country, despite 25 years since the collapse of communism, the division is still visible. This process is ongoing and we will probably need another 25 years to fully overcome these differences.

Would you say that the peaceful revolutions that took place in 1989 had


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an impact on the relations between Poland and Germany?

There have been significant changes that have happened in this regard. Without a doubt inter-state relations between the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Polish People's Republic were totally abnormal. Relations between Poland and West Germany were slightly better as Warsaw and Bonn made some important steps toward normalisation of relations in the post-war period. Nonetheless, we should also keep in mind that relations with the GDR had two dimensions – official and social. The official dimension was based on friendly meetings and gestures between top officials from both states. They were meant to seal, in line with communist propaganda, the brotherhood and unity of all communist states. This was a mask that marked hatred towards Poland.

Also, the media in East Germany did not present Poland as a real partner. They suggested that Poles were striking in the 1980s because they simply did not want to work and they were provocateurs. It was a very unhealthy image of Poland that was being broadcast. Unfortunately, the majority of the society believed this propaganda. It was only the minority that did not fully trust the media that became interested in what was going on in Poland, but it was too scared to undertake any actions against the government. An even smaller minority, which made up the former dissidents, including myself, had hoped that the demands voiced by Polish Solidarność would be implemented one day and have a positive spill-over effect in East Germany. That is why, when we look at the relations between East Germany and communist Poland before 1989, we get a very gloomy picture.

After 1989 the situation became more complicated. The reunification of Germany created a "new Germany", one which also had a significant impact in the area of international relations. The same case was with Poland as the "new Poland" was also a completely different country than before 1989. Thus, the two states began looking for ways to get closer to each other. The new Polish political elite that had its roots in the Solidarity movement significantly shaped the nature of these relations. In fact, this is true not only in regards to

Germany but also to other countries that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, namely: Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. Hence, there was not only a Polish-German rapprochement, but also a Polish rapprochement with other post-Soviet states.

Polish foreign policy after 1989 was clearly under a strong influence of the ideas that were formulated in *Kultura*, the leading Polish-émigré literary-political magazine which was published in the second half of the century in Paris, and the thinking of Jerzy Giedroyc, its editor-in-chief. This is a very important fact because there is also a different, I would say more sceptical and pessimistic trend in Polish thinking about international relations which perceives Germany as a long-time enemy and sees the east of Poland as the land of wild, half-barbarian tribes. Even though the adherents to this type of thinking believe that it is important to keep relations with neighbouring states, in their view, the creation of a true friendship between nations is impossible and all the attempts towards this goal should be abandoned as an illusion.

Let us return to the issue of the Solidarity movement. To what extent would you say the democratic opposition in Poland was an inspiration to this small group of East German dissidents? Is there an awareness today in Germany that Solidarity was a powerful movement that helped defeat communism or is it rather an unknown fact in the general perception?

I would say that this awareness has been increasing in the last few years. Even back in the 1970s, the young generation of Germans from the east was linked to Poland in a way. At that time, it became easier to travel without visas to communist states. Many people I know went in the 1970s to Poland. They did not know much about the country, they did not speak the language, but they knew that there was more freedom in Poland. They noticed, for example, that in Warsaw cafés you could read West German press or that you could discuss quite openly some important social and political issues. There was a modern culture in Poland. Even in this way, before Solidarity, Poland was an inspiration to some groups of East Germans.

This of course had an impact on our political activity. It was very important for us to receive information about organisations which emerged in Poland in the 1970s such as the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR). Unquestionably, KOR as well as such people like Karol Modzelewski and Adam Michnik were very important to us German oppositionists. In fact, very few people in the GDR had a comparable importance. That is why, in 1989 during the mass demonstrations in Leipzig and other cities, people were perfectly aware of what had happened in Poland ten years before. My friend, Roland Jahn, while commenting on these events said: "In Leipzig, Solidarity was with us." He was right.

I think in Poland we are a bit disappointed that in the West the fall of communism is associated more with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the role of Solidarity is somewhat pushed to the background. How do you think we should talk about these two events today? Do you think Poland and Germany can build a mutual narrative regarding the end of communism in our region?

I think it is a process and the situation is still developing. But in one point you are right. A few years ago there indeed was some kind of a competition: the Berlin Wall versus Solidarity. As always, it is history that will show what had more importance. In fact, it has already been becoming clear that it was the Solidarity movement in Poland that was an epoch-changing event. It was a signal to the entire Soviet Bloc. The fall of the Berlin Wall of course had great significance, but only in the context of Solidarity. Yet, the history books are only a part of the bigger picture.

The internet and museums also play a key role in spreading the knowledge about history. That is why the European Solidarity Centre (ECS), which has just been opened in Gdańsk this August, is the best example of an institution which can show the dynamics of change. Its exhibitions present not only Solidarność but also other opposition circles in Poland, as well as groups such as the Czechoslovak Charter 77 and the Hungarian opposition movements. Even the GDR's oppositionists are presented as a part of the wider historical structure.

What, in your view, is the weight of such institutions like ECS? Do you think the centre's work can go beyond the local perspective to include a wider message?

It definitely has a much wider sense. Even its name – the European Solidarity Centre – suggests that Solidarity is placed here in an international context and it is important for the whole continent. But also in the Polish museum scene, ECS has a new quality. In addition to the permanent exhibition, the centre is also a space for debate, seminars, lectures and discussions. The Polish public debate has been dealing for quite some time with questions as how to present its national history. Some participants of this debate prefer to emphasise Polish martyrdom or to present Poland as its "Christ of nations", a state that suffered for others. It has justification too, but it is only one part of the equation.

Thankfully, there are projects in Poland that offer a different narrative. Besides ECS, this includes the Museum of the Second World War and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. These exhibitions significantly contribute to important national debates. As a result, people are coming to the understanding that it is possible and highly effective to present national history in a modern and international way. What is more, it can be very successful. The European

Solidarity Centre is successful not only because it shows the past, but it is also important because it asks questions about the future. What values of Solidarity can we apply in our lives today and how to understand one of the official mottos of Poland which is "for our freedom and yours"? It is particularly important today, bearing in mind the war in Ukraine.

Speaking of Ukraine, how do you perceive the events that have taken place in this country in the past 12 months, relating to what we have just discussed?

Indeed, when we look at Ukraine today we are facing a similar situation to what we experienced in 1980 and 1989. Ukraine also shows us that governments of wealthy, western societies always make decisions with a significant delay. In 1980, Europe was deeply divided and people feared nuclear confrontation. Thus, any social unrest in the Soviet Bloc was seen more as a threat than a chance. In 1989, Poland and other countries showed that great changes can happen in a peaceful way. Today, a quarter century after these events, the West came back to the discussions that were held in the early 1980s. It is discussed whether we should support Ukraine's freedom and independence movement and whether this is a threat or an opportunity for Europe. However, there are more democratic countries in Europe now than 25 or 35 years ago. This is why Ukraine is, first and foremost, a European issue. Europe could effectively change the situation in Ukraine, but its reaction seems to be late again.

Wolfgang Templin is a German essayist specialising in the history of the GDR, the former Eastern Bloc and the reunification of Germany. He was a leader of the democratic opposition in East Germany.

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Ukrainian Nationalism: Not to be ignored

MAREK WOJNAR

Since the very beginning of the EuroMaidan protests, the vast majority of Polish and Ukrainian media have been trying to convince their audience that nationalism in Ukraine is a myth. Such a claim is not true. Repeating it, paradoxically, serves the Kremlin's imperial policy.

When the results of Ukraine's latest presidential election were officially released at the end of May 2014, Polish and Ukrainian journalists declared an end to Ukrainian nationalism. According to the Central Election Commission of Ukraine, the leader of the nationalist party Svoboda, Oleh Tyahnybok, received 1.2 per cent of the vote while the leader of another far-right party, the Right Sector (Pravvy Sektor), Dmytro Yarosh gained less than one per cent. It is not my aim here to dispute the honesty and transparency of the latest election in Ukraine, but it is important to recall some events that took place earlier and which are quite relevant for today's context.

First, let us move two years back when, as a result of the October 2012 parliamentary elections, two controversial politicians from Svoboda were elected members of parliament. The people in question were Iryna Farion and Yuriy Mykhalchyshyn. Farion became famous after a visit she had paid to one of Lviv's preschools. While there, she encountered children who were using Russian diminutive forms of names and whom she asked to "pack up their stuff and head off to Moscow". Mykhalchyshyn's activities were even more radical as he issued an ideological compendium consisting inter alia texts written by Ernst Röhm and Joseph Goebbels. Farion and Mykhalchyshyn gained in their single-member constituencies 68 per cent and 57 per cent of votes respectively. These numbers allow us to say that two years ago more than half of Lviv's population had radically nationalistic views. Clearly, such a conclusion would be a far-reaching simplification. What is the truth then? The truth, as usual, lies somewhere in the middle.

Intellectual foundations

The roots of contemporary Ukrainian nationalism reach back to the turn of the 20th century. In 1900, Mykola Mikhnovsky, a young Ukrainian lawyer from Kyiv, published a brochure titled *Samostijna Ukrajina* (*Independent Ukraine*). Its content referred to the ethnographic ideas of Ukrainian historian and politician Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, who had drafted a map of future and independent Ukraine situated between the San River and the Caucasus. Mikhnovsky, unlike other members of the Ukrainian independence movement, harshly criticised the signing of the 1654 Treaty of Pereyaslav which had unified Ukraine with Russia. At this early stage, however, Ukrainian nationalism, although not very influential yet, had strong legal bases.

It was Mikhnovsky's successors, especially Dmytro Dontsov, who rejected legalism and chose a path of radicalism. Dontsov, the author of *Nationalism* (Lviv, 1926), connected this idea with fanaticism, amorality and imperialism. In fact, the strict voluntarism and maximalism that characterises Dontsov's philosophy fits with Machiavelli's famous rule that "the ends justifies the means". In other words, the sacrifices and losses that are made on the Ukrainian side are justified only if they bring Ukrainians closer to the victory of the "Ukrainian idea" (i.e. nationalism). It was the Machiavellian cult of authoritarian personalities that also led Dontsov to praise Hitler and Mussolini in his pre-war writings.

Patriot of Ukraine and the Social-National Assembly openly call for the creation of a mono-ethnic country and the deportation of minorities.

Evidently, Dontsov's ideology had a great influence on the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The OUN was an organisation whose leaders, inspired by Dontsov's thinking, created an organisational framework for Ukrainian integral nationalism and brought it into a real political struggle. Consequently, various political thinkers started then to describe the future Ukrainian state in great detail (although not always coherently). They claimed that Ukraine would be a state formed as a result of a national revolution, with a territory stretching from the San River to the Caspian Sea, or even further reaching all the way to Central Asia, to the Pamir and Altai Mountains. This country, however, had no room for national minorities. For them, the OUN prepared one thing – mass deportations.

A fully planned political system was based on the models of the then totalitarian states. It did not offer any alternative to the cult of personality or one-party dictatorship. Although the leaders of the OUN, like Yevhen Onatsky, denied any links with fascism (because Ukrainian nationalism was an idea of the nation without a state, whereas fascism was not), their political and economic ideas were strongly affected by this ideology. Another important characteristic of the pre-war ideology

of Ukrainian nationalists was their concept of the Front of Captivated Nations. The main assumption of this idea was that smaller nations which were enslaved by the Russians should unite under the Ukrainian leadership and destroy Russia from within. The influence of such thinking can be seen even today, although there are also some groups of Ukrainian nationalists who still refer to racist ideas which are closer to German Nazism than to Ukrainian integral nationalism.

Nationalists and neo-Nazis

Today, Ukrainian nationalism can be divided into two wings which are under the command of Svoboda and the Right Sector. Other nationalist organisations are definitely much less significant. Svoboda was established in 1991 as the Social-National Party of Ukraine (SNPU). Today, hardly anyone remembers that among its founders, next to Oleh Tyahnybok and Yaroslav Andrushkiv, was also Andriy Parubiy, a commandant of the EuroMaidan revolution. The symbols that were used by the SNPU were directly adopted from Nazism, although its programme was generally related to the ideas of Dmytro Dontsov and Yaoroslav Stetsko.

In 2004, the SNPU transformed its image to become much smoother. The party changed its name as well as its logo and excluded the most radical of its members. The ideological base was replaced with an anti-Russian (and anti-Polish to some extent) attitude and aggressively nationalistic historic policy: besides the OUN and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), Svoboda also commemorated the Nachtigall Battalion and the 14th SS-Volunteer Division "Galician", which were the German military formations made up of Ukrainian volunteers during the Second World War. For an even a deeper look into Ukrainian contemporary nationalism, it is important to quote Leonid Mucha, a member of the Waffen-SS, who said in 2009 that all Russian-speaking soldiers of the Ukrainian Army should form a separate unit and relocate to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

Oligarchs closely linked to Viktor Yanukovych financed both the Right Sector and Svoboda.

Mucha made his statement in a book titled *The "Galician" Division in Questions and Answers*, which was published with the assistance of Svoboda in 2009. This narrative has been gradually decreasing since Svoboda entered parliament in 2012, but the vacuum has been filling up by even more radical parties.

The Right Sector is a confederation of several paramilitary groups founded on the basis of the Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian National Self-Defence (UNA-UNSO) and the Stepan Bandera All-Ukrainian Organisation "Tryzub". The political programme of the Right Sector refers to the idea of a "national revolution",

the neutrality of Ukraine (unlike the slightly pro-Western Svoboda) and the creation of a "Greater Ukraine," that is the unification of all lands historically inhabited by Ukrainians.

Although Andriy Tarasenko, the spokesman of the Right Sector, underlined once that his party has no territorial claims to Poland, the arguments were not so convincing. One quick look at the websites of Tryzub or UNA-UNSO is enough to realise that the demand of further expansion of the Ukrainian state is a common claim by these groups. Nonetheless, both Tryzub and UNA-UNSO are considered to be a "liberal" wing of the Right Sector.

Vladimir Putin has been effectively using Ukrainian radicals in his geopolitical game against Kyiv, Brussels and Washington.

The most radical faction of the party consists of such organisations as the Patriot of Ukraine and the Social-National Assembly. It is even difficult to call them "nationalists". The term "neo-Nazi" is indeed much more applicable in this case. It is not only because of the usage of Nazi symbols (such as the *Wolfsangel*), the Patriot of Ukraine and the Social-National Assembly openly call for a creation of a mono-ethnic state, the deportation of minorities, forced Ukrainianisation or improving the genetic quality of the Ukrainian population. The Social-National Assembly additionally puts forward a completely surrealistic imperial concept of "Ukrainian domination in the world".

The reason all of these facts have been presented here is that the above-mentioned groups are the core of the all-volunteer Azov Regiment. Its commander, Andriy Biletsky, has been frequently appearing on key Ukrainian media in recent months. The question that comes to mind in this regard is what are the benefits that the new Ukrainian authorities are getting from financing and supporting a far-right militia?

Another radical movement, although relatively unknown, is the Autonomous Resistance. For a long time, it was perceived as a youth wing of Svoboda linked with above-mentioned Mykhalchyshyn. However, everything has changed, when Mykhalchyshyn became a deputy of Verkhovna Rada. Then, the Autonomous Resistance painted, on the walls of Lviv, an image of Svoboda's newly-elected deputy with a bullet hole in his head. The Autonomous Resistance is also notorious for its annual marches commemorating the formation of the "Galician" Division. The organisation prides itself with spectacular arsons, including the fire-raising at the office of the Party of Regions.

Nonetheless, these organisations, despite their dark image, do not define contemporary Ukraine. They do not even define all of western Ukraine. Yet their presence in the mainstream of Ukraine's political life carries two major risks. First,

it may be easily used by Russian propaganda against Ukraine. Second, it preserves the outdated ethnic vision of Ukrainian statehood.

Moscow's long arms

The debate on whether it is Russia's neo-imperialism or Ukrainian nationalism that is more dangerous makes sense only outwardly. Such an argument is false as it pushes everyone to stand up against Russian imperial ambitions as a bigger threat to world peace and to close its eyes to any symptoms of Ukrainian nationalism. As a matter of fact, however, Ukrainian nationalism is not in opposition to Russian imperialism. It is rather its voluntary or involuntary ally and a tool used by the Kremlin.

More than two decades of Ukraine's independence have showed that Russia has not been able to export its values and symbols to Galicia. Taras Voznyak, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Ї*, accurately pointed out few years ago that Galicia would somehow need to be separated from the rest of Ukraine and to become a "foreign body" within the state. The best way to achieve this is to cultivate Ukrainian nationalism, which would build a wall between western parts of Ukraine and the rest of the country. It is unclear how Russia can pursue this project, but two ways seem to be the most applicable: financial support and activities of intelligence services.

According to Sergey Glazyev, advisor to Vladimir Putin, it was indeed the oligarchs closely linked to Viktor Yanukovych who financed both the Right Sector and the Party Svoboda, although Moscow attempted to stop this practice. In spite of Glazyev's cynical words, the Kremlin was not bothered by this fact. Dmytro Yarosh a couple of years ago stated clearly that all the activities of the Patriot of Ukraine and the Social-National Assembly served Russian interests.

Nationalists are also not consistent in their political preferences. They have even supported politicians who can hardly be identified as patriots. The best example is the presidential campaign in 1999 during which Tryzub described Leonid Kuchma as a statesman. Dmytro Korchynsky is another classic example of this lack of consequence. He was one of the key figures of UNA-UNSO in the 1990s, while later he supported such people as Viktor Yanukovych and Alexander Dugin. In November 2013, during the EuroMaidan protests in Kyiv, Korchynsky called for an attack on the building of the presidential administration, which was widely perceived as a Russian provocation. It is difficult to count how many other similar provocateurs are among Ukrainian nationalists.

It is easy, however, to find more examples of activities of Ukrainian nationalists which are surprisingly convergent with the objectives of the Kremlin's foreign policy. One of them is particularly clear – Svoboda was one of the strongest voices against

the exploitation of shale gas in western Ukraine. Why have the "patriots" from Svoboda so suddenly become environmental activists, having in mind Ukraine's total gas dependence on Russia?

Where is Ukraine heading?

The real popular support for nationalist groups in Ukraine is probably higher than the official results of recent presidential elections and it oscillates between five and ten per cent. These numbers may not be very high, but the constant presence of nationalists in Ukraine's mainstream political scene jeopardises the creation of a civil concept of the Ukrainian nation. Even though all the symptoms of Ukrainian nationalism have been suppressed (i.e. attempts to cancel the march of the "Galician" division), they are a part of public discourse. Recently, one of the most important western Ukrainian websites called for the full Ukrainisation of Donbas. The author of this call openly expressed the need for censorship and unfair trials. He also warned the audience to cut the "pseudo-democratic twaddle", which is not applicable during a time of war. Mistakes should not be made and these and other similar calls will not help Kyiv integrate Donbas into the rest of the country.

Hence, the question "how not to spoil the tremendous social capital that was gained as a result of the Russian aggression in cities like Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk or Zaporizhia?" will soon prevail. The transformation of the Azov Battalion into a regiment, inflaming a new "memorial war" or promises of the rehabilitation of OUN and UPA made by Petro Poroshenko, are certainly gloomy signs of what may happen to Ukraine in the near future.

Thus, it is perhaps worth listening to Yaroslav Hrytsak, a historian with the Lviv Catholic University, who says that instead of constantly building the Ukrainian nation, it is better to eventually start modernising it. Clearly, before we face that problem, we need to first realise its existence. That is why a mindless repeating that "Ukrainian nationalism does not exist" is, in the long term, only useful to Vladimir Putin, who has been effectively using Ukrainian radicals in his geopolitical game against Kyiv, Brussels and Washington, DC.

Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

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A President with his Trousers Rolled Up

ZBIGNIEW ROKITA

Václav Havel was a tragic hero in a drama that he could have written himself. Each choice that the Czech president had made could have turned out wrong. Yet he decided to play on. Abroad, he was a symbol of the collapse of communism; at home he became marginalised and heavily criticised. However, on the first anniversary of Havel's death, crowds of people walked down the streets with their trouser legs rolled up, just like their Váshek did during his inauguration ceremony.

It is the peak of Václav Havel's fame. The former Czech dissident is standing on the balcony overlooking the main square in Prague. Down below a crowd of several hundred thousand people jingle their keys letting the communists know that their last hour has come and that it is time to step down from power. It is already the end of November 1989 and the political change in Czechoslovakia has been somewhat delayed when compared to Poland, where a non-communist prime minister (Tadeusz Mazowiecki – editor's note) has already taken office, or to Hungary that has already opened its border to Austria or to Germany where the Berlin Wall has already fallen.

Three days earlier, a British historian from Oxford, Timothy Garton Ash, came to Prague and spoke with Havel at the rear of Havel's favourite beer house. At that meeting Ash commented on the political change that had been taking place in Eastern Europe by using the following words: "Poland needed ten years to get here, Hungary ten months, East Germany ten weeks, perhaps Czechoslovakia can do it all in ten days?"

He was not that far from the truth. From that moment on, events unfolded relatively quickly. A month later, Havel – a sweater-clad, smiling artist – became president of Czechoslovakia.

Act 1 – 1989

"Obviously, I do not want to be president. But if the situation develops so that it would be in the state's best interest that I become one for a short time, I am ready to take it on," Havel said right before he was sworn into office. It was not a calculated statement on his part, this ingenuous man really meant to stay in office for a relatively short period of time. At that moment, he also made a promise to the hero of the 1968 Prague Spring, Alexander Dubček, who in 1989 was also interested in presidency, that he would not run for the second term. Evidently, back then it did not even cross Havel's mind that he was going to reside at the Prague Castle over the next fourteen years.

In 1989, it did not cross Havel's mind that he was going to reside at the Prague Castle for fourteen years.

Havel was given a firm vote of confidence from his people. The nation who could always maintain a healthy self-distance and whose political views could be labelled as "extreme centrism" is well-reflected in the name of the party started by Jaroslav Hašek, the well-known author of *The Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Svejk,* which was called the Party for Moderate Progress within the Bounds of the Law. The Czechs are a nation whose national anthem does not include a single mention of war or change but instead praises the beauty of Czech nature and peace. It is a nation that declared Jára Cimrman, a fictional comedy character, to be its most eminent figure in history. Havel was very much a representative of that nation. He showed up for his inauguration ceremony with the legs of his trousers rolled up a couple inches – he simply forgot to tidy himself up after a casual breakfast at home – probably the only man in history who became the head of state with his trousers rolled up.

Stage Directions

Havel, in his mid-fifties, looks good for his age. One would not guess that this charismatic writer and dissident was once an obese teenager, ridiculed by other children and wrapped in cotton wool by his mother. He was always witty and well-read though; he started writing at a very early age. He was born into a wealthy family. One of his grandfathers was among the richest people in pre-war Prague, the other was a governmental official in the last years of inter-war Czechoslovakia.

Havel was noticed already in his youth. Before he turned twenty, he already took the floor (which was quite incidental, actually) at the Czechoslovakian Writers' Convention where he gave the communist party a piece of his mind. Once the 1968 Prague Spring was over, he became seriously involved in politics. His plays were staged all over the world and the royalties kept lining his pockets in great abundance. He led a rich life and he liked living large. He had fun, he was a charmer, he engaged in love affairs (and he did not renounce the pleasures of that petty sin until the very last days of his life).

Act 2 – 1990

Havel had not changed much since becoming president. He did not like the rigid rules of etiquette and enjoyed direct contact with people. Jacek Baluch, a former Polish ambassador to Czechoslovakia once told me how Havel had sent an invitation to the ambassadors of Austria, Poland and Hungary to share an evening beer with him. The meeting had meant to be typically informal, with just jeans and sweaters.

When driving his car, President Havel liked picking up hitchhikers or speeding, which was a real bane to his security guards. When he moved in to the Castle in Hradčany, he was terrified with the distance he had to cover in the palace – the official residence of the Czech president is the largest castle in the world. Havel's friends came to his aid and decided to buy him a child's scooter, which he used for some time to travel down the long corridors.

As time went on, Havel began to lose his status as a living hero.

Soon after moving in the Prague Castle, Havel started exploring its gigantic chambers to discover a secret room with a teleprinter that the Czech communist authorities used to directly communicate with the first secretaries of the Soviet Union. The fact that the former government did not even have time to remove the machine shows how fast the political changes in Czechoslovakia took place. Havel, with his unique sense of humour, used the opportunity to send Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader at the time, his warmest greetings via the teleprinter.

Act 3 – 1992

As time goes on, Havel's impeccable image suffers its first flaws. He was not a skilful politician yet, and he had started to lose his status as a living hero. His harshest criticism came for his willingness to apologise to the German Czechs who were expelled from the country after 1945. Some three million people had been displaced at that time, their property confiscated and their citizenship taken away.

Photo: Ben Skála (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

Havel had not changed much since becoming president. He did not like the rigid rules of etiquette and enjoyed direct contact with people.

One of the families who suffered from that law were the Lichtensteins, who rule in the state of Lichtenstein. They lost an enormous fortune due to the appropriation. As a result, the tiny state of Lichtenstein refused to recognise the Czech Republic until 2009, when diplomatic relations were finally established between both countries.

Havel's first official trip after he was sworn into office also raised a lot of controversy. He chose Germany instead of heading for Bratislava, the second capital of his country. The Slovaks felt humiliated (Havel admitted later: "Subconsciously, as it were, we thought of Bratislava as some kind of entity subordinate to Prague"). Though the Slovaks and the Czechs lived in a federation state at that time, the political elites of both nations began having ever more divergent interests.

The political tension turned into a war over a hyphen, when the name of the country was about to be changed from the Czechoslovakian Socialistic Republic to Czechoslovakia. The Slovaks demanded that the name be divided with a hyphen, into Czecho-Slovakia. The Czechs did not like that idea and in the end a less logical version triumphed – the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. Unquestionably, there emerged an unprecedented tension between the two states. Previous disagreements had been successfully eased, but from that point on the federation was to face some difficult times.

In 1992, Czechoslovakia suddenly ceased to exist. The elite quietly agreed to split the country (Havel's role here was not very significant), while the citizens, who would

have opposed the split, were not included in the decision. Even though today the bilateral relations between the two countries – both in politics and everyday life – are good; immediately after the split it was feared that Slovakia would become a Russian satellite state. It steered a dangerous course towards authoritarianism and Havel could not do much to prevent it. The Czech/Slovak split was named "the Velvet Divorce" just like the earlier change of 1989 was named "the Velvet Revolution". Velvet here means bloodless, and bloodless is a characteristic trait of the Czech nation.

Act 4 – 1993

Havel hoped that after the split of the country he would step down from office. He recalled later on: "I thought that I had already played my part … I wanted to write, to travel like a common tourist, to read, to enjoy my freedom without being followed by guards and simply live the way I wished. A VIP car with a roof light is not enchanting enough to be worth going through this entire ordeal!"

He became a tragic hero in a drama that he could have written himself. Each choice that he made could have turned out to be wrong. And yet, Havel decided to carry on. At that time, his popularity dropped considerably, but he was still strong enough to be able to become the first Czech president in history. The drop in popularity was an unavoidable outcome of his decisions and the uniqueness of that time: the country had to go through long years of difficult reforms in order to shake off the stagnation of communism.

He was still writing a lot, though his plays or poetry were often modified to serve as speeches or memos. His literary skills still came in handy. He was learning how to be a politician, he worked hard and made decisions about every petty detail.

Act 5 - 1996

It would be difficult for the Czechs to imagine that Olga, Havel's beautiful and charismatic wife, would not be standing by her husband's side day in and day out. However, in 1996, Olga passed away. Less than a year later, Havel tied the knot again. Marriage, however, did not manage to keep him from engaging in successive love affairs.

Havel's health deteriorated at that time as well. He was hospitalised and during one of his hospital stays in Austria, he nearly brought about another international conflict. In a state of narcosis, the Czech president started to hallucinate. He thought that the patient instructions, which were written in German and were hanging on the wall above his bed, were Austria's military plans to conquer the

Czech Republic. Fortunately, when the president of Austria paid Havel a visit at his hospital bed, the Czech leader was able to hold his tongue and did not share this outrageous discovery.

Act 6 – 1998

Certain things that emerged earlier were now only increasing. Havel's presidency was criticised more and more, and the president himself started to feel like the wrong person in the wrong job. He was adored abroad as a symbol of the collapse of the communist bloc. But at home things were not going so well. Havel did not want to run for re-election in 1998 either. His advisors, however, kept repeating that the stability of the country was very fragile and that he was the only guarantee that the Czech Republic would not turn into a semi-dictatorship, such was the case of Ukraine or Slovakia.

The elite quietly agreed to the split Czechoslovakia, while the citizens were not included in the decision.

They insisted that without Havel's international standing, it would be much more difficult for the country to join the European Union or NATO and the Iron Curtain would split Europe once again. Havel yielded to their arguments and agreed to run for office one more time. He won only in the second round and, what is more, by just one vote (up until 2013 Czech presidents were elected by the parliament).

Internationally, Havel is perceived as a president-philosopher. He was seen as a unique combination of Marcus Aurelius, the Good Soldier Svejk and Czekoslovakia's first president Thomáš Garrique Masaryk. At the domestic level, on the other hand, Havel had not proven to be a skilful player. He often did not have his own opinions on an issue, which soon allowed his adversaries to marginalise him. In fact, among Havel's greatest opponents at that time were Václav Klaus and Miloš Zeman. They both became presidents of the country: Klaus followed Havel, Zeman followed Klaus.

A year later, in 1999, the Czech Republic achieved one of its greatest triumphs of the Havel presidency. Along with Poland and Hungary, it joined NATO, something that only a few years earlier was totally unthinkable. Now it is a fact that the Czechs have done what they announced they would do. They "have returned to the West". Again, however, the citizens were not asked for their opinion: a majority of the society was actually against joining NATO at that time.

Despite Havel's success that stemmed from the NATO accession, the president was still strongly criticised by his people. He was accused, among other things, of being overenthusiastic towards the United States. Czech society also did not like the fact that their president, fascinated with the US his whole life and without

having a mandate from the United Nations and against the will of the majority of his people, supported the war operations in Iraq and Serbia.

Act 7 – 2003

"He was more interested in the Dalai Lama than in ruling the country," said the Czechs. And indeed, Havel felt much more at ease as a statesman discussing worldly affairs at length than a player on the domestic political scene. As a result, Havel continued to lose influence at home. He was more occupied with topics like human rights, fighting against blind consumerism and ecological protection.

For Havel this was a very difficult time. Tabloids tore him to shreds and most of the Czech people had nothing good to say about him, even his family relations were bad. Recognised as a moral authority worldwide, Havel was now an ailing old man in his seventies who could not find his own place. He wrote at that time: "I am hiding in Hrádeček [his private home]. I am here alone and I am depressed. I keep coming to the conclusion, over and over, that there is no going back and that I am not the same person that I was when I was writing my plays here, preparing experimental dishes, throwing joyful evening parties or organising secret meetings for dissidents. I am older, sicker and tired. I do not know why, but I seem to be more afraid of the world and people. Even such a simple thing as calling someone by telephone is difficult for me."

Towards the end of his life, Havel wrote his first drama in twenty years. He titled it simply – *Leaving*. The play is about a politician who has to resign from his position after many years in office and has great difficulties facing that moment. He is unable to separate his private and public lives, his whole world is falling apart. The similarities are not accidental.

The Epilogue

The words by Milan Kundera, who commented on Václav Havel's death in 2011, could be a good closing line here: "The greatest work by Václav Havel was his own life." As for the Czech people, they found a fitting way to commemorate the memory of their ex-president. On the first anniversary of his death, crowds of people walked down the streets with their trouser legs rolled up. Just like their Váshek when they all still loved him.

Translated by Agnieszka Rubka

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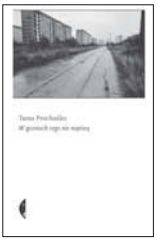
Ukraine in Metaphors



W gazetach tego nie napiszą (*They Won't Write about This in the Newspapers*).
By: Taras Prokhasko.
Publisher: Wydawnictwo Czarne, Poland, 2014.

Ukraine has been in the international media spotlight almost constantly since the EuroMaidan protests erupted in Kyiv in November 2013. But what the news reports have not been covering, a curious reader might find in this slim book of essays, with the apt title *They Won't Write about This in the Newspapers*.

Taras Prokhasko's essays are not exactly what one might call newsworthy, but they are timely. They came out in Ukraine in 2009 and were published in Polish translation this year, but do not seem dated by the turbulent events of the past twelve months: the protests on Kyiv's Independence Square and the conflict in Donbas that followed. Now more than ever is the time for curious international readers to enrol on a "personal crash-course in Ukrainian studies", as one of the book's subsections is titled.

Prokhasko, a writer and journalist, was born in Ukraine's south-western city of Ivano-Frankivsk in 1968, (his brother Yuriy Prokhasko is a well-known essayist and literary translator). This Carpathian perspective – though distinct from the more widespread Lviv-centric one – defines his essays, with their references to the regions of Galicia and also the Hutsul heritage. The Polish translation by Renata Rusnak does a good job of conveying Prokhasko's poetic meanderings, surely better than an English version. All the same, Ukrainian literature remains in short supply in English translation, while the situation in Polish or German is much better.

Two strands characterise this volume. On the one hand, the pages contain Prokhasko's musings on timeless themes such as Ukraine's place between Russia and Europe or East and West. Taken out of context, some of Prokhasko's observations could be misinterpreted or even offend. "When I want to tire myself out, I start to think about my Ukrainianness and my Ukraine," he writes in the opening pages. This is surely a reference to the country's richness, which cannot be reduced to simple dichotomies such as Ukrainian vs. Russian language, "pro-Russian" vs. western-oriented.

When he is not making bold remarks about his country, Prokhasko's writing meanders from subject to subject, from summer to winter, from childhood to parenthood, like the mountain paths of his beloved Carpathians. He leads us up from the city, past colourful mountain graveyards, to the huts where the shepherds come to rest. In the high pastures of Zakarpattia, near the border with Hungary, we find shepherds enjoying vodka made from fruits, cigarettes and coffee which, the author insists, they drink freshly brewed, rather than that awful instant stuff.

Sometimes Prokhasko takes a detour, such as a passage on Ukraine's tradition of painted Easter eggs, called *pysanky*. Indeed, what may be the world's only Easter egg museum is located in the small city of Kolomyia, in Prokhasko's native region. I remember the museum building, shaped like a colossal brightly-coloured *pysanka*, from a trip I made through the Carpathians a few years back on a bus with folk tunes blaring on the radio. Prokhasko's training as a botanist is visible in his frequent references to the

natural world. For him, Ukraine is a land where trees grow effortlessly, a field where dozens of species of flowers grow side by side. Lviv, which he explores further on in the book, is a city of "favourite trees" and the forests of his region are filled with hundred-year-old pines, beeches, birches, aspens and alders.

Back in philosophical mode, Prokhasko likens Ukrainian statehood to a "hasty and welcome marriage" between the country's east and west, which barely knew each other. Predictably, eastern Ukraine is the man (why cannot it be the other way round?), prone to outbursts and with a fondness for alcohol. Both the husband and the wife "like to visit their own parents, but are ashamed to take their partner with them". This brings to mind former-President Viktor Yanukovych's sneaky trips to Moscow to see Vladimir Putin, or current President Petro Poroshenko's recent appeals to leaders in Brussels and Washington.

What about the child of this marriage? United, independent Ukraine, "is burdened by genetic illnesses and spoilt by its grandparents on both sides," Prokhasko writes. This is a colourful way of pointing to the lasting historical legacies of Russian, Soviet, Austrian and Polish rule over various parts of Ukraine at different times. In particular, the memory of the Second World War recurs frequently, from Prokhasko's musings on Ukraine as a whole to the most isolated mountain chalet.

For his native Stanislaviv, as Ivano-Frankivsk was known until it was renamed in 1962, the change from Nazi to Soviet occupation on July 27th 1944 was like changing the sign on a brothel where people "were kept against their will and exploited in all sorts of ways". There is no subjunctive in history, he continues, but he cannot help wondering what would have happened if Germany had won the war. "Would we be slaves now, or real Europeans?" he says, aware that he is voicing a forbidden question. This is another phrase that could easily be misquoted or turned against the author. Returning to the brothel metaphor and the lasting imperial Russian and Soviet legacies in Ukraine, Prokhasko adds that: "This brothel will stay with us for a long time. We will not be able to close it down so quickly."

Unsurprisingly for a book that focuses on Ukraine's west, Prokhasko's literary wanderings bring him to the city of Lviv. "Everyone has their own Lviv," he points out. Prokhasko's Lviv will be familiar to readers who have visited this city of chestnut trees, windows looking onto intimate courtyards, snow and rain, where "the bed shakes from the vibration of the trams" outside. After the rustic chalets of the Carpathians, Lviv is a beacon of civilisation with its libraries, villas, newspapers and the sound of the choir singing in the Armenian Cathedral. The author also delights in the little luxuries, like proper coffee, that once made Lviv a European outpost in the Soviet Union, a reputation it retains to this day. It is a city of "love in all sorts of places".

All this is wonderfully nostalgic, though readers may feel they have read this story before. Still, Prokhasko also captures Lviv's potentially claustrophobic side. "I feel privileged in Lviv," he opens his chapter on the city. "I don't have to be there permanently; I arrive whenever I want and stay as long as I like. And that changes everything."

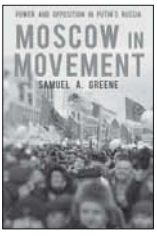
In at least two passages, Prokhasko addresses the question of nostalgia directly; this includes nostalgia for the Soviet past (which he interprets

as a yearning for the golden years of youth) and in a more general sense. This faintly tinted view characterises many of the passages in this book.

In the space of just 164 pages, Prokhasko does not – and does not pretend to – provide a full picture of Ukraine's cities, landscape and history. Rather, he takes readers by the hand and offers them a personal tour of the episodes and places that matter to him. These essays are not populated by separatists, Berkut riot police or "little green men" because, as the title says, this book is about things that do not usually make it into the press.

Annabelle Chapman

A State without Citizens



Moscow in Movement: Power and Opposition in Putin's Russia By: Samuel Greene, Stanford University Press, United States, 2014.

When 20,000 people gather on the streets of Paris or London to protest against their government, they are not likely to end up on the front pages of international newspapers or on television news programmes around the world. Imagine such a protest in Russia and how quickly it would conquer international media, such as what happened in September 2014 when Muscovites marched to call for peace in eastern Ukraine. Why is it that the several thousand protesters, hardly noticeable in a city of 13 million, got so much attention outside Russia?

This and other questions related to Russian civil society are discussed in Samuel Greene's new book *Moscow in Movement: Power and Opposition in Putin's Russia,* published in August 2014 by Stanford University Press. The author of the book is the director of King's Russia Institute at King's College London and an expert in Russian politics with extensive experience in Moscow.

Picking up the book, I expected that *Moscow in Movement* would provide some in-depth analyses on why Russian civil society is so weak. However, the more I read and the more case-studies Greene presented, the more I realised that the answer is trivially simple, and it was already presented on the third page of the book: "Russians, on the whole, do not organise and are difficult to mobilise and they do not tend to join movements or to participate in public protests." The Russian election protests held in December 2011 were rather an exception to the rule as they did not yield any lasting organisation and did not bring any significant change to Russia's political system – especially looking from the perspective of 2014. The author of *Moscow in Movement,* however, clearly seems to overestimate the value of the December 2011 demonstrations, which he uses as an example of significant change in the relations between the Russian state and its citizens.

The first two chapters of the book are dedicated to various concepts of civil society and provide the reader with a solid background for further understanding. Thus, *Moscow in Movement,* written in an academic manner, may serve as a repetition of philosophy. John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume and Alexis de Tocqueville are among the names evoked by the author in this context. Certainly

the person who is missing in Greene's book is Astolphe de Custine, the author of *The Empire of the Czar: A Journey Through Eternal Russia*. Some of his observations on Russian society made during his journey through the Russian Empire in 1839 would be perfectly applicable to *Moscow in Movement* as some of the truths about Russian society seem to be universal and span time.

Greene points out that civil society in today's Russia is paradoxically in some ways less effective than civil society during the Soviet times. Therefore, the source of passivity and indifference of a vast amount of the Russian society should not be sought only in the repressive policies of Vladimir Putin, as they are not as harsh as before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The roots appear to be somewhere deeper. Greene concludes that the main reason for this state of affairs is an atomised civic space and the common opinion that any civil engagement would be useless.

However, this does not mean that Russians are not able to organise themselves at all. *Moscow in Movement* gives many examples of successful civil initiatives, such as Soldiers' Mothers, Public Verdict or the housing rights movements. When the Russian state, Greene notes, "intervenes in the life of its citizens in a concerted manner, allowing them to sense a collective injustice and identify themselves as aggrieved, Russians prove eminently capable of mounting a coherent and often successful response." To put it simply, Russian organised action focuses on the micro-level, rather than the macro one. Civil actions, for example, are not enough to influence crucial decisions made by the state, such as foreign policy, but they are enough to bring a local policemen from Nizhny Novgorod who abused their individual power to court.

Russian civil society, hence, operates on a very limited scale and is not likely to develop in the oncoming years as Putin's internal policy has become increasingly restrictive. Although the full title of the book is *Moscow in Movement: Power and Opposition in Putin's Russia*, Greene's book does not focus much on the "opposition", understood as a political party or well-organised movement. Instead, Russian civil society, as portrayed by Greene, is opposed to certain decisions made by the government; it rarely aims to replace it or to replace Putin, who has been ruling the country since 2000. Greene argues that people in Russia organise themselves in order to fight for small causes than for the big ones and therefore have difficulties to channel this energy into building a civil society.

Moscow in Movement does not mention such organisations as Memorial and other human rights groups, and does not tell reader much about particular actions taken by the Russian state in order to quell civil society, such as the infamous "foreign agents" law. The book may leave reader disappointed in that regard. The opposition in Putin's Russia is always an intriguing theme, but *Moscow in Movement* does not really provide the reader with any new information about it. The picture of a rally on the cover page promises analyses on anti-Putin demonstrations, yet Greene does not really focus on them either. But it does not necessarily mean that the author is negligent. Perhaps it is because Russia itself does not provide researchers with enough material to study civil society.

What is valuable in Greene's book is the philosophical approach. Civil society in Russia is presented in a broader context and it is compared to its classic definitions. The book also contains a reflection on what "citizenship" is and whether this word (as well as other terms taken from the western philosophy and political thought) is applicable to Putin's Russia. Unfortunately, the condition of civil society in Russia as it is pictured in the book tells us that "Russian citizens are citizens in name only: they enjoy no real ownership of the state they inhabit."

Bartosz Marcinkowski

From Pornographer to Prophet

Telluriya (*Теллурия*).
By: Vladimir Sorokin.
Publisher: AST, CORPUS, Moscow 2013.

Vladimir Sorokin is undoubtedly one of the most electrifying figures in contemporary Russian literature. He has been triggering intense emotions and dividing Russian public opinion for nearly four decades. The Sorokin phenomenon, however, is not easy to define or classify. In fact, it is something that seems to be still evolving and full of surprises, which can be quite difficult to digest for the average reader.

In the early years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Sorokin's books were first to be published, the writer's name was accompanied by such descriptions as "provocateur" or a "pornographer". Likewise, Sorokin's prose was described as "postmodernism" or "deconstructionism". The truth is, however, that while not many understood the meaning of these concepts, one thing was clear: they were generally perceived as synonyms of evil. This narrative dominated in the 1990s and early 2000s. It has only been the last decade which has brought a significant shift in this thinking. The game changing novel was titled *Lyod* (*Ice*). It was the first part of Sorokin's "Ice Trilogy" which was then followed by *Den oprichnika* (*Day of the Oprichnik*), *Saharniy Kreml* (*Kremlin Made of Sugar*) and *Metel* (*The Blizzard*). Characteristically, while Sorokin's originality and clean-cut language did not disappear from these books, the deviance of his characters was more moderate than before, and because of this it became more acceptable to a wider audience. But the most important shift that can be seen in Sorokin's recently published novels is a strong focus on the future tense and the author's visions of political and social anti-utopias.

Den oprichnika, published in 2006, is a particularly important illustration. In this book, Sorokin portrayed the Russia of 2027. His portrayal of a future Russia was full of exaggerations of tendencies that characterise today's Russian society. Throughout the pages, Sorokin takes the readers to the world of the restored Russian monarchy officially based on the tradition of the Orthodox Church. In order to keep Russia pure, the whole country is surrounded by a great wall which separates Russia from the rest of the world.

Sorokin's imaginary world, with its feudal society, monocracy, cult of personality, a new class of noblemen and the omnipotent *oprichnina* (a policy of secret police and mass repressions – editor's note) was seen by many not as a purely literary vision but rather as a real prophecy – and not a necessarily distant future of Russia. For centuries, Russians have developed a special attitude towards prophets (especially writer prophets); thus Sorokin, the "pornographer" was quickly replaced by Sorokin the "genius" and "living classic".

Saharniy Kreml and *Metel* were seen by most readers as a continuation of *Den oprichnika* and their success explains why Sorokin's alleged prophetic gift became accepted by Russians. It has been three years since Sorokin published his last book, when the mysterious *Telluriya* came to light. This work is another futuristic anti-utopia story. However, on the pages of this book, Sorokin does not exclusively focus on Russia, but also on the future of Europe. After reading this novel, we can only hope that Sorokin is not a real prophet, but simply a writer with a wild imagination.

Published in 2013, *Telluriya* is made up of 50 chapters which have basically one thing in common – they all describe Russia and Europe after two religious wars which led to a total collapse of the international and social order. The new "Middle Ages" is what awaits us as Sorokin believes. The future built on the debris of the world that we know takes anachronic forms. Sorokin's world is inhabited by dozens of different nations, giants, dwarves and hybrid creatures who live in a number of small and large principalities, republics and khanates. The post-Russian territory is divided into a wide range of picturesque quasi-states with different political systems ranging from tsarist-communist Moscovia and the Stalinist Soviet Socialist Republic (SSSR) to the enlightened monarchy of Ryazan. There is also Telluriya, which is located in the Altai Mountains. It owes its name to the large resources of a rare chemical element – tellurium. It is distributed worldwide as a new kind of drug. Tellurium, however, differs from other drugs as it is taken through nails spiked into the head. Tellurium, although banned by the United Nations in 2026, is widely used due to its extraordinary narcotic qualities.

Tellurium is a great metaphor of the new absolute – it refers to the Holy Grail. It is a substitute or, if you like, an accomplishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Sorokin himself stated in one of the interviews that tellurium was invented as a super-narcotic. It allows people to eventually get anything they want, including travelling through time. And what about Western Europe, you may ask. In Sorokin's book, this part of the world is a land conquered by radical Muslims. Paris and Munich face Wahhabi revolution, Switzerland was bombed by the Taliban. Christianity survives only in southern France where the Knights Templar constituted the Republic of Languedoc. In general, it is religion that is responsible for critical changes and riots spread all around Europe.

We cannot say, however, that *Telluriya* provides the readers with a complementary vision of the future. By no means does Sorokin create a closed picture. Just the opposite. His novel is assembled from random facts, stories, hints and comparisons. Its composition reminds us more of one big patchwork that involved sewing together 50 completely different pieces;

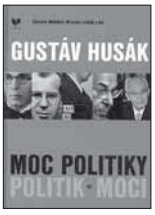
or to put it differently, it includes 50 different microcosms which do not create a coherent picture.

Yet there is a method to Sorokin's madness. The literary form of the book is exquisite, which harkens to some of the world's best literature. *Telluriya*'s 50 different chapters show us stories of 50 different characters who use different languages and live in different places. It is then a great intellectual challenge and adventure to follow all of Sorokin's creations as well as the variety of languages he uses. They include the old East Slavic dialects, the language of Pushkin and the Soviet propaganda, business jargon and prisoners' slang. However, even this linguistic mosaic is not enough for Sorokin who also attempts to construct his own languages. The book is also full of hidden references to classical works of literature and philosophy, mythology and religion. Sorokin's novel is therefore an inexhaustible source of meanings and ideas. Reading one chapter three times may bring four – or even more – interpretations, which makes the translation of the book into foreign languages almost an impossible task.

Another characteristic feature of *Telluriya* is that each of the 50 stories ends exactly at the moment when the reader is getting more and more engaged in the plot and cannot wait for its continuation. It may seem like a waste of potential but, on the other hand, it gives us a unique opportunity to meet multiple narrations and come to appreciate the virility of the author. Sorokin's extraordinary writing skills are empirically proved by the number of novels he has published. Hopefully, he is not as good at prophesising as he is at writing. However, to fully understand Sorokin's phenomenon, *Telluriya* is a must read. No review can fully show what kind of a masterpiece this book really is.

Daniel Wańczyk
Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

A Man Motivated by Power



Gustáv Husák. Moc politiky. Politik moci (*Gustáv Husák. The Power of Politics. A Politician of Power).* By: Slavomír Michálek, Miroslav Londák a kol. Publisher: VEDA, Bratislava, 2013.

"So, that's it then." These were Gustáv Husák's last words after announcing his resignation on national television on Saturday evening December 9th 1989. The President of Czechoslovakia and the General Secretary of the Communist Party from 1969 to 1987, Husák was not aware that the microphones were still recording. His last words convey not only the relief that this very difficult announcement was over, but can also be understood as an essential expression of who he was. Always a realist and rational to the point of cynicism, Husák knew that his resignation marked the end of an era – the era of his power and socialism in Europe.

In the context of the Prague Spring, Husák is the bogeyman. He replaced the popular Alexander Dubček who wanted to establish Czechoslovakia's "socialism with a human face". Husák was the symbol of normalisation, the period of neo-Stalinist oppression of civil rights,

a return to Soviet-style methods of governing, a centrally planned economy and a conservative socialist system that ended with the Velvet Revolution of November 1989. Under Husák's rule, anyone who refused to openly condemn Dubček's reforms as an aberration of socialism was persecuted. The StB (*Statní Bezpečnost*, the Czechoslovak State Security Service) established a dense network of surveillance. Czechoslovak citizens who signed the declarations of the civil rights group Charter 77 were sent to prison and experienced psychological terror: unannounced house searches, lengthy interrogations and even damage to property. In Václav Havel's (1936–2011) case, the drainage system of his *chalupa* (cottage) was filled with concrete.

My friend Dan, born in Komárno in southern Slovakia, has only painful memories of the Husák regime. For fourteen years after his sister left in 1968, the StB summoned him to weekly interrogations. Dan was not allowed to attend university; the regime considered the family enemies of socialism and confiscated their passports. Dan, his wife, children and parents immigrated to Israel in 1990.

According to the Czechoslovak Constitution, work was not only a right but also a civic duty. Highly qualified teachers, professors, researchers and academics who refused to publicly condemn the reforms of the Prague Spring as a counter-revolution according to the Moscow dictate lost their jobs and had to support their families by manual labour, often causing financial difficulties. Historians are divided about the exact date of the beginning of the normalisation, but when Warsaw Pact troops occupied Prague and Bratislava on the night of August 21st 1968, the Czechoslovak government was no longer at liberty to act independently. The return to the old system was determined by the stipulations of the Moscow Protocols that the Dubček government was forced to sign. It was only a matter of time before the reformers would have to step down one by one and the "realists" would take over.

After the invasion, the Soviet leadership hastened to formulate *ex post* the doctrine of limited sovereignty, commonly referred to as the Brezhnev Doctrine: if socialism in a bloc state is threatened by a counter-revolution, the states of the Warsaw Pact Alliance are obliged to come to its help. Needless to say that it was the Soviet Communist Party that determined what exactly was a "counter-revolution" and a "threat to socialism".

For eight months, Czechoslovak citizens had enjoyed a liberal atmosphere: they could travel abroad, discuss politics without fear of arrest and, most importantly, they felt for the first time after 1948 that the government really cared about them. The majority of the population supported Dubček's reforms. So did Husák, a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party KSČ, deputy prime minister under Dubček and member of the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party (KSS). On August 29th, eight days after the invasion, Husák declared at a meeting of the KSS: "I fully stand behind Dubček's politics … I will stay with him or I will leave with him."

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth in 2013, top historians at the Slovak and Czech Academies of Science (SAV and AV ČR), and Hungarian and Russian experts published their research on Husák. Apart from a short biography of Husák that the media tycoon Robert Maxwell published in a series of communist leaders in the 1980s (praising

other leaders like Leonid Brezhnev, Nicolae Ceauşescu, Władysław Gomulka, Erich Honecker, János Kádár and Todor Živkov), the English-speaking public did not have an objective, scientific biography of Husák at its disposal.

This volume by Slavomír Michálek and Miroslav Londák is certainly the best and most comprehensive biography one can wish for, presenting rich archival material. These contributions present a scientifically impeccable analysis of the many different aspects and stages of Husák's career, including his early years in the Communist Youth, his activities in the *predjarie* ("early spring", the slow liberalisation of the 1960s that culminated in the Prague Spring of 1968) and his population policy in the 1970s that coined the famous concept of "Husák's children".

Of particular interest is the international context. Three chapters meticulously assess the Husák government's economic relations with Washington, Husák's personal relationship with the Hungarian First Secretary János Kádár as well as with Mikhail Gorbachev. We learn that the Soviet party leader used to address him as "Gustav Nikodemovich", the patronymic being the traditional Russian way of addressing a close and respected person. The chapters about Husák's childhood and his two marriages offer interesting psychological insights, explaining to some extent why this highly intelligent and courageous man became Czechoslovakia's most despised politician.

Husák's mother died when he was 15 months old. He grew up with two older sisters in a family of Slovak Catholics. At the age of six, he began serving as an altar boy in the local Catholic church in Dubravka, today part of Slovakia's capital Bratislava. The priest, aware of the boy's remarkable intellectual abilities, convinced his father to send Gustáv to high school. In 1929, the teenager joined the Communist Youth and in 1933, he joined the Communist Party, graduated from high school and enrolled at Comenius University in Bratislava to study law. In 1938, the young doctor of law worked for several months in Vladimír Clementis's law firm. Until Clementis's execution in 1952, they would remain close friends, sharing their passion for law and socialism.

Interwar Czechoslovakia was the only democracy in Central Europe, but to Husák it was a system of the past. As an intellectual, he was in search of rational and ethical principles of social and economic organisation. He found his creed in Marxism-Leninism, like so many of his generation, for example the Hungarian-born British novelist Arthur Köstler. The author of the famous novel *Darkness at Noon*, however, saw through the system's intrinsic totalitarian features after the Moscow show trials of the 1930s and left the party. Husák, however, would remain a faithful communist and said on the day of his resignation: "Since my early youth, I have believed in the holy ideal of socialism. If there have been mistakes, they were man-made and not based on the fundamental principles of socialism. I do not see… a better fundamental orientation in the world. That is why I remain faithful to it."

During the Second World War, the authorities of the Slovak clerical-fascist state imprisoned Husák at the notorious Ilava complex. After his release, he joined the resistance movement in 1943 and participated in the Slovak National Uprising in the autumn of 1944. As chairman of the board of the *povereníci*, government trustees with a controlling and executive function, he

actively undermined Czechoslovakia's post-war democracy and helped prepare the so-called February Putsch of 1948, the Communist Party's takeover.

In the context of Stalin's Sovietisation of Eastern Europe, the rejection of the Marshall Plan and Tito's declaration of Yugoslavia's independent path to socialism, show trials of alleged western spies, Titoists and Zionists were orchestrated in every country of the Eastern Bloc. The rationale was to purge the highest echelons of the parties to extinguish any criticism, starting with the trial of the Hungarian László Rajk.

The Czechoslovak trials had a particular antisemitic feature: eleven of the fourteen accused were Jewish. As a university-educated communist, not a true member of the proletariat like President Antonín Novotný, Husák was accused of "Slovak bourgeois nationalism" and spent nine years in prison (1951–1960). The authorities' task was to extract a fake confession from him that would serve as evidence in the planned show trial of Rudolf Slánský and Clementis.

As a lawyer, Husák believed in the law. To sign a false confession to him was a betrayal of all that he believed in, specifically the rule of law. A signature was equal to a death sentence – so he did not sign. He instinctively knew that what the authorities did to him could later be legally contested. He drove his interrogators to despair as he refused to sign the "confession" designed for him. Artur London described in his memoirs *On Trial* how the authorities, advised by the Soviet NKVD officers, tortured the accused to make them learn their "confessions" by heart. They were deprived of sleep, food and water, beaten and had to undergo hours of interrogations and discussions about their duties as a party member.

Considering the brutal psychological and physical abuse he was subjected to, Husák's resilience is most admirable. With his unwavering resistance he saved not only his own life, but also the lives of some of the other accused. The authorities were forced to postpone his trial until 1954 and went ahead with the trial of Slánský and Clementis in 1952.

After his release in 1960, thanks to the amnesty issued by President Novotný, Husák concentrated his efforts on returning to high politics. He published regularly with *Kultúrný život* (*Cultural Life*), a Slovak journal critical of the regime. The President's Slovakophobia and his refusal to embark on the much-needed economic reforms only fuelled his adversaries' determination. Members of the KSS, as well as the Czech Party members and large parts of the army and the StB, wanted Novotný out. When the Central Committee elected Dubček First Secretary in January 1968 (the title was changed to "General Secretary" after 1968), the Prague Spring was in the making.

After the Prague Spring, the Central Committee, in the firm hands of the "realists", appointed Husák as First Secretary on April 17th 1969. He was Moscow's preferred candidate for this position; appointing a member of the faction of the "realists", who had sent the letter of invitation to Brezhnev, was no option for Moscow, as the Soviet Central Committee was clearly aware of the fact that the Czechoslovak citizens considered the "realists" as traitors. So Husák, imprisoned and tortured by the Novotný regime and close to Dubček, was the perfect choice that suggested to the citizens that he

would mark a new era in Czechoslovak socialism and relations to the Soviet Union alike. Dubček resigned and was assigned the chairmanship of the Federal Parliament, from which he was sacked already in October. After a few brief months as the Czechoslovak ambassador to Turkey, Dubček was finally banned from political life for good and worked as a technician in a forest in Bratislava until the Velvet Revolution would sweep him into the public again in 1989. Following the new Soviet course of *perestroika*, the party forced Husák to resign and elected Miloš Jakeš General Secretary in December 1987.

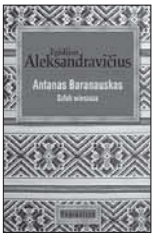
Some defend Husák and his switching sides to Moscow in 1969 with the argument that the main goal of his normalisation politics was to have the Soviets withdraw their troops by convincing them that the "normalised" Czechoslovakia was reliable in political terms. Others, particularly in the poor countryside in eastern Slovakia, were grateful to Husák since, under his regime, they experienced social and economic stability and a distinct improvement in the quality of life. Many also believed that Husák was "the lesser of two evils". Yet, who or what system would have been worse? As Moscow was in command anyway, even the most radical realists in the party would not have dared to independently orchestrate show trials or have people condemned to death in the style of the 1950s. The times had changed. After 1969, Moscow was not interested in drawing unnecessary international attention to Czechoslovakia, since the principal goal in its relations with the West was to push forward the process acknowledging the post-Second World War borders in the negotiations starting in 1975.

Power was Husák's principal motivation. The politician who said on the night of August 21st 1968 that he would "save the nation even if the people would spit in his face" knew that Czechoslovak history would not judge him well – but then he did not seem to care. The fact that Husák was estranged from his wives and children is an interesting psychological detail. He was married twice, but did not live with either wife in a common household. He used to meet them on the weekends.

The book only lacks a detailed chronology of Husák's life in the appendix. But the volume offers an abundance of information, the archives are meticulously listed and the bibliography and index carefully composed. This study is an excellent example of meticulous scholarship and sound analysis. One can only hope that it will be translated into English very soon.

Josette Baer, University of Zurich UZH

An Invitation to Dialogue



Antanas Baranauskas. Szlak wieszcza (*Antanas Baranauskas: The Trail of a Poet*) by Egidijus Aleksandravičius translated by Jadwiga Rogoża and Tomasz Błaszczak. Publisher: Ośrodek Pogranicze – sztuk, kultur, narodów, Fundacja Pogranicze, Poland, 2014.

Who is the man signing his name in two different languages (Antoni Baranowski in Polish and Antanas Baranauskas in Lithuanian) that became the main character of a book which has recently been published by Fundacja Pograniczne (Borderland Foundation) and authored by historian Egidijus Aleksandravičius? This man was a poet who lived between 1835 and 1902, and who is regarded as one of the most influential figures in Lithuanian literature. His poems, written in Lithuanian, are said to have awoken the national sentiment among Lithuanians. Not surprisingly, Baranauskas is sometimes compared to the Polish national poet, Adam Mickiewicz, who was also born in Lithuania and who inspired many Poles during the time of the Poland's partitions.

Baranauskas was a talented, self-made man. In addition to poetry he was also interested in mathematics and music. He played multiple instruments, but was also interested in linguistics and dialectology. Baranauskas collected folk songs and tales as well as other ethnographic information on the neighbouring regions. His engagement in linguistics research corresponded with the general revival of Lithuanian culture, aimed at introducing the Lithuanian language into public life. For the purposes of lectures and seminars held at the Kaunas Priest Seminary, Baranauskas even prepared a Lithuanian course book. Although his merits for Lithuanian culture were widely known, the fact that he was a Catholic priest was often ignored. He did not attract much attention as the bishop of Sejny, a diplomat, a skilful politician, not even as an intellectual or a visionary.

However, Aleksandravičius's book presents Baranauskas in all his complexity. Throughout the Aleksandravičius's pages, we can indeed observe the protagonist's different roles and faces: a young poet, a linguist, and a seminary teacher. Aleksandravičius shows the Lithuanian poet as a mysterious and equivocal personality. The book is also not limited to one – Polish or Lithuanian – perspective. While reading this biography we ask ourselves, how was it possible that one of the most important Lithuanian poets, as a Catholic bishop, so strongly opposed the idea of the national liberation of Lithuanians. The archives do not give us a clear answer to this question and that is probably why Baranauskas is such an intriguing figure.

The author of the biography perfectly understands the world in which Baranauskas grew up – the world of bilingualism. Baranauskas's mother tongue was Lithuanian, but Polish was the official language used in public institutions. Baranauskas expressed his thoughts in Lithuanian and became an apologist of this language.

As we read in the book, Baranauskas is now famous in Lithuania mostly as a poet. A selection of his poems published in schoolbooks create quite a homogenous image of Baranauskas, as if he was a saint. At the same time, awkward episodes from his life, such as his opposition to Lithuanian independence movements, remain diligently skipped. Such a hagiography was emblematic for the Soviet times when the presentation of national heroes was unambiguously positive. Any attempt to show Baranauskas as a complex person could have provided Soviet propaganda with arguments to undermine Lithuania's pursuit for independence and sense of national distinctiveness.

To fight this propaganda, countries such as Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus and Poland needed iconic heroes like Baranauskas. Nonetheless, the black and white approach seems to have remained until today, as we observe that evidently there still is a strong need for a clear – either Lithuanian or Polish – identification. A more complex identity still bumps into a wall of misunderstanding, as for many it is difficult to imagine someone who could be both a Lithuanian and a Pole at the same time. For this reason, the biography may be an interesting read which could be used not only in a class of regional education but also by those who want to understand the phenomenon of a "man of the borderland".

Aleksandravičius carefully reconstructs Baranauskas's life and work, placing the narration in two time perspectives: in the second half of 19th century as well as in the present by making many references to our time. The author himself encourages readers to compare Baranauskas with other great figures of the borderlands; citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As Aleksandravičius puts it: "Baranauskas was not the only one who struggled with national and social factors of the epoch that cast a shadow over the heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Neither was he the only one who lost this battle. In my opinion, Baranauskas should be placed next to such prominent, although forgotten, individuals as the Bishop of Vilnius Edward von der Ropp. It is also necessary to compare Baranauskas with such great citizens of 20th century Vilnius as Michał Pius Römer or even Czesaw Miłosz."

Baranauskas's views may also be compared with ideas of a group of mainly Polish-speaking intellectuals from the Vilnius Region known as *krajowcy* who, at the beginning of the 20th century, were a voice against the then growing nationalism both in Poland and Lithuania. Even though the group was established a few years after Baranauskas' death, its members shared similar views to the poet in regards to the question of equality of all nations. Today we know that they did not manage to implement these ideas. Thus, Aleksandravičius's idea to write a history of those who lost seems even more interesting. Indeed, the story of Baranauskas and those who shared similar ideas to him forces the reader to undertake a critical reflection on the idealists and the activists who were not able to implement their dreams. Even today we cannot find an answer to the question why a positive socio-cultural change is so difficult to become part of everyday life.

The biography of Baranauskas was first published in Lithuania in 2003. Its Polish translation was published 11 years later – at a time when we wonder how small Central European countries can survive on the global stage, where the most powerful countries establish all the rules. Here another crucial question comes to mind: should Central European states and nations forget about mutual animosities that have characterised them for so long in the face of the most important international events and band together to protect their own statehoods?

The end of the Cold War was not within sight when Czesław Miłosz and Tomas Venclova engaged in a dialogue about Vilnius, a city that has been a point of contention in Polish-Lithuanian relations since the interwar period. However, in order to turn a confrontation into a dialogue, Miłosz called his beloved city

"Vilnius" while Venclova used its Polish name "Wilno". In the same way, in the Polish edition of Aleksandravičius's book, Baranauskas's name was kept in Lithuanian, although the Polish spelling has an equal value. By so doing, the historian and his Polish publisher have made a reference to Miłosz and Venclova as *Antanas Baranauskas. Szlak wieszcza* too is, after all, an invitation to the Polish-Lithuanian dialogue.

Dorota Sieroń-Galusek
Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

A CITY OF LITERATURE

This autumn marks one year since Kraków (Poland) was awarded the title of UNESCO City of Literature. A much awaited dream came true, some people say. And indeed, the city authorities along with some key institutions have done a great deal of work to allow Kraków to become the first city in Central Europe to receive such a prestigious title. However, it would be quite a simplification to say that literary Kraków is solely a result of this work.

It is, first and foremost, a city of very many artists, poets and writers alike, who live or lived here and whose work and a special and unique connection with the city have allowed it to be seen as having a distinct place in the realm of literature. These individuals, as diverse as they are, are thus the best key to understand what role Kraków has played in Polish, but also European, or even more broadly world, literature. We invited a few of them (either directly or indirectly through other writers) to share with you their stories and their relationship with the city.

Among them is the Austrian writer and translator, Martin Pollack, who shares with you some family secrets from the times when he decided to start studying Polish and Slavonic literature. Pollack's tongue-in-cheek recollections are followed by the portraits of two recipients of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Wisława Szymborska and Czesław Miłosz, whose lives were also marked by Kraków, and an interview with the poet Ewa Lipska, a representative of a generation that experienced life under more than one political system, who shares with you her cross-generational observations of Polish literary life. Finally, two contemporary writers, Zośka Papużanka and Ziemowit Szczerek, verbally wrestle with each other on the last pages of this issue, all to show you two very different perspectives of Kraków, Poland and literature.

This section is co-financed by the City of Kraków.

A Belated Love Affair

MARTIN POLLACK

It was not easy to resist Kraków's flair and magic. When, after two years of Slavonic studies, I decided to go to Poland for one year to improve my language skills and get to know Polish literature better, everybody assumed I would go to Kraków: "You have to go to Kraków, it is such a beautiful city, almost as pretty as Vienna or Paris, and the girls are even prettier," I was told.

When I think about the obscure channels that led me to discovering Polish literature and translating Polish authors into German, it strikes me that Kraków has played only a marginal role. It is worth mentioning that most Austrians, when speaking about Poland, think primarily about Kraków. Many of my colleagues feel at home in Kraków, even if this notion is mostly linked to a certain nostalgia and a slightly superficial understanding of history rather than to a real connection with the city. In my case, however, it was different. For a long time I was consistently rejecting Kraków.

Why is this? To explain this rather unflattering fact, I have to move back slightly to the past. All in all, the conditions for developing an interest in Poland, for studying Polish language and then translating Polish literature were in my case rather unfavourable. I did not inherit any kind of love for Poland. Even the name Pollack, which I carry from my stepfather, did not change anything.

Testimony to German greatness

Hans Pollack did not want to know anything about his potential family ties to Poland. On the contrary, he insisted that his heirs came from an "old Upper Austrian farmers' family," even though the name Pollack made his assumptions rather unconvincing. Typical names of Upper Austrian farmers were mostly Himmelfreundpointner, Gsöllpointner, Hanselmayer, Zehetmaier, Fürlinger or Baumgartner, but not Pollack. The name rather points to the fact that probably a

long time ago there was a Polish ancestor in the family who came to the Danube region to stay. Hans Pollack, a committed German Nationalist (and a National Socialist), rejected this narrative fully and reacted with outrage to any suggestions going into that direction.

According to him, the family never had anything to do with Poland. It comes as no surprise then that at home in Linz, on the Danube River, no one ever talked about Poland. The closest we ever got to that topic was Galicia – where my stepfather served during the First World War. He did not talk much about this time in his life. As many Austrians of his generation, he associated Galicia with a purely negative experience, primarily with hunger, poverty, bloody battles, miserable louse-ridden accommodations and terrible coldness. I recall him mentioning Kraków from time to time: "a pretty city," he used to say, with marvellous churches, the altarpiece of Veit Stoss in St Mary's church – a tremendous example of German sculpture – the market square, the Cloth Hall, the Wawel Royal Castle – all testimony to German greatness, he explained. It is unfortunate though that the city is so dirty, he used to add melancholically. And all those Jews there, in caftans and with their side curls – his face twisted in a disgusted grimace.

When, after graduating from high school, I decided to study Slavonic studies with a major in Polish, my stepfather, unsurprisingly, was not particularly thrilled. But he took it with amazing composure, unlike my grandparents on my father's side who did not live in Linz, but in Amstetten. My grandmother went berserk when she heard about my plans. She was a very energetic woman who did not accept anybody disagreeing with her. Especially not her grandson, whom she loved and spoiled more than anything, but still (or maybe precisely for this very reason) wanted to control. Her intentions were surely genuine, she wanted to show me the right path in life, which, in our family for generations has been marked by an anti-Slavic attitude passed on with conviction and stubbornness.

In our family, Slavs were considered enemies; Slovenians, Czechs and, of course, Poles.

Slavs were considered our enemies. Slovenians, Czechs and, of course, Poles. And I wanted to study Polish literature? It was outrageous, total madness! The Poles are of no use, said my grandmother with certainty. I do not think she had actually ever met any real Poles, as there were no Polish people living in Amstetten, and she never had any personal experience with the country or its people, but nevertheless she applied her stereotypes. Poles are all scoundrels and that was that. Taking Polish studies was out of the question and besides, my father would turn over in his grave. We were both very stubborn and obstinate and normally it would be my grandmother who would impose her will, but this time I retained the upper hand. Why she eventually succumbed remains unclear to me to this day.

A city of poets and books

Following this vague aim of Slavonic and Polish studies, I went to Vienna. Back then I knew embarrassingly little about Polish literature – to be frank, I had no idea at all. The first wonderful surprise awaiting me in Vienna was my Polish teacher, a young woman, as pretty as a picture and unbelievably charming. I think we were all a little bit in love with her. She was from Kraków, of course.

Here is where my complicated love affair with the city begins. My Polish teacher, Pani Zofia ("Pani" means "Miss" or "Mrs", put together with a first name it is a common way to semi-formally address or refer to women in Polish) did everything to awaken in us a love for her city. She painted Kraków for us in the most beautiful and tempting colours. The atmosphere, the architecture, the bars, the people, even the air in Kraków was something extraordinary, velvety and aromatic. She never mentioned the huge ironworks conglomerate erected by the communists that at times produced a blanket of dense sulphur fog which covered the city for days. Her eyes turned misty when she talked about Kraków and its sights, which made them appear even more beautiful to us. She used to refer to her hometown as a city of poets and books, which she missed every single day, as she confessed. She mentioned names which did not mean much to us back then, the authors of the Kraków avant-garde: Tadeusz Peiper, Jalu Kurek and Julian Przyboś, the Kossak sisters, Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and Magdalena Samozwaniec, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, Jan Józef Szczepański and Zbigniew Herbert, just to mention a few of the most important authors associated with Kraków.

I used to write poems and I asked myself whether Kraków could possibly boost my poetic energy.

The city attracts poets in a magic way, Pani Zofia used to say. No one can resist its charm; it simply inspires. I used to write poems back then, quite bad ones as I was soon to realise, and I asked myself whether Kraków could possibly boost my poetic energy but I soon dismissed this thought. Maybe that was my mistake after all; maybe the city would have bettered my lyrical work, though I remain sceptical about that. Can an atmosphere of a city make a brilliant poet out of someone who is just an ordinary one?

When she was a student of Polish studies at the Jagiellonian University, our teacher spent all her free time in one of Kraków's many bars, cafés or clubs, Piwnica pod Baranami, Siedem Kotów, or the Cricot 2 Theatre in the Krzysztofory Gallery. She praised Hawełka Restaurant and the many coffee houses, similar to those in Vienna. She knew exactly which poet was a regular of which place. We could not quite keep up with putting down all the names and then rummaging in the bookshops for German translations of a given author's work. The poets that Pani

Zofia so enthusiastically told us about were at this stage impossible for us to read in the original, as we were only taking our very first steps in the Polish language. On the other hand, it was very difficult to get a hold of translations. Back then, in the early 1960s, they were still a rare commodity.

Destination Kraków?

Pani Zofia mentioned also Mordechaj Gebirtig – a poet and a musician writing in Yiddish. She used to recite his poems to us, her voice was rich and clear. The son of our city, she called him. Gebirtig became important to us not long afterwards. Many students joined leftist groups back then – I tended towards Trotskyism – and we were filled with enthusiasm for the early revolutionary movements, including the General Jewish Labour Bund in Poland, where Gebirtig published his first poems.

The first book that we read together in our Polish class was, unsurprisingly, about Kraków. I still have it among the other books in my library. Jan Paweł Gawlik's *Powrót do Jamy (Return to Jama)* is a funny and entertaining introduction to the literary life of Kraków in the first half of the 20th century. I have to admit I was not particularly impressed by this text, which might have been due to my insufficient knowledge of the Polish language. But the Jama Michalika café, the Kraków bohemia, which even now looks as it did a hundred years ago, appeared to me already back then, with all due respect, as rather kitschy. Nevertheless, I was faking a major interest, just to please sweet Pani Zofia. But in my first years in Poland during which I often came to Kraków, I kept my distance from Jama Michalika and visited it only much later with an Austrian friend.

I felt like a deserter or a traitor who cowardly changed sides, but I stuck to my decision.

All in all though it was not easy to resist Kraków's flair and magic as it was introduced to us by Pani Zofia. When, after two years of Slavonic studies, I decided to go to Poland for one year to improve my language skills and get to know Polish literature better, everybody assumed I would go to Kraków. "You have to go to Kraków, it is such a beautiful city, almost as pretty as Vienna or Paris, and the girls are even prettier," an old acquaintance of my parents who spent some time in Kraków during the war told me. He very wisely did not reveal what exactly his role was in the city, and frankly I did not want to know. "You surely are going to go to Kraków," said my professor at the faculty in Vienna. He spent some years there and learned to love the city, as he oftentimes told us. He specialised in Polish literature.

And of course Pani Zofia was certain that I was on my way to Kraków. Other Polish cities were in her eyes out of the question, neither Wrocław nor Łódź nor Gdańsk qualified, not to mention Warsaw. Warsaw, the very idea! A Moloch, a city

with no soul as it was stolen by the communists, she claimed, something they did not succeed with in Kraków. She convinced us that Kraków was one of the most beautiful cities in the world that did not need to be shy when compared to Vienna, Paris or Florence. Because she was so beautiful and her smile so charming, we blindly believed her. Kraków it is then. However, when I was filling out the application form and had to write down the name of the chosen host university, I did not hesitate a single moment. What I wrote was: University of Warsaw.

Treachery and treason

It was my Nazi grandmother, out of all people, who in the very last moment spoilt the idea of me going to Kraków. When finally with a heavy heart she accepted that her grandson was to study Polish literature and go to Poland for one year or longer, she authoritatively, as was typical for her, decided that I of course had to go to Kraków. My grandmother attached a great importance to bourgeois education, the ideas of which she took from magazines like *The Faithful Eckart. A Monthly Magazine for the German Household*, which she eagerly read and collected. I assume that her ideas about a "German Kraków" also originated from there. A brilliant city, created and built by German architects and artists, she said. Veit Stoss, Hans Suess von Kulmbach, a student of the great Albrecht Dürrer whose brother Hans was a court painter in Kraków; the marvellous Renaissance buildings, the townhouses, all brilliant legacies of German work and the German soul!

Kraków must have been truly wonderful; it is unfortunate that the Poles, and foremost the Jews, have destroyed so much of its previous greatness. Undoubtedly, she must have read it in *The Faithful Eckart* or in another nationalist paper of its kind which she also always recommended for me to read. I kept declining politely. My grandmother's enthusiasm suddenly made Kraków appear suspicious and ruined the idea of wanting to study there. So I spontaneously decided in favour of Warsaw, although I knew nothing about the city. Even less than I did about Kraków. I had no idea what would await me there, but at least one thing seemed to be clear: there would be no glorious Renaissance buildings, no altarpiece by Veit Stoss, no townhouses built with German sweat and creativity that anyway seemed to exist in my grandmother's imagination loaded with Germanness, rather than in reality. When I thought about Pani Zofia, I had a bad conscience of course. I felt almost like a deserter or a traitor who cowardly changed sides, but I stuck to my decision nevertheless. I went to Warsaw to study. And I have never regretted this decision. Warsaw became my first and most important reference in Poland. With time I developed also a wonderful relation with Kraków, a deep love. Most probably I

needed this long run-up and the way around to Kraków, otherwise nothing good would have come out of us both.

What followed was a certain normalisation. I visited Kraków more often. I met people there who became important to me, professionally and privately. I met authors who were strongly attached to Kraków, Adam Zagajewski, Ewa Lipska, Ryszard Krynicki – the modest and fascinating poet and editor. For years, I subscribed to *Tygodnik Powszechny* and at some point I decided to apply for a residency at Villa Decius. I very much enjoyed the time spent at the Villa, the conversations with my colleagues, among others with Renata Serednicka with whom I later had the pleasure to work. I learned a lot from them. It was during this time that I truly fell for Kraków, once and for all: a late love, but a deep one nonetheless.

Translated by Karolina Golimowska

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Tiny as a Painted Egg

ANDRZEJ FRANASZEK

The collapse of communism in 1989 allowed Czesław Miłosz to return to Poland, which was then regaining independence. For his place of residence the poet chose Kraków, which reminded him of his youth, the time when he was a schoolboy and a student in the small, provincial Vilnius.

For Czesław Miłosz, Kraków was primarily a web of human points of reference and home to his friends and intellectual partners. It was the city he deliberately chose as the last stop on his long life journey. This journey began in the small Lithuanian village of Szetejnie, where the future poet was born in 1911. Soon afterwards, the next stops on his journey were in Vilnius (then a part of Poland), then Warsaw, where Miłosz spent the late 1930s and the time of the German occupation, post-war New York, Washington, DC, followed by his emigration years in Paris of the 1950s and finally in Berkeley, California, the university city on the east shore of San Francisco Bay, his safe haven for more than three decades.

The collapse of communism in 1989 made it possible for the writer to return to Poland, which was then regaining independence. For his place of residence, Miłosz chose Kraków, which reminded him of his youth, the time when he was a schoolboy and student in the small, provincial Vilnius. He did not choose Warsaw because it reminded him of the grind of the clerical job he had given up decades earlier and a capitalist "jungle."

A passion for honest work

Miłosz found Kraków friendly, tailored in proportion to the needs of a human being, interesting with its medieval Old Town, rich in libraries, bookshops and cafés and, above all, inhabited by the people who were close to him: Jerzy Turowicz, the legendary editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*; Jan Błoński, an eminent literary historian; Wisława Szymborska, a poet and future Nobel Prize winner; Jacek Woźniakowski

and Jerzy Illg from Wydawnictwo Literackie publishing his books; and Ireneusz Kania, an expert on various forms of spirituality. These were the people with whom Miłosz wanted to meet, talk to and share his spiritual passions.

In his childhood, Miłosz became familiar with Kraków through the stories told by his mother, Weronika, who had attended a girls' school in there. To the residents of Szetejnie, a small village lost in the vast Russian empire and located on the Nevėžis River, Kraków seemed like a wonderland, a place where the Polish kings were laid to rest. Other cities were close and more real: Kiejdany (Kėdainiai in Lithuanian) and Vilnius, where the Miłosz family settled after Poland regained independence. Miłosz most likely visited Kraków for the first time at the beginning of 1939, during a trip from Warsaw to Wisła, a small town in the Beskid Mountains where Jerzy Andrzejewski, a writer and the poet's friend, spent holidays. However, clear memories are evoked by another visit in 1941, and again by Andrzejewski, who during the occupation was deeply involved in the underground literary life and as a representative of the Polish government-in-exile in London provided writers with assistance grants. For this reason, he made numerous trips and he took Czesław Miłosz on one of them.

In August 1941, during the trip to Kraków, the two friends arrived in the village of Chroberz, where they spent the night in a barn. Andrzejewski wrote about it in this way: Czesław "was sleeping, breathing, like an angel, and I, lying next to him, spent two sleepless nights... because the hay was swarming with fleas. I did not understand it at all. He was, like me, blond with fair skin, so why was I the one that attracted these little bastards and not him!" They went by train to Kocmyrzów and finally got to Kraków on foot on a hot summer day when Nazi uniforms were nowhere to be seen. The only encounter they had was with a caravan of gypsies. Miłosz remembered it as one of the happiest days of his life. In addition, the city itself seemed to him quiet and safe, as if separated from the nightmare of the occupation that was so tangible in Warsaw.

Miłosz found Kraków friendly, rich in libraries, bookshops and cafés, and inhabited by the people who were close to him.

To their amazement, in the Łobzowska Street Café, a place popular with artists, they recognised the waitress as a hiding Jewish woman – the wife of poet Adam Ważyk. In the evening, they got drunk on rum at the railway station bar before getting on the train to Krzeszowice, where Kazimierz Wyka, one of the most talented literary critics of their generation, was waiting for them. There is a photo taken during this visit to Krzeszowice which shows the three writers sitting on a pile of planks at a sawmill. At that time, they all shared the conviction that in times of war it was necessary to sustain a sophisticated intellectual life, they all

had a profound distaste for the myths created with a view to strengthen hearts, which frequently happened in the underground life, for exalted patriotism. They also shared a passion for honest work, which, after all, especially in the case of Miłosz and Wyka, produced great results after the war.

Sharp like a diamond

Another point on the map of the poet's Kraków is the village of Goszyce, near the city and the manor belonging to Zofia Zawisza-Kernowa, whose daughter from her first marriage, Anna Gąsiorowska, married Jerzy Turowicz, a young journalist and a Catholic activist of liberal and antinationalistic views. During the occupation, the young couple lived in the manor in Goszyce, which became more and more crowded by arriving relatives and friends, and where intellectual and underground life flourished. After the outbreak of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, refugees from the capital landed there as well. Miłosz and Janina Cękalska, his future wife, were among them.

In Poland, Miłosz was branded a traitor and deserter.

In Goszyce, there were two buildings which stood next to each other: a brick mansion dating back to the 19th century, where the Turowicz family lived, and a manor house, two hundred years older, which became accommodation for Miłosz. Both buildings were bursting at the seams and sometimes thirty people sat at the table to dine. There were also a lot of young people and Miłosz was supposed to teach them literature, but the time was not favourable for learning and the idea was abandoned after a few lessons. The poet revealed other talents adored by the children, because Mr Scarecrow, as they called him, excelled at making scary faces and when asked, the poet did not take long to "bare his big teeth, goggle madly and roar loudly".

In addition to scaring the children, Miłosz also found the time to write. In Goszyce he wrote new poems, which, handwritten and adorned with hand-painted initials, formed the volume entitled *Wiersze pół-perskie* (*Half-Persian Poems*). This little book, published on January 10th 1945 in one copy, includes ten poems which quite consistently combine playful and serious tones. Among these were: "Pożegnanie" (Farewell), in which the escape from the burning Warsaw resembles the flee from Troy where the refugee knows very well that there will be no turning back, and "Morał" (Moral) in which the poet teaches that a train of thought, sharp like a diamond, should be valued more than youthful sentimentality.

This idea of the sharp thought was the source of a conflict in which Miłosz became involved during his stay in Goszyce. A friend of the Turowicz family recalled: "an acquaintance of the housewife arrived at the manor; it was a partisan, Jan Józef

Szczepański. Gąsiorowska remembered his dispute with Miłosz, who was explaining to Jan, with firm assurance, that he did not intend to fight because he had to survive the war: his duty was to write, not to fight, his possible death would prove useless and his writing was important for Poland." The argument with Szczepański, a partisan and later a writer living in Kraków, was not only about the way in which the artist can be useful to the country and society. It was also about the shape of the future Poland and about the word "honour" – a term difficult to explain in a rational manner. In Miłosz's opinion, the residents and guests of the manor were representatives of an intellectual and spiritual group that he perceived as strange and which he accused of mental laziness, shallowness, adherence to false myths, replacing consideration with noble, yet pernicious, impulses.

An immigrant under censorship

Miłosz and his fellow companions differed not only in their fundamentally critical view of the Warsaw Uprising, but also in their awareness that the traditional Polish world of manors and landed gentry would be totally annihilated by the Red Army. Soon, his predictions came true. At the beginning of 1945, the owners of Goszyce were ordered to leave the estate. Miłosz himself had left earlier. As soon as the Soviet and Polish troops entered Kraków, he borrowed a pair of heavy army boots and a pillow from Jerzy Turowicz and together with Janka went on foot to the city located less than 20 kilometres away.

The strong distaste that Miłosz had for landed gentry, the social class he himself came from, did not include Turowicz and his wife. The friendship formed in Goszyce survived all the political and historical differences. However, when Turowicz began publishing the *Tygodnik Powszechny* weekly magazine in 1945 Miłosz refused to co-operate, fearing that it would be a "reactionary" or clerical magazine. At the same time, he entrusted Turowicz with the task of proofreading his poetry collection *Ocalenie* (*Rescue*). By the time the poems went to press, the author had already been in London and on his way to a diplomatic post in the United States. When Miłosz became an immigrant under censorship in Poland, Turowicz occasionally managed to "smuggle" in his poems under a pseudonym into the columns of his magazine. Throughout their lives they would write to each other and meet in Rome, Paris, the United States and, after 1989, in Kraków.

In independent Poland, the poet became one of the most important authors of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, publishing numerous poems, essays and a column called "A Literary Larder". Miłosz was a frequent guest at the editorial office of the magazine, located on Wiślna Street. He honoured Turowicz in the poem called "Caffè Greco":

In the eighties of the twentieth century, in Rome, via Condotti
We were sitting with Turowicz in the Caffè Greco
And I spoke in, more or less, these words: We have seen much,
comprehended much.
States were falling, countries passed away.
Chimeras of the human mind besieged us
And made people perish or sink into slavery.
[...]
And you have my admiration,
For you accomplished more than did my companions
Who once sat here, the proud geniuses.
Why they grieved over their lack of virtue,
Why they felt such pangs of conscience, I now understand.
With age and with the waning of this age
One learns to value wisdom, and simple goodness.

Ripe old age

In January 1945, Czesław and Janina Miłosz met Zofia and Tadeusz Breza in Kraków. Breza was a writer who Miłosz had already met in Vilnius, but also a friend of Kazimierz Boczar, a dermatologist and lecturer at the JagiellonianUniversity, and his wife Anna, who, at the time were a popular couple and owners of a guesthouse

called Pod Duszą (the Soul Hotel). The Boczars informed Miłosz that there was an empty flat, which had been abandoned by its German tenants, on the fourth floor of the building. However, to get it an official notice of allotment was needed.

"Suddenly I bumped into someone in the uniform of an officer of the Polish army coming from the east. He was a short man, with a huge gun bouncing off his calves. Adam Ważyk! We embraced and hugged each other," Miłosz wrote later. "We set off towards the housing office, which was easy to recognise as a massive crowd was pushing against the building. A civilian with a white-and-red band on his arm was shooting in the air from time to time to impose order. Ważyk was marching to the front, trying to push through the crowd: "'We are from Lublin!' It was enough to enter the building and take the stairs up to the office." Ważyk, once an avant-garde poet, now a political officer of the Polish Army, represented the new authorities and the officials did not dare to refuse him anything; he used to say ironically that he felt like "the king of Kraków".

Kraków became the place of countless disputes about pre-war or contemporary Poland and poetry.

Thanks to Ważyk, the Breza and Miłosz families became tenants of the four-room apartment, number 11 at 26 Tomasza Street, starting their stay with a more or less successful battle against a plague of bedbugs. Another tenant of this house was a 90-year-old stage actor and theatre director named Ludwik Solski. At that time, however, it did not occur to Miłosz, who watched the great actor through the window, that one day he would also live to a ripe old age in Kraków.

An angry cherub

On January 31st 1945, the first morning poetry reading was held on the stage of the Stary Theatre: the audience filled the auditorium, giving the artists a thunderous applause. "Czesław Miłosz made the biggest impression on me," Wisława Szymborska recalled later. "The poets usually read with terrible diction, made mistakes and faltered … Suddenly, Miłosz appeared, he looked like an angry cherub and he had a great voice. I remember that then I thought that he was a great poet." The great poet was not only preparing a collection of his poems, *Ocalenie* (*Rescue*), for print, but he was also very intensely involved in reviving cultural life. He outlined proposals for reform, attended constituent meetings launching newspapers and magazines, he sometimes attended meetings with readers in the famous Writers' House at Krupnicza 22 and wrote reviews of theatre performances and screenplays.

Miłosz also published feature articles in the new newspaper *Dziennik Polski*, whose editor-in-chief for a few months was Jerzy Putrament. Putrament, once a

novice writer from Vilnius, was now a major and an influential member of the new communist authorities. Obviously, the paper he edited had an explicitly defined political profile, although in the first months after the war, Miłosz did not have to make any ideological statements. Yet, when he visited Putrament the poet was aware that, in a way, he put his name and reputation behind the regime imposed on Poland. What was at stake in the game Miłosz played was a diplomatic post. He wanted to leave the increasingly Sovietised Poland, without cutting ties with his country or his mother tongue. After numerous efforts, he succeeded.

At the end of 1945, Czesław and Janka Miłosz left for Warsaw to fly to London. From there, they travelled by boat to the United States. As the Polish cultural attaché, Miłosz spent more than five years in New York and Washington, DC. At the beginning of 1951, he came to Paris where, in dramatic circumstances, he broke ties with the People's Republic of Poland and remained in exile in France. In Poland he was branded a "traitor" and "deserter". It was not until he received the Nobel Prize in 1980 that Miłosz's works could be published again in Poland and his name could appear in the Polish press.

Mental passion

"Cabbies were dozing by St. Mary's tower. / Kraków was tiny as a painted egg / Just taken from a pot of dye on Easter," Miłosz wrote in "Traktat poetycki" (A Treatise on Poetry). Although the city has changed a lot since the modernist period of Young Poland, a certain touch of intimacy remained, which apparently suited the poet.

So it was Kraków that Miłosz began to visit systematically after 1989, first staying for a few days, meeting readers and giving lectures at the Jagiellonian University. In 1993, he was awarded an honorary citizenship to the city and he soon bought an apartment on Bogusławski Street. First, he spent the summer months in Poland with his second wife, Carol Thigpen, and went back to warm California for winters. Towards the end of 1999, nearing the age of 90, the poet could no longer travel so much and he settled down in Kraków for good.

Today, the flat houses the Miłosz's archive, managed by his secretary Agnieszka Kosińska. What has remained after the poet are his books, pens, a computer and a special enlarger which helped his failing eyesight to cope with reading. There is also a bronze bust of Carol that Miłosz ordered after his wife had passed away.

Miłosz was always an extremely sensual man, the joy of tasting made him write in one of his poems: "My Lord, I loved strawberry jam/ And the dark sweetness of a woman's body. / Also well-chilled vodka, herring in olive oil, / Scents, of cinnamon, of cloves. / So what kind of prophet am I?" Although he was often carried away by the element of intelligent fun during the famous dinners at Wisława Szymborska's

place, generally his poetic voice was serious and spiritually involved. That is why Kraków became the place of countless disputes about pre-war or contemporary Poland, about poetry "which is understandable" and about the vanishing religious imagination and the existence of the devil.

Until his death in 2004, Miłosz was both the centre and *spiritus movens* of the intellectual life of the city. He gave lectures, took part in discussions, gave interviews, and published poems and essays. In his old age, there was not a shadow of surrender or indifference, just the opposite. He remained passionate until the very end. It was as if his mental passion was a form of rebellion against death. After his death, on the way to the gravesite – a granite sarcophagus in the crypt of the Pauline Fathers Monastery at Skałka – he was accompanied by the words from a poem by Dylan Thomas, a poem he liked so much: "Do not go gentle into that good night / Old age should burn and rave at the close of day / Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Translated by Tomasz Gąssowski

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My Literary Kraków

MICHAŁ RUSINEK

Kraków as a literary city has a long tradition. It was not so long ago when in it was possible to bump into Czesław Miłosz or Wisława Szymborska. And the number of new points on the literary map of Kraków continues to grow.

Nearly three years ago, *National Geographic* published a list of the ten most literary cities in the world. Among them were: Edinburgh, Dublin, London, St Petersburg, Paris, Stockholm, Santiago de Chile, Washington DC, Melbourne and Portland. The deciding factor in putting a city on this prestigious list was the opportunity to explore the city by following literary trails: those of Dickens and Shakespeare in London, Raskolnikov in St Petersburg, or Balzac and Oscar Wilde in Paris. Of course, you may have doubts about these choices and speculate about the absence of a few other, no less important, places. But my critical view results from a conspicuous absence and astonishment rather than an attempt to question the relevance of this literary list.

A unique place

My astonishment is inextricably linked to Kraków – a unique place, well recognisable across Europe and repeatedly honoured by outstanding bodies. In 2000, Kraków was awarded with the title of European Capital of Culture and in 2013 with the prestigious title of being a UNESCO City of Literature. It should also be mentioned that since 2004, Kraków has been the seat of the Polish Book Institute – a national institution established to promote literature. I present these facts to show that it is necessary to see Kraków in a similar way as the *National Geographic* list. Some people also associate the city with modernist artists of the *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland) movement, the Jama Michalika café and the *Zielony Balonik* (The Green Balloon) cabaret. For others, Kraków brings to mind the famous literary cabaret Piwnica pod Baranami and its founder Piotr Skrzynecki; while others see the most

Photo: Grzegorz Ziemiański. Courtesy of Kraków Festival Office

Kraków, being a city of literature, is not only a city of poets and writers but also a city of readers.


KRAKÓW
MIASTO

Photo: Tomasz Wiech. Courtesy of Kraków Festival Office

Kraków was the first city in Central Europe which was awarded the prestigious title UNESCO City of Literature.

Photo: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

Wisława Szymborska, recipient of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Literature

important landmark of the city as the Adam Mickiewicz monument on the Main Market Square.

I must admit that my literary Kraków is, first and foremost, a city of Nobel Prize winners in literature. It was not that long ago that when walking across the Market Square, passing Gołębia Street or riding a bike in the Planty Park, the green belt around old Kraków, it would have been possible to run into Czesław Miłosz or Wisława Szymborska.

Szymborska always found people more important than places.

Now, it is difficult to evoke memories of Kraków from several years ago. I look at the old photographs and postcards. Pictures do not only revive the memories of the old times, but they also make me realise that I have been a witness to the many transformations that have taken place in my hometown. I do not think about transformations in technical or architectural terms, but rather refer to the literary and cultural life of the city, especially during the time of my studies. I remember my first timid participation in evenings of poetry reading and my strolls down Krupnicza Street, where building 22 was the site of the famous Writers' House.

Kraków was also the home of the unique "oral" literary magazine *Nagłos*, later published on paper, whose complete collection is now an antiquarian rarity. The a5 Publishing House, run by Krystyna and Ryszard Krynicki and specialising in poetry, moved from Poznań to Kraków. Since 2002, Kraków has also been home to the Cracow Poetry Salon initiated by actress Anna Dymna. The Nowa Prowincja café, opened in 2004, is a new centre of poetry and literary events. The city enjoys an abundance of bookshops, with the English-language Massolit and the independent Księgarnia Pod Globusem at the forefront, where authors from around the world come to meet with Cracovians. The number of new points on the literary map of Kraków continues to grow with free reading zones and trams "supplied" with e-books.

Szymborska's city

Kraków as a literary city has a long tradition. As I browse through Wisława Szymborska's albums of old photographs, I see pictures of Kraków homes and workplaces where meetings of authors took place. However, my attention is drawn to those photos taken outside. Among them I come across one of my favourite ones: a picture showing Szymborska and Kornel Filipowicz (Polish poet and Szymborska's life partner – editor's note). This photograph was taken in 1972 by the poet Ewa Lipska, during one of their many walks to Kazimierz, Kraków's historic Jewish quarter. It shows Szymborska, with a wide smile, in a flowery dress accompanied by

Filipowicz in a white shirt and a cigarette in his hand. It is difficult to recognise the exact place. In the distance, you can only see a wall. I mention this photo because of its absence of details associated with Kraków that is so typical of Szymborska's works: she hardly ever wrote about Kraków.

In 1977, Szymborska published *Wypracowanie na temat morza* (*An Essay on the Sea*) in which she ironically presented her hometown: "I live in a city which is 30 km from Bochnia and 12 km from Wieliczka … From the windows of my room you can see the Wawel Castle built on a limestone hill ... Walking along the streets towards the Market Street I float, whenever my imagination wishes, on the boundless surface of water." These are one of the few lines that Szymborska penned describing Kraków. It is difficult to say what determined this fragmentary description, perhaps the explanation can be found in what Szymborska repeatedly said "I live in Kraków, which means that I do not visit the city." In my opinion, she always found people more important than places. She travelled not to visit the world but to meet friends. She lived in Kraków because she had so many friends here.

Someone named Miłosz

Szymborska was connected to Kraków since her adolescence. In 1941, she finished her education in an underground school and almost three years later, at the age of 22, she took part in the so-called "great morning of poetry", which took place in the Stary Theatre. There, she had the opportunity to meet Czesław Miłosz for the first time. The importance of this meeting is clearly reflected in her essay "Intimidation" (Onieśmielenie) in which the poet in her unique manner, confessed: "I found myself in the audience of the Stary Theatre in Kraków, where the first post-war poetry reading was organised ... At a certain point, someone named Miłosz was announced. I had a feeling that you had to put on airs in front of Miłosz. Soon my admiration was put to the test. For the first time in my life, I found myself in a real restaurant. I looked around and what did I see not far from me? Czesław Miłosz, in the company of some people, sitting and eating a pork chop." This account, however, does not exhaustively reflect the story of her meetings with Miłosz. In the following years, there were many favourable opportunities, but the poets did not meet again until 1989, when the author of *A Poetical Treatise* received a degree *honoris causa* from the Jagiellonian University.

Despite her death in 2012, Szymborska's relationship with Kraków is still alive today.

Szymborska also stayed in contact with the Union of Polish Writers, participated in meetings organised by Koło Młodych (the Kraków Youth Circle), incidentally,

founded by the poet's future husband, Adam Włodek. During 1946-1948 she worked for the biweekly *Świetlica Krakowska*, where she was as an assistant editor and, at the same time, published her texts. From 1948, she worked for *Dziennik Literacki* and a few years later she began working for the literary review magazine *Życie Literackie*. Her collaboration with the legendary weekly enabled her to make a lot of long-standing friendships and to find her own place among the great authors.

But Szymborska's Kraków is not only a short reference on the margins of her writing. It is also a city of important Polish publishing houses, Znak, Wydawnictwo Literackie and a5. It is also a place of numerous promotional meetings whose sheer number contradicts the negative stereotype about the poet's alleged spectral presence in the city. However, I must admit that after the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Szymborska, it was with great care and effort that we both chose meetings and evenings of poetry reading. Overall, Szymborska most enjoyed those less formal meetings with less bustling and no black ties.

Szymborska confirmed the exceptionally personal relationships with Kraków in her will.

Despite her death in 2012, the poet's relationship with some places in the city continues even today. At the Nowa Prowincja café, there is a special intercom that brings us memories of the poet. When you push the button of this unique device, installed at the entrance, you will hear different poets reading their poems. Among them are Ewa Lipska, Bronisław Maj, Czesław Miłosz, Ryszard Krynicki, Adam Zagajewski and, of course, Wisława Szymborska. This is not the only place in Kraków where you can still experience the presence of the late poet, hear her voice or feel the texture of a green velvet couch. Leaving the Market Square and walking towards Sławkowska Street, you should turn left. Nearby, in one of the rooms of Szołayski House, you can find an old telephone which once belonged to Szymborska. If you pick up the phone, you can hear poems read by Szymborska herself. This phone is only one part of a larger whole. We collected more such items for the permanent exhibition called *Szymborska's Drawer*, which consists of objects and things from the poet's flat.

Free from tourist greed

In 1978 Szymborska wrote: "I live in Kraków, which means that passing the Wawel Castle, I usually think of something else, something not necessarily important. It means that passing St. Andrew's Church, I do not slow down, I do not sigh, although it is the most beautiful church in Kraków." A bit further she added: "It also means that I do not take a great tourist bus with spotlessly clean windows through which you somehow see everything differently than through the constantly dirty windows

of a tram. I live in Kraków, which means that I have breathed this air for years, in contrast to the lively tourists who will breathe it for a few days."

I get an impression that these short lines properly reflect the nature of the bonds between the poet and the city. Szymborska describes these bonds using metaphorical language and the figure of a tourist. These words are also evidence of the poet becoming an integral and inseparable part of the city. The poet's view is free from a tourist's greed, it is a view held by an average citizen.

Wisława Szymborska finally confirmed her exceptionally personal relationship with Kraków in her will, by virtue of which, we proceeded, together with a group of trusted friends, with the inauguration of the Wisława Szymborska Foundation's activities and establishing an international poetry awards in the poet's name. NEE

Translated by Tomasz Gąssowski

Michał Rusinek is a Polish writer, literary scholar and chairman of the Wisława Szymborska Foundation. He was Szymborska's personal assistant since the poet received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1996 and until her death in 2012.

A Musician of Words

An interview with Ewa Lipska, Polish poet and writer.
Interviewer: Łukasz Wojtusik

ŁUKASZ WOJTUSIK: In 2013, Kraków was awarded the title of UNESCO City of Literature. This reflects Kraków's image as a city of Nobel laureates in literature, poets and writers. You are also one of the names associated with this title. Do you think that Kraków has a literary identity?

EWA LIPSKA: Kraków's literary story began a long time ago. As early as the 10th century, a merchant named Abraham ben Jacob presented Kraków in the memories and commentaries of his journey as a city situated on trade routes, which gradually became a city of culture. In the 14th century, during the rule of King Kazimierz Wielki, an unusual patron of the arts, the Sukiennice (Cloth Hall) and the most famous churches were built. During his reign, the Academy of Kraków, later transformed into the Jagiellonian University, was also founded. These are the paths that lead us to the contemporary city. Even during the partitions of Poland, when Kraków became a part of Austria, it was the spiritual capital of the country. That is why today you can hear the sounds of history in every wall here, in every street you take.

I was born in 1945, right after the war, and grew up in politically very special times. Back then, Nowa Huta, the workers' district, was coming into existence. It was meant to diminish the intellectual spirit of Kraków, but, paradoxically it became a centre of high culture itself. I remember the great plays staged at the Ludowy Theatre, run by Krystyna Skuszanka and Jerzy Krasowski, and the innovative set designs of Józef Szajna. For us, it was the first encounter with avant-garde. Another very important intellectual experience for my generation was Tadeusz Kantor's Cricot 2 Theatre. I remember the opening night of *Kurka wodna* (*The Water Hen*) by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), which took place in the Krzysztofory Palace. Beyond this, Kraków has hosted countless exhibitions of prominent Polish painters, to name just a few: Maria Jarema, Jonasz Stern, Adam Marczyński and Eugeniusz Waniek. There was also, of course, Piotr Skrzynecki's famous literary cabaret, Piwnica pod Baranami.

Would you say that during these difficult times, poets, writers and artists had a good life?

Of course life was more difficult than it is now. We could not travel abroad freely and we had problems getting a passport. It is unbelievable today, but sometimes we had to queue from 4:00 am to get a passport and we had to face tedious talks with government officials. Very often we were refused a passport, which prevented us from taking part in literary meetings abroad. The economic situation in Poland was also difficult, but at the same time we lived closer to each other. Today, we would say that we lived more "offline" than "online". We did not make phone calls, because we either did not have phones or we knew that our conversations were being tapped. We met mostly in homes, for example the one belonging to Kornel Filipowicz, an excellent writer, or at Wisława Szymborska's. Nowadays, it is almost impossible to meet a few times a week. We live a completely different rhythm.

Those times were also the times of paradoxes. We fought the regime, but I think the more we drift away from those times and look at our freedom, the more calmly we look back at this era, the past, which fortunately does not threaten us anymore. As there were no computers, no internet, no "culture industry" as Theodor Adorno put it, we read a lot. Books were everything. Some poetry books had 10,000 print runs. And we found shelter in art.

Did art substitute or provide a sense of freedom?

I think both. We were happy that by using the language of allusion, we could say more, something that the censorship did not notice. I remember the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and its column called "image of the week", which was sometimes a linguistic masterpiece. We knew how to read between the lines.

The famous Writers' Home on Krupnicza Street is often said to be a place where talents were born...

A lot of great writers lived in that house: Ildefons Gałczyński, Stefan Kisielewski, Tadeusz Nowak, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Tadeusz Różewicz, Sławomir Mrożek, Wisława Szymborska... It is impossible to name them all. I lived there as well for a few years. My flat, a kitchen converted into a 12 square metre room, belonged to a so-called "kolkhoz", meaning that three families lived in it. But I was happy to have it. Despite the harsh conditions, a vibrant social life flourished in this place. Then, a group of young writers was formed and literary workshops were organised and led by Adam Włodek. We read our texts and discussed them.

For my generation, when we think about these times we imagine the Orwellian censorship and the eye that hung over the writer.

Because those were truly Orwellian times. The author of *1984* would say "Big Brother was watching" us all the time. Let me give you one example from my life. I once happened to meet the poet Adam Ważyk in Warsaw. Years later the journalist Anna Bikont brought me a document she found in the archives which

had been drawn up by the secret police. The document stated " the opposition poet Ewa Lipska met Adam Ważyk". But we, regardless of the system we lived in, were young, enthusiastic and willing to fight, some on the literary battlefield, some in an active way and we wanted to mislead the eye of the censorship. When I worked for the Wydawnictwo Literackie publishing house, we began to publish a series of emigration poetry, which was a daring thing to do, because they were poets who lived abroad and they wanted to print in Poland, but faced difficulties both here and there. We published poems by Adam Czerniawski, Jerzy Niemojowski, Bolesław Taborski and Jan Rostworowski.

My generation often hears idyllic descriptions of fishing trips that you went on with Szymborska and company. Were these just myths?

We went fishing very often and even on obligatory election days! The company was always the same: Wisława Szymborska, Kornel Filipowicz, my husband and I. We mostly chose the Dunajec or the Skawa rivers. On every election day, Kornel Filipowicz pulled out a bottle of his famous homemade liqueur, poured it into little glasses and proposed a toast: "To hell with them!" The men went fishing, and Wisława and I chatted about the "transient world", preparing a bonfire and dinner.

Was Kraków a place for "free thinking"? Would you say that the indoctrination here was not as strong as elsewhere in the country?

Perhaps Kraków resembled other cities, although it was always a little different. It was in Kraków where Kantor's performances took place, the Piwnica pod Baranami cabaret existed, you could listen to forbidden jazz music, Konrad Swinarski staged *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*) by Adam Mickiewicz in the Stary Theatre and Andrzej Wajda put on Stanisław Wyspiański's *November Night*. We would often leave parties at about 3:00 am and looked at the misty beauty of the city the old buildings that had survived the turbulent periods, wars and partitions, and still looked so beautiful in the fog. Peacefulness and consolation radiated from the walls of this city. There is something like this in the city. From early childhood, I used to look at St Mary's Church as a large nativity scene which you can take out and put in another place. The Adam Mickiewicz statue majestically looking at history, the enchanted carriage from a poem by Gałczyński. Today, waves of tourists sweep Kraków. There is an obvious acceleration of life and an excess of everything. The "charm of sadness" of those years gone has quickly been forgotten.

Are you able to find a distance from Kraków? I am asking this question specifically thinking about the time you spent as the director of the Polish Institute in Vienna.

To be honest, Kraków sometimes irritates me, as it has been become a dustbin, especially the city centre, which, by some miracle, puts up with

Photo by Danuta Węgiel

loud concerts, go-go clubs and an increasing number of liquor stores. It upsets me that beautiful old houses, which are subject to drastic changes, disappear irretrievably and are replaced by nightmarish upward extensions, let alone the chaos of billboards and uneven pavements.

Let us move back to the time before you went to Vienna. Your debut dates back to 1967. Anyone who does even the smallest amount of research on your life will come to the conclusion that Ewa Lipska did not fully identify with any contemporary movement, nor her generation. I am very curious what can you tell us about this rebellion.

I am linked with my generation through history, birth certificates and friendships, but I have never belonged to any literary group simply because I have never liked them. A rebellion? It has always been part of my life. But it is also typical of young people. I remember when we read Jean-Paul Sartre and were fascinated by the philosophy of existentialism and we wanted to be different. Now you can dye your hair green, but then there was no such possibility. I started to smoke a pipe. Back then, it was something really astonishing.

Today, a rebellion is different because the society is different. There are different material goods and we live in a different reality. Young people leave the country, smoke joints and find shelter in the virtual world. I often talk to them about these things. I support rebellion, although I do not like all of its "shades".

Your generation gave a new direction to Polish literature and culture. However, I would also say that it is very easy to change a revolutionary into a guardian of the revolution.

Oh yes for sure, there is always such a danger. A political poem can become a propaganda leaflet, a pamphlet, and this is something that literature does not like. History offers examples of such artists, sometimes prominent, whose works served ideology. A good example is the film director Leni Riefenstahl, whose films served Nazi propaganda. Even a work of art that is in opposition to ideology or reality, may turn into journalistic rhetoric. This has always frightened me, sometimes it seemed to me that I trod a fine line.

But there are also the guardians who had their debuts a few decades ago and now dictate to young people what literature is and what it is not, what you can and cannot do…

Do such guardians really exist? Young people will eventually say "thank you, this is not your bus. We are now travelling on our own bus." And they will be right. It is bad when you lose touch with another generation. I also remember being told: "When we were young…" Now I can sometimes hear similar words and they make me laugh. Mankind is incorrigible.

How would you characterise your relationship with the younger generation, writers and readers included?

I would say that I have great contact with young people. Often, after meetings that I have with readers our contacts become more private. We meet to talk about the world we live in, about literature, about everything that upsets or worries them, about school, teachers, love and death. I am also interested in their virtual world, this multibillion state called Facebook, where they live in a great collective loneliness. I read the poems that they publish on the internet, where poetry has moved now. I also find a lot of my own poems there.

And you do not mind that nobody has asked you for your permission to republish your work?

No, I do not. Just the opposite: it makes me glad.

You once said that writing is "the most serious anecdote" of your life.

It is. Karel Čapek, one of the most important Czech writers, once said that "Humor is the salt of life and whoever is well salted will long keep his freshness." I used my own definition of poetry on the cover of my book, which has just been published in Bulgaria, but also have some other concepts. Let me give you a few: Love – an incurable disease everybody dreams about. A writer – a musician of words. Politics – the oldest profession in the world. God – an emergency for those who believe. Morality – the Ten Commandments. Beauty – replacing thinking with seeing.

Is friendship among writers possible?

Of course it is! I have had a lot of interesting friends, both in Poland and abroad, about whom I could write a book. Unfortunately, many of these interesting people are dead. But here in Kraków, I now often meet with the people from the "new wave" group. These meetings are always very nice. Good times are spent on chatting, chatting and more chatting.

Chats about writing?

We hardly ever talked about writing. I have never felt the need that we should. The most I talked about my poems was with my Danish translator, Janina Katz, who, unfortunately has passed away. What we do, however, is what I would call working discussions, not discussions friends hold. Wisława Szymborska and I never discussed our poems. Rarely did we take part in meetings where people read their poetry. Maybe it sounds funny, but I have a feeling that it was our colleagues and the prose writers who needed such discussions. Not us.

What is your view about literary criticism today in Poland? Can we complain about it a bit?

You cannot complain about something that does not exist. I do not envy the young generation. We were very fortunate that we were introduced to the literary scene by such critics as Jerzy Kwiatkowski, Zbigniew Bieńkowski, Ryszard Matuszewski, Jan Błoński, Julian Rogoziński and Kazimierz Wyka. They were great and distinguished critics and literary historians. Even though we lived in times with limited freedom, magazines with large circulations wrote about us. After my debut, there were a lot of reviews of my work. Today's generation unfortunately is deprived of this comfort. In addition, there is a general crisis of values – the criteria have been blurred. On the publishing market you can find everything. High culture is mixed with popular culture. Criticism was once used to introduce order, it taught the appropriate attitude to literature and was a point of reference. Now the ocean of mediocrity sweeps everything. The high standards are only maintained by universities and faculties of humanities. Fortunately, we still have excellent literary historians who write about literature.

The tendency of today is that young people more often write than read. But you seem to like this new generation as you always accept the offers to meet with them and talk to them in their schools.

Whenever I have free time, I meet them. Unfortunately, I often leave Poland. Nonetheless, such meetings are indeed important to me. I am very interested in what young people think about, the times in which they live, why they feel good or not, what they read or why they do not read. We happen to argue and have different opinions. But the most important thing is that we talk in person, not via the internet.

Is that why you wrote a text for a rapper?

While writing the text you are referring to I did not think that it would be performed by the eminent Polish rapper, Adam Ostrowski, also known as O.S.T.R. This decision was made in Kalisz, during the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the destruction of the city. This idea came from Adam Klocek, the director of the Philharmonic there. I really liked the performance; I did not think that I would make a debut with a rapper.

And if you were to make a debut today?

Oh, no! Today I would be a pianist.

Translated by Tomasz Gąssowski

Ewa Lipska is a Polish poet and writer.

Łukasz Wojtusik is a Polish journalist and radio reporter.
He is the head of the Kraków office of the radio programme TOK FM.

Enchanted Carriages

A conversation between Zośka Papużanka and Ziemowit Szczerek, two Kraków-based contemporary writers.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: You come from Radom. Why did you move to Kraków? You must like this city if you decided to live here.

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: I love Kraków. Overall, from Radom's perspective it always seemed to me that Galicia was different, a better part of Poland, like a Polish "West Germany". It was kind of an accident that my parents were living in Radom. They come from southern Poland, which means that Kraków, and not Warsaw, was their natural point of reference. And for me too Kraków became a better version of Poland. Thus, my Poland is the Poland from the bottom part of the map; and Kraków is the capital of that Poland. The north and east were always somewhat suspicious for me. The giant green blemish that was the Soviet Union on the map that hung over my bed as a child, the one I had endlessly stared at, had generated this feeling of suspicion in me. I had connected these northern and central parts of Poland, which included Radom and Warsaw, with the awful steadiness of this Soviet map. I had put Radom and Warsaw in one bag.

The other thing is that Kraków is indeed different; it is much calmer and less vulgar. I am not sure if that truly is the case or whether this is just my impression. Now, I am somewhat reformatting my understanding of Poland as I travel a lot these days and the eastern and northern parts are becoming closer to me. But Kraków is certainly where I feel comfortable and at home.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: I was born in Kraków and I have to admit that I am quite sentimental when it comes to this city. It is probably not very elegant to make such statements in our cosmopolitan times when people with great ease change cities, but the truth is that I would not like to leave for any other place. One of the very first poems that my mother taught me was "Zaczarowana dorożka" (The Enchanted Carriage) by Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński. I was probably four years old and I did not understand half of it, but I could feel that there was something important in this night walk through Kraków. I was walking down Szpitalna Street yesterday and I noticed that the small workshop of a man fixing fountain pens was no longer there. The workshop was run by an older gentleman who would sit in half-darkness and look at me calmly when I would explain that

something was wrong with one of my pens. I have written with a fountain pen all my life, and now that the pen workshop has been replaced with a bakery, I feel a certain loss inside me. This is how sentimental I get. Do you have such places in Kraków, places that go beyond the official symbols that we so typically associate with this city?

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: Yes, I do have such places too. They go beyond the city centre and can be found in Bronowice, near the Kościuszko Mound or around the Błonia field. All in all, I do not know why I prefer these places. Or to put it differently, I can feel why I do, but this "feeling" somehow does not make sense, hence I do not know…

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: There seems to be something about this city. That people like it but do not know why. And what about places connected with literature? Or art? When my friends would come here to study, they were so excited that they could go to Bracka Street, which Grzegorz Turnau had sung about, and they could come across a famous actor or writer. They were surprised that nobody was pointing to these famous people, nor whispering about them. Do you feel that on this map of Poland that you are now, as you said, discovering and reformatting, that Kraków has a special place in the realm of literature?

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: In Warsaw or in Międzyzdroje in the summer you can meet even more such famous people, but this face hunt is not something that turns me on. Kraków fits this image as a city of literature just as much as do other Polish cities: Nadarzyn, Toruń, Radom and Przemyśl. But there is one issue here: Kraków is much less trivial than Radom or Przemyśl. Here you can simply have a different lifestyle than you would have there. In Radom, with my style I would be considered a freak. I like to spend time in bars and that is not limited to one night but many nights. I like to wander around the city with my laptop, meandering about, not worrying that I don't have a permanent job. I do not have kids and no aspirations to own a Mercedes. Here, I am simply one of many and nobody pays attention to me. And that is why I like it here. I also know that a similar lifestyle would be accepted in Warsaw or Wrocław. The reason Kraków is different than other Polish cities is the fact that here Poland does not bother you as much as it does in other parts of the country. What I want to say is that when I am in other places and I leave my room, I see Poland but when I am in Kraków and I come outside I can see Kraków. And this is what I like about it. Is that what you see here too?

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: I see a city I want to return to. I am trying to travel as much as I can. I love travelling, but every time I come back to Kraków from a different place, a place which was beautiful, I think that Kraków can easily compete with them and I would not like its beauty to become an everyday thing for me.

I also do not think that its relationship with literature is the same as any other

city. I do not want to belittle other cities, but there must be something special about Kraków if so many writers and poets choose to live here. Czesław Miłosz, for example, chose Kraków as a place of residence in his old age. He could have chosen any other place in the whole world. Maybe this has to do with what you said; that in Kraków you can meet so many famous people and yet keep on living a normal life. You can be "somebody" and "nobody" at the same time.

You said that this is your lifestyle too and Kraków allows you to do that. I live a very different life. I have a permanent job and a family and I cannot spend so much time sitting in bars, but under no circumstances would I want to leave this city. To be honest, I was not surprised when Kraków was awarded the UNIESCO City of Literature title. And while here there are probably just as many topics and stories to write about as there are in other cities, the people are different for sure.

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: I also like to return here. Kraków is my place on earth and the part of my world's axis, but I would not be so certain that this is one of the most beautiful places in the world. It is pretty indeed, but let us not forget about proportions. It has a lot of Polishness to it with the billboards and the kitsch; this kind of beauty is, I would say, rather perverse. Again, I like it, but to call these "Polish elements" some kind of "beauty" is rather impossible.

When it comes to Kraków itself, an Italian once called it a city which "the Poles perceive as incredibly beautiful but which for an Italian does not present a high value". The same can be said about its literary values. I can see what I want to see here. Miłosz indeed moved here in his old age because – apparently – this is the "most beautiful Polish city" (by the way how do you measure that? Beauty, as we know, is in the "eye of the beholder") and a "culture capital". But you probably have no doubt about it that if he only could, he would have chosen Vilnius. But yes, I do like Kraków, even though I do not worship it – for me it is a private miracle. And all those enchanted carriages, I am not sure if I believe in them. OK, they may be wherever they want to be, but I have my own enchanted things.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: And I would say that I do believe in them. Maybe it is a matter of upbringing and me being sentimental. I was born here and I believe that the enchanted carriages have always been here. Our relationship with the city is probably a very subjective thing: for me it is difficult to objectively measure the beauty of the city to which I am so attached. But what about the literary Kraków? Do you think that this city is hermetically closed or rather open to, for example, new literary phenomena? You travel around the world, you see different things…what can you say about the literary nature of Kraków as compared to other cities?

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: Literary Kraków…what can I say about it? People come here, that is true, but these are

mostly students and when you have students then you have bars and when you have bars then you have a bohemian lifestyle and when you have a bohemian lifestyle, then you have writers.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: I understand what you are saying because you probably feel that you are part of this bohemia lifestyle. But this is not the only available model and this is what annoys me – this fin de siècle style of connecting writing with bohemia; if somebody is a writer then this person needs to participate in obligatory night crawls, be unhappy in love and drink absinthe. This is such a stereotypical picture and probably a bit outdated.

And this is what bothers me about my beloved Kraków. It is this almost fake artistic nature of the city, the fact that everybody here is an artist but they cannot simply and straightforwardly say what they are writing, painting or staging. They are only "creating art" or "making" a new book. Someone will record one CD, write two poems and they feel like they are artists right away, just misunderstood by others.

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: I do not feel like I am part of the bohemian life here. I just like to wander around and this has nothing to do with writing. I have always had this lifestyle as I dislike repetitiveness and predictability. And this is exactly why I like Kraków, as I feel comfortable here with this lifestyle of mine while somewhere else I probably would not feel so good. When it comes to this pseudo-artist talk, I agree it is laughable. There are bars here where you can early in the morning listen to such talks, but I hate that.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: But Kraków does offer a lot. There are many festivals and meetings here and events which are devoted to literature. There are music festivals, niche cinemas and sporting events. It is impossible to get bored and for sure there is plenty to choose from. This has its own pluses and minuses. The map of the city has changed a lot; you had your favourite place where you go for wine and then you realise that it is suddenly gone and has been replaced by a shoe shop or a pharmacy. It is difficult to find sense in all this. I am also happy that some places, related to the history of this city, are becoming more modern; for example, the underground museum. Kraków seems to be balancing between the need for modernity and its conservatism and it is still unclear what the outcome of this will be.

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: Kraków, I would say, is quite special as it offers the possibility not only of functioning in some framework, but also it offers the possibility to live outside a certain social system. There simply is room for people such as myself, who are not interested in performing social roles but want to live life outside society and not feel any unpleasant consequences as a result.

Kraków has its own character, its own atmosphere, and this is what I really like. It has its own style, not really a speedy one, but a calmer and more pleasant one and sometimes it can be a bit melancholic.

What is very important for me it is that it is deeply rooted in Central Europe.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: Kraków, being a city of literature as we recently like to call it, is not only a city of poets and writers but also a city of readers. I can see people reading books in parks, on trams, etc.

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: I believe that the cry over the drop in readership in Poland is a bit exaggerated. Indeed, the medium has changed, which means fewer people read books than was the case before, but we also need to keep in mind that nowadays the internet has become a place where literature has started to settle in. I am not sure if fewer people read internet portals than were reading newspapers. We all know what the internet is, but maybe it also has to go through growing pains and with time it will start generating more valuable stuff. Even today, there are valuable things on the internet.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: I agree that readership has moved from one medium to another and that is the way the world is and the direction it is going and we cannot change that. However, I also must admit that I have not yet used an electronic-reader and still prefer paper. In addition, I like books as objects. I cannot throw away old books, even those which I should have given away a long time ago. It is difficult to say goodbye to a book.

Readership data in Poland is drastic. Many people do not read at all, not even cookbooks. At least this is what the statistics tell us. But when I visit the book fair every year in Kraków, I see people waiting to meet their favourite authors or the crowds are so big that I cannot reach a stand of a certain publishing house, or I see people leave with bags of books; then I think that things are not so bad with the reading culture in Poland. And this is when I also think that Kraków is indeed a city of literature.

ZIEMOWIT SZCZEREK: I do not think of Kraków as a "literary city". I seek this "literary nature", if there even is such a thing, on my own. I look for inspiration. I also have difficulties with crowds and I am simply under the impression that slogans like "literary Kraków" are empty slogans as nobody has ever presented any data that in Kraków, statistically, more people read (or write) than elsewhere. And even if there were such data I would not make anything special out of it. My case is just like anybody else – I look for it on my own. Not with a group.

ZOŚKA PAPUŻANKA: And this is probably the only solution. You cannot read with a group. A relationship with a book is one-on-one. But in a city, willing or not, we have to live with others. NEE

Translated by Iwona Reichardt

Zośka Papużanka is a Kraków-based contemporary Polish writer best known for her book *Szopka* (*A Domestic Charade*) published in 2013.

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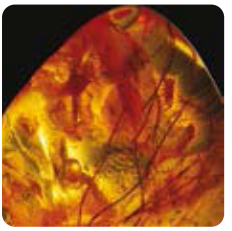
Gdańsk.

Culture of Freedom

Jazz Jantar Festival
4-16 November



GDAŃSK
city of freedom

Gdańsk Piano Autumn
14-21 November

Narracje Festival
15-16 November

SpaceFest!
5-6 December

City Christmas Fair
5-23 December

Actus Humanus Festival
8-14 December

All of Poland is Singing Carols
20 December