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New Eastern Europe

DAVID KRAMER This is not a new Cold War
MYKOLA RIABCHUK Russians need a European Ukraine

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

HOW UKRAINE HAS BECOME A TEST FOR GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS

ISSN 2083-7372

New Eastern Europe

NEW EASTERN EUROPE IS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN THREE POLISH PARTNERS

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The Centre was established in Gdańsk on November 8th 2007. Its new building was opened in 2014 on the anniversary of the August Accords signed in Gdańsk between the worker's union "Solidarność" and communist authorities in 1980. The Centre is meant to be an agora, a space for people and ideas that build and develop a civic society, a meeting place for people who hold the world's future dear. The mission of the Centre is to commemorate, maintain and popularise the heritage and message of the Solidarity movement and the anti-communist democratic opposition in Poland and throughout the world. Through its activities the Centre wants to inspire new cultural, civic, trade union, local government, national and European initiatives with a universal dimension.

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The Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe in Wrocław

The College of Eastern Europe is a non-profit, non-governmental foundation founded on February 9th 2001 by Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, a former head of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe and a democratic activist. The foundation deals with cooperation between the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. The aims if its charters are to carry out educational, cultural and publishing activities, and to develop programmes which enhance the transformation in the countries of Eastern Europe. The organisation has its headquarters in Wrocław, Poland, a city in western Poland, perfectly situated in the centre of Europe and with a deep understanding of both Western and Eastern Europe.

Dear Reader,

In early February 2015 the heads of four states (France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia) met in the capital of Belarus to once again attempt a ceasefire agreement that would put a stop to the violence raging in eastern Ukraine. At the time that this issue of *New Eastern Europe* went to print, it was still uncertain whether the second Minsk agreement, as it has become popularly known, would have a better fate than the one that was concluded in early September of 2014. What these two high level meetings have, nonetheless, highlighted is the fact that the relations between Russia and the West have indeed changed significantly.

Such sentiment is echoed in policy circles as well as among journalists and analysts who increasingly talk about a "new Cold War". Words of concern are also expressed by ordinary people, regardless of the side of the conflict, who see firsthand a change in their lives. Such situations naturally lead to numerous assumptions, not all of which are correct. That is why, in this issue we have asked David Kramer to respond to some common assertions about the current state of international relations. We present his answers in a newly created section called Doubletake.

Not surprisingly, changes in inter-state relations tend to have a direct effect on the countries that are nearest. One year of conflict can either destroy decades of dialogue-building and reconciliation or strengthen partnerships in ways that have not been thought of before. Considering these two scenarios we take a look at the current German-Polish relations and analyse how the situation in Ukraine has affected them. Our authors, most of whom are deeply involved in the Polish-German reconciliation process, present their reflections about the differences, but also the common ground, that these two countries have found throughout the last year.

In the spring of 2015 we also reflect on the situation in Crimea, one year after its annexation into the Russian Federation. Two journalists, Piotr Andrusieczko and Roman Osharov, reporting on the life on the peninsula present a complex picture of the situation on the ground that is often silenced as the main focus of the international community is naturally on Donbas.

Since the first issue we published in 2011 we have remained committed to covering all important issues that relate to our region. We are determined to continue this work in 2015, despite a significant reduction in the funding we received for this project. To find out about the numerous ways to support us, please check our website: www.neweasterneurope.eu or contact us directly at editors@neweasterneurope.eu.

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DOUBLETAKE: A New Cold War?

DAVID J. KRAMER

The West is now entering a rough period in its relations with Russia. We should not pretend that the Ukraine crisis is a minor blip on the radar screen; it is a huge development. Suddenly, the post-Cold War order was torn to shreds. Talk of a strategic partnership with Russia sounds like a thing of the past. But does this mean that we are now entering a new global order which some have called Cold War 2.0?

At the end of 2014 Mikhail Gorbachev wrote that he feared that the global order was now returning to that of the Cold War. "One primary reason," Gorbachev wrote, "is that the trust created by hard work and mutual effort in ending the Cold War has collapsed. Without such trust, peaceful international relations in today's globalised world are inconceivable." The reasoning behind Gorbachev's arguments is seen in "the events of the past few months" and "the consequences of short-sightedly seeking to impose one's will while ignoring the interests of one's partners."

The Russian aggression against Ukraine and the subsequent sanctions placed on Russia by both the European Union and the United States do illustrate at the very least a return to tense relations between Russia and the West. But how did we get here and where are we headed? Does this indeed mean that the global order that was in place during the Cold War is now returning completely, with an isolated Russia, proxy wars and spy scandals?

In the inaugural text of a new section called "Doubletake", *New Eastern Europe* asked David Kramer, a senior director at the McCain Institute for International Leadership and the former president of Freedom House, to respond to some popular

assertions regarding the current situation and answer the question: Are we really in a period of a new Cold War?

Assertion one: The extension of NATO membership in Central and Eastern Europe has forced Russia to respond; hence the West is at fault for bringing back the Cold War mentality.

It is absurd to argue that the West bears responsibility for bringing back the Cold War mentality. NATO enlargement has been carried out because countries that formerly fell under the Warsaw Pact or were part of the Soviet Union became free and independent states and wanted to join Euro-Atlantic institutions. No country in the West forced Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic or other countries to become NATO members. They wanted to join, just as they sought to become members of the European Union, because it gave them a sense of returning to the European fold, protection from outside threats (not necessarily from Russia at the time they joined), and incentive to undertake difficult reforms. NATO's decades-old open-door policy made their joining possible, even desirable, but at no point were countries threatened if they did not join. The only pressure they faced was from Russia to *not* join.

Mark Kramer, director of the Cold War Studies Project at Harvard University (and in the interest of full disclosure, one of my brothers), wrote an important article in *The Washington Quarterly* in 2009 debunking the notion that NATO pledged to Russia that it would not enlarge in exchange for Russian agreement on the reunification of Germany. His article is an important contribution in rejecting the idea that the Clinton Administration reneged on commitments made by the Bush Administration, which at that time was negotiating over the reunification of Germany.

He wrote that "the purpose here has simply been to determine whether Russian and western observers and officials are justified in arguing that the US government, and perhaps some of the other NATO governments, made a 'pledge' to Gorbachev in 1990 that if the USSR consented to Germany's full membership in NATO after unification, the alliance would not expand to include any other East European countries. Declassified materials show unmistakably that no such pledge was made. Valid arguments can be made against NATO enlargement, but this particular argument is spurious."

Some argue that to address the current crisis between Ukraine and Russia, Ukraine should rule out seeking to join NATO and remain neutral. Michael O'Hanlon and Jeremy Shapiro made this case in the *Washington Post* in December 2014, essentially calling for giving Vladimir Putin a veto over anything the European Union and NATO would do vis-à-vis Russia's neighbours and consigning Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and other countries in the region to a Russian sphere of influence.

No more NATO enlargement, they argue, and any EU relationship with Ukraine would have to receive Moscow's approval and not interfere with Russia's Eurasian Economic Union project.

Yet countries join the Eurasian Economic Union because they face tremendous Russian pressure to do so. On the other hand, they join the EU and NATO because they want to and see it as being in their nations' best interests. Moreover, NATO enlargement was not an issue that factored into Putin's decision to invade Ukraine. To justify his invasion, Putin fabricated stories that Russian-speakers and ethnic Russians, first in Crimea and then in eastern Ukraine, were under threat after Viktor Yanukovych's departure. In reality, no such threats existed. In the early phase of the invasion, Putin did not cite NATO enlargement as a reason for Russia's move – in large part because nobody was discussing the idea of Ukraine joining the Alliance.

Thus, NATO enlargement had nothing to do with Putin's decision. It only became a factor cited by western analysts like O'Hanlon and Shapiro who blame enlargement for many of the current problems between Putin's Russia and the West, when, in fact, the source of tensions between the West and Russia lies with the nature of the Putin regime.

Ukraine's membership in NATO is a far-off possibility, to the extent that it exists at all, but Putin's aggression against Ukraine has produced recent survey results showing, for the first time, a small majority of Ukrainians wanting to join NATO. How demoralising would it be to Ukrainians for NATO, on top of already refusing to provide Ukraine with the military means to defend itself against further Russian attacks, to announce that it is shutting its door, too? Putin would read such a decision as open season on Ukraine and other non-NATO neighbours.

To justify his way of governing, Putin has needed to perpetuate the myth that the West, and the United States in particular, represent a threat to Russia. As far back as his speech following the Beslan hostage crisis in 2004 and continuing with his Munich speech in 2007, Putin has hyped the threat from outside powers. NATO enlargement was cited in the 2010 Military Doctrine as the greatest military danger, a theme repeated in the newly released Military Doctrine that Putin approved in December 2014.

Russia's most secure, stable borders are with countries that belong to NATO and/or the European Union. It is utter nonsense that NATO, a defensive organisation, is a threat to Russia. Instead, Putin's Russia is a grave threat to its immediate neighbours, to the West and to global stability more broadly. The true dangers for Russia lie in the south and east – and within its own borders, from the Putinist system itself.

Assertion two: A Cold War can be characterised by a clear distinction between two competing ideologies, often through proxy wars or conflicts. The current conflict

with Russia is an extension of a conflict of two ideologies played out on the geopolitical arena (e.g. in Ukraine).

I do not find comparisons to the current crisis and the Cold War useful and do not agree that the latest situation is a "New Cold War". The Cold War was a unique confrontation between two ideologically different powers, one being the Soviet communist system and the other the democratic West. The Soviet system collapsed and the western model prevailed. This is not to sound the trumpet of victory but to state the simple fact that when the Soviet Union fell apart and lost its satellites, it is impossible to deny that it lost the Cold War. The current Putinist system is not an updated version of the Soviet Union, even though Putin famously has declared that the collapse of the USSR was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century".

Vladimir Putin's ideology is to stay in power no matter what.

The current situation is more complicated. Putin's ideology is to stay in power no matter what. He is willing to play the nationalist card to do so, if that suits his purposes, but he is more opportunistic when it comes to real Russian nationalism than a true hard-core believer. His talk about Russia as the protector of traditional values also seems contrived. It is more a play to Russian populism than a platform from which he espouses an alternative model.

Putin cannot afford to surrender power and has become a kind of hostage to his own system. This is why he cannot tolerate real elections, serious opposition and criticism, or even the emergence of genuine civil society movements. Opposition to him, he believes, must be driven from outside forces and thus to deal with that threat, he has implemented the "foreign agent" legislation and is even considering new legislation that would enable authorities to close down foreign organisations operating in Russia that are deemed "undesirable". Putin refuses to believe that populations either in Russia or in neighbouring states are able, on their own, to rise up and demand better, more accountable governance.

For Putin, what happened in Ukraine between November 2013 and February 2014 – where a thoroughly corrupt leader was driven from office by millions of frustrated Ukrainians demanding a more accountable, western-oriented leadership – was a nightmare, worse than the Orange Revolution in 2004. Were Ukraine and the other countries along Russia's borders to move towards closer ties with the EU and demand more democratic and rule-of-law based governing structures, Russians might have wanted the same thing. And given the terribly corrupt and increasingly authoritarian system that Putin had built up over a decade-and-a-half, nothing threatens the paranoid Putin's grip on power more than seeing his neighbours break free as truly independent states able to determine their own orienta-

tion and become a possible alternative model for Russians (especially in the case of Ukraine). In other words, this is less about ideology than it is about alternative and attractive models that would threaten the Putinist system.

Putin sees movements calling for liberalisation and democracy and against corruption and authoritarianism as threats to his own grip on power. When Putin's partner in crime in Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, fled power, Putin decided to invade his neighbour so that Russians would not get the idea that they could produce a similar result in Moscow. By first invading and annexing Crimea with stealth forces and then moving into and occupying eastern parts of Ukraine, a country of 46 million people, Putin sent a clear signal that attempts to democratise, liberalise, and integrate more closely with western institutions like the EU would be stopped. Moscow would decide what was best for Ukrainians, Georgians, Moldovans, and others, denying them the right to choose their own destiny. And the West, Putin believed, would do nothing in response.

To some extent, Putin was right. The West was slow to understand the gravity of the threat Russia posed to European security and to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and other countries. European countries in particular were reluctant to lose business opportunities in Russia and feared a tough response would heighten tensions, for which none on the continent had an appetite. Moreover, the West had done very little after Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, and the Obama administration came to office five months later eager to "reset" relations with Moscow. Putin undoubtedly thought he could get away with the same thing, this time with Ukraine.

But instead of halting Ukraine's westward shift, Putin has accelerated it, albeit unintentionally. Ukraine, while still riven with huge challenges, has never been more united – thanks to Putin. The December 23rd 2014 vote in the parliament (303 to 10) in favour of revoking Ukraine's "non-aligned" status and increasing co-operation with NATO was a huge rebuke to the Russian leader and never would have happened had Putin left Ukraine alone. Similarly, the leaders of Belarus and Kazakhstan, founding members of the Eurasian Economic Union, visited Kyiv in December to express support for Ukraine, worried that they could be next on Putin's hit list. Instead of winning over his neighbours, Putin is repelling them – and badly damaging Russia's standing and national interests in the process.

Instead of halting Ukraine's westward shift, Putin has accelerated it, albeit unintentionally.

Assertion three: A new Cold War would mean the further deconstruction of mutual interdependencies. The majority of ties with Russia will be eventually broken and Russia will become isolated from the West, economically, politically and socially.

To be clear, it is Putin who is isolating Russia from the West, not the other way around. Sanctions would have never been imposed on Russia had it not invaded Ukraine. Indeed, the policy of the West over the past two-plus decades has been to seek to integrate Russia more closely into the global community, whether through inclusion in the G8 and the World Trade Organisation or through NATO-Russia and EU-Russia channels. The "reset" policy of the Obama administration was an effort to work more closely with Russia on a range of issues and the fact that it was articulated so soon after Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 underscored the interest on the American side to put the Georgia conflict in the past. At the same time, it arguably gave Putin the impression that he could get away with invading a neighbour without paying a significant price.

Talk of a strategic partnership with Russia is a thing of the past. Despite the efforts of some in the West to stress that the US-Russia relationship is too important

to allow the clash over Ukraine to get in the way, most policymakers and analysts have concluded that the bilateral relationship will never be the same, that the reset is over and not to be revived, and that as long as Putin is in charge in the Kremlin, the ability of the West to work with Russia is very limited. There are some who want to return to a business-as-usual approach, especially in Europe, but from the shoot-down of the Malaysian Airliner in July 2014 to renewed fighting in Ukraine's east in early 2015, Putin makes it virtually impossible to do so.

That said, just as we worked with the Soviet Union on arms control agreements at the same time that the United States passed the Jackson-Vanik legislation in the 1970s (which denied "most favoured nation" status to certain countries, like the Soviet Union, with non-market economies that restricted emigration – editor's note), we can find some areas where the West and Russia can work together, whether on non-proliferation, North Korea, or Iran. But we should keep our expectations very low and remember that Putin thrives on building up the West, and the US in particular, as a threat to Russia. In the end, he is limiting his own country's ability to work with the West.

An isolated Russia is not in the West's interests, but the West can only go so far in indicating its readiness to work together.

An isolated Russia is not in our interests. But the West can only go so far in indicating its readiness to work together when there is little reciprocation from the other side. We are in for a rough period in relations with Russia, and we should not pretend that the Ukraine crisis is a minor blip on the radar screen. It is a very big development which undermined the Helsinki Accords of 1975, the Paris Charter of 1990, the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 as well as other agreements and commitments that had kept peace in Europe – with the exception of the Balkans – since the end of the Second World War.

Suddenly, the post-Cold War order was torn to shreds. Putin's authoritarian Russia poses an enormous challenge not only to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity but to the liberal world. Will the West rise to the challenge presented by Putin? Or will it attach more importance to preserving good ties with Russia at Ukraine's expense? Much depends on the answer to those questions.

David J. Kramer is a senior director for human rights and democracy at the McCain Institute for International Leadership in Washington, DC. He previously served as the president of Freedom House as well as a former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor in the George W. Bush Administration.

Emancipation from the East Slavonic Ummah

MYKOLA RIABCHUK

A European Ukraine would inevitably force Russians to develop a modern national identity which is much more suitable for today's world of nation-states and compatible with modern liberal-democratic values. However, with the legacy of Kyivan Rus' Ukraine also remains a crucial part of Russian imperialistic mythology and imagination.

Ten years ago, in the wake of the spectacular Orange Revolution, quite a few authors mulled over the possibility of success for Ukrainian reforms and their decisive impact on Russia's subsequent transformation. The belief was largely based on the fact that many Russians perceived Ukraine as a kindred nation to whom it was much closer, in cultural and civilisational terms, than to any other post-communist neighbour and which, therefore, was far more relevant and acceptable as a role model. Dmitri Trenin, a liberal Russian intellectual and the director of the Carnegie Center in Moscow, succinctly expressed this view when he emphasised the supposed attractiveness of a European Ukraine that is democratic and successfully modernised as a model for his compatriots. Back in 2007 Trenin wrote that: "The process of Ukraine's European integration (initially and for a long time in the form of 'more Europe in Ukraine'), and its eventual outcome ('Ukraine in Europe') will be good news to Russia. Russian isolationists will have far fewer arguments for a special Russian way … A Ukraine that is committed to modern European values

and speaks Russian with confidence could become a force for good in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia … Ukraine's potential strength lies in what Russia has so far been unable to use, i.e. soft power."

Break free of Putinism

The flip side of the attractiveness that a European Ukraine could have for many Russians was the loathing that Russian authoritarian, ardently anti-western and anti-European rulers felt for it. In the last ten years this hatred has apparently played a role in the subversive activities of various Russian agencies vis-a-vis Ukraine, which culminated in 2014 with the direct military invasion of Crimea and a large-scale hybrid war in Donbas.

The ultimate goal of the entire adventure, as Russian expert Igor Torbakov argues, was the rescue of Putinism – a system in which "power is wielded by a narrow, tight-knit group of people who cannot be easily removed from power, the rule of law does not exist, the legislature is a rubber-stamp in nature and there is no genuine space for political and economic competition. Ukraine's attempt to break free of the Putinist system and build a more competitive framework in its place poses a mortal challenge to the master of the Kremlin. Keeping this in mind, it is not so surprising that Putin responded to Kyiv's challenge with reckless brinkmanship."

A democratic and European Ukraine as a template for Russian development explains the attitude that is held in Russia in regards to Ukraine's attempts at democratisation and Europeanisation.

The view of a democratic and European Ukraine as a desirable (or highly undesirable) template for Russian development largely explains the attitude that is held in Russia by various actors in regards to Ukraine's attempts at democratisation and Europeanisation. This, however, does not reveal a much more important and ground-breaking consequence of such a possible change: namely, that a European Ukraine which is fully integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures and institutions would inevitably force Russians to reconsider their archaic and quasi-imperial identity based on a number of outdated myths and "invented traditions." It would further force them to develop a modern national identity which is much more suitable for today's world of nation-states and more compatible with modern liberal-democratic and anthropocentric values.

However, the truth is also that, with its legacy of Kyivan Rus' and some other elements of historical symbolism, Ukraine remains a crucial part of the Russian

imperialistic mythology and imagination. Furthermore, it will continue to remain a "sublime object of desire" for too many Russians until it crosses the point of no-return, becoming firmly institutionalised in Euro-Atlantic structures, graphically symbolised by NATO and EU membership.

The ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, euphemistically defined as a "crisis", marks the beginning rather than the end of a painful and painstaking process of emancipation of both nations from a pre-modern "imagined community" of Eastern Slavs (the medieval Slavia Orthodoxa), reinvigorated and over-politicised today in a highly ambiguous concept of *Russkiy mir*. Ukrainians, for a number of reasons, are more advanced in this emancipation process, while many other Slavic nations – like the Russians (or, even more, the Belarusians) – still bear to a certain degree some sort of quasi-religious identity that is highly conductive to holding essentially pre-modern, non-civic values and engaging in patrimonial and clientelistic relations. This type of identity was formed as a result of a specific imperial discourse and emerged from certain practices. It was supported, in modified forms, by the dominant power brokers in all three countries which resisted a radical de-Sovietisation of their fiefdoms, mainly because they felt that the unmaking of Soviets – or imperial, heavily mythologised "Orthodox Slavs" – into Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians meant, more than anything else, a remaking of the obedient quasi-feudal subjects into free and self-confident citizens.

Thus, the promotion of overarching civic identities in all three countries should be an urgent task for reformers as it is the only way to facilitate much-needed modernisation. This, however, requires a full understanding of how local pre-modern identities – a kind of Orthodox-Slavonic "ummah" – have been historically constructed, and what discourses support them today. The process stems roughly from the turn of the 17th century when the development of a modern Russian (as well as Ukrainian and Belarusian) identity was effectively derailed by some westernised Ukrainian intellectuals, mostly clerics, who were engaged by Peter the Great in his project of empire building. It was they who "rediscovered" an imaginary connection between the Moscow tsardom and Kyivan Rus'. The European idea of *translatio imperii* (in English: transfer of rule – a concept used for describing history as a linear succession of an empire that invests power in a singular ruler – editor's note) was quite common among the inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They would invoke it to assert their special role and therefore status within the new political reality that emerged after a part of Ukraine had broken away from Poland and made an alliance with Muscovy. The idea of the Little Rus' (Ukraine) and the Great Rus' (Russia) was invented as a clear historical and symbolical analogy of the Little Greece as Greece proper and the Greater Greece as a vast territory of Greek Mediterranean colonisation. This meant granting Ukrainians central status within

the newly born empire and bestowing upon their land a special symbolical role as the cradle of Russian/Rus' civilisation.

An antiquated model

This Greek-style model, however, was soon reversed, and *realpolitik* predictably took the upper hand over historical symbolism. The Great Rus' naturally became the central part of the empire, whereas the Little Rus' was downgraded to the status of its provincial appendage. The myth of the "Kievan Russia" proved to be harmful not only for the Belarusians and the Ukrainians, whose existence as separate nationalities it simply denied (and who, to various degrees, internalised a Russian perspective of themselves); but also for the Russians, whose development into a modern nation was significantly slowed down.

In the modern world, the "continuity" myth appeared as highly anachronistic. It over-emphasised and established for decades to come the religious, Eastern Orthodox identity of Eastern Slavs as a basis of their quasi-national unity. It also introduced the dynastic ties between the Kyivan dukes and the Moscow tsars as the main institutional legitimisation of the Russian state. Little if any room was left for modern civic identity and modern state institutions to evolve within this rigid and antiquated model. With some reservations, it can be compared to the Islamic *ummah*, a spiritual community of true believers. As a matter of fact, a better analogy that could be used here for "Slavia Orthodoxa" was the Western European concept of "Pax Christiana," with the main difference being that "Pax Christiana" was never nationalised anywhere in Europe and no national identity in modern Europe was ever fused primordially with "Pax Christiana".

The deconstruction of the Kiyvan Rus' myth is crucial for the development of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus.

Such imaginary belonging and anachronistic loyalties complicate, rather than facilitate, the development of modern national identities and nation-state building. The deconstruction of the myth of "Kievan Russia" as a sort of "invented tradition" seems to be of paramount importance for the successful development of all three nations – Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. However, in the case of Russians it looks especially crucial and problematic. The myth reinforces, and is still reinforced by, some very strong anti-western forces that emphasise the deeply-rooted "otherness" of the mythical East Slavonic/Eurasian civilisation. It rejects western values and institutions, including the notions of human rights, civic national identity and the liberal-democratic nation-state as a viable alternative to pre-modern patrimonial

empire. The East Slavonic/Orthodox Christian *ummah* is particularly instrumental in this rejection and the preservation of pre-modern structures, customs and institutions. Thus, the centuries-old controversy between the Slavophiles and the Westernisers is just a certain reflection of a more fundamental clash of civilisations and identities in modern Russia – but also, to various degrees, in modern Ukraine and Belarus.

An uneasy emancipation

Ukraine seems to be the most advanced in the process of emancipation from the East Slavonic *ummah* and in the construction of its modern national identity. The country's recurrent revolutionary attempts to detach itself from Eurasia and verge toward Europe are just a part of the process. There are many reasons for this dissent, starting with a political culture to which Ukraine had been for centuries exposed, before it fell under the Russian autocracy, and that was distinctly different from that of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, to the peculiar nationalising impact of western Ukraine that has never belonged to Russia and has never internalised the Slavic Orthodox and, eventually, Soviet identity.

Without a doubt, the current situation in Ukraine has many ramifications, both at the domestic and international level. Among other things, it means a deep crisis of Russian-Ukrainian relations, with the unsolved identity problem at its core. Consequently, on the one hand, we can notice that Ukraine's increasing detachment from the East Slavonic *ummah* for the sake of the Europeanisation process goes hand-in-hand with the forging of a modern civic national identity. On the other hand, we also see an increasing Russian attachment to the antiquated concept of the East Slavonic/Orthodox Christian *ummah* in the crude and highly reactionary political form of *Russkiy mir*. However, the process of nation building, which the Ukrainians have started to increasingly interpret in modern and constructivist terms, is still stubbornly represented by the Muscovites in the primordial terms of "blood and soil", common language and culture, religious faith and "traditional" values. This indicates a deliberate ignorance of the civic nature of the Ukrainian nation and imposes an outdated ethno-linguistic matrix upon both Russia and Ukraine. This is the case because, as Pavel Kazarin a columnist of the reputable Moscow-based *Novaya Gazeta*, aptly remarks, "to describe Ukraine in political categories would mean recognising the specific values upon which the nation is built. And this may lead to a highly unpleasant comparison of the values in both countries."

A revolution of values

The EuroMaidan Revolution – or the "Revolution of Dignity" as many Ukrainians popularly call the last year's protests in Kyiv – was first and foremost about values, not identities. More precisely, it was about identities, but only to the extent that they are value-based. Igor Torbakov, a leading expert on Russian-Ukrainian relations, rightly points out that the notion of identity cannot and should not be reduced to "ethnicity and/or language or to the ways the past is remembered and represented". It also includes a highly important "axiological dimension" that is "the value system that is upheld by social groups or the society at large". Therefore, he argues, "it is precisely in the realm of the axiology, not ethnicity, that the identity conflict between Ukraine and Russia is currently taking place."

The war in eastern Ukraine, despite its ugly face and some deadly aspects, has paradoxically created a window of opportunity for the Ukrainian government to move ahead with much-needed and badly-delayed reforms. It also provides an answer to the underlying question that all previous Ukrainian leaders opportunistically tried to avoid, namely: who we are, what kind of nation do we want to build, and to which civilisation would we like to belong? The Russian aggression, as Tatiana Zhurzhenko, a Russian-speaking scholar from the borderland city of Kharkiv, remarks, "catalysed the creation of a political nation. The Ukrainian identity which for so long had been associated with ethnicity, language and historical memory, suddenly became territorial and political and thus inclusive. … For the Russian-speaking urban middle class, along with small and medium-sized business owners and the intellectual elite in the east, Russia's anti-democratic tendencies, its self-isolation and its growing hostility towards the West make it easier to identify with a (potentially) European Ukraine."

There are no signs that Russia is coming to terms with Ukraine's cultural distinctness and political sovereignty.

On the opposite side, however, there are no signs that the Russians are coming to terms with Ukraine's cultural distinctness and political sovereignty, thereby moving forward from 19th century imperial geopolitics to 21st century civic identities and modern values. In his recent national address, Russian President Vladimir Putin once again justified the annexation of Crimea in historical and ideological terms, referring to the land as "the spiritual source of the formation of a multifaceted but monolithic Russian nation and a centralised Russian state", and supplementing Stalin's notion of a nation with some quasi-religious and primordial arguments: "In addition to an ethnic similarity, a (common) language, common elements of material culture, a common territory unmarked by stable borders, and nascent common economic

activity and princely rule, Christianity proved to be a powerful spiritual unifying force that helped include very different blood tribes and tribal unions of the extensive eastern Slavic world in the formation of a single Russian nation and the creation of common statehood. And it was on this spiritual soil that our forefathers for the first time and forever became conscious of themselves as a single people."

Even scholars who are not aware of the subtle differences between Rus' and Russia which, as a matter of fact, are nearly as significant as those between ancient Rome and today's Romania, would be surprised to learn that the "single Russian nation" and "common statehood" date back to the 10th century. In this context, even more striking is the absence of a traditional space for the "fraternal" Ukrainian and Belarusian people, let alone for the native people of Crimea – the Crimean Tatars; who held their own state in the peninsula until the late 18th century. Here, it seems that not only justice or common sense, but even scholarly truth, fell victim to the political expedience. Thus, it is difficult not to agree with the sarcastic remark of the American scholar, Alexander Motyl who poignantly wrote: "This is nothing more than a rehashed version of the Muscovite imperial notion of Moscow as the Third Rome. This is crazy stuff, especially in the 21st century, but the good news is that, when dictators seek legitimacy in religion, it usually means they know they are weak and need succour from outside."

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War is not an Excuse

KATERYNA KRUK

There is one thing we EuroMaidaners have learnt: we have already paid the highest price; now we have no right to slow down or give up. In order to avoid a new wave of protests, the authorities need to stop wasting time and using the war as an excuse.

It was mid-January 2014 in revolutionary Kyiv. The EuroMaidan Revolution was in full swing, gathering hundreds of thousands on Independence Square. I was standing next to two men and, while trying to connect to the internet, I overheard their conversation.

"I have déjà vu," the first man said. "Every single week they speak about the same. For God's sake, we know the situation is bad! Tell us how to deal with it!"

"Did you expect anything else?" the second man replied. "They do not care about us; they are just the same as those on Bankova (the street where the presidential administration is situated). To be honest, I do not believe they want to change anything, they are a part of the system".

"True, but what can we do?" said the first man, "wait till they come up with a plan or stop coming?"

"No, let's stay. We are here not for them, but for our Maidan," the second man concluded.

It has been more than a year since this conversation took place, but it still explains very well how Ukrainians perceive politicians: with a lack of trust and a clear division between "us" and "them". One year after the Maidan, despite having a new pro-European elite with EuroMaidan roots, Ukrainians still do not entirely trust politicians and analyse their actions with a large dose of scepticism. Unfortunately, the present authorities provide many reasons for society's dissatisfaction.

Sad truth

The EuroMaidan Revolution has proved that civil society in Ukraine is not only vital, but is way ahead of our politicians. I still have a feeling that most Ukrainian politicians have not learnt the lessons of the Maidan and do not understand that life "as it was before" will never be possible again. If they did, they would stop playing with words and finally start acting. But the sad truth is that we see more loud words and nice gestures than real actions. What disappoints me most of all is that the old habits and old patterns against which the EuroMaidan had gathered are still cultivated by those who gained power thanks to this revolution.

The old habits and old patterns, which the EuroMaidan had fought against, are still being cultivated by those who gained power thanks to the Maidan.

I think everyone remembers the way deputies voted for the scandalous dictatorship laws on January 16th 2014. Most of the observers focused on the "show of hands" and the violation of the voting procedure, but that was not the only peculiar thing about that day in the parliament. Deputies did not receive the text of the proposed law and were simply told to vote for whatever will be presented! It is hard to imagine, yet one year later the pro-European and post-EuroMaidan parliament did exactly the same thing: deputies voted for a document which they had no chance to read or analyse. This time it was not just a set of laws, but the budget for the country on the brink of default and engaged in an ongoing war. The session of parliament lasted the whole night and at 4.30 am, Volodymyr Hroisman, the speaker of the parliament, announced that voting for the 2015 budget would take place. The deputies were told that they were voting for the budget with all the changes agreed on by representatives of the factions, but no one had seen the changes or the final version of the budget itself. And, despite the promises made by Prime Minister Aresiny Yatsenyuk, weeks have gone by without the public seeing the full version of the budget either.

Another worrying tradition that seems to be maintained from the previous regime is the way the government and the president treat the parliament. I would even risk saying that Ukraine does not have an independent legislative branch of power. Every single time an important vote is about to take place, President Petro Poroshenko arrives at the parliament and delivers a speech. This might look very nice for the TV screens, i.e. joint efforts in making important decisions, but as time goes by it evokes memories of the visits by Viktor Yanukovych to the parliament during the EuroMaidan. Moreover, meetings of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc take place at the presidential administration. Poroshenko seems to be using his

Photo: Wojciech Koźmic

In order to avoid a new wave of protests, the authorities need to stop wasting time and using the war as an excuse. We all understand that it is hard to introduce reforms right now. But we also know that postponing them is not an answer.

authority and the fact that he controls the largest party in the parliament to "push" through decisions he wants.

This has already taken place twice. The first time was before the vote for the new cabinet of ministers, when many deputies were against the creation of the ministry of information, and the second was before the vote for the budget. In both cases the position of the faction was different from the president's wishes, and in both cases the faction changed its mind. Yet, with the memories of a parliament controlled by Yanukovych still fresh in our minds, these situations can be seen as worrying signs that old habits die hard.

Great responsibility

In the democratic, modern European state that we want to build, there is no place for exploiting parliament, blackmailing it and pushing through decisions it is otherwise against. Parliament must be a place where legislative acts are proposed, debated and voted for, but not a place where decisions are made behind closed doors. It is sad to see that post-EuroMaidan politicians have made no steps in changing

parliament from being a "bargaining centre" into a fully independent branch of power. Without any doubt, the deputies have to try to secure their position and their independence and not allow themselves to be treated as simply "boys who press buttons". And this is where there is a great responsibility for the president and the prime minister, who are also leaders of the two biggest parties: to break the Rada's vicious circle of being treated as an institution of secondary importance.

The aforementioned situations are examples of a worrying misuse of power by the highest authorities in Ukraine. But they also have another dimension which directly leads us to an understanding of why so many people in Ukraine are dissatisfied with the present authorities and the lack of reforms. Let us take a look at Kyiv's "governmental quarter". Arseniy Yatsenyuk is a pro-European prime minister, one of the key political leaders of the EuroMaidan and the leader of the second largest political party in the present Rada. Petro Poroshenko is a pro-European president whose status was achieved thanks to the EuroMaidan. He is the leader of the biggest party in the parliament. The present government is popularly called "the best government Ukraine has ever had" and includes technocrats, foreigners and representatives of the ruling coalition. The Ukrainian parliament consists of 423 deputies (due to the annexation of Crimea and war in the east), among whom 305 are members of the pro-European coalition. It is also worth mentioning that the only real opposition party to the governing coalition has only 40 seats in the parliament and consists of former members of Yanukovych's Party of Regions.

In other words, the Ukrainian authorities have carte blanche to reform and rule the country. The only obstacle they might have is a lack of political will and in my opinion this is precisely why we still do not see any reforms. How else can Yatsenyuk's speech during his meeting with director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development be explained? After nine months of being prime minister, Yatsenyuk stated that "we should stop talking and finally introduce the reforms that are so badly needed for Ukraine's economy". It is rather strange to hear these words from the person who is directly responsible for introducing said reforms.

Time to act

Some may say that there is another obvious reason why the Ukrainian government does not introduce reforms – it is engaged in the war in the east. Undoubtedly, the crisis in the east, which quickly led to a Russian invasion, absorbs the time and attention of all Ukrainian politicians. It is true that Ukraine has to deal with foreign aggression and conduct an undeclared war, which can be paralysing for a young state that has never before experienced such a conflict. But the truth also

is that the conflict is paralysing only for the state structures, and not for the civil society. People in Ukraine understand the complications of the situation. Many have already suffered terrible losses. Constant worrying news from the front and fear of further aggression has created a very particular mood in the society which leads to a very simple and logical assumption: in order to save the country we need to act, not to hide from our problems.

Now our actions need to focus on Ukraine's two biggest problems: the war in the east and corruption throughout the whole country. However, while the society tries very hard to do whatever they can to help the soldiers fighting in the east (and are quite successful at it), combatting corruption is impossible without the state's involvement and intervention. The biggest threat of corruption is that it undermines state structures and erodes relations between the state and its citizens. Therefore, if Ukrainian civil society wages a war against corruption without the state's assistance, it will lead to the total failure of the Ukrainian state as it is now and give way to *Makhnovshchyna* (a state of anarchy protected only by militias) that will result in a total loss of control for Kyiv. A high level of corruption leads to a lack of trust in public administration and that is why without co-operation between the state and the activists it will be impossible to change this situation and restore trust and respect for public institutions.

Without co-operation between the state and civil society it will be impossible to restore trust and respect for public institutions.

Right now the Ukrainian authorities have a unique opportunity: a society which is waiting for reforms and is ready to fully support the government. If this moment is lost, we may never again find ourselves in a situation in which the public has such a clear understanding of the need for deep and painful reforms. Quite surprisingly, this understanding has been provided by the war. Thus, instead of using the war as an excuse for every failure to act or postponement of action, the Ukrainian government should use the moment of solidarity and political mobilisation in Ukraine to start the process of reforming the state. Understandably, Ukrainians are becoming fed up with the excuse that "things are as they are because of the war". However, if this time we again do nothing in regards to corruption, it will destroy Ukraine from the inside and will thwart all our hopes of becoming a European state.

Unprecedented opportunities

I myself try to understand why the situation in Ukraine is developing in this rather worrisome direction. Behind my criticism is a genuine wish to make things

work, to make Ukraine successful; so that the EuroMaidan Revolution and the lives it took were not in vain. This is the reasoning of most Ukrainian activists. We are not devoted to a party or group of politicians, but to ideas of democracy and the EuroMaidan. But if we want to cure the disease, we first have to correctly diagnose it. And here I repeat: the EuroMaidan caused a change in Ukrainian society, but not in the state structures. The state apparatus does not want reform because the system developed by previous governments allows easy access to money and resources; it provides unrestricted power and the possibility of control. It is obvious that the authorities do not want to introduce reforms that will limit their power.

The two post-EuroMaidan governments had unprecedented opportunities to reform, but made no use of them. This is especially true for the first two months of the coalition government, before the crisis in the east developed into war. The configuration of power, the civil engagement and the fresh memories of EuroMaidan victims created perfect conditions for massive reforms. But as time goes by, it has become harder to introduce these reforms. Moreover, if the authorities continue to make only cosmetic changes, solely talk about the difficult situation, and at the same time work in old corruption patterns, then new protests will be just a question of time.

The EuroMaidan helped Ukrainians understand that they are powerful; they will not hesitate to confront the authorities again in the future.

The EuroMaidan helped Ukrainians understand that they are powerful and that is why we will not hesitate to confront the authorities in the future. The most gruesome scenario would be if the present authorities, who were brought to power by the EuroMaidan protesters, were to use force against similar protests in the future. Though there is always a chance it could happen, I hope it will remain the darkest and the least likely scenario. Yet in order to avoid a new wave of protests, the authorities need to stop wasting time and stop using the war as an excuse. We all understand that it is hard to introduce reforms right now. But we also know that postponing them is not an answer. Just the opposite, it will make it even harder to stabilise the economy and then shake it again with unpopular reforms.

There are some voices in the society that say we should trust our new authorities and be patient. However, facts (and experience) show that those in the government do not need our patience, they only want our silence. As gruesome as it sounds it does not mean that the situation in Ukraine is as bad as it was under the Yanukovych regime. We have new, uncorrupted politicians, support from our foreign partners, new ideas and a vital civil society. I believe that right now the synchronised work of civil society and foreign partners is the only way to push the government on the

road to reform. There are two things that Yatsenyuk and Poroshenko desperately need: foreign financial support and the support of civil activists.

Let us be also clear about one thing: if we do not see new reforms taken soon, we will have to prepare for yet another Maidan, which this time might not restrict itself to passive protest, but take a form of a wild decentralisation of the country which will lead to the total loss of Kyiv's control over the regions. As someone who was among the thousands of protesters witnessing the brutality of the previous regime, I do not want to see more victims and clashes. But there is one thing we EuroMaidaners have learnt: we have already paid the highest price; now we have no right to slow down or give up. I genuinely wish that our authorities will finally understand this lesson for the sake of Ukraine's future.

Back in January 2014 following the conversation I overheard, I soon went closer to the stage and lost sight of the two men. In the few weeks that followed, I heard more and more similar opinions, so the clashes on Hrushevskoho Street and the clear refusal to follow politicians' orders did not surprise me. The protesters made it clear: we are ready to fight for our country, even without leaders, even against leaders that will try to stop us; the fight is not about a new president or a new prime minister, the fight is for a new Ukraine. We want to change Ukraine into a democratic, modern, European state and we will never be charmed by politicians again. We are fighting not for them, but for our country and its future.

This is exactly the same sentiment I gathered from that second man, who I quoted earlier. A few weeks later, I saw this man on TV and found out his name; he was Andriy Sayenko, a Hero of the Heavenly Hundred. NEE

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Russia's "Nudge" Propaganda

ANDREW WILSON

From the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis in 2013 Russia has been able to attract a wide range of sympathisers across Europe. But today's Russian propaganda, though more cynical and professional than Cold War Soviet propaganda, is far from omnipotent. The Kremlin may know how to exploit our foibles; but it does not really understand the West.

Ever since the beginning of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine in 2013 there has been much discussion about the power of Russian propaganda in the West, and particularly within the EU. Russia has been able to attract a wide range of sympathisers across the political spectrum. But the way in which Russia exploits these other voices is different from how it operates at home. For more than a decade now, domestic Russian politics has been dominated by actors, proxies, cynics and fakes. If the Kremlin needs sympathisers, it invents or pays them. In the EU the forces exist anyway; the Kremlin has not created them, but has proved adept at "nudging", that is slightly pushing them in the required direction.

At least that is how things work at stage one. The role of direct contact and covert finance in influencing such organisations has been under-investigated. There are some signs of the Kremlin creating fakes and proxies in the EU too, which would multiply the problem many-fold. But for now at least the focus should be on the Kremlin's indirect role and its ultra-flexibility in exploiting any group.

Political technology at home

Vladimir Putin's Russia was designed as a system of monopoly control. Before 2011 it was even run by one man, Vladislav Surkov, who acted in the words of the Eurasianist ideologue Aleksandr Dugin "not just as a puppet master but as a de-

miurge". The Kremlin's techniques were direct. Parties were created, co-opted or controlled, but they all took orders. Several commentators have exploited the metaphor of Surkov's desk, with its numerous named phones for direct contact with the parties and NGOs he controlled.

The Kremlin cannot do this abroad; with the exception of one thing that it carries over – eclecticism. Despite now posing as a conservative power, the Kremlin no longer has a single ideology to promote. In fact it has no ideology. But it is used to playing all sides. In Russia, the Kremlin sought to direct all the pieces on the political chessboard; both sides – black and white. And, to undermine the metaphor of how chess is actually played, it also policed the edge of the board and determined who could actually play. Thus, when it comes to influence-peddling abroad there is no contradiction and indeed there is a certain logic in the Kremlin seeking to influence both left and right, nationalists and separatists, traditionalists and post-modernists, as all Moscow is trying to do is align them to a *realpolitik* that does not even serve Russian national interest, but only regime prosperity and survival.

The Kremlin no longer has a single ideology to promote. In fact, it has no ideology.

This tendency is only enhanced by the multiplication of channels of influence abroad. "The Kremlin" is a single actor at home, though there are many satellite influence groups. Abroad there are various networks courted by people such as Dmitry Rogozin, the "Orthodox Oligarch" Konstantin Malofeev and even Dugin himself. "The Kremlin" also operates through Russian business contacts, both through companies like Gazprom and through the contacts of the likes of Gazprom.

The result is the casting of a very wide net. According to Dugin's protégé Aleksandr Bovdunov, writing on evrazia.org: "acknowledging the civilisational nature of the conflict between Russia and the West, we aim at destroying the West in its current form as a civilisation. Therefore, having recourse to the use of the existing networks, we should give priority to those that are themselves directed at the destruction of the modern European civilisational identity. Groups that can act in this capacity include totalitarian sects, separatist movements, neo-Nazi and racist movements, anarchists and anti-globalists, radical ecologists, Euro-sceptics, isolationists, illegal migrants, etc." This statement is not official policy of course, but it gives us a flavour of some of the cynicism and eclecticism involved.

The useful idiot tradition

One place to start is on the left. Lenin may or may not have used the term "useful idiot" but the term "fellow traveller" was common enough during the Soviet

period. By definition, it meant someone on the left with some degree of sympathy for some aspects of the Soviet project, though arguably it could also be applied to the *Smenovekhovtsko* movement which attracted both Great Russian and Republican (Ukrainian, Belarusian, Armenian, etc.) nationalists who were convinced the Soviet state was beginning to move in their direction in the 1920s.

The modern European, Russia-sympathetic left still seems to be motivated by a residual "anti-fascism" – mainly the version that existed after 1941 rather than the Popular Front era of the mid-1930s. As American scholar Timothy Snyder and others have argued, the key historical tropes of this type of anti-fascism are guilt towards Russia (Germany); or that fraternal Russian sacrifice was key to the ultimate victory over fascism (France); that all the lands between Berlin and the Russian redoubts in 1941–1944 were full of "collaborators"; and, for some, the ultra-Soviet myth that "fascism" was defined not by the Holocaust or domestic repressions but by its assault on the Soviet Union. "Fascism" can even be a synonym for Russophobia. Thus, Ukrainian or Baltic nationalists are called fascists by association.

For modern day "anti-fascists", simple history or geography lessons do not seem to work even though they are always worth trying. The non-Russian west of the Soviet Union was just as much a victim of fascism, if not more so. Ukraine and Belarus are closer to Germany than Russia. Between 7.5 and 9 million Ukrainians

perished in the war, around a fifth of the total population. The accepted figure for Belarus is 2.2 million, a quarter of the total. Belarus and Ukraine, plus Lithuania and Poland, the lands of the old Commonwealth and then the Pale of Settlement, were also the centre of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. The Battle of Berlin in 1945 was led by the 1st Belarusian Front and the 1st Ukrainian Front, which were not just geographical names. Ukraine, in other words, was by virtue of its geography the centre of the struggle between fascism and anti-fascism. Anti-fascism was not something that came from the north.

But nowadays anti-Americanism is probably a bigger motivating factor for the European left towards taking a pro-Russian stand, to the point that the well-known film director Oliver Stone is convinced that the CIA was involved in the EuroMaidan protests. The Russian media can also be the first to say that this year's Charlie Hebdo murders were an American plot. Russia can free ride on conspiracy theories and on "what-about-ism" (Russia cannot be condemned for its actions in Ukraine because of America's actions in Iraq and elsewhere). It also benefits from "it's-all-our-fault-ism", particularly the argument often heard on the left that Russia's aggression against Ukraine was "provoked" by NATO expansion or something else.

The Russian media can be the first to say that Charlie Hebdo murders were an American plot.

Conservative values

Anti-Americanism is also a force on the right, where Putin is popular for apparently standing for some of the same things as the traditional right and its new populist rivals. However, Putin's "conservative values project" was largely derived from his need to secure re-election in 2012, and the centrality of the Eurasian Union project in that process. One can trace earlier antecedents, but the Kremlin's alignment with the European right is recent, as well as opportunistic and situational. Even on "Gayropa", Russia's criticism of post-modern Europe is mainly designed to shore up the idea of a unique (pan-)Russian civilisation and halt the expansion of the EU in Eastern Europe. Putin's Russia is also not a natural supporter of other rightist values, like the Westpahalian sovereignty of every nation state. For Putin, sovereignty depends on strength. The Kremlin's eclectic messaging is also more evident when it attempts to appeal to the right. Russia's foreign TV station RT (formerly "Russia Today"), which currently broadcasts in English, Spanish, Arabic and Russian with plans to launch French and German channels this year, gives airtime both to the National Front and to activists complaining about Europe's "Islamophobia".

Hence, messages designed to influence the European right have to be broken down and individualised. Russia may want to co-operate with all the disparate elements of the right and far right, and cares little about their ideological differences; but there is still the old joke that there is no such thing as a right-wing international. Many European nationalisms are mutually antagonistic and/or also anti-Russian. This leads to some strange mutations such as Jobbik's belief that the Hungarians are "Turanians*" and therefore natural allies of the "Eurasian" Russians.

Russia's many messages are increasingly well addressed to particular national discourses. This is obviously why RT is opening new offices in the UK, Germany and France. In the UK, it feeds off the kind of post-modern nihilism championed by the likes of the comic Russell Brand; but it also free-rides on great power nostalgia that is increasingly directed away from Europe. Euro-scepticism and Euro-antipathy suits Russia; as do RT reports on the UK Independence Party (UKIP) that claim "'Putin on our side': Nigel Farage demands West work with Moscow to defeat ISIS".

Euro-scepticism and Euro-antipathy suits Russia.

In France and Germany, anti-Americanism is key. In France this sentiment has deeper Gaullist roots and emphasises France's cultural uniqueness via attacks on Washington-led globalisation and "Euro-mondialism". In Germany the emphasis is more on recent spying scandals and anti-NATO sentiment, though there has also been a revival of the idea of "equidistance" between Russia and the West. One poll carried out in April 2014 showed that 49 per cent of Germans supported the idea of Germany *mediating* between Russia and the West, as compared to only 45 per cent of Germans who wanted their country to side with its EU and NATO partners.

Special affinity

Behind these attitudes is the old idea that Germany has a distinct identity related to the *Mittellage*, or central location in Europe, and Thomas Mann's old argument that Germany stood for a *Kultur* that was distinct from, and even superior to, Western *Zivilisation*, plus the related claim of a special affinity between Germany

* Turanism is a loose concept which is based on the idea that the ancestral homeland of Hungarians was in Asia and which was used to define diverse phenomena in the history of Hungarwian ideas. This assumption served as a guiding principle for many political movements, especially in the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. Turanism became an extremist political ideology after World War One. The revival of this thinking has been seen since the collapse of communism with the right-wing Jobbik party being its uncompromising supporters – editor's note.

and Russia. Significantly, this tendency has been criticised by the historian Henrich August Winkler, whose grand opus *The Long Road West*, originally described how Germany finally committed to the West after the Second World War.

Russia is also adept at feeding the residues of the Concert of Europe idea, namely nostalgia for the days when great powers like France, the UK or Germany would decide the fate of countries like Ukraine with Russia, over the heads of Ukrainians, or indeed of any ordinary Europeans. The "Normandy Format" at least replaced more direct forms of US-Russia or EU-Russia negotiations to which Ukraine was "invited" (the Geneva Declaration), but still only includes Ukraine as one of four parties. Thankfully German Chancellor Angela Merkel moved a long way in 2014 with her personal disillusionment with Putin helping her transcend Germany's still numerous *Russlandversteher* (those who understand Russia) and adopted a more inclusive approach towards Ukraine. But there will no doubt be more initiatives like the "Boistö Plan", which was a grand design drawn up by 13 US and Russian experts after a meeting on a Finnish island in August 2014 – with no Ukrainians present.

Russia has no natural sympathy for small nations. But, repeating the same pattern of eclecticism, Catalan or Scottish nationalism fits the Kremlin narrative of a Europe in decline. The Kremlin was therefore clearly locked into expecting a "yes" vote in the 2014 Scottish referendum, and could only explain the "no" vote in its own terms, as the result of propaganda or fraud – the count was conducted in the open, in one case in an "aircraft hangar", rather than safely behind closed doors.

Catalan or Scottish nationalism fit the Kremlin narrative of a Europe in decline.

Russia's view of Europe sees only a dysfunctional EU and sick nation states being overthrown from below. Hence, once again, an eclectic approach masks propaganda that can only be skin deep. Russia's claim to be a conservative power is hollow; it is not a 19th century power in the sense of the tsar standing firm with his fellow autocrats against all threats from below. Modern Russia stands for the opposite – the Kremlin hides behind the RT logo of "Question More" to promote any minority force that challenges existing power structures. Matryoshka separatism suits Russian *realpolitik* in northern, western and southern Europe just as much as it does in Eastern Europe.

Useful Internet Idiots

The Kremlin works with anybody who will take its money. France's National Front took 9.4 million euros (allegedly 40 million euros in total) from the Russian-owned First Czech-Russian Bank. This may be the beginning of a new trend. Ataka

in Bulgaria, Jobbik in Hungary, the Freedom Party in Austria and the Northern League in Italy may join the queue. Financial support is not the same thing as exploiting corruption of course; but graft may be another thing many Russophile parties have in common and another reason why left or right does not matter to Russia.

EU business lobbies do not usually have much of an ideology to "nudge". Most argue that business is business and that business with Russia should not be obstructed by politics. On the other hand, the short-lived Conservative Friends of Russia lobby in the UK (launched and closed in 2012) shows how easily such groups can take their talking points from Russian sources. Nudge is also possible at the other end of the business world. NATO has alleged that Russia "helps" European environmental movements, but only to protest against schemes that are in competition with Gazprom (shale, LNG, exploration off Italy) and not against others like South Stream.

Nudging public opinion is of course particularly easy on the internet and in social media. It works quicker. There is hardly ever a chain of reference. Debaters end up quoting Russian-origin myths and memes without even knowing it. The well-known tendency of the echo chamber debate to rapidly degenerate to the extremes facilitates the nudging process.

Research in the Baltic states has shown how Russia has moved from a "modern" to a "post-modern" phase. Its priority in the 2000s was building a dual media space, a TV-based empire for local Russian-speakers to hear the Kremlin point of view. Now it is more about exercising modal influence in an interconnected world. In Lithuania, for example, Russia has sought to expand beyond the Russian-speaking audience and connect with greens, parents' rights groups, anti-shale and anti-capitalist groups, plus campaigners against the CIA prison scandal, the local nuclear power plant, local banks and paedophiles. Russia cannot dictate the agenda of such groups, but it can insert messages or connect one group with another via "cross-branding", so that anti-fracking groups can link to, or post material from, "parental rights" groups, and vice versa.

Internet troll farms can feed the process. But so can ordinary Russians. With Russia being a propaganda state, the captive audience at home can be relied on to feed the same myths and non-facts into global debate. Ironically, this may be one reason why the Kremlin may not want to push too hard in its campaign to isolate the Russian internet.

Political technology abroad?

Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss have argued that the point of Russian propaganda is not to convince but to confuse and to hinder consensus-building

around anti-Russian action rather than to prompt positive support. In this case, the "nudge" model works well.

But this is not how Russia does things at home. And there are some signs of Russia preferring to do things the same way. According to Anton Shekhovtsov, the two "election monitoring organisations" that send European "monitors" to legitimate dodgy elections and referenda in Eastern Europe – the Eurasian Observatory of Democracy and Elections (EODE) run by the Belgian fascist Luc Michel, and the European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis (ECGA) run by the Polish far right politician Mateusz Piskorski – have little independent life of their own and are basically Russian fronts. Openly pro-Russian think-tanks exist, like the Institute of Democracy and Co-operation in Paris; but so do organisations whose origins are obscure, like the Center for Eurasian Strategic Intelligence. The appearance of outright Russian puppets in Europe is clearly possible, but ought to be easy to spot.

The Kremlin did not invent the Scottish National Party (SNP) or the anti-fracking movement. The declarations of admiration by politicians like Nigel Farage for Putin are clearly based on ignorance or a vague sense of common cause, plus a certain degree of envy for a style they would like to adopt. The SNP does not really need foreign role models – it lives in a world of its own. While others like Marine Le Pen may be aiming higher, seeing Putin as an ally in the "next Europe"; a Europe that they will come to control.

Russia may give them a few extra resources to pursue their campaigns, but its main contribution is to affect the climate of opinion within which such groups hope to grow. But Russian nudge propaganda is far from omnipotent. It is much more cynical and professional than Cold War Soviet propaganda. Russia knows how to exploit our foibles; but Russia still does not really understand the West. It has no idea what the Charlie Hebdo protests meant or what really happened during the Scottish independence debate. European opinion is always moving in directions the Kremlin cannot fathom. In other words, a nudge is not the same as a hard push, or a pull on a string. NEE

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Has Ukraine Become a Test for Polish-German Relations?

Photo (CC) the Office of the Prime Minister of Poland

Following the collapse of communism in Poland and East Germany in 1989, the reconciliation that took place between Poland and Germany has illustrated the importance of good neighbourly relations based on trust, solidarity and common values.

But now, it seems that this relationship has been put to the test. The war in the East, different approaches to Ukraine and relations with Russia, as well as the ongoing economic crisis in Europe, have put old issues in new contexts. Seeking common ground on matters relating to the crisis, however, is still a priority for both neighbours. Yet, some pertinent questions remain in analysing the European Union's eastern policy in the context of German-Polish relations.

Have these relations changed? Is there a new quality in international relations based on the German-Polish partnership? What will these relations look like in the coming years?

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Relearning the Lessons from 1989

BASIL KERSKI

Not long before his death in 2008 Bronisław Geremek, Poland's former foreign minister and Solidarity strategist, said that foreign policy cannot be defined only through the prism of interests. Peace and welfare in Europe can only grow on the foundation of brotherhood.

The 2004 enlargement of the European Union to the East was a breakthrough moment. It brought hope to the new member states, but also caused a serious anxiety among many western European societies. I remember a Polish-German conference which took place in April 2004 in Neuhardenberg, Germany, examining Polish-German relations. Participants tried to look into the future and their feelings were ambiguous. On the one hand, they were happy that the historical rapprochement with the EU had finally taken place. On the other hand, they noted some animosities between Poland and Germany were emerging at the beginning of the 21st century. Opinion polls showed that the majority of Germans were against Poland's EU membership. However, no significant political party in Germany ever tried to seize the opportunity to use this anti-Polish potential. It clearly showed the gap between the ambitions of the German political elite and the perception of Europe by the German nation.

New Europe, new fears

In 2004 Warsaw and Berlin had been experiencing their first breach of mutual relations since 1989. Differences in attitudes on Iraq and Russia took a toll on the

Polish-German partnership, leading to a sense that there was a growing distance between the political elites of the two countries. At the centre of the discussions in Neuhardenberg were not only bilateral differences but the future of democracy in Europe overall. I remember very well a statement made there by Adam Michnik, a member of the Polish opposition under communism and the first and, thus far, only editor in chief of the Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, who expressed his genuine concern for the development of political culture and the appearance of populist tendencies in Poland and other Central European states. Michnik predicted difficult times ahead, but he believed in the ultimate victory of democracy over all obstacles.

Michnik's prognosis was right. EU membership brought about an economic and political revival in Central and Eastern Europe. Borders disappeared, and citizens became free to travel, live and work anywhere in Europe. And thanks to EU subsidies, Poland, in a very short period of time, was able to modernise its infrastructure. As a result of the rapprochement with the EU and a stable financial policy, the Polish economy grew to the point where it was able to endure the last global economic crisis with uninterrupted growth. This wave of modernisation, however, not only secured benefits, but also led to a lot of disappointment and uncertainty about the future.

Populist politicians with nationalist and anti-European slogans have been quite successful in many post-communist states in recent years. But such demagogy is not only an illness of the "young democracies" of the EU's east. Fears of growing competition from the new member states, the cultural and economic consequences of globalisation or immigrants from the east and the south have fuelled anti-liberal and nationalist sentiments in the "old" members of the EU as well. Newly created populist and nationalist movements and parties have significantly changed the western European political landscape. Hence, political instability and the weakening of the democratic culture are not solely a regional phenomenon of the "young democracies".

A threat to both Western and Eastern Europe is the enduring fascination with a way of thinking which is too focused on national and ethnic factors when defining collective identity.

A threat to both Western and Eastern Europe is the enduring fascination with a way of thinking which is too focused on biological, national and ethnic factors when defining collective identity. There are many reasons for a re-emergence of these traditions. In the West, the key problems include: fear of increasing immigration from non-European cultures, the failure of Muslim integration and the radicalisation of certain religious minorities (especially Islam). The impoverishment of multiple social groups and the high level of unemployment among young

people have severely disturbed the calm social atmosphere of Western European societies and reshaped their political order.

On the other hand, a return to ethnic models of identity in the East is predominantly a consequence of the lack of critical readiness of its societies to settle with their authoritarian heritage and the fear of essential changes within the society. The most extreme form of these tendencies is the ethnically legitimised neo-imperialism of Vladimir Putin. It is difficult to understand how the President of the Russian Federation – a multi-national state – has been planning to consolidate the country by emphasising the cultural mission of Russians. I doubt whether Russian hyper-nationalism has been a proper model for the ethnically diverse Russia. Although it has strengthened Putin's position, it has also weakened the society, separating it from its neighbours and turning the country into a "psychiatric hospital" – as it was once put by the Russian-Ukrainian writer Andrey Kurkov.

Solidarity's rich heritage

Poland's democracy has been performing well in spite of the European crises of the last several years. A vast part of the Polish society benefits from economic growth and the country's position on the international stage has been improving. While Poles do not have much trust in the political elite and criticise many aspects of the democratic system, they do not see any alternative for it and are ready to defend it in difficult times. This Polish paradox is based on the contrast of a stable democracy with the crisis of the democratic culture caused by the poor atmosphere among political protagonists.

At times it may seem that the majority of Polish society just wants to close itself off inside a bourgeois bucolic, cutting itself off from the sorrows of the contemporary world and enjoying the pleasures of its humble wealth. Thus, politics cannot find another way to hold people's attention than through a media show and the polarisation of attitudes. Such a decline in political culture is fostered by the strategies of traditional media, such as television or the press, which in the era of digitalisation want to secure their influence by supporting the tabloidisation of the public sphere. But these ailments are not solely limited to Polish democracy; these tendencies can be seen throughout the whole of Europe.

Let us return to the threat of nationalism. Although some Polish politicians use a nationalist narrative in order to get publicity, only a minority of Poles are susceptible to this way of thinking. Since 1989 most Polish politicians have been trying to accommodate, in an intelligent way, Polish national interests with European interests. A foreign policy focused on reconciliation with its neighbours has

stabilised democracy in Poland. Today, faced with the bloody conflict between Moscow and Kyiv, it becomes more apparent what a great political success Poland's reconstruction of its relations with its neighbours was after the collapse of communism. And it was not only Polish-German relations that were burdened with tragic history in the 20th century.

In 1989 the young Polish democracy faced the challenge of reconciliation with both Lithuanians and Ukrainians as well. In this regard Poland could use its rich political heritage from Solidarity. By emphasising the connections, and not the divisions, between Poles, Solidarity pursued a nationwide agreement despite political differences. However, what should also be kept in mind is the fact that the Solidarity revolution was not entirely an internal Polish affair. Its aspirations were European and one of its goals was to rebuild Europe by using peaceful means; something that was often criticised by Western European (especially Western German) politicians as an unrealistic policy that was a threat to peace.

Solidarity was not entirely an internal Polish affair. Its aspirations were European and one of its goals was to rebuild Europe through peace.

The policies that emerged from Solidarity, with Lech Wałęsa at the helm, proved that prudence and peaceful intentions are possible – not only during the 1989 Polish Round Table Talks, but also in the field of foreign policy. The agreement on the Oder-Neisse border was a milestone in European history; as was the acceptance of Poland's eastern border imposed in 1945 and which meant that Poland rescinded its claims on Lviv and Vilnius. The Solidarity activists openly stressed that it is not conflict with its neighbours that strengthens Poland, but rather the search for common interests. That is why, already in the 1980s, the serious leaders of Solidarity understood that the unification of Germany was in Poland's best interests as it would move Poland to the West and possibly end Russia's military presence in Central and Eastern Europe. The anti-communist opposition thus strongly backed the independence of Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine, seeing it as a basic condition for Europe's stability and Poland's independence.

A community of values

It was argued that democratically and economically strong neighbours in Eastern Europe are good for Polish democracy. This is why Poland has been so clearly supportive of the European Union's Eastern Partnership policy, and not in isolation but with the backing of influential partners such as Sweden and Germany. In the

past decades, Poland has understood that while democracy cannot be imposed from the outside, a favourable external context is necessary for the positive development of political culture, while support from democratic states constitutes decisive aid. For Poland that strong stabilising impact came from the prospective of membership in NATO and the EU in the near future.

Translating these facts into today's terms, we can say that the task of democracy-building in Ukraine should be undertaken mostly by Ukrainian politicians, but that it is also dependent on the EU; just as it was in Poland in 1989. The majority of Ukrainians have clearly demonstrated that they have ambitions to become a part of the European community of values rather than Vladimir Putin's Eurasian Union. The EU should treat these ambitions in the same way that it treated the newly born European democracies after 1989. A community of values between the EU and Ukraine is an essential condition for the consolidation of the Ukrainian state as well as for peace in Eastern Europe.

This thesis, however, is not seen as an imperative throughout Europe. In recent months there have been many discussions on the old continent about Russia's alleged right to its own sphere of influence. Some have even argued that only the acceptance of Putin's hegemonic plans will guarantee stability in Europe. It is dreadful that double standards are applied, as liberal rule in the EU member states is seen as something natural, while the dreams of Eastern Europeans of a life in accordance with western values is seen as a luxury that Europe cannot afford. This thinking has a resemblance of a colonial perspective – what is good for us cannot be good for Eastern Europeans. Arguments that western values in Ukraine could provoke Russia and that Putin's nationalism is a "natural element of Russia's political culture" are absurd. The current distrust towards the EuroMaidan Revolution is like déjà vu; bringing us back to the 1980s and the lack of trust towards the intentions of Central European revolutionaries when Solidarity's dream about free Europe was criticised as an alleged threat to peaceful order on the European continent.

A quarter century after the fall of communism we cannot forget the experiences from 1989.

A test of emotional ties

Today, a quarter century after fall of the communism we cannot forget the experiences from 1989. We should accept Ukraine's aspirations to become a part of the West. We need to support Ukrainians, believe in their political wisdom and

ability to accommodate both national interests and the European perspective. Policy towards Ukraine is also an important test for Polish-German relations. It is not only a test of the ability to articulate mutual interests, but it is also a test of emotional ties. Polish-German co-operation thus far on the Ukrainian crisis, including the important activities of the Weimar Triangle aimed at solving the conflict in Kyiv in early 2014, gives hope that the political elite in both Germany and Poland have been trying to define common interests towards Ukraine. However, some obvious differences in the public debates that are taking place in these two countries are also clearly visible. Numerous voices of support for Putin, as expressed in Germany, are alarming for the Poles, creating an emotional distance and mistrust towards Germany.

Bronisław Geremek, the former Polish minister of foreign affairs, not long before his death in 2008 stated that foreign policy cannot be defined only through the prism of interests. Peace and welfare in Europe are able to grow only on the foundation of brotherhood. This is why he stressed: "In politics, interests play a key role. But co-operation, friendship and brotherhood matter as well. Positive emotions advance common interests. I would like Poles and Germans to not be connected only by interests but also by an emotional bond which would mean we trust each other. If we have trust, we will be able to resolve the challenges of the future." This is a lesson that we should not forget today.

Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

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A New Test for German-Polish Relations

KAI-OLAF LANG

At least for the time being, Russia's confrontation with the West has been rather neutral, if not slightly positive for German-Polish relations. Germany has worked to maintain EU unity and tried to integrate different approaches in response to Russia's combative behaviour that are in line with Polish expectations. But the crisis is far from over and future developments may become even more testing for German-Polish relations.

Attitudes towards Russia and Europe's *Ostpolitik* have always been a focal point of German-Polish relations. Often, differing interests and historical experiences have put a strain on bilateral co-operation between both countries. There is no doubt that the events in and around Ukraine and Russia's ferocious policy of ensuring influence in its neighbourhood pose a serious challenge for Germany and Poland. Does the Russia-Ukraine crisis drive Germany and Poland apart? Or does it open up additional chances for common reflection and common action vis-á-vis the European Union's Eastern neighbourhood and Russia itself? In other words: Is the conflict in and around Ukraine a new opportunity or a considerable risk for German-Polish relations?

The areas of possible dispute between Germany and Poland are relatively well-known from previous bilateral discussions and clashes of interest. German-Polish debates on Russia are about security, energy, co-operation with Ukraine and other Eastern European countries, about Germany's "special relationship" with Russia and about the question of whether Poland is appropriately "involved" in Germany's policy towards Russia. The dynamics and the peculiarities of the ongoing crisis

have put these old issues in a new context. Looking at specific details, however, a mixed picture emerges.

Growing unease

From the European point of view, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a massive security risk in its direct vicinity. Poland and Germany hence want to avoid escalation and both are aware that there is a continuing threat that the crisis could grow in scope and intensity. Both countries are also on the same page regarding their rejection of a military response by the West or NATO as this would bear the risk of an armed conflict with Russia. Despite these agreements the return of hard security has revealed and re-invigorated traditional disagreements between Germany and Poland. Poland wants to overcome what it considers second class NATO-membership, and so has called for allied hardware and even troops on Polish soil. Therefore, Poland's president, Bronisław Komorowski, has announced that Warsaw's strategic objective in NATO is to turn general security guarantees into palpable solutions improving Poland's defences.

The return of hard security has revealed and re-invigorated traditional differences between Germany and Poland.

Whereas Germany has been hesitant to upgrade NATO-presence in Central European member states in order not to "provoke" Russia, Poland's position is that "Russia will not tell NATO countries whether or not US-troops will be deployed on their soil", as Komorowski had said. Regardless of Germany's support for a prudent upgrade of NATO activities on its Eastern flank according to the Alliance's Newport summit, Poland is asking questions about the reliability of Germany as a security partner. Warsaw's growing unease, less frankly expressed by the Polish government, is articulated in straightforward observations by Polish experts and Warsaw's conservative opposition. But it is noteworthy and telling that Roman Kuźniar, an advisor to the Polish president, has written that due to the close relations between Berlin and Moscow, "We cannot count on Germany when it comes to the security of [our] region."

Whilst security could turn out to be an irritant in German-Polish relations, energy issues are more nuanced. There is no doubt that Germany and German companies continue to have strong ties with Russia, and the assessment that "even the Soviet Union was a reliable supplier", with the implication that Vladimir Putin's Russia will also not play the energy card, still dominates German debates. However, there is a growing sensitivity about the Russian question and its meaning for German

energy policy. While in light of Germany's energy transition *(Energiewende)* the security of supply had almost been a non-issue and German debates about energy security had focused on grid stability and the construction of high-voltage cables, the Ukraine crisis returned security of supply to the German energy debate. In autumn 2014, the German chancellor said that the EU's energy partnership with Russia should be continued, but this could change should Russia not stop the violation of "basic principles".

The crisis had also some fallout at the business level. One of the most spectacular cases was the cancellation of a planned multi-billion asset-swap between BASF/Wintershall and Gazprom, which would have given Wintershall access to natural gas fields in Russia, with Gazprom gaining full control over Wintershall's trading and storage branches. According to the companies, the deal was called off "due to the current difficult environment". Does this herald the end of close energy relations – once the core of bilateral co-operation – between Germany and Russia? Not quite, but it does indicate that Germany is obviously rethinking its old paradigm of energy interdependence according to which both sides, Germany and Russia, are mutually dependent on each other. This paradigm is being slowly replaced by a view that Germany has to diversify its supply and make its energy system more robust against uncertainties from Russia. At the same time, Germany has adopted a position of cautious support for enhancing the European energy policy and EU energy solidarity, including the somehow vague concept of an Energy Union, which was launched by Poland and accepted by the EU (apart from the proposal of a joint purchasing mechanism).

Divergence and convergence

Regarding the Eastern Partnership and assistance for Ukraine during the crisis, there has been much German-Polish overlap and support. Of course, Poland would have liked to see German backing for more financial assistance for Kyiv, including a new Marshall-like plan. From Warsaw's point of view the priority was that Germany continues to uphold Ukraine's association process despite mounting Russian resistance. Moreover, Germany had been ready to support Ukraine in key areas, especially the field of energy. The German government pressured countries like Slovakia to create the technical and legal preconditions for sending gas in a reverse-flow mode from the EU to Ukraine.

Yet, the differences regarding the European offer to Ukraine remain, and have acquired new significance. Poland has argued that the EuroMaidan Revolution and Ukraine's existential situation have created a historic moment, where the EU should

give Ukraine a decisive European signal including, in the long term, the prospect of membership. In this regard, Germany continues to be prudent, not wanting to open up another strategic enlargement debate which would additionally complicate relations with Russia. However, these questions do not really stress German-Polish relations since both sides are busy with crisis management, on the one hand, and more practical questions about the Eastern Partnership and the EU's bilateral co-operation with Ukraine and other partners on the other. The message that has emerged from the crisis thus far is that there is an implicit consensus between Germany and Poland that, despite huge uncertainties, despite Russian intransigence and despite doubts about Kyiv's new leadership, Ukraine has to be Europeanised and stabilised and, hence, has to receive tangible support.

There is an implicit consensus between Germany and Poland that Ukraine has to be Europeanised and stabilised.

In this context, divergence and convergence seem to co-exist. Yet, all things considered, there is much more uncertainty in Germany about the right way to deal with Russia. Poland feels confirmed in its long-term reading of Russian behaviour, silently skipping a critical debate of its own reset policy with Moscow. Poland is generally following a consistent course of a robust and multi-dimensional Euro-Atlantic response, including soft and hard security, common European and western action, and active and sufficient support for Ukraine. The situation in Germany, on the other hand, is essentially different. Here, confusion and scepticism about the assumptions and the practice of *Russlandpolitik* are stronger than before. There is a growing awareness that a sort of basic conceptual review of Germany's and Europe's relations with Russia should be done, although it is still open which planks of Berlin's approach should be replaced and if a new view on Russia should rest on more firmness towards or more empathy with Russia.

A changing Russlandpolitik

In the process of crisis management and diplomacy, a grand conceptual redesign of Germany's policy vis-á-vis Russia is hardly likely to take place. Such an overhaul is rather an endeavour for calmer periods. However, there are some important tenets of Germany's eastern policies which have and will continue to have a direct or indirect impact on German-Polish relations.

Most importantly, Germany's *Russlandpolitik* has moved away from the position that "sanctions-are-neither-possible-nor-effective". This shift is important not only because of the policy change towards Russia, but it also sends a signal that its

Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz (left) with German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Right). Despite the many differences in policy preferences, for the time being it seems that Russia's confrontation with the West has been rather neutral, if not slightly positive for German-Polish relations.

policies are modifiable. Similar to the way in which Berlin reacted to the Eurozone crisis, the German government has accepted and promoted policies, solutions and offers which were questioned by important domestic players. In the sovereign debt crisis Berlin has taken action despite heavy objections from the Constitutional Court, the Bundesbank, members of the Bundestag and a hesitant public opinion. During the Ukraine crisis Berlin has put forward a policy of reprimand and negotiations even though the influential business community, the *Russlandversteher* from different political camps, the Russo-romantic intellectuals and strong Russophile segments in the society have been calling for more courtesy to Moscow. This does not mean that all these groups have lost their power to shape Germany's position. But with committed political leadership – and as long as there is a perceived lack of a co-operative Moscow – these "pragmatic" forces are just relevant factors and not veto players in Berlin's response to Russia.

Related to this development, Germany has been forced to reconsider the core of its eastern policy: i.e. the idea that the EU's attempts to transform its eastern neighbourhood can be "harmonised" with constructive collaboration with Russia. Germany's effort to convince Russia that change and reform in Ukraine would

create a "win-win" scenario and that in the end Russia will benefit from the Europeanisation of the EU's Eastern partners have not been accepted by Russia. The perception of Russia has also strongly suffered: Russia is seen increasingly as a significant and troublesome factor rather than a predictable and reliable partner. While there is still an element in German society arguing for a complete reformatting of German policy based on the recognition of Russia's "legitimate interests" in the region, the dominating position is that any offer to Russia must not delete or restrict the European choice of the countries in Eastern Europe or the South Caucasus (provided these countries wish to go down the European path). This does not mark a new German *Russlandpolitik*, but rather the exhaustion of the old one and the strengthening of a still fuzzy "value-based interest policy".

This development brings Germany and Poland a bit closer together. However, Germany is still very much oriented towards a "compromise first" attitude – and this is the source of many doubts in Poland. Warsaw's attitude is based on an intention to avoid soft bargaining and undue flexibility as that would only increase Russia's appetite. As Marcin Bosacki, Poland's ambassador to Canada, recently put it: "Appeasement is the worst answer to an aggressive regime. The best answer is deterrence." Notwithstanding the enormous disillusionment of the last months, Germany is continuing its policy of engaging and including Russia. Hence, Berlin was encouraging the European Commission and the External Action Service to embark on talks with Moscow on the "compatibility" of the EU-Ukrainian Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with existing free trade relations between Ukraine and Russia. In this context, the decision to postpone the DCFTA implementation until the end of 2015 and to initiate trilateral talks between the EU, Russia and Ukraine was a positive step from the German perspective. In Poland, however, the dominant concerns voiced were about the Russian influence on bilateral EU-Ukraine relations through the backdoor. Similarly, whilst Germany is open to trade talks with the Russian-dominated Eurasian economic and trade structures, there is little enthusiasm in Poland for this idea.

Asymmetry of expectations

In addition to this mixed picture of German and Polish policies, another problem has emerged in terms of bilateral relations. There is a clear asymmetry of expectations between both countries. Poland has clearly defined its expectations towards Germany. Poland wants involvement in any eastern policy and its conceptual preparation and has called for solidarity and a "Europeanised-Berlin approach" in dealing with Russia. Further, Poland wishes that Germany will not pursue bilateral

agreements with Russia that are detrimental to third countries. Germany verbally acknowledges Poland as a co-creator of the EU's eastern policies, but has a rather unclear idea about what Warsaw's specific role should be in the Ukraine crisis.

When the internal conflict in Ukraine entered its critical stage, Poland was an indispensable partner in forging a solution. However once Russia became more involved, with its action in Crimea, Germany's main interest was to have Poland's tacit and loyal support for its efforts to negotiate with Russia. Officially, the Polish government seemed unbothered by this development and saw its low profile in talks with Moscow as a contribution to make communication with Russia easier. Yet, there has been a mounting dissatisfaction that Poland is being pushed out of the most important discussions with Russia. The evolution from the successful Weimar Triangle mission in Kyiv in February 2014 to the dialogue process of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine, the so-called Normandy format, in June was a visible downgrade of Poland's role, which could only be partially compensated by lively bilateral consultations and some new ideas about the future of the Eastern Partnership.

The evolution from the Weimar Triangle mission in Kyiv to the so-called Normandy format was a visible downgrade of Poland's role.

Despite this all, at least for the time being, Russia's confrontation with the West has been rather neutral, if not slightly positive for German-Polish relations. Germany has avoided backsliding into a unilateral *Russlandpolitik*, it has tried to maintain EU unity and tried to integrate different approaches in response to Russia's combative behaviour into a policy of talking and chastising. Although Poland would have wished to see a more supportive German attitude concerning hard security and effective military reassurances in NATO, Warsaw has no illusions about German reluctance and has appreciated Berlin's endorsement of a modest, but flexible improvement of intra-Alliance defence according to the Newport Summit. Even though Poland was not included formally in the Berlin-Moscow channels of communication and the Normandy format has shattered the dreams of the Weimar triangle as the centrepiece of European dialogue with Russia, Warsaw's unease with this visible side-lining has been relatively limited. The reason for this is that Warsaw generally endorsed the German approach and respected Germany's efforts to strike a balance between varying interests inside Germany and among EU member states. Germany's approach during the crisis, i.e. pressure through sanctions, readiness to dialogue and support for Ukraine, has been highly compatible with Polish policies, even if Warsaw had hoped for more pressure on Russia and aid for Ukraine. In other words, the crisis has so far not harmed German-Polish relations.

Upcoming tests

However, the real stress test for German-Polish relations is yet to come; particularly with four potential developments which could lead to substantial differences. Firstly, a Russian offer to regulate the conflict in eastern Ukraine and to find a compromise on Ukraine's association and free trade regimes could stir serious debate between Germany and Poland, as many in Warsaw would question Russia's credibility. Poland would call for safeguards and real progress while Germany could give in more easily if there is some symbolic movement and demonstration of a "serious will" on the side of Russia. Squabbles about softening sanctions and the price the West should be ready to pay for a deal with Russia could also harm German-Polish relations.

The real stress test for German-Polish relations is yet to come.

Secondly, a massive deterioration in Russia's economy could also lead to some discrepancy in approaches. Of course, neither Germany nor Poland want to see an economic or financial collapse in Russia. But if the going gets tough with Russia's economy, Poland might see Russia's weakness as a chance to exert additional pressure on Russia in order to attain more leverage. Germany, on the other hand, would be very cautious. With regard to the fall of oil prices, a rapid weakening of the rouble and the meltdown of foreign exchange reserves, Germany's vice chancellor has declared that those who want to destabilise Russia in this situation even more are pursuing neither German nor European interests. Even though the German chancellor has maintained her consistent posture given Russia's most recent economic problems, a further worsening of financial and economic indicators could be used in Germany as an argument or an excuse to loosen sanctions.

Thirdly, a looming financial or economic collapse of Ukraine could lead to new controversies between Germany and Poland. Poland would call for immediate and sufficient aid to avoid economic, political and social chaos directly beyond its eastern borders. Germany would most likely also be inclined to set up a rescue package, but that would be difficult and involve lengthy discussions about the sums and modalities (e.g. what kind of conditions). Recently, discussions have taken place in Germany regarding what would happen in the case of an imminent gas supply crisis in Ukraine. Should Germany and other governments, or the EU, deliver gas for free if Ukraine is unable to pay the bill? In this case Poland would probably show more readiness for burden-sharing than Germany.

And finally there is the scenario of a massive escalation. If Russia pursues increased military action in the south and east of Ukraine, what should be the response? There is no doubt that Germany and Poland would both opt for additional

sanctions. But in such a situation, Poland would probably opt for a much more active approach. Given new waves of fighting in the Donbas region already at the beginning of 2015, Poland's foreign minister has said that Poland would be ready to sell Ukraine weapons. Germany on the other hand is opposed to these ideas and is determined to avoid any sort of military support as it fears this would be seen as a provocation by Russia.

An examination of trust

The final outcome of the situation in Ukraine and with Russia remains anybody's guess. For the most part, Germany has held the EU together and is seen as a guarantor of a difficult but united sanctions policy towards Russia. This is seen as a valuable achievement for Poland, which has broadly appreciated and supported Germany's approach – even if it wished for a more inclusion in talks. Germany on the other hand has needed Poland as a source for legitimacy in its talks to Russia and in intra-EU brokering: Poland is also a balancing partner against Russian-leaning member states. Nevertheless, the crisis has also revealed German-Polish ambivalence.

In Poland, there is a deeply-rooted suspicion that the relatively consistent line of the German government can be easily reversed with a quick return to pro-Russian empathy or a split among the key political actors. There is also a conviction that Germany's strategic culture is hampering Poland on its way to effective reassurance. Germany's rising understanding for the Polish threat assessment and tangible steps to improve security co-operation have not allayed Warsaw's worries that in terms of hard security Germany is more of an unreliable fellow than a solid ally.

For the time being, the conflict with Russia in and about Ukraine has not been a disruptive shock for German-Polish relations. It is rather an ongoing examination of the adhesive force which has bound Germany and Poland increasingly together over the course of the last year. In other words, the Ukraine crisis has become a big test of the trust and credibility of the German-Polish partnership. NEE

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A Tidal Change in Ostpolitik

HANNES ADOMEIT

It is fair to say that Germany's policy towards Russia and, more broadly, its policies east of the Oder river (*Ostpolitik*), have changed significantly, if not fundamentally, over the course of the last year. What is more, this change is likely to last for the foreseeable future. A quick return to "business as usual" is highly improbable.

As early as May 2014 German Chancellor Angela Merkel pointed out that the crisis in and over Ukraine was unlikely to be resolved soon and that, therefore, patience and persistence were necessary "so that the pre-eminence of law would be asserted rather than the principle of might makes right". The context into which the chancellor consistently puts her plea for patience and persistence is the German government's position that the sanctions against Russia should be maintained until the Kremlin clearly demonstrates that it is willing to carry out the provisions of the Minsk Protocol.

Predictions after the autumn 2013 parliamentary elections, which led to the formation of the coalition government of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), its sister party and Bavarian wing, the Christian Socialist Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), that there would be significant differences in the approach between the more realistic and hard line stance of Chancellor Merkel, on the one hand, and the more Russia-friendly orientation of the foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on the other, have failed to come true. Merkel and Steinmeier have worked hand in glove.

Complicated picture

To the extent that differences exist, they fail to affect policy. There is consensus across the board, embracing the CDU/CSU and SPD as well as the Greens, that a more determined approach towards Russia is required. One of the few exceptions to the consensus was an insinuation by CSU chief Horst Seehofer in November 2014 to the effect that "if Herr Steinmeier were to conduct his own diplomacy parallel to that of the chancellor, it would be extremely dangerous". However, it was almost as if he had put his hand in a wasp's nest. In the Bundestag debate on November 26th 2014, even Gerda Hasselfeldt, the head of the CSU parliamentary group, distanced herself in no uncertain terms from Seehofer. She reminded parliament that Europe was a community of values and that Europeans had great expectations about Germany and its policy vis-à-vis Russia. She then, evidently with a swipe at Seehofer, continued: "In all of these questions [relating to Russia and its policies] it is especially important that we act in a united way – united in Europe, and united in NATO; that united we will not allow any rupture of the threads of talks but that at the same time, concerning sanctions [against Russia], we demonstrate resolution and toughness, and are united in the government coalition."

There is a broad political consensus that on Russia issues, Merkel and Steinmeier work hand-in-glove.

The German government's foreign policy, as that in any country, is influenced by domestic factors, including public opinion. There has been a widespread perception, notably abroad, to the effect that German public opinion is both "anti-American" and "pro-Russian". However, trend analyses conducted by polling institutions reveal a more complicated and contradictory picture. Whereas, indeed, the image of the United States and that of Russia in German public opinion deteriorated over time (September 2009 to July 2014) and by and large worsened in parallel, trust in the US diminished from much greater heights as compared with that in Russia, and has shown more fluctuation. The public image of the US improved for a time after the Russian annexation of Crimea. Even at its lowest point thereafter (July 2014), with 35 per cent of the respondents expressing trust, it was still better than that of Russia in the same month (15 per cent). Equally contrary to widespread views is the fact that German public opinion has generally been quite supportive of the government's handling of the crisis over Ukraine, including sanctions against Russia.

One of the more puzzling phenomena about German public opinion, however, is the ubiquitous presence of *Russlandversteher* or *Putinversteher* in the public domain, people who invariably show "understanding" for Russia and its leader;

find excuses and rationalisations for Russian arguments and actions; hold the EU and NATO responsible for the conflict; and reject sanctions against Russia as misguided or "counterproductive". Strangely, their proportion in the former East Germany (GDR) is higher than in the western parts of the country. It is doubtful, however, that this is because of genuinely "pro-Russian" sentiments. The Soviet presence in the GDR did not elicit much enthusiasm, and neither did the learning of the Russian language and participation in activities of the German-Soviet-GDR Friendship Society. Genuine friendship between East Germans and Russians was rare, not least because of stringent Soviet non-fraternisation policies. Thus, it stands to reason that appeasement attitudes in the eastern parts of Germany as, indeed, in the western parts, are much more a feature of anti-Americanism and, more generally, anti-western and anti-European sentiment rather than an expression of pro-Russian attitudes.

Political parties, groups and individuals generally in support of and expressing "understanding" for Russia and its policies may be vociferous and widespread. However, their views are by no means mainstream. Individuals, movements and parties combining anti-American and pro-Russian attitudes can usually be found on the far right and far left of the German political spectrum. That camp also consists of former chancellors and ministers irrespective of their political party affiliation. They typically convey the notion that their successors messed things up and if they were or had been at the helm, there would be no crisis in German-Russian relations. Examples of such self-confident (and often self-serving) critics of the government's Russia policies include former chancellors Helmut Kohl, Helmut Schmidt and Gerhard Schröder; Kohl's foreign policy advisor Horst Teltschik; government ministers Egon Bahr and Volker Rühe; the first and last non-communist GDR prime minister Lothar de Maizière; and former minister-president of Brandenburg Matthias Platzeck. What these politicians apparently fail to comprehend is that the Soviet Union in the late Brezhnev era was essentially a status quo oriented power. Putin's Russia, however, has turned neo-imperialist and revisionist.

New perceptions

The most important reason for coalition consensus and consistency, as well as the likelihood of their extended duration, has been deep changes in the perspectives on Putin and Russia's internal development and foreign policy. Whereas the CDU/CSU and the Greens have felt their previous perceptions of Putin's Russia to have been confirmed, major changes have occurred in the SPD leadership so that its views are now part of a general consensus.

Part of the revision in the SPD's perceptions concerns the concepts of *Wandel durch Annäherung* (change through rapprochement) and *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade), that is, the ideas that change in Russian domestic and foreign policies can be achieved through an expansion of economic contacts and exchanges. These would give rise to a middle class which, in turn, would promote democracy, a free market with fair competition, a law-based state and an active civil society internally, and co-operation with the Euro-Atlantic world externally. Actual developments, as the SPD leaders now have acknowledged, have not conformed to such precepts and predictions. Putin has created a system *sui generis* that is decidedly anti-western, authoritarian and illiberal, and professes to incorporate "traditional" Russian values. In foreign policy, it is revisionist, aiming at the re-establishment of Russian influence and control over the post-Soviet space, the Eurasian Union project being one of the means.

The undeniable expansion of German-Russian trade ties has done nothing to advance the modernisation of Russia.

Another significant change has been the demise of the "Russia first" approach. In other words, there is a greater realisation of the importance of Ukraine and other countries of the EU's Eastern Partnership. Ukraine used to be at the margins of German interest. In accordance with this secondary interest, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was specifically designed to forestall rather than foster Ukrainian (and other countries') applications for EU membership.

German decision makers have now also come to recognise the fact that the defining feature of the relationship between NATO and the EU, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, in the common neighbourhood is not partnership but competition and conflict. Related to this is their realisation that Russia is not aiming at the solution of the frozen conflicts in the region but their manipulation in order to prevent the countries involved in these conflicts from pursuing the European option. Thus, they suspect, the Russian support for separatism in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk) is meant to establish yet another such conflict.

No return to "business as usual"

The government's Russia policies also have to be seen in the context of its realisation that Germany has to shoulder a greater degree of responsibility in international affairs. In fact, the management of relations with Russia and the crisis over Ukraine can be said to conform to the announcement of a new approach in

German foreign policy by President Joachim Gauck, foreign minister Steinmeier and defence minister Ursula von der Leyen at the 50th Munich Security Conference in late January and early February 2014. Assertions, therefore, to the effect that in its handling of the conflict Berlin is yielding merely to pressures from Washington rather than executing its own policies vis-à-vis Russia, are wide off the mark.

The policies have, from the very beginning of the coalition government's formation in December 2013, been remarkably firm and consistent. This is quite contrary to previous crises, such as after the Georgian war in August 2008 when German-Russian relations quickly returned to "business as usual". This is a phenomenon that was by no means limited to Germany. In the United States, too, assumptions then were that normalcy could be re-established – as witnessed by Washington's attempt to "reset" its relations with Russia. German firmness and consistency has especially been visible on the issue of sanctions. Assumptions subscribed, not least in Moscow, to the effect that Berlin would be averse to the adoption of sanctions turned out to be incorrect. In fact, the German government has been at the forefront of the EU member states pushing for sanctions and their coordination with those of the US.

Assumptions that Berlin was averse to sanctions and simply yielded to pressures from Washington are incorrect.

Equally incorrect is the notion that German business has exerted extreme pressure on the government not to adopt sanctions and, once put in place, to rescind them. Of course, the Ost-Ausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft (Eastern Committee of German Trade and Industry) has never tired of making the argument that economic sanctions are ill-advised or even counterproductive and that politics should not interfere with business. Yet more typical of attitudes of German business is the position adopted by the Association of the German Economy for Eastern Europe (Osteuropaverein der Deutschen Wirtschaft), representing about 300 enterprises with business interests in Eastern Europe, including Russia. Its chairman, Markus Felsner, is on record saying "Of course, there are complaints. Nevertheless, most of the enterprises support the sanctions. Our entrepreneurs do not need closeness to the Kremlin but a predictable legal framework for investments, and on that score Russia already some time ago went into the wrong direction."

Another widespread erroneous assumption is the idea that German government policy is constrained by the huge importance of German exports to Russia, and if that business were to contract significantly, this would produce disastrous economic and therefore ultimately political consequences. To put things in perspective, however, Russia in 2013 was not even among the top ten destinations for

German exports. The list was topped by France with goods worth 100 billion euros (9.1 per cent of total German exports) followed by the United States, (8.2 per cent), the United Kingdom (8.2 per cent), the Netherlands (6.4 per cent), China (6.1 per cent), Austria (5.1 per cent), Italy (4.8 per cent), Switzerland (4.3 per cent), Poland (3.8 per cent) and Belgium (3.9 per cent). Russia received only 35.8 billion euros (3.2 per cent) of German exports and thus took 11th place on the list.

Trustworthy partner

An important change in Germany's *Ostpolitik* is Berlin's close co-operation with Warsaw. In the Schröder era (1998–2005), government officials in the chancellery and the foreign ministry considered Polish and Baltic insistence on a tougher line towards Russia almost a nuisance. This changed under the Merkel governments even before the crisis over Ukraine. By all accounts, Merkel's relations with Donald Tusk were excellent, as were Steinmeier's with Radosław Sikorski. The relationship promises to be as close between the top German leaders and the successors in the Polish government, Ewa Kopacz and Grzegorz Schetyna. Co-operation has taken place in the format of the Weimar Triangle, when Steinmeier, Sikorski and Laurent Fabius of France met in February 2014 in Kyiv with the representatives of the Viktor Yanukovych regime and the EuroMaidan movement and helped forge an agreement on the cessation of violence, constitutional reform and early presidential elections in Ukraine.

Subsequently, German moves have appeared to exclude Poland. Such perceptions are connected with the "Normandy format" of negotiations that originated in a meeting of the presidents of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine in commemoration of the June 6th 1944 allied landing on the Normandy beaches. The concern, however, appears misplaced. Putin would in all likelihood have rejected the idea of being faced with yet another leader from EU and NATO countries plus Ukraine at the negotiating table. More importantly, the credibility of the West's position in the conflict over Ukraine is represented more credibly by countries previously more accommodating to Russia (Germany and France) than by a country or countries considered by Russia and many Russians to be "anti-Russian". In any case, whereas Poland may formally not be part of the talks in that format, in practice, co-operation and coordination between Berlin and Warsaw at the government level is working well. Finally, the common position and policies are broadly based as Polish-German reconciliation has developed deep roots. This is confirmed by public opinion polls in Germany which show that the vast majority of Germans consider Poland to be a "trustworthy" partner.

The German government's energy policy, if it has not changed already, is also bound to take new directions. "There will be a reconsideration of the whole energy policy", Merkel stated shortly after Russia's annexation of Crimea. Although, as she pointed out, Germany's dependency on Russian oil and gas in comparison to that of other EU member countries was by no means the highest, it was nevertheless necessary to reduce the overall dependence of the EU on Russian natural gas. Merkel acknowledged that the "necessary infrastructure [for the achievement of that goal] has not yet arrived". However, the point was to set in motion a long-term orientation. As for the short term, Berlin has firmly supported the EU's Third Energy Package that provides for the unbundling of transportation and gas production to lead to full marketisation of the industry – a firm position that has already led to the frustration of Gazprom's ambitious and expensive plans to build South Stream.

Unchanged policies

There are, however, several unchanged axioms of German policy. These include the belief that "European security is impossible to achieve without Russia, let alone against Russia"; "the conflict", no matter whether this concerns Ukraine or war in the Middle East "can only be solved politically"; "there can be no military solution"; and "de-escalation can only be achieved through dialogue".

The first axiom, however, has consistently neglected the fact that improvements in European security could not be achieved *with* Russia and that, for four decades, security in Europe was safeguarded through NATO *against* the Soviet Union – an appropriate reminder since Putin is on record of having stated that "The Soviet Union, that, too, is Russia, only under a different name". Of course, a comprehensive solution of the conflict over Ukraine has an important political dimension, but it must also take into consideration the military realities on the ground. These define the parameters of a possible political solution. For instance, in July and August 2014, it seemed as though the conflict could be terminated in favour of the government in Kyiv when the Ukrainian armed forces in alliance with armed militias succeeded in pushing back the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk. This raised the prospect that the separatists would be defeated. This was not to be, however. Russia significantly increased its military assistance, both in terms of weapons and personnel, and reversed the fortunes of war.

Unchanged is also Berlin's aversion to the provision of weapons to "crisis areas" – a principle adhered to by all previous governments. The principle was only broken after acrimonious debate in parliament with the decision to supply the Kurds in northern Iraq with weapons, including the Milan anti-tank missile, in

their fight against the terrorist Islamic State. That breach was declared to be an exception. One could argue that Europe had a moral obligation to come to the defence of a country invaded by its neighbour, even though with limited forces. Why not, then, furnish the Ukrainian armed forces with the Milan to put them in a better position to stave off attacks carried out by the separatists with armoured support? The government in Berlin even refuses to ask that question realising full well that raising the issue would lead to a public outcry and undercut the support it has enjoyed hitherto on its sanctions policy.

The "congagement" approach

One of the consequences of the German government's diagnosis that Putin's Russia has turned revisionist and is using military means to achieve far-reaching objectives could be a policy of containment. Since it considers responding by military means to the challenge posed by Russia to be out of the question, containment could theoretically take the form of weakening the country economically. Berlin could join forces with Washington in order to raise the "costs of empire" for the Kremlin. In line with such an approach, economic sanctions would then not be tied (as now explicitly) to the implementation of the September 5th Minsk protocol but to a change of Russian domestic and foreign policy. However, containment of Russia in that sense is not on the agenda of the German government. It is de facto endorsing the idea of "congagement" as suggested by one of the think tanks close to the SPD, that is, containment combined with (constructive and cooperative) engagement.

> Whereas criticism by German officials of Russian policy had been previously absent or subdued, it is now direct and open.

In execution of this idea, talks between German and Russian high-level officials have not only failed to dry up but, given the critical nature of the crisis, have been held with greater frequency than before. Thus, between Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the G20 meeting in Brisbane in November, Merkel held about 40 telephone conversations with Putin. Face-to-face talks took place in Normandy on June 6th, in Milan on October 16th and in Brisbane on November 17th. Steinmeier and Lavrov also met numerous times, and twice the German foreign minister travelled to Moscow.

The German government's engagement is important from a number of perspectives. Two of them stand out in particular. First, since Germany used to be a country favourably disposed towards Russia in the past and, in fact, was an important

advocate of the Kremlin's interests in the EU, its firm position carries more weight than that of any other European country. Second, the full engagement of Germany in the management of the crisis and its support for Ukraine serves to highlight the fact that the crisis is of supreme European concern and helps to invalidate the Russian claim that the conflict over Ukraine is part and parcel of the United States "striving for world dominance".

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A Storm in a Teacup?

PIOTR BURAS

The year 2014 was an odd year for Polish-German relations. Not surprisingly, discussions between Berlin and Warsaw were dominated by the topic of the Ukrainian crisis and the European struggle to address the new geopolitical situation in the East. However, the misunderstandings and frustrations that characterised relations between these two countries certainly call for reflection.

Those who view Polish-German relations through the prism of differences in collective memories were given a gift in 2014. Last year was truly a "year of anniversaries", with the 100th and 75th anniversaries of the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars respectively, being assigned a special place on the political agenda. On this occasion, Polish President Bronisław Komorowski delivered an important speech at the German Bundestag in which he redefined the interests of the Polish-German community as a "community of shared responsibility". However, in the context of the war in Ukraine the speeches and celebrations were not as interesting as was the perception – both in Poland and in Germany – of the emerging, new geopolitical order in Europe. Historical analogies are an interesting gauge of political sensitivity and moods among the elite.

In Germany, Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers* has become one of the hottest books in recent months, providing a pre-First World War memento that seems very vivid. Back then, Europe entered a disastrous conflict, "a catastrophe of the century", somehow accidentally, by sleepwalking under the influence of false assumptions, projections and calculations. But Europe – including Germany, pictured in earlier historiography as the unquestioned aggressor – did not make a conscious decision that such a large-scale conflict was necessary. This is, at least,

what Clark claims in *The Sleepwalkers*. His theses were met in Germany with great interest and appreciation.

1914 or 1938?

If the Europe of 1914 was to give us a lesson one hundred years later, it would be that a conflict needs to be kept under control and not allowed to further escalate throughout the whole continent. We should keep calm no matter what – this is the motto today for those who are aware that history tends to repeat itself. But what if the proper analogy lays in a completely different time? Instead of 1914, what if 1938 is the year that we should rather be focusing on?

In Poland, Clark's book has not yet been released. Hence, it is rather the classical work by Henryk Batowski which described two German attacks (on Austria and Czechoslovakia) which has a stronger impact on our national imagination. The First World War does not have much room in our school curricula and not many have concrete knowledge on the topic. There is, however, an awareness that the policy of appeasement – a policy of making concessions to an aggressive state in order to avoid conflict – is the first step to ruin. Not surprisingly, this historical cliché has become the most popular in analyses of Russia's current intentions and future developments of the situation in the East.

Differences in historical sensitivities help explain the variations between Polish and German debates on the Ukrainian-Russian crisis.

These differences in historical sensitiveness are a fascinating problem for researchers of memory; and they explain, to a large extent, why the Polish and German debates on the Ukrainian-Russian conflict vary. But differences in this regard are not only rooted in history, but also come from the more recent past. In Germany, the perspective of the latest break in relations between Russia and the West woke up battalions of – usually quite aged – *Russlandversteher* (those who "understand" Russia) who are willing to loudly call for respect of Russia's interests and dignity, despite the fact that it is the Kremlin that is actually doing the most harm.

In Poland, on the other hand, the feeling of a specific *Schadenfreude* ("We told you so!") that Russia is not a teddy bear but rather a dangerous polar bear against which we have been always warning about has forced many to exploit some of "our" own historical analogies, even if rarely furnished with adequately drawn conclusions. The somewhat chaotic discord of German discussions, which included warnings about "the guns of August" (in reference to the outbreak of the First World War)

mixed with appeals by self-proclaimed defenders of Russian interests, German businessmen regularly travelling to Moscow and an increasingly harsh tone against Vladimir Putin from the media and the Bundestag, became very confusing for the Poles. It led to the belief that Poles and Germans were living in two different realities and that the conflict in the East has created, not for the first time, a deep gap between Berlin and Warsaw.

The need for change

Hence, the question is: Does this virtual dispute of historical analogies reflect the nature of the Polish and German reshuffle in eastern policy that took place in 2014? In Poland, it was realised quite late that the key element of German discourse was not about historiosophy at all but about the doctrine of foreign policy. The Ukrainian-Russian crisis has not only undermined the very foundation of the traditional German approach to Russia but it has also questioned the premises on which German foreign policy has been based for over the last 25 years. The crisis has led to a major rift between the German political elite and the society in terms of international policy issues. It is not surprising that the signals coming from Germany were ambiguous and often difficult to understand. It does not, however, change the fact that the redefinition of German foreign policy which took place in 2014 was unprecedented and that change is what is important today.

In 2014 three of the main aims of German foreign policy were put into question. First was the principle of interdependence which traditionally was perceived by the Germans as the most effective tool of influence, stability and the transfer of values. In relation to Russia the ideas of "change through rapprochement" (Egon Bahr, 1960s) or "change through linkage" (Frank-Walter Steinmeier, 2007) were the best expressions of this approach. As a result of the strengthening of economic ties, Russia was meant to come closer to Europe and become more predictable. The aggression in Ukraine ultimately defeated these hopes and showed that interdependence could be also used in an asymmetric way.

Second, Germans have always believed in the triumph of geo-economics over geopolitics. They assumed that, just like Germany and other countries, superpowers are driven by economic motivation and that the language of economics should become the language of diplomacy. The "revenge of geography", as Robert Kaplan put it, which became most evident thanks to Russian foreign policy, has eliminated these calculations. Third, Germany had implied that Europe was made up of several strong powers and that Germany was in fact just one of them – *primus inter pares*. The Ukrainian crisis broke out, however, at a moment when this

assumption proved to be false. The United Kingdom has voluntarily put itself on the periphery of the EU and the disproportion between the political and economic potentials of Berlin and Paris, after just a few years of crisis, has never been more serious. Hence, Germany was left alone to take responsibility for building a united European front towards Russia.

The necessity of rethinking some elements of German foreign policy was signalled even before the Ukrainian crisis. It suffices to mention the speeches given by the German president, Joachim Gauck, the minister of defence, Ursula von der Leyen, or the foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, during the Munich Security Conference. However, it was the crisis in its relations with Russia that exposed the weaknesses of this diplomacy. It is difficult to say today how far this redefinition will reach. But with the experience of 2014, we can say that while facing the most serious problem since the end of the Cold War, Berlin rose to the challenge.

The greatest merit of German policy was that it was able to shape and keep a united position towards Russia.

The greatest merit of German policy was that it was able to shape and keep a united position towards Russia, despite the internal divisions of EU states. It is true that Germany was not first in line among the states demanding sanctions against Russia at the beginning, and the accusation, often repeated in Poland, that Germany waited too long to send a strong response to the annexation of Crimea is not unjustified. However, Germany's foreign policy, especially in the summer of 2014, was clear. Since that time Germany has been pursuing a consistent foreign policy on four fronts: maintaining sanctions against Russia; engaging in dialogue (without any great hopes that it will be effective); building a coalition within the EU; and organising aid for Ukraine. What is more, it is also the German business community (or at least its official representatives) that supports the government's policies and is working to convince their partners from other European states to do the same.

Crisis of trust

Why then have there been so many differences between Warsaw and Berlin? Why in the summer 2014, did many prominent Polish politicians claim that "we cannot count on Germany" and that "Germans are Putin's greatest ally"? The impression that Germany is not a reliable partner for Poland has led to a crisis of trust between the two neighbours. This could be a paradox given the evolution of German foreign policy entails its moving in a direction that is closer to that of Poland.

But the state of affairs is more complex. The loud voices of the *Russlandversteher* are widely cited by the Polish media and Poles naturally make a connection to the "Steinbach issue" (referring to Erika Steinbach, a German politician, and her controversial views on German expulsion from Poland after the Second World War; often seen in Poland as anti-Polish – editor's note).

Yet the Germans assumed that after the annexation of Crimea its change of foreign policy was so obvious that they did not need to ask for Poland's support. This is probably why Germany underestimated the disastrous reaction in Poland after Polish representatives were excluded from the so-called "Normandy format" (Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine), the current framework of discussions aimed at resolving the crisis in Ukraine. Poland feels that it has been purposefully omitted from a political process that is so crucial to its own interests and security and which has been one of the most important issues for Polish diplomacy.

Another thing that led to concern in Poland has been Germany's position during NATO negotiations prior to the summit in Wales in September 2014. Germany was then opposed to the deployment of NATO forces on its eastern flank, a strong demand coming from Poland and the Baltic states. Berlin based its position on the stipulations of the 1997 NATO agreement on mutual co-operation with Russia, which in Poland's view has been breached by Russia on many occasions.

Germany's cautious position towards Russia did not find a lot of sympathy in Poland. Poland feels that Germany, once the strongest advocate of NATO enlargement to the East, was now refusing Poles (as well as other societies of Central and Eastern Europe) their right to increased security. The Polish critics, however, did not notice that German policy was not only directed towards the Kremlin but also within the EU where Germany had to convince other, more reluctant, member states towards to agree on a united policy towards Russia, a near-impossible mission in and of itself.

Mutual ground

Were the noticeable tensions between Warsaw and Berlin just a storm in a teacup and a result of superficial differences? In the end Germany agreed at the 2014 NATO Summit to resolutions which largely satisfied Polish demands. Furthermore, Angela Merkel's speech in Sydney during the G20 Summit, in which she harshly criticised Putin, could have been authored by any major Polish politician. However, the misunderstandings that took place between these two countries also showed how interstate relations, which in recent years were praised for being so good, can easily get stuck in the mud. Paradoxically, the dialogue that is taking

place between the political elite of both countries leaves much to be desired. The best example here is the very shallow nature of relations between the Polish and German parliaments. It is quite surprising that Polish fears and objections were virtually unknown in the Bundestag. Thus, the role of mutual parliamentary groups must be redefined in this regard.

There is little doubt that Poland and Germany will continue to face more challenges in the months to come. Today, Europe's policy towards Russia is at a point from which any return will be difficult, unless concessions are made to which neither Poland nor Germany will agree. Thus, a good test of the Polish-German cooperation and trust will be the quick implementation of the resolutions of the 2014 NATO Summit, such as the establishment of a rapid reaction force with its headquarters in Szczecin, on the Polish coast. For Poland an issue of great importance is German support for establishing an energy union. Poland and Germany should also prepare together a realistic aid plan for Ukraine which would meet the country's needs but also be dependent on the progress of internal reforms.

A good test of Polish-German trust will be the quick implementation of the resolutions of the NATO Wales Summit.

Finally, the EU's policy in its neighbourhood needs a complete overhaul. This is an issue on which Poland and Germany could easily find mutual ground and speak with one voice. In order to achieve this, Berlin needs to help Warsaw get out of the isolation in which it has found itself in the recent months, while Warsaw needs to return to its role as a pioneer and policy initiator at the EU level.

One thing is certain: the crisis in Ukraine has illustrated that Berlin's eastern policy has no legitimacy in the long term without Warsaw's support. At the same time Germany remains a vital partner for Poland, especially concerning its ambitious foreign policy aspirations towards Russia and Ukraine.

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Rediscovering Ukraine

A conversation with Karl Schlögel,
a German historian, essayist and writer.
Interviewer: Paul Toetzke

PAUL TOETZKE: In recent years you have begun to rediscover Ukraine. In an article you wrote about Kharkiv for *Die ZEIT* you wrote that "Ukraine is like a small Europe: culturally and linguistically diverse". Yet, in Germany we often talk about the risk of the country being divided between east and west. Why is this?

KARL SCHLÖGEL: I have noticed that the German discourse about Ukraine is only focused on the negative aspects. This has something to do with the fact that there is no real idea about Ukraine in Germany. It is always associated with chaos, cultural divisions and different languages. Only a few people see the potential of Ukraine. In fact Ukraine is one of the only countries in Europe that is officially bilingual. Few in Germany see the richness of Ukraine's culture that combines Habsburg traditions with a Russian or Soviet heritage; or that combines Black Sea culture with the steppe and agrarian culture of Chernihiv or Poltava. These things are rarely mentioned. This also goes for what I wrote about for Kharkiv, which was one of the biggest construction sites of European modern architecture.

What I wanted to show is that there is no image of Ukraine in Germany; it is like a black hole on the map. In the minds of the German people, there was only the Soviet Union and Russia became its successor. This has slowly changed since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. Ukraine is finally finding its place on the "mental map" of the German people and that is one of the main effects of the current processes taking place in Ukraine.

How can this diversity be preserved while at the same time preventing a division of the country?

The discussion about a division between eastern and western Ukraine is not quite accurate in itself. The Dnieper Ukraine, or Kyiv, is neither west nor east

Ukraine. And what we now see developing is an integrating force, through the aggression from Vladimir Putin's Russia, which is creating an even greater awareness about the idea of Ukraine among Ukrainians. This is not about east or west Ukraine, but about a self-conception of what it means to be "Ukrainian". So in this sense, the indirect effect of Russian aggression is the emergence of a Ukrainian conscience as a political nation and a nation state.

The Donbas region is a very particular part of Ukraine and we have to discuss why it is this area that is now affected by the divisions. In my view, the easiest way to prevent this division is closing the border with Russia and the termination of weapons supply. That way the conflict would become an internal affair that the country could maybe handle itself. But to fight a war, defend itself and at the same time reconstruct the whole country is an almost impossible task.

The fighting in eastern Ukraine began seriously escalating in early 2015. In your view is there still any point in pushing the goals of the September 2014 Minsk Protocol that was agreed on by the representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the two self-proclaimed people's republics the "Donetsk People's Republic" and the "Luhansk People's Republic"?

Just one day after the protocol was signed there was a military intensification, so my impression is that the protocol was just a ruse to buy time. Clearly, the majority of the escalation is being done on the side of the Russians and the separatists. In fact, it is Russia who dictates when to attack and when to stop. Not long ago, the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Sergey Lavrov, said that Russia will use its influence to stop the violence, while Aleksander Zakharchenko (the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic) refused to negotiate. Yet to believe that the separatists act independently from Moscow is just ludicrous. It is obvious that all supplies, including weapons and tanks, are sent by the presidential administration.

What do you think is the main goal of Russia towards Ukraine, especially considering the vicious attacks on Mariupol in mid-January 2015?

The main goal for Russia is the complete destabilisation of Ukraine. It is not about Crimea, Mariupol or Kyiv; whether they will attack particular cities is not the question. Putin wants to put Ukraine on its knees. And that might take a lot of time. We can easily imagine that, for example, one day the separatists will demand a ceasefire in Mariupol and a week later they will attack again. It is not possible to predict what will happen tomorrow, or the day after. But it is clear that the strategy is the destabilisation and eventual destruction of an independent Ukraine. And that is why this is not only a Ukrainian matter.

Germany is one of the most important intermediaries between Russia, Ukraine and

the West. How do you assess Germany in terms of fulfilling this role?

In my opinion the German government has been doing well so far. There was a strong condemnation of the annexation of Crimea and of the military support for the separatists. The government has also emphasised that it does not intend to drive anyone into a corner and has repeatedly offered to continue talks with Putin. Angela Merkel has always sought dialogue with Russia. Even now there are plans to strengthen cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union.

There is, however, also a tendency to avoid any words that could irritate Putin. In my opinion this is not the best approach. The aggression in Ukraine is not the result of a provocation by the West, but a plan by the Russian leadership that is unable to cope with the fact that the Soviet Union no longer exists. It is the political leadership that is not able to solve Russia's internal problems and blames the West for its own political bankruptcy.

Russia's economy is in critical condition and the sanctions have started to take an effect. Yet Putin's policies have not changed as the West had hoped. In January 2015 Poland's president, Bronisław Komorowski, demanded new sanctions to be imposed by the European Union. What other options does the West have?

The most important question is how Europe will defend itself and how it will support a state that is being attacked. It is clear that NATO and the EU do not see military involvement as an option. Putin knows this. So far sanctions are the only instrument that the West has at its disposal. However, the sanctions will have a long-term effect. When it comes to such a big country like Russia, it would be unrealistic to expect immediate results. This country has immense resources and experience with shortages and self-subsistence for generations. And there is a general attitude among Russians that their country is immune to sanctions.

I also believe that the introduction of sanctions is not so much about their economic effects on Russian, but rather a test of whether Europe can stand united. This question will be particularly pressing in March 2015 when the Europeans have to decide whether they will maintain the sanctions against Russia. If they will not do so, this will be a victory for Putin.

In Germany opinions on Russia are heavily divided. Does this also play into Putin's hands?

Putin has powerful allies all over Europe. The nationalist, anti-European and anti-American forces like Front National in France are on his side, but also countries like Hungary and Serbia have strong ties with Putin. In Germany we are currently witnessing a strong pro-Russian and anti-American movement. Looking at the PEGIDA movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West, an organisation which is against

Photo: Dontworry (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

Born in 1948, Karl Schlögel is a German historian, essayist and travel writer.

the alleged Islamisation of Europe) we see those pro-Russian voices. And these groups are not marginal.

This atmosphere is also reflected in the appeal "Another war in Europe? Not in our name" (an open letter to end the provocation against Russia signed by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, former German President Roman Herzog and filmmaker Wim Wenders, among others). I find such acts not only embarrassing but also dangerous. To believe that there is no war in eastern Ukraine and that the West is actually responsible for the aggression is absurd. This especially pains someone like me; I have worked my whole life to create a better understanding of Russia in Germany. To label people like me as someone who is not interested in peace with Russia is outrageous.

Where do these emotions towards Russia come from?

There are different influences that have come together. Russia has always been identified with the Soviet Union. The feeling of guilt that resulted from the horrific crimes the Germans committed on the territory of the Soviet Union during the Second World War is still very present – and rightly so. But the fact that basically all countries of the Soviet Union were also affected by them, especially Ukraine, is often ignored. We see only the Russians, who have inherited ownership of this feeling of guilt by the Germans. It is a mix between ignorance and a lack of knowledge.

Another element is the belief that there is a kind of *Seelenverwandtschaft* (congeniality) between Germans and Russians. This attitude has historical justification. Friedrich Nietzsche once said: "if you want to know what is happening in Europe, you have to go to St Petersburg". People like Rainer Maria Rilke, Lou Salomé or Thomas Mann were similarly enthusiastic about Russia. But the question is: why does Putin get credit for the achievements of the golden age of the 1920s? What does he have to do with those accomplishments of Russian culture?

You are a great admirer of Russian culture. In 2013 you were awarded the Pushkin Medal for your achievements in strengthening cultural co-operation with Russia. However, you decided not to accept it. Is there no room for cultural co-operation under Putin?

Well, I spent almost my whole life trying to understand Russia and to pass this understanding on to Germans. So, it is not very odd that I was awarded with this medal. I also received the Federal Cross of Merit (*Bundesverdienstkreuz*).

I did not accept the award because I did not want to receive it from the hands of someone who lies to my face saying: "I am not fighting a war; those people buy their uniforms in second hand shops". I was just not able to take it from the hands of such a man. There were also other recipients of the award who refused to accept it including Dutch translator Hans Boland. Germany has to understand that there is a Russia beyond Putin.

How important is the role of Russian intellectuals and artists in making a stand against Putin?

Immediately after the annexation of Crimea there was a split within the Russian community of artists and intellectuals. There were appeals signed by hundreds of intellectuals, such as the letter initiated by the Ministry of Culture called "Russian cultural figures in support of the position of the President in regards to Ukraine and Crimea". But there were also people who openly opposed these actions like Andrey Makarevich, Lyudmila Ulitskaya or Boris Akunin –all of whom are very brave. They are famous but that does not mean that they are safe. In fact, they are now being attacked as "traitors".

Since the breaking out of the crisis in Ukraine you have been very engaged in the media. How do you see your own role in creating awareness for the developments in Russia and Ukraine in the German society?

When the EuroMaidan demonstrations in Ukraine started, I was working on a book about the cultural landscape of the Volga River. But it was impossible for me to ignore these events and just focus on the book. In such situations it is necessary that people like me, experts on the topic, become engaged. I personally felt the need to raise my hand. I decided to travel to Ukraine and get an idea of what was happening by seeing it with my own eyes. Especially in this information war, it is difficult to know what is true and what is propaganda. For example the narratives that Russians were oppressed in eastern Ukraine or that the EuroMaidan Revolution was initiated by fascists are just groundless. So I felt I had no choice but to actively engage in the debate, to help shed light on what was really happening..

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The Miracle of Solidarity

GESINE SCHWAN

The fact that the devastation caused by the Second World War and its consequences in Europe was, to some extent, overcome by Poland's Solidarity movement is in a way a true miracle. Solidarity has opened the gates for freedom and justice. A long-standing peace and stability in Ukraine and the Middle East should be built on such a base.

What was the meaning of solidarity when the Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarność" was established in Poland in 1980? What does this word mean today, in a more general understanding of the term? Without a doubt, the establishment of Solidarność, putting aside all the animosities within the movement and all the controversies around its functioning and mission, was a milestone in the fight against the communist dictatorship in Poland, throughout Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Soviet Union.

The establishment of Solidarność was also the birth of a united Europe which, until 1989, existed only partially. As a matter of fact, in 1980 it did not exist at all. Hence, Solidarity and Europe are a unity in a historical and substantive sense. Looking back to the past is an important element in any reflection on the meaning of the term "solidarity". September 1st 2014 marked the 75th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland. We Germans cannot forget the horrific tragedy that started on that day. As descendants of those who were responsible we also hold a weight of responsibility for the actions of our country and the harm that cannot be compensated. But these horrific acts should also not be forgotten by the victims and their descendants, so that they do not have to worry that the memory of suffering will be abandoned or that – without our solidarity – they will be left alone with their concerns.

Overcoming evil

The fact that the devastation caused by the Second World War and its consequences in Europe was, at least to some extent, overcome by the Solidarity movement is a true miracle. It meant a spontaneous rejection of the evil of Nazism. A "normal" reaction would be fighting evil with evil. However, as the Apostle Paul said: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21). Clearly, it is one thing to read the apostle's words and something entirely else to implement them. The latter requires a great deal of physical bravery, on the barricades, but it also requires a brave heart – when people risk being accused of ridiculousness or naïveté.

Many people were the builders of this new beginning, including Lech Wałęsa and Anna Walentynowicz, who died tragically in 2010. Józef Tischner, an eminent priest and philosopher should also be mentioned here as one of the spiritual guides of the revival. Many still remember his great speech delivered at the First Congress of Solidarność. This revival was based on a philosophy which, for decades, had been examining the relationships between good and evil, the power of good and its role in human life.

Tischner, following the path set by Edmund Husserl and his teacher Roman Ingarden, explored from a phenomenological and analytical angle the nature of rebellion against evil – a rebellion which is born during interpersonal encounters and which comes out of human goodness and the potential that we have to elicit goodness from others. In his philosophy Tischner expressed a certain internal absolute of self-rescue: an encounter with another human being may serve as a source of revival. People may help themselves out of the hatred and sorrow by accelerating good, support and solidarity. Perhaps this was Tischner's personal experience and his credo. He was a living example of a person with a philosophy of spiritual goodness and world-changing solidarity. Doing good in a world full of destruction and suffering – about which we cannot forget – generates happiness. That is why my reflections here are dedicated to solidarity, which is not only necessary and current, but also capable of inspiring people to shape Europe's common future.

"The word 'solidarity' is a little worn out, and at times poorly understood," Pope Francis stated in his Apostolic Exhortation *On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* in November 2013. Do these papal words mean that solidarity is outdated? No, they do not. As Pope Francis further argues, solidarity "refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity; it presumes the creation of a new mind-set which thinks in terms of community and the priority of life over the appropriation of goods by a few".

Not just a meaningless slogan

In this exhortation, Pope Francis formulates a key challenge to anyone who wants to spread solidarity among people in a modern world dominated by economic ways of thinking. The cost-effectiveness of goods and their consumption seem to be perceived today as the main source of happiness, respect and wealth. However, reducing wealth to the mere low-cost production of goods and consumption means that the quality of community life becomes drastically impoverished.

There is no question that life is better when the shops are full of goods than when the only products you can buy are potatoes and onions. I remember these harsh times in Poland. However, reducing the joy of living to consumption makes life, with the growing gap between the rich and poor, senseless. It also generates a great sense of discontent among those who live in the shadows. And here is where the question of solidarity emerges. Clearly, it is not enough to resent by merely referring to morality. This will not change much. Charity is not enough either. The way of our existence, our social, political and economic priorities, or – to repeat Pope Francis, our "mentality" – have to change and enable capitalist production to be reconciled with the dignity of all human beings, their right to self-determination in their own lives and to give this life the greatest meaning possible. Thus, the asymmetry between material and spiritual goods needs to be overcome in the name of freedom, justice and solidarity. These have been the leading democratic values since the French Revolution. Freedom and justice are not possible without solidarity. We have to integrate the idea of solidarity into our political and economic systems and make them compatible with it. Otherwise, solidarity will become merely a meaningless slogan used in occasional speeches by politicians.

The asymmetry between material and spiritual goods needs to be overcome in the name of freedom, justice and solidarity.

Let us now look at current attitudes within the European Union. A definite "no-bail-out!", that is a refusal to accept a rescue package, was the answer of the German government to a postulate of greater solidarity at the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis. It was argued that states should be responsible for their debt on their own, even when they cannot pay it off because of the bad economic situation. The law seemed to support this way of thinking even though public opinion in Germany was divided.

The justification of such a decision, although not always openly articulated, was a conviction that each state, as well as its citizens, is to be blamed for its failures and needs to face the consequences on its own. Thus, they should not receive any

help as this could lead to further irresponsible actions on their behalf. Such an approach to human beings – or rather a national prejudice – can be perceived as fundamental mistrust. It leads to the conclusion that people act responsibly only when under high pressure. In economic theory, the term "moral hazard" was even coined. However, such an understanding of responsibility offers no room for solidarity. In other words, there is no room for good.

On a side note, any attempt at assigning blame should be made cautiously. Economic differences, including the debt levels of public institutions, private enterprises and budgets within these countries and their interdependencies outside their borders, have many sources and are difficult to measure. Even more, they should not be compared with household budgets. Thus the picture of a thrifty "Swabian housewife" propagated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel is misleading because a flourishing economy is always based on loans and the state, as well as international corporations, may take loans for long-term investments. This is exactly why banks exist. Only a very precise analysis of the sources of public and private debt could be a base for assigning blame, but it would need to be highly differentiated. It should not confirm national prejudices which blame residents of southern Europe for a general lack of responsibility.

Solidarity in Europe

It was in this context precisely and based on the tradition of Solidarity that the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk delivered his speech at the end of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2011. He stressed the necessity for solidarity in Europe, stating: "Is the political leadership of Europe going to be the result of cut-throat competition between nation-states, and is the result of this competition going to be the domination of one, two or three capitals over the others? Or the contrary: is the political leadership of Europe going to be the leadership of the Union and is it going to be working for the good of the whole Union? Europe needs to examine its conscience together. We must not point the finger today and say: 'there is the source of the crisis.' We also need a shared responsibility for the future. Northern Europe, which boasts about its discipline, must also come to a better understanding of the need for solidarity. Southern Europe must also understand that shared responsibility also means more discipline."

At the same time, Tusk, whose government pursued a liberal economic policy, defined a central obstacle that lies in the way of European solidarity, the dominating tirades on competition, not only in the economic sphere (where is its place), but also between EU member states. Since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in

1992, the demand for "competitiveness" has increased significantly, and has been repeated like a mantra. Poland has also taken part in this. After joining the EU in 2004, Poland offered lower taxes and wages as it wanted, for understandable reasons, to attract as much capital as possible.

For Central and Eastern Europe, which had to catch up, it all made sense. However, competition as a permanent rule of international relations sparks a potential, as we know so well from history, for generating conflicts between European states. Not to mention that this rule suggests that in a world of economic globalisation nation states could take on the role of decision-makers, driving the economy and, by so doing, creating higher standards of living for its citizens. This is an illusion. In reality, things are quite the contrary: conflicts appear between states which are subordinated to certain investment interests and are no longer interested in a high quality of production and, for sure, are not interested in improving the standard of living of their citizens as the only thing they are interested in is the greatest profit possible.

Competition as a permanent rule of international relations sparks a potential for generating conflict between European states.

The development of a productive economy is naturally very important. However, in Europe we need to make common decisions, having in mind the long-term interests of all citizens – this is the much talked about "sustainable development". Also, throughout the world, together – not against each other – we need to create rules that will serve justice and help overcome the growing gaps between rich and poor, both within our own societies and between them. In order to embody solidarity, good regulations are required on the political side.

The main goal and the promise of "competitiveness" has been an increase of effectiveness of states and economies. But what kind of effectiveness are we talking about? As a matter of fact, effectiveness is equal here to production of increasingly cheaper goods and services, without regard for the working conditions. Is this not the type of development that is so strongly condemned by Pope Francis, one which is directed against life, and against the chance of solidarity?

When states compete with each other, and within the states individuals behave the same way, then everyone becomes an opponent to everyone. In such conditions, the possibility of solidarity disappears. This is taking place everywhere in the world. Not so long ago German television showed a South Korean woman who described the postulate of greater solidarity voiced by Pope Francis as "wishful thinking" which does not fit the highly competitive Korean reality. South Korea has had the highest suicide rate among young people in the world. Fanatical competition can destroy life.

A foundation of our co-existence

That is why we have to take certain steps against this fanatical competition, not only in Europe but globally, by developing political strategies such as the promotion of solidarity in workplaces. In Europe we will face tough challenges because even an agreement between members of the European Trade Union Confederation can barely be reached. It requires knowledge of history and a lot of tact and empathy. The confederation should establish institutional co-operation with the International Labour Organisation but also with the organisations of employers; as good relations within the labour world and a prosperous economy are in the interest of trade unions, employers and politicians. This takes us in the same direction as cross-border good governance in the service of freedom, justice and solidarity, to support – and not replace! – our representative democracies. As Lech Wałęsa once said, it is necessary to change democracy.

There are two more reasons why solidarity should again become a foundation of our co-existence. First, even in the economic sphere we have come to an understanding of how effective transparent, and not corrupt, co-operation is. Guidelines for this co-operation include trust, responsibility and social peace. In regards to the ultimate strength of the German economy in the last years of the crisis – something which, however, may still change – it is also important to recall that Germans in the time of crisis were able, based on our tradition of social partnership, to renew their trust by supporting not only social peace but investments. Even at the peak phase of the crisis, the number of people who lost their jobs was lower than the feeling of uncertainty had suggested. Deep trust between social partners as well as the state-run "short-work" programme helped curb a number of dismissals until the very last moment. This proved to be successful and when new foreign investments rolled in, German professionals were ready to immediately start production.

An important aspect of solidarity is the fact that it is a valuable source of joy.

Can joy unite people?

In my view, an even more important aspect of solidarity is the fact that it is a valuable source of joy. In reference to Europe, in April 1986 the European Community chose Ludwig van Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" and the poem of Friedrich Schiller as the lyrics for the anthem of Europe. But what is this joy in fact? When are we happy, what is it that makes us happy? In childhood, we are usually happy

because of our birthday or Christmas. It is connected with the period of anticipation which culminates in a gift. Would we be happy to the same extent if such anticipation did not exist?

As adults, we notice that the joy of Christmas does not come as easily as before. We are happy when someone gives us a surprise gift. However, when we notice that someone gives in order to gain profit for himself, our joy passes quickly. The person's calculation makes us feel disappointed. Joy requires an unselfish approach. Joy can be given only by those who are able to resign from their own interests. We find that giving people joy makes them more open and closer to each other. Can joy unite people?

In Schiller's "Ode to Joy", joy and brotherhood, joy and solidarity are inseparable. Joy flourishes in an atmosphere of solidarity. And, contrary to Schiller's thinking, joy creates an atmosphere of solidarity as it unites people. But is not joy just a volatile feeling? It is true that it often passes quickly. The other thing to remember, however, is that when we get involved in a serious project such as a multi-lingual kindergarten near a border, we support mutual understanding. Every action that bears fruit, every success that we can celebrate with others, is a source of joy. We are happy with our results and with appreciation for our efforts. Joy, which appears as a result of co-operation with other people, creating bonds of solidarity, is not a volatile feeling, and it also helps us tackle disappointment.

In public debates in recent years there has been a growing fear of Euro-scepticism as well as the collapse of the EU as a result of a lack of solidarity. Since the last elections to the European Parliament in 2014 this fear has grown much faster. Surveys conducted recently – such as by the Open Society Institute in 2012 – have shown, however, that the citizens of the EU are fully ready for solidarity. It is also the less off who are more open to the idea of solidarity. They expect responsible behaviour from the people they are ready to support.

The foundation for solidarity

This is understandable, although citizens' attitudes are often the result of certain opinions spread by the media or trusted political authorities. Among these opinions, there are many controversial economic ideas regarding, for example, the meaning of austerity. Surveys show that the German society wants to adhere to the principle of solidarity, but it also does not trust the rationality of its neighbours; interestingly illustrating German prejudices towards the "southerners". This leads us to a kind of vicious circle – the media use negative headlines and politicians are afraid that they reflect the overall anti-solidarity attitude of the society. As a result,

and out of fear of losing voters, they start speaking like the media. Therefore, they abandon the policy of solidarity. This vicious circle needs to be broken.

Cross-border actions undertaken by civil society organisations may help in this matter. They connect people and create a solid foundation for solidarity which will last no matter who is in power. I experienced this when I served as the head of the office of the co-ordinator for co-operation with Poland in the German government and these actions truly impressed me. As citizens, we can do a lot for the solidarity in our city, country or Europe, especially when following Józef Tischner's motto that good can be generated between people which can overcome egoistic calculations in the name of joyful solidarity.

Solidarity opened the gates for freedom and justice.

In a time of armed conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East and Iraq, such a conclusion may seem to be naïve and unrealistic. But it was the bravery and "naïveté" of the trade union Solidarność – which has a long history in Poland – that has already created a miracle. Solidarity has opened the gates of freedom and justice. A long-standing peace and stability in Ukraine or the Middle East should be built on this base. NEE

This text was originally delivered as a speech during the opening ceremony of the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk on August 30th 2014.

Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

Gesine Schwan is a German political science professor and a politician. She is the rector of the European University in Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) and was actively engaged in Polish-German relations.

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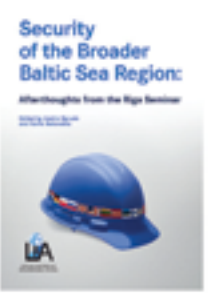

The Next Phase of the Hybrid War

MYKHAILO GONCHAR, ANDRIY CHUBYK AND OKSANA ISHCHUK

Russian aggression against Ukraine has demonstrated the characteristics and effectiveness of the hybrid war. One of its key components, policy through the energy sector, remains the most sensitive. Nevertheless, evidence shows that Moscow's next moves may be aimed at establishing itself as an energy superpower.

A former NATO security adviser, Dutch Major General Frank van Kappen, was one of the first western analysts to clearly call things as they were: "[Vladimir] Putin conducts a hybrid war against Ukraine," the general said back on April 26th 2014. A hybrid war is understood as a system of heterogeneous actions against an enemy, the intensity of which can be regulated and combined in different configurations. These actions are applied in accordance with a given algorithm, and military means are not necessarily dominant. This is especially clear in the case of Russia's actions against Ukraine. From the summer of 2013 through the end of February 2014 no one in the world, or even in Ukraine, would have considered Russia's policy towards Ukraine as aggression. This was due to the lack of a military component. Even the onset of the annexation of Crimea was not immediately perceived as a military phase.

Similarly, the events of April 2014 in the eastern regions of Ukraine were not regarded as a Russian war against Ukraine. Instead, they were put into the category of armed activities of separatists and terrorists. As a result, an anti-terrorist operation was initiated and continues today. In Europe, the Russian war against Ukraine is not officially called aggression. The preferable term is the "Ukrainian crisis".

Active intelligence

Hybrid warfare, however, is not an invention of the current Russian regime. These Russian ideas are constructed on the basis of old Soviet practices whose roots can be found in the decision of the Soviet Communist Party on February 25th 1925. Soviet Russia practiced "hybrid warfare" for the first time in the inter-war period against its neighbouring countries – Poland, China and Central Asian states. In accordance with Stalinist standards, "hybrid warfare" was differently named: "active intelligence" or "military subversion". In Poland for example, special groups dressed in Polish military or police uniforms operated in the east of the country, looting and burning local councils or private property and hijacking trains in an attempt to discredit the central government and cause an uprising in those regions with a predominantly non-Polish population. These saboteurs and terrorists failed to achieve the main task of "active intelligence" as a popular uprising did not break out. Thus, we can say that the Russian version of hybrid warfare technology today is an upgrade from that which was developed and tested in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin.

The hybrid war launched against Ukraine by the Russian Federation neither started in April 2014, along with the beginning of events in Donbas, nor in February, with the operations in Crimea. The beginning of the Crimean events symbolises the involvement of a military component which was not needed prior to that point, since everything was going "according to plan" (although the military scenario was prepared). Rather, the implementation of the hybrid war began on August 14th 2013 when Russia initiated a massive blockade against Ukrainian goods, causing serious economic damage. The goal was clear: to prevent the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union and bring Ukraine into the Customs Union. This scenario, which was elaborated inside the Kremlin, can be described as a Russian version of *Anschluss* (referring to the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938). The essence of *Anschluss* was to conquer Ukraine without firing a single shot, using "carrots and sticks" to force the Viktor Yanukovych regime to make an irreversible geopolitical turn towards Russia.

During the summer and autumn of 2013, the "sticks" were the primary tool – and it worked: Yanukovych refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. In November and December 2013, the "carrots" were brought in with promises of multi-billion dollar contracts for Ukrainian companies, especially in the military industrial complex, and 15 billion US dollars in credits and cheap gas. The EuroMaidan Revolution, on the other hand, essentially destroyed Putin's *Anschluss* scenario. Therefore, in 2014 the Kremlin launched the military and energy components of its hybrid aggression.

The military operation was launched on February 20th 2014 – the date of the beginning of the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Some statements by Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the general staff of the Russian Armed Forces, are extremely interesting in this context. In his report for the Academy of Military Sciences presented in February 2013 – one year before the Crimean campaign – he noted that: "the role of non-military methods in achieving political and strategic objectives has grown. In many cases, its effectiveness exceeds the effectiveness of weapons. The proper proportion between non-military and military measures should be four-to-one".

A tool of foreign policy

The boundaries between military and non-military threats have become blurred. When it comes to non-military measures, a crucial role is played by Russia's energy sector. Russia is traditionally a state based on energy resources in which hydrocarbons, as well as the infrastructure to deliver them, are more than just a commodity. Since the 2000s, high oil prices stimulated not only the economic development of the Russian Federation but also certain dangerous plans in the minds of its political establishment. The Russian political elite were experiencing psychological trauma from the defeat of the Cold War. The desire for global retribution and the creation of a multi-polar world with Russia as one of the key poles correlated with the idea of "gathering lands" in the post-Soviet space. However, in the EU, especially in the leading member states, this was either overlooked or ignored. The evaluation of Russia's activity in the energy sphere was carried out only in a business context.

Since the 2000s high oil prices stimulated not only the economic development of Russia but also certain dangerous plans in the minds of its political elite.

An analysis of Russia's behaviour in the 2000s, however, shows that it was consistent in using energy resources as a policy weapon. This was conducted under the careful guise of commercial disputes with buyers of Russian energy in the post-Soviet space. Only a handful of people paid attention to the fact that the official document entitled "The Energy Strategy of the Russian Federation through 2020" begins with the statement: "Russia possesses considerable energy resources and a powerful fuel and energy industry, which is the basis for the development of the economy and a tool of domestic and foreign policy." This document was signed by Putin in August 2003. Two large-scale gas crises in Russian-Ukrainian relations took place

after that – in 2006 and 2009. The EU countries felt their effects as well, as Russia stopped gas transit through Ukraine to Europe. Now, as the basic provisions of the Russian energy strategy through 2035 are being formulated, the additional dimension of external energy policy is no longer a secret: "As a responsible state, Russia understands external energy policy not through a narrow perspective of the exporter maximising short-term income, but as a means of solving not only domestic, but also global problems."

The gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine in 2009 had far-reaching goals. It was meant to provoke political conflict in Ukraine between its eastern and western regions. The idea was that in the case of a complete halt of gas supplies (both for domestic consumption and transit to the EU), the Ukrainian authorities would not be able to ensure the flow of gas from underground storage facilities located in the west to its main industrial centres in the east. Thus, according to Russian strategists, it would provoke "a social explosion in eastern and southern Ukraine". It was no accident that on January 12th 2009 publications mentioning "a revision of borders" within the Commonwealth of Independent States appeared in the Russian media together with statements by Russian politicians: "[State Duma member] Konstantin Zatulin does not exclude that Russia will 'at the right time' give a sign to the south-eastern regions of Ukraine to join Russia".

In 2009, this scenario did not work as the Ukrainian gas transportation system was reconfigured to allow for reverse flows. In the end, the central, eastern and southern regions of Ukraine received gas from its western storage facilities. This first test of a hybrid war may not have been quite successful, but in 2014 an improved scenario was put into place, the preparation of which had started well in advance.

Pre-emptive moves

Applying economic damage to Ukraine that would have long-term consequences became one of the goals of Russia in this hybrid war. From June 16th 2014 gas supplies to Ukraine stopped while strategic strikes on targets related to its energy infrastructure began. As noted in a report by the chief of the general staff of the Russian Armed Forces, this is being done to "reduce the military and economic potential of the state by damaging critical facilities of military and civilian infrastructure in the short term". Ukraine has always been dependent on gas supplies from Russia. And the gas sector has traditionally been a weak point for Ukraine in its relations with Russia.

At the same time, Ukraine has always been independent when it comes to coal – the state produces a sufficient amount and has even exported coal. However, the

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (left) meets with Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko. NATO officials have been the most outspoken regarding Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine.

new situation with a growing coal deficit in Ukraine reflects two things. First, the separatists from the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk "people's republics" failed to capture the entire territory of Donbas. Supported by Russian troops while retreating, they retained control over the main areas of coal mining. Thus, the war resulted in temporary coal dependence for Ukraine before the winter. In this way, Russia has created two alternatives for Ukraine: either the shortage of coal is covered by imports from Russia or coal is purchased from the territory of Donbas, from the Russian-controlled "people's republics".

Nevertheless, in order to determine Russia's course of action, it is necessary to understand the Russian system of strategic decision making. In his 2014 Valdai Club speech, Putin declared: "Russia is a self-sufficient country". This statement can be seen as preparing Russia's ruling elite for a possible conflict with the West. Tacit decisions regarding readiness for this confrontation were made through informal consultations by the members of the "Politburo 2.0": the circle of people closest to Putin, representing the security forces, members of his administration and the oligarchs. According to Kremlin analysts, 2015–2018 will be a period of major military conflicts on a regional scale.

"From the perspective of cycles of global economic and political development, the period of 2014–2018 corresponds to the period of 1939–1945, when the Second World War broke out," said Sergey Glazyev, a key formulator of Putin's policies. Naturally, in this approach Russia is the object of aggression from the West.

According to Glazyev, the United States wants to replace Russian gas in Europe with their own, as well as to obtain control over shale gas sites in Ukraine and cut Russia off from the nuclear fuel market.

An analysis of materials prepared by Russian experts shows that Russia is ready to act pre-emptively. In fact, it has already started to do so. As noted above, the beginning of the hybrid war was barely noticeable. It became evident only after the introduction of the military component. This points to the fact that the Kremlin is ready for a new, large-scale wave of geopolitical expansion. This readiness is based on Russia's strength (including its military aspect) and the West's weakness.

The Kremlin is ready for a new, large-scale wave of geopolitical expansion.

Essentially, this expansion was launched in a test mode in August 2008 during the five-day war against Georgia. In 2014 it found its continuation. In Russia it is believed that there is a unique window of opportunity while Barack Obama is still president of the US and Washington is overloaded with problems in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. According to this hypothesis, the Kremlin is preparing "a new Cuban crisis" for the US and the West in general. According to Kremlin calculations a Cuban-style crisis is ideal for getting strategic concessions from the West. The 1962 failure to achieve a similar goal is explained by Nikita Khrushchev's poor management of the conflict. In 2015 the Kremlin's idea is to include unexpected elements for the West.

Energy superpower

Energy resources and infrastructure will remain one of the tools of Russian policy. Our analysis and modelling of possible Russian behaviour indicates that, based on the concept of "energy superpower", the Kremlin will attempt to maintain and strengthen its status as a major supplier of hydrocarbons to the EU and as the monopoly supplier of gas from the Eastern gas corridor; to destabilise existing and future deliveries to the EU from non-Russian sources; to gain control over prospective hydrocarbon deposits of global significance; to prevent the development of unconventional sources of hydrocarbons in Europe; and to block the development of the Black Sea shelf.

If we analyse current Russian actions in this context then we see that much has been done, is being done or is being prepared. We can observe that, for example, Russia has intensified its policy towards Azerbaijan along with reinforcing its Caspian flotilla and increasing the number of military exercises in the Caspian Sea. Russian politicians have spoken publicly about the need to include Kazakhstan's

northern regions, inhabited predominantly by Russian-speaking citizens, into the Russian Federation. Certain projects aimed at the development of unconventional gas production in Ukraine and in the Black Sea shelf now appear at risk following the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine. In addition, Russia has dramatically increased its Arctic forces, its fleet of icebreakers is being modernised, old bases are being re-opened and new ones are under construction.

The G20 Summit held in Brisbane Australia in 2014 demonstrated that the West has not been able to come up with preventive actions in relation to Russia. Western policy remains reactive. Moreover, the Kremlin once again received the traditional message about the possibility of abandoning sanctions if Russia changes its behaviour. This is yet another strategic mistake on the part of the West.

The G20 Summit held in Australia in 2014 demonstrated that western policy remains reactive.

For an effective course of action, one could imagine the following plan from the West, which excludes a military component: The hybrid war of Russia against Ukraine is identified by the EU, NATO, as well as leading G7 countries, as aggression in accordance with the United Nations' definition; this classification of Russian actions as aggression enables the introduction of financial sanctions and the freezing of Russian bank assets in the US and Europe; Russian banks are disconnected from the international interbank system of communications and payments SWIFT (similar steps were taken against Iranian banks in 2012); and the application of sanctions on trade with oil, oil products, gas and coal and a fundamental rejection by the EU of the South Stream project with the simultaneous renewal of the Nabucco pipeline project.

The final three points are essential for the effective deterrence of Russian aggression. In mid-September 2014 the Russian minister of economic development Alexei Ulyukayev said that he did not believe that Russia would be excluded from SWIFT. "It would be, I would say, an act of war," the minister said. At the same time, he stated that Russia must be ready for such unlikely scenarios. Moscow also does not believe that the EU will restrict the import of energy from Russia because it is excluded from the sanctions regime. Thus, the West should focus on those areas that are most sensitive for Russia, rather than those that cause discomfort without stopping its aggression (and perhaps even encouraging further aggressive actions).

Conditions to lift sanctions

The EU and the US should join efforts (including through the G7) in order to persuade Russia to accept the following as conditions for abandoning the sanctions:

allowing experts representing an international monitoring group at the Ukrainian-Russian border to monitor the movement of gas exported to the EU and the Energy Community; ensuring the freedom of gas transit from Central Asia to the EU through the territory of Russia; accepting the system of selling gas to European consumers on the Russian-Ukrainian border, which is also the eastern boundary of the Energy Community Treaty; and de-monopolising the gas sector in Russia and opening the market up for independent gas producers willing to export Russian gas on foreign markets.

If Russia refuses to accept these conditions, EU sanctions should be extended to the energy and nuclear sectors. Specifically, the EU should reduce oil and gas imports from Russia to the EU by 10 per cent in 2015; 12 per cent in 2016; and 15 per cent in 2017. The EU should also announce a freeze on construction of new nuclear reactors of Russian design in the EU. To strengthen its position in the energy sector, the EU should focus on speeding up the creation of the Energy Union within the EU/Energy Community. It should also join efforts with the US and Canada to accelerate the import of LNG from North America to Europe and stop the practice of granting exemptions from the Third Energy Package for pipeline projects from countries outside of EU membership.

To strengthen its position in the energy sector, the EU should focus on speeding up the creation of the Energy Union.

Russia will not stop its expansionist activities. It did not stop them after the military aggression against Georgia and six years later it started its aggression against Ukraine. Europe should expect Moscow to undertake artfully disguised confrontational steps in Central Asia, the Caspian Sea region, the South Caucasus, the Balkans, the Baltic states and the Arctic. The next focus of military operations may be in the Caspian Sea region and the South Caucasus as gas production projects and transportation in these regions are competing against Russian gas supplies to Europe. Therefore, one should not exclude the possibility of military action. If the EU and NATO do not stop Russia's hybrid aggression against Ukraine now, they will remain helpless in those regions in the near future. NEE

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Integration Games

MARCIN KACZMARSKI

As the Eurasian Economic Union was launched in January 2015, Russia was already breaking its own rules by placing restrictions on goods in transit. It seems reasonable, hence, to raise the question as to whether Russia does not understand the essence of economic integration and therefore is torpedoing its own project. Or perhaps it never intended to implement the economic component of the integration project and was simply satisfied with the political subordination of particular countries?

Integration of the post-Soviet space became the dogma of Russian foreign policy already in the early 1990s. Since that time Russia has been trying to push various formats in an effort to integrate with the countries created after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Already during the rule of Boris Yeltsin a free trade zone and a customs union was established within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Vladimir Putin began his rule with the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) in 2000 and attempted to launch the Common Economic Space in 2003. The failure of the subsequent projects which took place, regardless of their institutional shape or their member states, seemed to finally bury the idea of integration by the mid-2000s. Even the Russian elite, including Putin himself, seemed to be prepared for a substantial change in the model of relations with smaller post-Soviet states. In 2006 and 2007 the concept of economisation took centre stage. It assumed the end of subsidisation of particular states by raising existing preferential low prices on raw materials.

The jewel in the crown

In this context it should come as no surprise that the idea of the Customs Union, to which Russia invited Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2009, was greeted with scepticism by observers. The Customs Union seemed to be merely yet another attempt to implement the same outdated concept. Moreover, it was perceived as a roundabout way for Russia to give up on its membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which was being negotiated at that time, an organisation of which neither Belarus nor Kazakhstan were members. Even before the Customs Union began its operations, Russia proposed to move to a second phase of integration, termed the Common Economic Space.

Two years after launching the Customs Union during the presidential campaign in 2011, Putin presented an even more ambitious and comprehensive project which was meant to crown all other integration processes: the Eurasian Union. The launch date was set for January 1st 2015. Over a period of less than a decade, the *troika* was supposed to reach a level of integration that had taken the countries of Western Europe four decades to achieve. It was no coincidence that Russia decided on another attempt to integrate the post-Soviet space in reaction to the global economic crisis of 2008–2009. It was predominantly the weakness of the West and an opportunity to consolidate its own neighbourhood that the Russian elite saw in the crisis. Ukraine had been set up to be the Eurasian Union's "crown jewel". After the disruption of the Orange Revolution in 2004, Russia managed to regain the majority of positions it had lost. All that was needed for Moscow was to await Viktor Yanukovych's entrenchment in power and secure Russian and Ukrainian ties through their institutionalisation.

The key motif behind Russian integration in Central Asia was to maintain influence in Kazakhstan and place a barrier against Chinese expansion.

This new organisation also aimed to prevent the further development of ties between the European Union and the post-Soviet states, and to ultimately end the project of the EU's Eastern Partnership. In Central Asia the key motif behind the Russian initiative was to maintain its influence in Kazakhstan and place a barrier before the development of Chinese economic expansion. Other countries, apart from Ukraine and Kazakhstan, were in practical terms of secondary importance as they were unable to conduct any independent policy. There were exceptions in the form of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan but even Russia did not consider it possible to include them in the new project.

While planning the Eurasian Union, Russia attempted to follow the path of exclusivity. In other words, from the Russian perspective these countries were included

in the new project in order to prevent their subjectivity to the interests of other powers. Consequently, Russia sought to monopolise their contacts with Europe. If the West established official contacts with the Eurasian Union, it would represent implicit recognition of Russia's sphere of influence (Moscow lobbied for years for such recognition of the Collective Security Treaty Organization by NATO).

In relation to China this factor was not so essential since the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation became a form of condominium and a mutual, however limited, recognition of interests even though the countries of Central Asia are successful in using it for protection of their own subjectivity, predominantly towards Russia. Striving to protect its sphere of interest was not, however, the only motif behind Russian determination to establish the Eurasian Union.

Integration paradoxes

The international order as perceived by Moscow, striving towards increasing regionalisation and effective de-globalisation, is of equal importance. According to the Russian elite, after the inevitable decline of American hegemony, which is becoming increasingly evident, political-military-economic blocs will become the dominant entities. They will concentrate around the key superpowers: the US, China and potentially Germany. The only chance for Russia to keep its top place in global politics was therefore to create its own bloc.

Contrary to the opinions voiced by sceptical observers, Russia has managed to meet all the predefined deadlines and has launched its new integration structure on schedule, including the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in 2015. The EEU – the word "economic" was added through pressure from Alyaksandr Lukashenka and Nursultan Nazarbayev – is a prime example of the paradoxes of contemporary Russian foreign policy. The Eurasian integration echoes the objectives of Russian policy over the last 15 years but proposes modern solutions. It was the first project that proposed not only a propaganda façade but a real harmonisation of economic mechanisms. Despite the fact that the EEU was supposed to implement the imperial concepts of the Russian leadership, the proposed solutions were in fact reliable copies of their proven equivalents from the European Union. The increasing competition with western countries and a deepening conviction of the failure of western political and economic power did not stop the Russian elite from copying the EU model. Moreover, the decisions of the Customs Union were consistent with the WTO membership conditions that Russia had negotiated. For the first time, integration in the post-Soviet space was being written in the current context of the global economy.

Despite omnipresent scepticism, the Customs Union and its complementary Common Economic Space turned out to be the first Russian integration initiative to have a real chance of success. The member states approved and ratified the required instruments of incorporation and negotiated the agreements and customs code which set them on the path towards a single market. A number of bodies were appointed including (at least officially) transnational ones. Russia proved to be extremely determined in the process of reaching agreement on particular issues.

Despite scepticism, the Customs Union turned out to be the first post-Soviet integration initiative to have any chance of success.

It soon turned out, however, that Moscow's policy towards Belarus and Kazakhstan would question this preliminary success. Facing tensions with the West and sanctions in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea and the intervention in Ukraine, Russia rejected the rules on which the integration was based. A number of limitations have been imposed on the transit of goods from Belarus to Kazakhstan through the territory of the Russian Federation, while completely ignoring the existence of a common customs zone which would, in time, be transformed into a single market.

The key problem in terms of the fate of the Russian project lies in the fact that integration is a technical process and it is simply dull. While it requires political impetus, the details must be implemented within bureaucratic procedures. Politicians launch integration, but its implementation goes beyond their abilities.

It is no coincidence that the EU creates a surplus of regulations and the key staff positions are most often taken by individuals who are politically dim but efficient administratively. In contrast, in the Russian political scene, there is no place for autonomy in the economic or administrative sphere. In the system initiated by Boris Yeltsin and finished by Vladimir Putin the political sphere is omnipresent, which ensures the political nature of economic integration.

Chinese response

The weaknesses of Russia's policy become particularly visible when placed alongside a rival project promoted by China: the New Silk Road. This idea was first presented in public by Chinese President Xi Jinping in September 2013 during a visit to Kazakhstan. The Chinese leader first proposed the establishment of the "Silk Road Economic Belt". A year later Xi announced the creation of a "New Silk Road Fund" in the amount of 40 billion US dollars. Additional resources were

to be provided by the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) created in November 2014 by China and 20 other Asian countries (including Kazakhstan but not Russia).

To put it simply, the idea of the "New Silk Road" assumes the creation of a network of transport corridors to connect China with EU member states, with the EU being the number one trade partner of China. First of all this means the creation or modernisation of transport infrastructure such as rail, including high speed rail, and road, land and sea ports, airports, as well as the construction of resource transmission infrastructure such as oil and gas pipelines and telecommunications infrastructure. All of this should happen, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Central Asian countries. Moreover, part of the infrastructure investment, such as roads and oil pipelines, in Central Asian countries had already been completed even before the idea was announced. Therefore, the idea of the "Road" becomes a political superstructure and a rationale for Chinese actions previously regarded as "autonomous" moves.

Nevertheless, the importance assigned to the idea of the New Silk Road by the Chinese leadership goes far beyond the construction of transportation infrastructure between China and Europe. The very first outline of the project, presented by President Xi in Astana, pointed at even higher ambitions. Trade and investment aims, promoting financial settlements in the local currency and strengthening interpersonal contacts were included in the objectives by the Chinese leader. In the case of Russia and Central Asian countries the notion of the "Road" is the Chinese response to the integration process promoted by Moscow. While it is based on rules other than the Russian idea, the Chinese concept facilitates the protection of the economic position of Beijing in Central Asia without the need for open competition with Russia. At the same time, treating Russia as a key element of the New Silk Road will help alleviate Russian reluctance towards the project. It also creates a sense of a positive-sum game, which might persuade Russia that hampering Chinese projects in Central Asia is simply not worth it.

Two philosophies

Juxtaposing both approaches will help us understand the various philosophies behind them and, at the same time, the sources of weakness in the Russian idea. Through the Eurasian Economic Union, the Russian elite wish to control member states seeking prestige and status of a great power. While, on the one hand Russia does not undertake to hold the leadership or provide public goods. It wishes to take no responsibility for resolving any disputes among post-Soviet states. On the

other hand, Moscow is unable to specify its interests narrowly enough to be able to protect them in a non-exclusive formula, which is exactly what China is doing. The aim of absolute control and an exclusive sphere of influence is accompanied with a lack of willingness to get more seriously engaged in formulating specific objectives. At the same time Russia has found itself stuck in a trap. It is unable to get beyond the post-Soviet space and propose a concept attractive enough for countries that were never a part of the Soviet Union before 1991.

The Chinese concept of the New Silk Road, in turn, represents an entirely different approach to building political and economic influence. The project is inclusive and has very uncertain borders. Investment in particular countries might be carried out in a bilateral format and only after their completion might they be presented as forming one entity, joined together by the phrase New Silk Road.

The Chinese concept of the New Silk Road represents an entirely different approach to building political and economic influence.

At the same time the idea aims at easing potential fears of economic expansion and the growth of China as well as promoting China's image as a benign great power. Given an attractive shape, the idea of the New Silk Road becomes a kind of "packaging" for Chinese economic expansion. It is framed of multilateral co-operation, being beneficial both for China and its partners. At the same time it illustrates the Chinese philosophy of international relations, according to which all engaged states win, popularising the *win-win* formula. Contrary to the integration promoted by Russia in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the idea of the New Silk Road is an open political project with no clear borders. As a consequence, it will constitute a basis for the development of Chinese political influence and will lend itself to greater multi-lateral co-operation.

With this background, it is clear that Russia's Eurasian Union is a project at serious risk of double failure. Not only will it be unable to create one economic organism to keep the other powers out; it will also not be able to become an independent entity in the game played beyond the post-Soviet space. NEE

Translated by Justyna Chada

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A Story of Broken Promises

ROMAN OSHAROV

For Crimean Tatars, the past year has been a story of broken promises and undercut expectations. The promises began even before the contested referendum on Crimea's accession to the Russian Federation. Yet, a year after the annexation, Moscow has failed to live up to these promises.

On March 18th 2014, when Vladimir Putin signed the treaty to formally annex Crimea, he announced that there would be "great respect for people of all ethnic groups" living on the peninsula. To the Crimean Tatars, an indigenous Muslim minority that suffered a string of repressions under previous Russian governments, Putin promised to take "all the necessary political and legislative decisions" that would "restore them their rights and clear their good name".

Almost a year later, Moscow has failed to live up to Putin's promises. As evidenced by many sources, Crimean Tatars say their situation has worsened since the peninsula's annexation. Their plight is such that in December 2014 the government of Turkey, where many ethnic Tatars live, reprimanded the Russian government for failing to fulfil any of its commitments regarding the rights of Crimean Tatars.

Words, words, words

For Crimean Tatars, the past year has been a story of broken promises and undercut expectations. The promises began even before the contested referen-

dum on Crimea's accession to the Russian Federation. While "little green men" patrolled the streets of the capital city of Simferopol, the pro-Russian parliament of Crimea adopted a declaration "on the guarantees for the restoration of rights of the Crimean Tatar people".

The declaration promised that the Crimean constitution would recognise the Crimean Tatar language as an official language alongside Russian and Ukrainian; that 20 per cent of positions in government bodies would be filled by Crimean Tatars; that the Crimean Tatars' own governing bodies would be officially recognised; and that resources would be allocated for the preservation of Crimean Tatar culture, including language education.

In retrospect, the move appears designed to quell opposition from the Mejlis, a well-supported representative body of Crimean Tatars, some of whose members had called for a boycott of the referendum. In April 2014 Vladimir Putin signed a decree on measures for the rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars and other indigenous ethnic groups of Crimea which had suffered during Stalin-era repressions. The decree called for the federal and local government to create a procedure for the legalisation of land occupied by returning people who had previously been deported from Crimea, such as the Tatars.

The subject is a tender one for many families: when the Ukrainian government failed to create a procedure for returning families to legally receive land, many were forced to illegally occupy unclaimed areas and built temporary shelters. But, as early as May 2014, Sergey Aksyonov, the Crimean prime minister, made it clear that his government was not willing to deliver on its own promises. In a blow for Crimean Tatars, his office announced that the government would not be implementing quotas for ethnic minorities. In the same statement Aksyonov said he would not bestow legitimacy on the Tatars' representative bodies, the Kurultai and the Mejlis, until they had proven their willingness to co-operate with his government.

The deputy head of Crimea's State Council, Grigori Ioffe, explained that the declaration promising quotas for Crimean Tatars had been adopted by the old parliament, before Crimea became a part of Russia. Therefore, after the annexation, they were powerless. "In Russia, there are no legal grounds for minority quotas," Ioffe informed local journalists.

Some of the provisions of the declaration were implemented, but only partially. The constitution of the so-called Republic of Crimea, adopted in April 2014, declared the Crimean Tatar language an official language alongside Ukrainian and Russian. However, the state council is still drafting the law on the use of languages in the peninsula, making the constitution's provision on language difficult to implement. In the meantime, Russian has de facto acquired the status of the sole state language.

Photo: A. Savin (CC) commons.wikimedia.org

The Grand Mosque in Bakhchysarai in Crimea. The Crimean Tatars might be expected to integrate with other Muslim structures in Russia after the annexation, but so far, no political will in support of such integration has been forthcoming.

After the annexation, for example, the Crimean government largely removed the Ukrainian language from the peninsula, even from road signs.

Deliberate deception

Dr Nadir Bekir, a Crimean Tatar scholar who advocates for Crimean Tatars in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, described the adoption of the declaration as a "deliberate deception". In a gloomy prognosis for the

peninsula's minority groups, he predicted that the new law on languages would not change the situation substantially.

Before the annexation, state and public services in the Crimean Tatar language were available on request only, Bekir told *New Eastern Europe*. He expects that in the annexed Crimea the situation will not improve noticeably.

Another area of disappointment for Crimean Tatars is education. Despite promises to the contrary, the new Crimean government has made life much more difficult for minority schools, including Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian schools. For instance, the only Ukrainian language school in Simferopol, the prestigious "Ukrainian gymnasium", is no longer called "Ukrainian". In other schools, Ukrainian language classes were removed from curriculums. The same has happened with Crimean Tatar high schools.

The reason is that Russian law decrees that high school students must be taught only in Russian, effectively outlawing minority language schools. Before the new school year (in September), teachers in Crimean Tatar national schools and in ordinary schools with classes in the Crimean Tatar language complained that the new authorities made it very difficult to open new classes or continue old ones. Even in schools which continued classes in the Crimean Tatar language parents complained that their children were forced to take classes based on Russian Orthodox culture, as is mandatory for all schools according to Russian law.

On the issue of legalising Crimean Tatars' land, little progress has also been made. In early 2000 a new wave of unauthorised construction by formerly deported Crimean Tatar families began. In response, the Ukrainian government three years ago established a special Land Commission which was tasked with legalising households belonging to Crimean Tatar families. Early last year, immediately before the annexation, the commission had almost finished its work. But since March, the land commission has all but halted its work, according to locals.

Crimean Tatars were one of the groups treated most brutally by Stalin's abusive regime.

Stalin's legacy

Worse still, in May 2014, three months after the annexation, many Crimean Tatar families were asked to vacate part of the land they were living on in exchange for new territory elsewhere in the region. Rustam Temirgaliyev, the Crimean deputy prime minister, said that a part of the Crimean Tatar families' land was required for "social purposes". The move raised an uncomfortable echo of the treatment

of Crimean Tatars under Stalin, one of the most painful episodes in their history. Crimean Tatars were one of the groups treated most brutally by Stalin's abusive regime. Hundreds of thousands of them were deported from their homeland to Central Asia, while Crimea was repopulated with ethnic Russians.

The legacy of Stalin's actions is still felt by Crimean Tatars today. Their repatriation to Crimea began in the late 1980s and peaked in the early 1990s. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) nearly 280,000 Crimean Tatars returned to Crimea by 1994. On returning to their homeland, they faced a number of challenges; from the logistics and expenses of moving back from Central Asia, to the lack of housing that greeted them once they arrived in Crimea.

Houses and properties that had belonged to Crimean Tatar families were either occupied by Russians or destroyed. Some repatriated families managed to receive new housing facilities from the peninsula's government or aid from charity organisations. Those who were less lucky were forced to build temporary shelters on unclaimed land, often without access to basic infrastructure such as central electricity and plumbing.

In addition, more than half of repatriated Crimean Tatars were not able to secure jobs. Even skilled repatriates had to work as labourers in low-paying positions that did not match their qualifications. In the governing and legislative bodies of Crimea, Crimean Tatars were largely underrepresented in both administrative and elected positions. It was also common for Crimean Tatars to face discrimination and abuse from the mainly ethnic Russian "local" majority when they returned. Research from organisations such as the OSCE has documented a very low level of interethnic integration between repatriated Tatars and other inhabitants in the early 1990s. Moreover, much of the cultural and religious heritage of the Crimean Tatars, such as places of worship, monuments, literature and archives, was completely destroyed by the Soviet authorities during their banishment.

In the year since the annexation, Putin met representatives of the Crimean Tatar community only once.

In the year since the annexation, Vladimir Putin met representatives of the Crimean Tatar community only once, and then only with those who hold pro-Russian positions. In May 2014 Putin met in Sochi with Vavsi Abduraimov, the head of the controversial Milli Firqa – the People's party – as well as with Edip Gapharov from the Crimean's Party of Regions, a pro-Russian political party. During the meeting, Putin defined the Kremlin's policy on Crimean Tatars by promising not only "moral" support, but also money as a part of the programme of the development of Crimea. He painted a picture of future harmony and prosperity, pointing to the example of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Since the annexation, Putin has not met face-to-face with Mustafa Dzhemilev, a Soviet-era dissident and leader of the Crimean Tatar National Movement. Neither has he met with other representatives of the Mejlis. Putin only once, and unofficially, spoke with Dzhemilev by phone (for more on the phone call with Putin read the interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev in *New Eastern Europe* issue 5/2014). Again, during this short phone conversation, Putin tried to reassure Dzhemilev by telling him about the prosperous life of the Tatars in the Volga region.

Islamic revival

However, one topic remains untouched in Putin's public declarations about Crimean Tatars: Islam. As a Muslim minority, the Crimean Tatars might be expected to integrate with other Muslim structures in Russia after the annexation. But so far, no political will in support of such integration has been forthcoming. The leaders of Islamic organisations were not invited to the meeting in Sochi. Aleksey Malashenko of the Moscow Carnegie Centre claimed that the main disadvantage of the Kremlin's policy on Islam is its black-and-white division of religion into a "Good Islam", which is loyal to Moscow and local elite, and a "Bad Islam" of radicalism and terror.

For each Muslim region Moscow has its own strategy. However, it is not clear how it intends to apply this playbook to the Crimean Tatars. Experts expect that the Kremlin will approach Crimean Muslims with a mix of the so-called North Caucasian strategy, whereby the federal centre controls the region through loyal local leadership and elite, and the Volga Tatar model, whereby the federal centre would seek loyalty through steps towards the community, such as the legalisation of households. However in reality, experts say, the Kremlin's current approach to the Crimean Tatars is simply based on inattentiveness. Moscow has paid little attention to the Crimean Tatars as a Russian Muslim group and as such may have helped to create an environment for radicalisation among Crimean Tatar youth.

For each Muslim region Moscow has its own strategy.

One of the main issues of concern for Russia in 2015, like elsewhere, is the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Malashenko has pointed to some reports suggesting that Crimean Tatars have joined ISIS, although he stressed that those have not been verified.

Yet, the growing concern about the radicalisation of Crimean Tatars is all the more striking because Islam in Crimea was restored practically from scratch after

the collapse of the Soviet Union. Elvira Muratova, a Crimean Tatar scholar at the Taurida National V.I. Vernadsky University in Simferopol, says that the revival of Islam in Crimea stands in contrast to other Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union where the revival took place in the form of a gradually growing interest in Islam over time.

The first major step in the Islamic revival on the peninsula had a primarily institutional nature, according to Muratova. In 1991 the Kadiyat, a Muftiyat internal advisory body on issues related to Islamic theology, was established. The Kadiyat was the first centralised Muslim organisation in post-Soviet Crimea and was given a broad mandate to establish Muslim communities, mosques, schools and news organisations, as well as to maintain international co-operation.

In the same year a representative body of Crimean Tatar people, the Mejlis, was re-established for the first time since 1917, with the support of the vast majority of Crimean Tatars. The following year, the first Muftiyat in Crimea was created along with the creation of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea (SAMC). In 2010 the second Muftiyat within the Spiritual Centre of Crimean Muslims (SCCM) was established.

The second step, according to Muratova, was the restoration of the Islamic education system in Crimea. In particular, five madrasas were opened on the peninsula and started preparing imams and scholars of the Koran while mosques started running affiliated primary Sunday and Koranic schools. Before the Russian annexation, there were discussions about the opening of an Islamic university.

The third step of Islamic revival on the peninsula was the development of contacts between Crimean Tatar Muslims and international Islamic centres. According to Muratova, since the early 2000s Turkish Islamic institutions have monopolised Islamic education in Crimea, while Arabic Islamic institutions began to work primarily in the fields of charity, cultural co-operation and youth work. "Alraid", an Arab-sponsored network of Islamic non-profits began operating not only in Crimea but also in Kyiv and other major cities in both western and eastern Ukraine. In the early 1990s various Arab missions and foundations represented Salafi Islamic organisations in Crimea. But by the 2000s almost all of them were forced to shut down. And the Mejlis considered the Arabic influence a threat to the national identity of Crimean Tatars.

Islamic integration

After the annexation, Russian Islamic leaders paid several visits to Crimea to try to persuade Crimean Tatars to co-operate with Moscow. Mintimer Shaimiev, the

former president of Tatarstan, met Rehat Chubarov, Mustafa Dzhemilev's successor in the Mejlis. By that time, Dzhemilev had already been banned from returning to Crimea (Chubarov was also later banned from Crimea). But at that time Chubarov responded to Shaimiev's visit with a trip to Kazan, where they signed an agreement on co-operation between Crimean and Volga Tatars. Speaking to *New Eastern Europe*, Chubarov said that in the weeks after Russia's annexation of Crimea, the Mejlis had not tried to define its policy on co-operation with Russian Islamic organisations, but had simply informed visitors about the history of the Crimean Tatars as well as about existing Islamic institutions on the peninsula.

Russia has nearly 5,000 Muslim communities throughout the country. More than a third is controlled by the Coordinating Centre for Muslims of the North Caucasus (CCMNC). The second most influential centre is the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Tatarstan (SAMT), which controls nearly 25 per cent of Muslim communities. The third most influential centre is the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia (CSAMR) – with authority over 20 per cent of Muslim communities. CSAMR also operates in Belarus, Moldova and Latvia. Nearly 18 per cent of Muslim communities are under the Russian Muftis Council (RMC).

In Crimea there are two main Islamic centres. The first is the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea (SAMC), which was created in the early 1990s. The head of SAMS is a member of the Mejlis. According to 2014 data from the Religious Information Service of Ukraine, SAMC administered 353 Muslim communities. The second Islamic centre was created in 2010 – the Spiritual Centre of Crimean Muslims (SCCM). According to the same data, SCCM administered only 14 Muslim communities.

Despite the much greater size and representation of the SAMC, it is the SCCM that had the main channel of the Kremlin's engagement with Crimea's Muslims. According to Chubarov the SCCM had no respect among Crimean Muslims. After the annexation, the SCCM held a pro-Russian position, but soon suspended its operation and formed a new organisation – the Central Spiritual Administration for Muslims of Crimea or the Tauride Muftiyat.

Chubarov alleged that "Russian occupants" had created the Tauride Muftiyat to blackmail the real Islamic leadership in Crimea. "SCCM's representatives are being used by the Russian government in different Muslim conferences and gatherings and even in the OSCE as members of the Russian delegation," Chubarov said.

One pro-Kremlin expert, in an interview with the state run Russia Today (RT), stated that the SCCM would become the main tool of integration with Russia. However, according to Chubarov, the SAMC is the only real religious centre for Crimean Muslims.

In annexed Crimea, the SAMC was forced to initiate the procedure of re-registration in accordance with Russian law. "Otherwise, Russian occupants will declare the SAMC's operations illegal. It would mean that hundreds of Muslim communities would be isolated and disoriented," said Chubarov. "However, the re-registration has not been completed yet. It seems as though the Russian authorities remain undecided."

Elvira Muratova, the Crimean Tatar scholar in Simferopol, says that the SAMC is in the process of re-registration with the sole aim of its survival. The merger of the SAMC with any other of Russia's Islamic centres is not the real question. "They have to save mosques, madrasas and other property. This is the main reason for re-registration. Tauride Muftiyat's main purpose is to become a legal actor to gradually oust SAMC," Muratova told *New Eastern Europe*.

Chubarov has little trust for what he calls the "Russian occupants". "The vast majority of Crimean Tatars boycotted the so-called referendum and the Russian invasion, participated in pro-Ukrainian rallies and did not hide their opposition to the aggressor. That is why Crimean Tatars in annexed Crimea are at high risk," he concluded. NEE

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EUROPE
WITH A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

An international conference which will be held in Gdańsk on 14–15 May 2015 at the European Solidarity Centre

During the conference there will be:

- A panel discussion on new books by Mykola Riabchuk (Ukraine) and Leonidas Donskis (Lithuania)
- "Ambassador of New Europe 2015"– – Polish Publication Award and Ceremony
- Two overarching themes
  - Europe in a time of war in the East
  - Europe without Europeans? The condition of political community

"Europe with a View to the Future" is an international conference which gathers the contributors of two leading Polish magazines: "New Eastern Europe" and "Nowa Europa Wschodnia", as well as academics, analysts, politicians and journalists dealing with the wider issues of Central and Eastern Europe. The official languages of the conference are: English, Russian and Polish.

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EUROPE
WITH A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

Gdańsk on 14–15 May 2015
at the European Solidarity Centre

Jacek Kottan, PhD
deputy director of ECS
Department of Social Thought

During this year's edition of the „Europe with a View to the Future" conference we would like to reflect on the current condition of the European project. The disturbing political situation that we are witnessing, raises the question as to the real effects of previous attempts to build a political community of interests. The image of Europe as a place where different cultural traditions creatively come together is also now under examination. The brutal events in both the West and the East of Europe show that it is time to seriously reflect on how to protect the peaceful European project from the threat of armed conflict.

ECS european solidarity centre

Dear Visitors,

It is a great joy to welcome you at the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk. The ECS began in 2007 and has been very active since then, although our new building opened only very recently, 30–31 August 2014. The building stands in the birthplace of Solidarity, Poland's greatest civic success: the nearby BHP Hall is where the shipyard workers signed an agreement with the communist regime in August 1980, while the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970 commemorates those who shed their blood for freedom.

The ECS is a modern cultural institution that preserves the memory of the triumph of Solidarity. As a museum, it commemorates the Solidarity revolution and the fall of communism in Europe. But it is also an education centre, a research centre, an archive, library and media library. Last but not least, it is a public space, a meeting place for citizens who feel responsible for the development of democracy: a place where solidarity and citizenship are practised.

We believe that even today we can draw civic energy from the experience of the Polish road to freedom, while a spring of ideas to invigorate Europe still flows from the heritage of Solidarity. I believe that each and every one of you will find a place for yourself at the ECS.

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Basil Kerski | ECS Director

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This is the heart of the ECS building: the permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of the Solidarity movement and the transformations that it led to across Europe.

The bullet-ridden jacket that belonged to Ludwik Piernicki, a 20-year-old shipyard worker and a victim of the December 1970 Massacre; the plywood boards with the 21 demands that hung from the gate of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk during the strike of August 1980; the overhead crane which used to be operated by the legendary union activist Anna Walentynowicz; the desk of Jacek Kuroń, one of the legendary opposition leaders in communist Poland – are but a few of the almost 1800 items you can see at the ECS Permanent Exhibition.

The exhibition is a narrative, with visitors immersing themselves in the history told by objects, documents, manuscripts, photographs, video footage and interactive installations.

OPENING 28/MARCH/2015

LIBRARY + READING ROOM

The subject matter of our collected research material chiefly concerns the history of Solidarity and the anti-communist opposition in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries. You will have free access to the entire book collection, Polish and foreign e-magazines and databases.

ARCHIVE READING ROOM

Original and digitised archive and photographic materials will be available here. We are also planning archive-based classes, where history can be learnt from historical source material.

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In five booths and a video room you can see and hear archive footage, audio materials, interviews, documentaries and more.

Russia's Hybrid Regime

ROMAN BÄCKER

Over the last several years Russia has become a state of hard authoritarianism where power structures dominate and the role of the opposition has decreased. Totalitarian structures have not yet fully crystallised. However, totalitarian political gnosis and mass and controlled social mobilisation are already in place, even if not fully effective. Thus, today's Russia can be described as a hybrid of two political regimes: hard authoritarianism and some immature elements of totalitarianism.

In 2011 a renowned Russian expert, Natalia Zubarevich, developed a theory of four Russias. Based on this theory the "First Russia" can be found in Moscow and other large cities such as St Petersburg. Though not particularly numerous, they are inhabited by almost a quarter of the country's population. The "Second Russia" is that of industrial towns. They are both large and medium-sized and are also inhabited by about a quarter of the country's population. The "Third Russia" is to be found in small towns, villages and settlements. These areas are inhabited by almost 40 per cent of the country's population. Finally, the "Fourth Russia" includes the former republics of the North Caucasus and southern Siberia (Tyva, Altai). Its population is the smallest and accounts for less than six per cent of the country's total. Naturally, there have been other analytical differentiations also developed to analyse the current situation in Russia. Their application allows us point out that in the Russian Federation we can distinguish between a high-tech society; an industrial and a Soviet society; and a tribal society.

A closed society

Regardless of the applied classification the conclusion of most research is clear: a large part of Russian society lives in conditions that are typical for a closed society. Let me now present some facts that further justify the above statement. In Russia, the majority of the middle class is made up of some highly educated officials who, nonetheless, are loyal to the Kremlin. Corruption is on the increase with 145,000 roubles (around 2,000 US dollars) being the average size of a bribe in 2013, twice as much as compared to what was recorded in 2012. More than half of the society is dependent on subsidies, salaries or handouts paid by the state. Forty million people receive a pension, while another ten million rely on unemployment benefits. Russia also has as many as 1.1 million police officers as well as nearly ten million immigrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus, who have moved to Russia to find jobs. All these data need to be complemented with one crucial piece of information, namely that Russia is highly dependent on oil and gas production as well as exports.

A large part of Russian society lives in conditions that are typical for a closed society.

With this background in mind it becomes much clearer that the Russian society is indeed an example of a closed society. It could also be labelled as a bureaucratic-military society dependent on a rentier economy. It is also a country fated by the "resource curse", a term Richard Auty once coined: the inability of resource-rich countries to use their natural wealth to generate growth.

Modern political science has developed many definitions of non-democratic systems. Among the different definitions of authoritarianism, the one formulated by the late Yale University professor of Spanish origin, Juan Linz, seems to be the best fit here. Linz, while defining the ideal type of authoritarianism, pointed out that it consisted of three main elements: a specific highly emotional mentality, common social apathy, and the sovereignty of bureaucracy. In a similar way Linz enumerated three elements of totalitarianism. The first element that Linz distinguished in regards to this political system is a *Weltanschauung* (a worldview), or to be more precise, a political gnosis (a belief that it is knowledge that enables both our earthly and eternal salvation). This gnosis can be recognised when we apply the category of an objective enemy and newspeak. The second element is mass and controlled mobilisation, while the third is the existence of a party-state apparatus that is aimed at the subordination of all spheres of social life and the destruction of all social relations.

The question that many of us would like to answer today is at what place on the continuum, between authoritarianism and totalitarianism, can we find Putin's Rus-

sia? To provide an answer let us attempt an analysis that includes social thinking and dominating narratives, social activism and the composition of the ruling elite.

After the EuroMaidan Revolution in Ukraine, which ended in February 2014, a new and dangerous stereotype emerged. It was directly expressed by President Vladimir Putin in his address to the Federal Assembly when Putin publicly admitted his concerns about "actions by the fifth column, this disparate bunch of 'national traitors'." It is common knowledge today that the term the "fifth column" was coined during the Spanish Civil War; as four columns of troops commanded by General Franco were approaching Madrid, the "fifth column", that consisted of spies and subversives, was fighting inside the city. It is also widely known that during the Stalinist period this term was used with reference to all dissidents. A national traitor, it was believed, ought to be killed. With this historical background in mind we can say that a national traitor is typically a figure of an objective enemy, which in turn is a crucial category in the totalitarian political gnosis.

Apathy or social mobilisation?

Over the last year, we could also notice that the picture of the world has again become black and white. Russia and its allies are portrayed in juxtaposition to the United States and some European countries. A common narrative that has emerged in Russia is based on an assumption that the West wants to destroy it.

"Western politicians act as if 'Russia is entirely to blame'", is the opinion frequently uttered by those who are convinced of such a state of affairs. "The West wants to gain control over Ukraine (and rejects its right to free choice) in order to weaken Russia", is another opinion that could be heard in 2014. In this way, the picture of the world has now become very simple: The Kremlin is united with the nation against traitors who are paid by the hostile West. The resemblance of such language and opinions to those heard during the Soviet era is striking. Using academic terms, we could say that what we are seeing in Russia today is a fundamentalist way of thinking with some elements of the totalitarian political gnosis.

An analysis of the activities of Russian society in recent years also provides us with some insight into how Russians have been absorbing the messages that are communicated to them by the official media, orchestrated by the Kremlin. Let us again look at some numbers. In 2012 between 120,000 to 150,000 people participated in the May 1st parade in Moscow. In 2014 the number of participants in this event was comparable, while the anti-Ukrainian manifestation on March 2nd 2014 also gathered around 25,000 Muscovites. It was followed by a "brotherhood demonstration" which was held on March 15th 2014 and attracted 10,000 people, which

was half of the number recorded during the march of peace and solidarity with Ukraine. The Victory Day celebrations of May 9th 2014 in Moscow assembled between two to three million people, which is a sharp contrast with the protests organised by the opposition held on May 18th 2014, which were very sparsely attended.

In rural areas and small towns the level of apathy is alarmingly high even though numerous efforts have been undertaken to increase mass mobilisation.

The level of apathy – especially in rural areas and small towns – is alarmingly high. Even though numerous efforts have been undertaken to increase mass mobilisation it is clear that in May 2014 the opposition was still unable to organise any mass movement. That is why when we analyse participation in last year's celebration of Victory Day (May 9th is the only anniversary ceremony that is accepted by all Russians) we can interpret it in two ways. On the one hand, it was a manifestation of national affinity and, on the other hand, it was as a manifestation of the desire to defeat Ukraine, or even further, a manifestation of an aspiration to regain dominance over the post-Soviet territory.

Uniform state

In Russia it is the military (or, more exactly, the security service, the so-called *siloviki*) that dominate the state apparatus. A process has been recently unfolding, with Russia's political system being transformed from a personalised authoritarianism, which could be balanced between a few interest groups, into a militarist authoritarianism which started after the so-called "white revolution" of 2011–20012. Any "progress" gained during the Dmitry Medvedev presidency was seemingly lost and many of those connected to the Medvedev faction have been marginalised.

In addition, the ruling elite are now starting to control other, previously relatively autonomous, structures, including political parties such as the Just Russia, LDPR (led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky), the communists, as well as NGOs and other entities of civil society. The process has picked up greater speed since the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. While the institutional structure of the Russian state is the same as it was before the takeover of Crimea, the structures of real dependency have changed and the unification of all institutions is a goal within reach. Consequently, we can say that what we are seeing in Russia today is a uniform state camp. Finally, the ruling elite have become authoritarian in their structures and there is an increasingly strong influence of the party-state apparatus.

Based on the short observations presented above, we can observe that Russia has undeniably become a state of hard authoritarianism where power structures dominate and the role of the opposition is noticeably decreasing. Totalitarian structures have not yet crystallised, nor are strong elements of the political gnosis fully observable. However, mass and controlled social mobilisation is already in place even though not fully effective. With all this in mind, we can say that in early 2015 Russia can be qualified as a hybrid of two political regimes –hard authoritarianism and some immature elements of totalitarianism.

Roman Bäcker is the president of the Polish Political Science Association and a professor at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. He specialises in political theory, sociology of politics and Russia's political system.

Long Lost Brothers?

ADAM BALCER

For centuries Ukrainian-Romanian bonds were very strong. This heritage, however, has largely been forgotten. Today, after 25 years of poor relations, Ukraine and Romania have again started a process of rapprochement. The richness of their common history should be rediscovered and serve as an inspiration to build a future Ukrainian-Romanian alliance.

Since the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, Kyiv and Bucharest have been arguing with each other more often than they have co-operated. Consequently, many mutual prejudices based on a lack of knowledge have arisen between Ukrainians and Romanians. However, the events that have taken place in Ukraine recently, namely the 2014 EuroMaidan Revolution and the Russian aggression that followed, have created an opportunity for a revival of Ukrainian-Romanian relations. For this revival to succeed the rediscovery of a common historical heritage is badly needed on both sides.

The lack of mutual knowledge in the case of Romanians and Ukrainians is an anomaly, given how much the two nations have shared in the past. It is particularly important in the case of Romania as its national identity was built in the 19th century in opposition to the East, which was not limited to just Ukraine. Clearly, once Romania accepts that its connections with Ukraine are an important element of its identity, the country's position in the East will significantly strengthen.

Academies and monasteries

The main basis for Ukrainian-Romanian links is the commonwealth of Eastern Christianity which came to Moldavia from Kyivan Rus'. Moldavia, understood as a historical land, is today divided between Romania (its largest part with historical capitals of Suceava and Yassy), the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (northern Bukovina). The latter was, for centuries, a part of the Romanian territory with the best connection to Ukraine. At the same time, Moldova has played for centuries a crucial role in the cultural history of Romania. Together with Christianity, the Church Slavonic language in the Ruthenian edition and the Cyrillic alphabet found their way to Moldavia as well. Church Slavonic was Moldavia's official language until the 18th century while the Cyrillic alphabet was used even longer, until the 1860s.

Undoubtedly, Petro Mohyla was the most important person in the common history of the Ukrainian and Romanian churches. In the 17th century he played an extremely important role in the development of both Ukrainian and Romanian cultures by opening them to the West while at the same time defending their Orthodox roots. He was born into a family of Moldavian rulers and had to escape with his family to Red Ruthenia (Poland) where they stayed in Stanisław Żółkiewski's castle. As a child Mohyla was educated by Ruthenian monks from the Lviv Brotherhood, which, back then, was the most important educational institution in Ukraine. Mohyla's goal in life was to establish an academy in Kyiv which, for several decades, was the most important Ukrainian institution of higher education. Clearly, Mohyla never forgot about his Romanian roots; he set up the Monastery of Saint John the New from Bukovina in Ukraine and in 1640 sent his closest Ukrainian associate, Sofroniy Stefan Pochaskyi (former rector of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy), to Moldavia in order to create a similar academy there. Thus, a Ukrainian became the founder and the rector of the first institution of higher education in Moldavia, in Yassy. Vasil Lupu, one of the greatest Moldavian rulers, became the patron of this academy.

> Petro Mohyla opened both Ukrainian and Romanian cultures to the West while at the same time defending their Orthodox roots.

Another very important person in the spiritual life of Ukrainians and Romanians was Paisius Velichkovsky from Poltava. In 1750, encouraged by his Romanian students, he moved from Mount Athos in Greece to Bukovina, where he lived until he died in 1794. He became the superior of the Neamţ Monastery, which in the 18th century was one of the centres of the Orthodox spiritual life. Paisius Veli-

chkovsky was declared a saint in recognition for his impact on the renaissance of monasticism in the East Slavic Orthodox Church.

In the 17th century prominent Romanian intellectuals such as Miron Costin, Grigore Ureche and the Moldavian Metropolitan Dosoftei studied in schools run by the Society of Jesus in Ukraine, where they met not only Polish but also Ruthenian Orthodox students. These contacts were a very important source of inspiration for Romanians and for the poetry of Dosoftei as well. Dosoftei was the author of the first baroque poem in the history of Romanian literature.

Cossak engagement

Connections between Moldavia and Ukraine also had a strong political dimension. On many occasions during the 16th and 17th centuries the Cossacks tried to secure the Moldavian throne or interfered in internal political conflicts. In 1563 the Moldavian throne was taken by Dmytro Vyshnevetsky, legendary ataman and founder of the Zaporizhian Sich. As a result of the boyar conspiracy, he was arrested and handed to the Turks. He died in a public execution at the Sultan's court, and his torment became one of the key themes of Ukrainian literature. Another Ukrainian on the Moldavian throne was Ivan Pidkova, also known as Ioan al IV-lea Potcoavă, a Cossack warlord and adventurer. His rule lasted only several weeks but it was long enough to provide Cossacks with content for their songs. Ivan Podkova became also the main character of a novel written by Mihail Sadoveanu, a Romanian 19th century writer.

However, it was in the time of Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1648–1657) that we can talk about the most significant Cossack engagement in Moldavian affairs. Khmelnytsky tried to create a an alliance, in opposition to Poland, which would consist of Moldavia and Ukraine. Khmelnytsky even arranged a marriage between his son, Timofei, and the daughter of Vasile Lupu. Timofei died in Moldavia in combat. Khmelnytsky's father died in Moldavia as well; his passing took place in 1620 during the Battle of Cecora where he was fighting against the Turks and the Tatars. At that time, Bogdan was taken captive.

In the 18th century Moldavia was the main shelter for Cossack hetmans fighting against Russia for the independence of Ukraine.

In the 18th century Moldavia was the main shelter for Cossack hetmans fighting against Russia for the independence of Ukraine. Thus, it came as no surprise that in 1710 Cossacks proclaimed in the Moldavian town of Bendery a draft constitution for the future

Ukrainian state, undoubtedly an unprecedented document in Ukraine's history. Bendery was also the place where Ivan Mazepa, a Ukrainian hetman during 17th and 18th centuries, died. His successor, Pylyp Orlyk, also lived in Moldavia for many years and is buried in the city of Yassy.

We should also remember that a significant number of Cossacks originated in Moldavia. At the end of the 17th century Ottoman Turks named the Moldavian ruler, Gheorghe Duca, as hetman of Right-bank Ukraine. His son was Danylo Apostol, hetman of Left-bank Ukraine between 1727 and 1734 was also a son of Romanian noble. Apostol participated in numerous military campaigns of the Russian army in Poland, Livonia and in the Caucasus. Historians will easily recognise his face on the paintings as he lost his eye during the capture of the Persian Derbent fortress. It gave him the nickname "Blind".

Lviv as a bridge

Lviv, set on a very important trade route linking Central Europe and the Middle East – through Romanian territory – was also an important city in the history of Moldavia. There was a large Romanian merchant community that lived in the town. In Lviv, Moldavian rulers paid homages to the Polish kings. At times those who lost the throne in Moldavia could find shelter in Lviv, and some of them were also beheaded in the city as they tried to revolt. Romanians also had a substantial influence on the city's architecture. In the mid-16th century the Moldavian ruler Alexandru Lăpușneanu was the donor to the building of a beautiful renaissance tower in the Dormition Church (also known as the Wallachian Church) in Lviv, which became one of the main symbols of the city. St Paraskeva Church in Lviv was founded by Vasile Lupu, and the origins of its founder are confirmed by the coats of arms of Moldavia (the aurochs head) placed above the entrance.

Lviv remained an important hub of Romanian culture up to the 19th century. At the turn of the 19th century Ioan Budai-Deleanu, a Greek-Catholic priest, poet and historian from Transylvania, moved to the city. He was one of the most important members of the Romanian national movement at the time. His life work was *Tsiganiada*, a mock-heroic poem and the first piece of epic poetry in the history of Romanian literature. Budai-Deleanu also wrote a book on the grammar of Romanian language and authored dictionaries. He defended his thesis on the Latin origins of the Romanian language. He also created a system for the transcription of Romanian from Cyrillic into the Latin alphabet.

The Romanian-Ukrainian symbiosis was particularly strong in the Carpathian Mountains, in the borderland of Carpathian Ruthenia and the region of Maramureș.

These lands created a large single cultural area throughout the centuries. It was further strengthened by the Church Union of Uzhhorod (1646), which encompassed these regions. In the medieval period, Romanian shepherds settled in Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine and they mixed with the local Slavic population and gradually became ruthenised. As a result, Ukrainian highlanders – Hutsuls, Lemkos and Boykos – have, to a large extent, Romanian roots. Even the name "Hutsul" is probably derived from the Romanian word "hocul", which means bandit. The material and spiritual culture of Ukrainian highlanders have a lot in common with the life of Romanian highland folk. The most visible example is the number of wooden Greek-Catholic churches, and the onfluence of Romanian shepherds is also visible in local dialects where there are words originating from Romanian.

Bukovina: searching for identity

In the 19th century Bukovina was the region where the most intensive and mutually enriching contacts between two nations occured. The region which is today divided into Ukraine and Romania was a part of Moldavia for several centuries until 1774, when it was annexed by Austria. In the 19th century, a part of the Romanian gentry that had Ruthenian origins "rediscovered" their Ukrainian identity. Mykola Vasylko, a leader of the Bukovinian Ukrainians, is probably its best representative. Born to a Romanian boyar family he started his political career in a Romanian political party. However, under the influence of his aunt's Ukrainian husband he "returned" to his Slavic roots. Initially, he identified himself with the idea that Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians are in fact one nation. Finally, he recognised Ukrainians as a completely separate nation. His career was not only limited to Bukovina. At the beginning of the 20th century he was elected to the Austrian parliament where he assumed the position of deputy head of the Ukrainian parliamentary club. During the First World War he became the deputy head of the Central Council of Ukraine, an all-Ukrainian council that united Ukrainians living in Austria-Hungary and Russia. After the First World War, he became ambassador of the West Ukrainian People's Republic to Vienna. and the Ukrainian People's Republic to Berlin.

In the 19th century, Bukovina was the region where the most intense and mutually enriching contacts between Ukraine and Romania occurred.

However, the person who could serve best as a patron of Romanian-Ukrainian reconciliation is Zamfir Arbore. Arbore was born in Chernivtsi, the historical

capital of Bukovina. His father was Romanian and his mother was Ukrainian. Arbore played a key role in shaping Romanian national identity in Bessarabia at the turn of the 20th century. He perceived Russia as the biggest threat to Romania and was strongly opposed to the idea, popular in Romania at that time, that Ukrainians are in fact Russians. In his manifesto "Ukraine and Romania" written in 1916, he supported the independence of Ukraine which he perceived as a guarantee for Romania's security. Arbore was the first translator of Taras Shevchenko's poetry into Romanian. In 1879, he assisted in smuggling a volume of *Kobzar*, a book of Shevchenko's poems, to Ukraine – a work that was forbidden in Russia.

A Romanian-Ukrainian synthesis existing in Bukovina was particularly visible in music. Eusebius Mandyczewski, born to a mixed Romanian-Ukrainian family is a perfect example. He was an Austro-Hungarian artist *par excellence*. Although he lived in Vienna, a characteristic feature of his music was the folklore of Romanian and Ukrainian highlanders. His music teacher was a prominent Ukrainian composer named Sydir Vorobkevych. He composed over 240 songs including the most prominent Ukrainian poets poems (Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko) and Romanian (Mihai Eminescu, Vasile Alecsandri). Mandyczewsky inspired by his master also composed the music to the poems of Eminescu and Shevchenko. What is interesting is that the family of Eminescu, the greatest Romanian poet, was from Bukovina as well. Eminescu for eight years attended school in Chernivtsi and he learnt Ukrainian. One of the most significant Romanian composers of the 19th century, Ciprian Porumbescu, was Mandyczewski's student. Porumbescu, born as Ciprian Golembiovski, literally translated his last name into Romanian. His father was an Orthodox priest educated in Lviv.

However, sometimes Romanians and Ukrainians who changed the national identity became zealous neophytes. Nectarie Cotlarciuc, a metropolitan bishop of Chernivtsi in the interwar period who played a key role in the Romanisation of Bukovina and who was a great supporter of Romanian nationalism, was born to a Ukrainian family as Mykola Kotlyarchuk. Another representative of this process was Alexander Hasdeu. He studied at the University of Kharkiv where he became interested in Ukrainian folklore. Hasdeu collected numerous Ukrainian poems and songs and published them in several volumes. Interestingly, Hasdeu was the first researcher who focused on works from the 18th century great Ukrainian philosopher, Gregory Skorovoda. Later he settled in northern Bessarabia on the Romanian-Ukrainian border and devoted the rest of his life to studying Romanian folklore. As a result, he "discovered" his Romanian roots and became a Romanian. His son, Bogdan, followed in his father's footsteps and studied in Kharkiv as well. However, he devoted most of his life to eradicating Slavic vocabulary from the Romanian language.

Communists and nationalists

Until the 19th century there had been no bloody conflicts in Ukrainian-Romanian relations, in contrast to, for example, Polish-Ukrainian relations. The Ukrainian-Romanian rivalry emerged in the second half of the 19th century together with the development of modern nationalism and the question of the division of power in ethnically diverse regions. In Bukovina this competition corresponded, to some extent, with social divisions (Ukrainian peasantry vs Romanian gentry). However, the Ukrainian-Romanian conflict in Bukovina was never as strong as the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in Galicia. It was the result of a more complex social structure in Bukovina, a community of Orthodox Christianity and the lack of memory of wars enhanced by a balanced Austrian policy in the region.

After the First World War, when Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire collapsed, it became very difficult to draw a clear border between Ukraine and Romania on the mosaic-like ethnic map. Romania, as a much more powerful player, was not interested in negotiations with Ukrainians. It quickly assumed control over Bukovina and Bessarabia as well as the parts of Maramureș inhabited by Ukrainians. In Khotyn (northern Bessarabia) a Ukrainian uprising incited by Bolsheviks broke out but it was brutally quelled by the Romanians. In the interwar period, the situation of Ukrainians in Romania was worse than in Poland, not to mention Czechoslovakia. Their cultural rights were systematically limited and finally taken away in the late 1930s. As a result, Ukrainians in Romania, particularly in Bessarabia, sympathised with the communist party which was calling for the secession of Bukovina and Bessarabia. In the interwar period two of the five heads of the Romanian communist party had Ukrainian roots and they chaired the party for nine years between 1921 and 1940. After the Second World War there were also some Ukrainians among top Romanian communists. The most prominent of these was Emil Bodnarash who for many years held key offices in the country, becoming Deputy Prime Minister and Vice President.

After the First World War it became very difficult to draw a clear border between Ukraine and Romania on the mosaic-like ethnic map.

In 1940 when the Red Army invaded Bessarabia it was greeted by many Ukrainians with flowers. Between 1941 and 1944, Romania occupied the Ukrainian territory between the Dniester River and the Boh River (Transnistria). Fighting against the communist partisans, the Romanian army sometimes showed cruelty towards Ukrainian civilians. However, the German occupation was much harsher than that

of the Romanians and the Romanian-Ukrainian struggle during the Second World War was never as fierce as the Polish-Ukrainian conflict.

Turning back on the East

Even though Romania has a centuries-long tradition of connections with Ukraine, knowledge of Ukraine in Romania is still seriously limited and heavily influenced by stereotypes. These stereotypes are deeply rooted in history. Romanians were neighbours to lands inhabited by a mixed Russian and Ukrainian population whom they started to equate with each other. Thus, Romanians often identified Ukrainians with "Russian" communism. The foundation of the Romanian identity, built in the 19th century, was based on the turning of its back on the East and abandoning its historical connections with Orthodox Slavs. In additiona, from 1861 the Romanian political elite was dominated by representatives of Wallachia, and to a lesser degree of Transylvania, who were more associated with the Balkans than with Central Europe or Ukraine. During the communist period Romania was the most independent state of the Soviet bloc. Nicolae Ceaușescu's national communism was based on the Romanian identity in opposition to the Slavic Eastern Bloc. Russian was not an obligatory language in Romanian schools and its knowledge in Romania currently is modest.

The EuroMaidan Revolution and the ongoing Ukrainian-Russian war have led to the breaking of the last links between the Ukrainian and Russian identities. We may only hope that the Romanian attitude towards Ukrainians will also change in this regard and that Romanians will distinguish more strongly Ukrainians from Russians. The easiest way to change this attitude is to realise how close Romanians and Ukrainians actually were in the past.

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Fighting Old Wars against New Enemies

DEJAN JOVIĆ

In Croatia's presidential elections held in December 2014 and January 2015 there was little talk about the real issues, such as the economy. It is true that economic policy is led by the government, not the president, but the reappearance of old ideological divides, as well as the lack of a serious debate, is surprising. And so is the renewal of the rhetoric which reminded many of the nationalist and authoritarian decade of the 1990s.

A year and a half after it joined the European Union (in July 2013) Croatia is still waiting to experience any real significant benefits from this "historical event". Despite the country's optimism, the country is still in a deep economic crisis with GDP decreasing for the 11th quarter in a row. Although 2014 was the first year since 2008 in which the total number of registered unemployed decreased, it is still very high: 327,000 or 19.2 per cent of the workforce. The "real" unemployment rate is closer to 15.5 per cent, which is the third highest of all EU member states, behind only Greece and Spain, and among the young, almost every second person (45.4 per cent) is unemployed. Industrial production is showing the first signs of recovery, but the country is still far away from being an attractive destination for foreign investment.

Understandably, there is not much optimism about Croatia's economic future. The increasing level of interest rates on borrowing might prove an additional burden on the state budget in the next year. This budget is already heavily burdened by the high level of promised subsidies and pensions to war veterans. No govern-

ment dares to reduce their income and privileges, which in some cases amount to a monthly income of 3,000 euros, about nine times higher than the average pension in the country. When the current Social-Democratic government tried to take action, it was labelled "unpatriotic" and threatened with mass protests.

Two Croatias

In spite of this, during the presidential elections in December 2014 and January 2015 there was little talk about the economy. It is true that economic policy is led by the government, not by the president. However, the reappearance of old ideological divides, as well as a lack of serious debate on strategic issues – including how to use the EU membership to increase competitiveness – is surprising. So is the renewal of the rhetoric that reminded many, including leading international commentators, of the nationalist and authoritarian decade of the 1990s. The ideological divide between the "two Croatias" was clearly demonstrated by the results of the presidential elections. The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) candidate, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, once the country's foreign minister and later an assistant for public diplomacy to the Secretary General of NATO, won by about 32,000 votes over the incumbent Social Democrat Ivo Josipović.

The results of the election illustrate that the country is split down the middle along the lines of the old ideological divides regarding issues such as secularity vs. political Catholicism, or the history of the Second World War and communism. The ideological and political divide was, to a degree, also geographical. Those areas directly affected by the war in the 1990s were more supportive of the nationalist rhetoric of Grabar-Kitarović and (especially) of her party than the areas in north-western Croatia which were practically untouched by the war.

The regions in Croatia directly affected by the war in the 1990s are more sympathetic to nationalist rhetoric.

To understand this division, one needs to look at specific elements in recent Croatian history. Unlike any other EU member, Croatia is a country that has experienced a major conflict in its recent past, leaving a devastating mark on the economy and society. In economic terms, the industrial capacity of Croatia was reduced by almost half. The transport industry and infrastructure – an important source of income for a country that is on the main routes between Turkey and Germany – were practically cut off for over a decade. Croatian railways were completely out of use for most of the 1990s and have not recovered since. Before the war, there were more than 20 trains a day running between Belgrade and Zagreb, and the average time was

four hours and 50 minutes. Now, there is only one train per day, and the journey takes six and a half hours. After 24 years, commercial flights between Zagreb and Belgrade were re-introduced in 2014. Tourism, on which much of the country's income depends, was impossible in a country at war.

A war that has never ended

However, this was not the only problem that Croatia inherited from the horrible decade of the 1990s. The country failed to manage its political and inter-ethnic differences peacefully. Following the violent break-up of Yugoslavia in 1990 and 1991, Croatia was involved in an overall Serb-Croat-Bosnian conflict that cost more than 140,000 lives. Nearly 24,000 of these deaths were in Croatia, on both the Croat and Serb side. Instead of trying to reach a compromise with its Serb minority (about 12 per cent of the pre-war population), President Franjo Tuđman (also of HDZ) used force to reintegrate the secessionist region of Krajina, then under the control of Serb secessionists who were supported and organised by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. The reintegration of Krajina into Croatia ended the war, but it also resulted in almost two-thirds of the pre-war Serbian population leaving Croatia and thus Croatia becoming ethically almost homogenous. Whereas in 1991 about one million people (out of a total population of 4.8 million) in Croatia belonged to one of many ethnic minorities; in 2011 the minority population was about 400,000 (out of 4.3 million).

The core of the new Croatian national identity is centred on the conclusion that Croatia was both the victim and the victor of the war.

Although the war ended over 20 years ago, to those who follow Croatian press and TV news it seems that it has never ended. The country has constructed a narrative that the "Homeland war" is the core and heart of the new Croatian political and national identity. The core of this narrative is centred on the conclusion that Croatia was both the victim and the victor in the war. When one is both a victim and a victor, there is little space for self-reflection. Any attempt to critically examine the Croatian role in the war, which the state characterised as an international conflict of aggression and occupation, not as a civil war or inter-ethnic conflict, is a very sensitive issue. Instead, the war is celebrated, not commemorated. The side effect of this is that it keeps militarism (and nationalism) permanently alive.

Thus, the "return to the 1990s" is not seen as a return to the most horrible decade in Croatian modern history, as one would assume; it is a return "to the glory days"

in which the country became independent and victorious because it was "united". The "unity" here refers however only to those (almost exclusively ethnic Croats) who wanted independence. Anyone in favour of the preservation of the Yugoslav Federation was, then and now, treated as non-existent, erased from this collective portrait. In this respect, Croatian official discourse is still full of taboos and even academic research on this topic is significantly limited.

An unfair Europe

In this context, membership of the EU is seen in a more complex way than in any other Central or Eastern European nation. It was, first of all, welcomed as a security guarantee. No member of the EU and NATO (which Croatia joined in 2009) is in danger of either being attacked from the outside or disintegrating from within. It was also seen as a symbolic "end of the transition period" which, in the Croatian case, was also a long period of "post-conflict recovery". The Croatian transition had five elements including the political system, the economic structure, statehood, and identity issues, but it was most of all a transition from war to peace. In this period, many Croats felt that the world was not treating Croatia fairly. They argued that the world (and in particular Europe) was not there when Croatia needed help. The political elite described the European Community in 1991 as hesitant and indecisive. Had it not been for Germany – and later for the United States – the EU itself would have not been of much help. However, bitterness towards the EU was only intensified by European demands regarding "conditionality" for EU membership. Many Croats felt – rightly or not – that Croatian sovereignty in the period 1991–2013 was only "nominal" or "symbolic".

External supervision was obvious when the four regions with ethnic-Serb majority were placed under the United Nations Protected Area regime in 1991. In these areas (almost 25 per cent of country's total territory) UN peacekeepers were de facto sovereign. Following the end of the war Croatian legal and political sovereignty was largely violated by the policy of the International Tribunal for Crimes Committed in the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. The indictment of some Croatian military leaders, for instance General Ante Gotovina, was particularly difficult for Croatia as the myth of the Homeland War identified General Gotovina as a hero. The extradition of Gotovina to The Hague in essence became a condition for beginning EU-accession talks.

Once the negotiations began, the EU introduced a new set of criteria, more demanding and more difficult to meet. For many Croats, the fact that the country lagged behind not only the Central European and Baltic states, that joined the EU

in 2004, but also Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, was seen as adding insult to injury. Croats considered the latter two countries a part of the Balkans and it was difficult to comprehend why two Balkan states joined the EU before Croatia – a country that belongs to Central and Mediterranean Europe. This "anomaly" created the narrative of an "unfair Europe", of a Europe that keeps imposing new conditions, unaware or uncompassionate when it comes to the specific historical difficulties that Croatia had to overcome.

Again, the facts were only of secondary importance to Croatian "sovereignists" and nationalists who portrayed Europe as the source of Croatian victimisation. For example, they failed to acknowledge that the first Croatian President, Franjo Tuđman, himself was not a perfect democrat, to put it mildly. And neither was he a perfect European. Following the success of his military actions against Krajina in 1995, Tuđman in 1996–99 turned against the EU, criticising it not only for its "passivity" in the early stages of the post-Yugoslav conflict, but also for its insisting on co-operation between post-Yugoslav states. Tuđman viewed this as pressure on Croatia to "join a new Yugoslav, or some Balkan federation". He rejected any involvement or participation in regional initiatives, and vehemently opposed any use of the concept "Western Balkans". In 1997 he introduced an article that outlaws any attempt to enter organisations and associations that could lead to a renewal of Yugoslavia to the Croatian Constitution. In his vehement speeches against the opposition – which he compared to "yellow, red and green devils" (Liberals, Socialists and Greens) – he argued that Europe and the West were hostile to the very independence of Croatia and are conspiring against it.

It was only after Tuđman's death in December 1999 that Croatia started the process of "normalisation" and post-war liberalisation. Yet the tension between civilian democratisers and nationalist militarists continued well into the 2000s. In 2000–2004 the war-focused nationalists opposed the extradition of General Gotovina and others to The Hague, which caused further delays in the EU accession negotiations. These delays were in many ways fatal. Instead of joining the EU at a time of economic prosperity and liberal enthusiasm (in 2004 or even in 2007), Croatia joined the EU when Europe was entrenched in a deep economic and identity crisis. Croatia arrived at the end of the party, not at the beginning; and found Europe tired and depressed.

Instead of joining the EU at a time of economic prosperity and enthusiasm, Croatia joined when Europe was entrenched in a deep economic and identity crisis.

Nothing changes

By July 1st 2013, enthusiasm for EU membership all but disappeared. Only 43.5 per cent of Croatians voted in the referendum to join the EU. Two-thirds of them voted in favour – but this was not more than 1.3 million out of a population of 4.5 million. The dominant emotion was actually a lack of emotion: Indifference is the best word to describe the feeling. This is also the context in which one should

judge the lack of the "miraculous effect" that EU membership was supposed to have on Croatia. In truth, nobody expected such an effect and, indeed, the lack of public celebration was already obvious on the eve of Croatia's accession. The state celebration was entirely elite-driven. The political class had good reason to celebrate, since they had managed to achieve a national objective that kept them occupied and relatively united. For the rest of the population, however, it seemed as though nothing had changed.

The benefits of the common market are not entirely unknown to Croats, who had been emigrating in search of jobs long before their country even existed. Even before the breakup of Yugoslavia, many Croats worked in Germany and elsewhere as *gastarbeiters*. At the same time, the country had been opened for tourism as early as the 1960s. Thus, it is not that EU membership is linked with any radical change in terms of freedom and mobility. What's more, surveys on Croatian Euroscepticism conducted in 2011 revealed that many worried that the open market means less state subsidies and more competition for jobs. They also, paradoxically, feared that once Croatia joins the EU their living standards would decrease, not increase. Two years later, in 2015, some would say that they were right when fearing the worst. The country is still in an economic depression but is now without any hope, since there is no new unifying objective for the future.

The other major fear among Croats was the "loss of sovereignty". However, expectations in regards to this fear were mixed. For sovereignists who argue that all Croats share the same dream – "the dream of Croatian independence" – it is indeed difficult to accept that 22 years after becoming independent, Croatia should now join another multi-ethnic and multi-state quasi-federation, a "Big Yugoslavia". Far right opponents of the EU used the equation "EU = YU" to express this analogy. They also remind citizens that Croatia has "not been lucky" with capital cities whose names begin with B: Beč (local name for Vienna), Budapest, Berlin, Belgrade – and now Brussels.

New Croatian independence

On the other hand, the arguments in favour of joining the EU make perfect sense for the sovereignists. Membership in the EU ends the long period of "only nominal sovereignty" and thus the period in which Croatia had to tolerate undesirable intrusions into its legal and political systems. As a member of the EU, Croatia has a seat at the table, rather than being an item "on the table" (on the EU agenda). In addition, member states can exercise veto power, especially with regard to future enlargements of the EU. To the sovereignists for whom the whole journey towards

the EU was also a journey away from the Balkans, i.e. away from Serbia, this is potentially a very powerful instrument of foreign policy and strategy. The Greek example of blocking Macedonia is an example of how the nationalists/sovereignists could use EU membership to their own benefit.

To the Croatian sovereignists, July 1st 2013 also marked a new beginning. They immediately called their new programme "new Croatian independence". In the last presidential elections they demonstrated a rhetorical and political return to Tuđman and the 1990s. In fact, even more than that, they claim that it is only now that Croatian sovereignists could wage a full scale war against the "enemies of Croatian sovereignty" – the Yugoslavs and communists. In the long period of "nominal sovereignty" they could not do that because of the external (EU) supervision over them. They had to simulate transformation and reject nationalism in order for Croatia to be accepted into the EU. Now, they no longer have to simulate anything. They can be who they are – deeply suspicious of any multi-ethnic structure and supra-national authority.

Over the last year and a half, Croatia has moved back to the 1990s, both in word and deed. The leader of HDZ, Tomislav Karamarko who was once the head of police in Zagreb and also the head of the Intelligence Agency (SOA), has modelled his party in accordance with his own personal and professional profile. The main personalities come from the police and veterans of the war. Discipline inside the party is like that in the military – which was demonstrated in the quick and unceremonious manner in which the party expelled its former leader and prime minister, Jadranka Kosor. The party also announced that they would introduce new legislation in order to outlaw any "belittling" or "disrespecting" of the role played by Franjo Tuđman in Croatian history. Karamarko even promised to introduce the term "Tuđmanism" in the preamble of the constitution.

A year and a half after it joined the European Union, Croatia now faces a new round of ideological battles.

Ideology rather than economy

A year and a half after it joined the EU, Croatia is facing a new round of ideological battles or, as Karamarko recently said, a "new Homeland war". One other HDZ politician, Vladimir Šeks, stated in 2011 that the Homeland War had not yet finished, but continued in the "war for interpretation" of the past. To remind people of the war, the HDZ-organised war veterans to stage protests against "Yugoslavs" in Croatia. However, in Croatia today only about 300 people registered

themselves as "Yugoslavs" in the last census. So, who are these so-called "Yugoslavs" that HDZ fears?

According to political speeches by HDZ politicians, the "Yugoslavs" are all those who "have never accepted Croatia" and or "have never wanted it". The whole government is "Yugoslav" because of the link between the Social Democrats and the former Communist Party. The "Yugoslavs" are also those who dare challenge the national myth and official interpretations of the Homeland War. The "Yugoslavs" are also NGOs and the whole of civil society, except for organisations run by the Catholic Church.

In order for the war to continue, enemies must be produced. This is what is currently happening in Croatia. The creation of enemies is the most lucrative branch of the Croatian political industry. Talk of the war seems to be completely out of place and time. But if we know the context in which Croatian sovereignism has now reappeared then such talk makes sense. After all, Belgrade can no longer be blamed for Croatian economic failure and political disunity. Croatian nationalists need to find other "culprits" for the country's present crisis. And they find them at home – by waging ideological witch hunts against internal enemies.

By doing this, they only revive the old communist system in which ideological purity comes first and economic results do not matter. Yet, this return to the 1990s will lead Croatia only back to the old ideological divides and "unfinished wars", and further away from the serious challenges that lie ahead of it in real time.

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Democratic Change Always Comes from Within

A conversation with Maria Leissner, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies. Interviewer: Adam Reichardt

ADAM REICHARDT: The Community of Democracies is an international organisation whose members work together internationally to promote the values and idea of democracy. Unlike most international organisations, whose headquarters are either in Washington DC, London or Brussels, your organisation is seated in Warsaw. Why here, why is the permanent secretariat based in Poland?

MARIA LEISSNER: There are a number of different answers to that question. One of which is that Poland and the United States were the two initiating countries of the Community of Democracies. This happened in the year 2000 when the first conference of foreign ministers was organised. At that time Poland's foreign minister, Bronisław Geremek, and the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, who also has roots in Central and Eastern Europe, were discussing the fact that there was no meeting place for democratic countries. The United Nations is not a club for democratic countries, it is a club for any country. In the first decade after communism had collapsed, there was this feeling that democracy was on the move. Democracy was the winning concept globally, thus the need to have a platform for democratic states.

The other reason why the secretariat ended up in Poland is because Poland offered to host the first secretariat – a decision which came in 2007. At the ministerial meeting in Mali in 2007 it was proposed that there be a permanent secretariat to be the hub of the network. We have been gradually formalising ourselves and adding components each year. Poland volunteered to host, finance and support the secretariat for the initial phase. After about three years, there was a new decision at the ministerial meeting in Vilnius to create an international secretariat, based in Poland but not supported solely by the Polish government, with more countries contributing financially and administratively. Our premises

are funded by the Polish government, we have a host country agreement signed with the government and we continue very close co-operation with the government; but we are now treated as an international organisation.

Nevertheless, the fact that we are here in Poland illustrates that Poland has taken a leading role in supporting democracy promotion. We can recall that the European Endowment for Democracy was also a Polish initiative and the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is based here in Warsaw. Therefore, Warsaw has become the European capital for democracy.

Speaking of democracy promotion and how it relates to this region, how do you assess the situation in countries in the post-Soviet space, especially those that have indicated a desire for greater European integration like Georgia, Ukraine or Moldova?

We have done some significant work with Moldova. For two years we had what we call a "democracy partnership" agreement with Moldova. Basically, it means that we were in a position to provide formal technical assistance. We created a task force of members of the Community of Democracies from the ministries of foreign affairs. In essence, it is government-to-government support and is a limited instrument set up to work for two years.

In Moldova, we identified a number of areas of reform that the government has given priority. They included: anti-corruption, transparency, the justice system, the ombudsmen offices and reforms in the ministry of interior, especially police and border police. We ended the programme with Moldova in 2014, and we can now say that Moldova "graduated" from our democracy partnership.

Our activities aim at reforms not only supporting the consolidation of democracy, but also facilitating the European integration process. However, it is important to note that we are not a donor group. We do not provide large sums of money. What we bring is experience. About 80 per cent of the countries on our governing council have gone through their own transitions. They all have experts willing to share that experience.

Would you consider this partnership with Moldova a success?

We can say that it was successful, but if you look at the indicators in Moldova there are still many areas that need significant focus. Moldova is still lagging behind in indicators like corruption perception or press freedom, especially in comparison with its neighbours in Central Europe. But the recent elections showed that despite many fears there is progress and a will to continue the path of European integration. Nevertheless, it will not be an easy road for them.

The year 2014 in general was quite a tumultuous year in our region and 2015 appears to be on track to continue this trend. Do you think that democracy has a future in the post-Soviet space? Can these countries break free from the Russian sphere

of influence and move into the European community?

To be honest, I am really worried about the strength of the anti-democratic surge led by Vladimir Putin. It is so visible that it has created a very unfortunate reaction in many of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. I do believe that it is very much out of fear, yet the internal processes in some of these countries are really a cause for concern. And sometimes the attacks against democracy as an idea come from unexpected places.

I was deeply disturbed by Victor Orbán's speech on illiberal democracy. We also see some similar developments in the Czech Republic with the legacy of Václav Havel being questioned. The general willingness in these countries to conform to the new authoritarian leadership example of Putin is extremely worrying. I do not know where this will end, but I think events in Hungary will be crucial. Hungary's prime minister has promised to transform the country into an illiberal democracy looking to China and Russia as ideological leaders in an attempt to achieve economic prosperity, believing that it will be enhanced by supressing the people's rights to express themselves and by supressing government oversight. Yet, this is now leading to an increase in corruption since the mechanisms for oversight and open criticism are being reduced and weakened. Corruption is not good for economic growth – we know that. Therefore, I find it difficult to understand the rationale behind his speech. I understand that behind this lies frustration over the economic situation and this is not limited to Hungary. We all know that frustration over economics breeds this type of reaction. We see societies become more nationalist, intolerant and xenophobic. And this leads to a situation where leaders exploit those feelings and unfortunately many politicians are learning to use these feelings to nurture the idea of a strong leader promoted by Putin.

We see this even happening in Western Europe with the far right parties gaining support…

Exactly, this is the same.

Would you say that liberal democracy as we know it is under threat?

It is not only under threat, it is under attack.

How can this attack be countered?

That is the biggest challenge right now. We first need to do a better job at exposing what is really happening. We need to expose those leaders and countries which are a part of what I call "the bad guys club". We have seen a growing co-operation and experience-sharing between non-democratic countries. We have seen legislation being invented in Ethiopia, for example, to stop civil society organisations from receiving foreign assistance. This was several years ago. And now we see these laws, copied and implemented in countries like Russia – who took them even one step further

Photo: Maciej Jaźwiecki

with the label "foreign agents". Now the Russian foreign agent act is being copied in other countries in Africa and Asia. There is a lot of copying and pasting being done between these countries; it is spreading like a disease.

We need to expose this and look at why these countries co-operate. Is there a new ideology here? I would say: "no". This is an interest-club. This is a trade union for autocratic leaders who do not want to ask their citizens for a renewed mandate because they are afraid to lose. If they lost, they would not be able to continue to suck money out of their countries. Exposing this for what it is, a club of corrupt leaders who do not want to yield power, could strip them of their legitimacy.

But in addition to this we also have to look at ourselves. How are the democratic countries of this world doing? I believe it is time to take a quality leap in democracy to respond to these challenges by improving how our own democracy is working. We need to set a new goal: let us respond to this new international threat by not only combatting these trends but also let us lead by example.

There have been some claims that we may be returning to a Cold War type of world order. Do you agree with this assessment?

It is very similar in many respects. Russia has clearly demonstrated that it is no longer a part of the international world order. I am particularly disturbed by the fact that they opted to leave the international legal system. I am directly referring to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum which secured Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for its nuclear stockpiles. By annexing Crimea, Russia has blatantly violated international law, which means that Russia cannot be trusted as a responsible partner in international agreements.

This is very much linked to whether a country is democratic or not. If you look at any country which is an emerging democracy or going through a transition to democracy you see that all of a sudden they start signing international treaties and conventions and appear to be a country which can be counted on in the international arena. What Russia is doing is the opposite. They are withdrawing. This challenge to the international legal order is incredibly serious.

But what is different from the Cold War is that the current conflict is not based on ideological divisions. It is a division between leaders who have legitimacy based on citizens' expressed support and leaders who have been "elected" under conditions that make you doubt whether the citizens had a possibility to express their true will.

I want to point out that this is not a regional problem. Russia's actions in 2014, I believe, have been a watershed. They have changed the way the world does business. And this is a huge step backwards for a world order based on legality.

It definitely could be seen as setting a precedent in terms of the power of international agreements…

We can specifically cite here the nuclear issue with Iran. What if Iran would say, "Look at the treaty Russia signed and then decided to no longer respect it"? This behaviour will have serious consequences that I think Putin did not calculate.

Coming back to the discussion on this anti-democratic trend emerging, do you think it could be generational? We all remember the fall of communism and the enthusiasm and optimism for democracy that was the general mood in the 1990s. But the younger generation does not have this memory. Is there some relation here?

I think there may be some relation, but we can see that the younger generation is actively participating and following all the popular uprisings today. The Arab Spring a few years ago was as revolutionary in this era as the fall of communism was in Europe. Look at Hong Kong and this incredible movement primarily of the young people but supported by the whole society. It shows that there is youth engagement for democratic principles globally. I am not afraid of that, I think that this is a constant – both young and older people have aspirations to participate. We all want our voice to be heard and our vote to be counted. This is a global phenomenon. People may choose to lie still if their autocratic leader is delivering economic welfare. But the moment when that autocratic leader has problems delivering that welfare, there will be an uprising. I would say that totalitarian or authoritarian countries are extremely unstable as regimes. It is unstable because young people will always want a system that listens to them. But this instability is also a threat to international security.

Can Russia fit this argument? We saw several years ago a protest movement which has all but vanished. But with the dramatic drop in the price of oil and the economic sanctions, which have taken a toll on the Russian economy, is there a chance this movement will return?

I believe that through the invasion in Ukraine and the occupation of Crimea, Putin has shortened his political life substantially. He brought on a period of severe economic problems. If you breach that part of the contract with the citizens then it is much more difficult to stay in power. I do not know when or how or from where in the Russian system the change will come – but it will come. We saw just slightly more than a year ago actually quite good elections organised in Moscow. The opposition candidate came out quite high in the results. Russia is able to organise good elections. It is able to function as a democratic society as soon as conditions allow. Let us see where the internal emotions and feelings will lead Russia. I believe that the greatest threat to Putin's power comes from his own dissatisfied citizens and nowhere else. Democratic change always comes from within.

Speaking of democratic change, the current situation in Ukraine is probably the

most significant in Europe since the fall of communism. Yet when we think back to 1989 there was a massive support from abroad for democracy and civil society in the countries of Central Europe. How do you assess the democratic community's reactions and support for Ukraine now? The situation is obviously very different with the war in the east on the one hand, and the fact that Ukraine is not seriously addressing the necessary reforms on the other…

We have to understand that everyone is there and doing what they can. First of all, we realised that there is a strong will to have democracy and democratic principles respected. We understand that Ukrainians want to be a part of the free world and are even willing to die for it. Secondly, we realised that after the 2004 Orange Revolution Ukrainians did not deal with their problems; there was not a true transition. For a long period of time the democratic community ignored that. Now, everyone sees the problems that Ukraine has and the support it needs. Above all, this means that the democratic building blocks need to be solid and in place and this is what the democratic community can do.

The Community of Democracies can play a key role here as we support emerging democracies. We have been in Moldova, Tunisia and are working in Myanmar. And we very strongly wish to work in Ukraine. Similar to the partnership we had with Moldova, there are several areas where we can work with Ukraine. The top issues include anti-corruption and decentralisation.

Do you see a positive reception in Ukraine for your involvement?

The deputy foreign minister has already formally requested Ukraine to be a part of our democracy partnership. That is the necessary starting point. In fact, all of our activities are coordinated through co-operation with the ministry of foreign affairs.

Are you optimistic about the future of Ukraine?

I am. I have been there several times over the last few months. There are many reasons to be optimistic…

What makes you so optimistic?

They are Europeans! They are engaged and dedicated. They have a vision for their country's future. They want democracy and are willing to pay the highest price for it. NEE

Maria Leissner is the secretary general of the Community of Democracies. She was previously a Swedish politician, member Sweden's of parliament as well as Sweden's Ambassador-at-Large for Democracy.

Adam Reichardt is editor in chief of *New Eastern Europe*.

Isolation would be very Costly for Russia

Interview with Sergei Guriev, a Russian economist and former rector at the New Economic School in Moscow. Interviewer: Giuseppe D'Amato.

GIUSEPPE D'AMATO: The current crisis in Ukraine has completely changed the relationships between Russia and the rest of the world. Did Vladimir Putin plan this scenario because his economic model of development for the country (based on energy) has expired? In this case, Putin can more easily hide his mistakes under a heavy wave of nationalism. Or did the Kremlin miscalculate the strength of Russia in a moment of euphoria after the Olympic Games in Sochi, when the state reserves were full of money and the price of oil was incredibly high?

SERGEI GURIEV: I agree with the fact that the condition of the Russian economy, which has run out of steam, contributed to the decision to annex Crimea. But I am also sure that the economic slowdown was not the only reason why Russia annexed Crimea and later interfered in eastern Ukraine. Putin saw the opportunity and was also offended by the revolution in Kyiv. He wanted to prevent a similar, anti-corruption and pro-western revolution in Russia. Hence, he retaliated against Ukrainians.

According to some outlooks Russia will run out of financial resources by the end of 2016. What is the real financial situation of the Russian Federation in early 2015? Rumour has it that more or less half of the reserves are not there anymore.

We still do not know the spending plans of the Russian government. The federal budget is still based on the price of oil at 100 US dollars per barrel. Obviously it needs to be rewritten. Before it is revised, however, it is too early to say

Photo courtesy of Sergie Guriev.

when Russia will run out of its reserves. Based on current estimates, if oil prices stay at today's low level, it could happen within one to three years.

A significant part of Russia's reserves is indeed already committed to projects. We can probably say that the whole national welfare fund has been committed. These commitments can be broken, but at least for now they exist. The government has only the reserve fund which could last potentially for a couple of years. Again, it depends on how the government revises its budget.

The banking sector and non-financial firms are struggling with external debt. Is this the Achilles' heel for today's Russia? What would happen if they started to default?

The government may try to bail them out for the next two or three years in order to prevent default. These defaults would be very costly for the Russian foreign trade. It will also, of course, affect the living standards of Russians. So far, the Russian government claims it will do its best to avoid default. This is indeed a critical issue as the price of oil is low and the government does not have enough funds, while sanctions prevent the Russian government as well as Russian banks and corporations from accessing money from abroad.

From your articles in the international press I gather that autarky, or self-sufficiency, is not the right solution for the Russian economy. Can you justify this viewpoint? The so called policy of "de-offshorisation" and nationalisation of the elite has been the heart of Putin's third-term presidency. Do you think Putin will be forced to liberalise the Russian economy and effectively help small and medium-sized businesses?

I think Russia needs to integrate with the rest of the world in order to attract investment and new technology. Isolation would be very costly for Russia. Putin talks about liberalisation and the development of small and medium-sized businesses, but the actions do not follow the words. We can observe that investors in fact do not trust Putin's words and the small and medium business sector does not grow while capital flows out of Russia.

The former finance minister, Alexei Kudrin, said that the initial anti-crisis measures will provoke further stagnation of the Russian economy. Do you agree?

These statements are already out of date. Nobody is talking about stagnation anymore. If the price of oil does not recover quickly, the Russian economy will enter recession in 2015 and the GDP will probably fall by four or five per cent. Anti-crisis measures may only suffice to prevent a full-blown meltdown and collapse. A recession is unavoidable, no matter what. But if the Russian government does not prevent a full-blown banking crisis, then a financial panic, and not only a recession, is highly probable. Currently, the best scenario is a managed recession without a banking crisis.

What would you do to improve Russian economy at this moment?

The main recipe is outside of the realm of economic policy making. Any improvement for the Russian economy would first and foremost require a change in foreign policy, a fight against corruption within Russia and a reform of the judiciary system. It would also require the removal of certain people working in the government who are corrupt and harass Russian businesses and entrepreneurs.

For the first time in a decade, the United States and Europe are not supporting the Russian economy as was the case in 1991, 1998 or 2008. How much are western sanctions hindering Russia's economy? Are they the key difference in the current crisis, as compared to past crises?

They are very important differences. If there were no sanctions, Russia would be able to borrow money and manage the crisis much more effectively. However, the sanctions have ruled out that possibility. Russia is now facing a very dangerous situation.

Could you comment on the statement that: "oil leads to empire; a more balanced economy leads to democracy"…

Well, that probably means that when Russia, a non-democratic country, has oil revenues, it can use it for foreign policy adventures. On the other hand, there are many oil-rich countries which do not act this way. They use oil revenues for better purposes. These are not only the oil rents that push Russia into foreign policy adventures. There is something that exists among the Russian political elite and political institutions that creates incentives for making such foreign policy decisions.

How is it possible that, according to official surveys, at the end of 2014 around 80 per cent of Russians supported Putin? Kremlin propaganda used the slogan "There is no Russia without Putin and no Putin without Russia". Why do many Russians not see a difference between the president and the state?

We have never seen propaganda as shameless and as totalitarian as we have over the last year or so. We have seen repression of the political opposition, censorship of the internet and outright lies on the television. In that sense, it is not surprising that Russians do not believe in any alternative – they simply cannot see them. They can only learn the "official" point of view.

In that sense, I would not really interpret this 80 per cent as a real measure of support. Just to remind you, 99 per cent of Russians voted for Soviet rulers in the Soviet Union. Two days before Nicolae Cauceascu was shot, his approval ratings were also more than 90 per cent. In a country like today's Russia, approval ratings do not have a lot of meaning.

Dmitry Medvedev, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Alexei Navalny…. Which one of them has the best chances to become an alternative candidate for the Russian presidency?

We do not know. We have not seen honest elections in Russia for quite a while. I think all of them can compete

in presidential elections, but we do not know for whom the Russian people will vote. I would stay agnostic on this question.

What is your forecast for Russia in the coming years from the economic, political, and international point of view?

Putin has been quite clear about his dislike for the West. He also considers Russia's neighbours as a legitimate sphere of Russian interest. Therefore, I do not see much chance for change in the next year or so. This particular government will remain on the same foreign policy course. If the regime does change somehow, and this will definitely happen in the long run, we will then finally see that Russia can eventually become a democratic and peaceful country.

Sergei Guriev is a Russian economist and former rector at the New Economic School (NES) in Moscow. In 2013 he left Russia and currently resides in France.

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

Crimea is Ours!

One year after annexation

PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

In the spring of 2014 the slogan most often heard on Russian television was "Crimea is ours!" In 2015, however, words like these are no longer shouted on the streets of Sevastopol or Simferopol. Sanctions have taken their toll and western companies have withdrawn from co-operation and investment.

"Please be aware: Because of the geopolitical situation we do not serve Americano [coffee]. Please ask for Crimean coffee instead" reads a notice placed at the counter in a café in the town of Dzhankoy in northern Crimea. No one knows whether these words are genuine or simply intended as a joke but, one way or another, they show very well the international context in which Crimea has ended up.

With everybody's focus on the war in eastern Ukraine, the situation in Crimea and the people inhabiting the peninsula one year after it was annexed into the Russian Federation is often pushed to the background. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that the annexation of Crimea was the prelude to the war in Donbas and some of the key actors of the war theatre in the east, including Igor Girkin and Alexander Borodai, were actively involved in the annexation of Crimea. Today, when they are interviewed by the media, they do not even deny this involvement.

So long, freedom

"To some extent we remain loyal towards Kyiv. There are no burning bridges anymore," a pro-Russian political scientist Andrey Nikiforov told me back in 2011

when we spoke about attitudes in Crimea. His words were a reflection of the relations between Crimea and Ukraine. According to Nikiforov, the pro-Russian potential emerged in the middle of the 1990s, when the first attempt to strip Crimea from Ukraine was made. A referendum was held then and pro-Russian politicians took over, in a similar scenario to that which we know from 2014, minus the "little green men". Clearly, had it not been for the Russian aggression in 2014, Crimea would have remained in Ukraine. The Russians took advantage of the moment; they pulled a previously drafted scenario out of a drawer and carried out their special operation. In this way Crimea became "ours", hence Russian.

"Hello" and "goodbye" are the words that my Crimean friends from Simferopol say in Ukrainian. No, they are not great Ukrainian patriots. They have never been. Some are ethnic Russians, but they did not vote in last year's referendum. For them Ukraine was not so intimidating. They are young, yet from the very beginning of the operation, they were aware of the consequences that Russian annexation would bring. Specifically, they know that now it is more difficult to enter Ukraine, whereas before they could receive visits any time, whether for business or for pleasure. They were used to paying with credit cards, but last December both Visa and MasterCard took Crimea off their payment systems. Thus, today short phrases that are still uttered in Ukrainian are for some people a form of resistance against the new Russian authorities. Young people in Crimea, similarly to other regions in Ukraine, were accustomed to more freedom than in Russia.

Since the annexation, traces of the Ukrainian past are vanishing from the streets of Simferopol and other major cities in Crimea.

"I can speak Ukrainian. I am Russian, but I was schooled here in Crimea in the 1960s," says a taxi driver. Such people are few and far between however. Traces of the Ukrainian past are vanishing from the streets of Simferopol. The academic library in the capital of Crimea was, until recently, named after Ukraine's poet and writer – Ivan Franko. The library was given this name back in the 1950s but in December of 2014 the poet's name was removed from the plaque.

Simferopol has also become a darker place. It might have something to do with the winter weather. Cafés are open, but the clientele has changed. I go to grab something to eat with some local journalists. We end up at a kebab joint. "That is what we are eating now. It is the cheapest option," they tell me laughingly. However, we soon switch to a more serious discussion. Optimism may be lacking among my friends, but life still goes on. And they have decided to stay here. They were born here and their families live here.

Sanctions

Crimea is an ideal place to see that the sanctions imposed on Russia have been successful. Back in Kyiv a Ukrainian journalist, who in the spring of 2014 left Crimea for Lviv, points out some people sitting in the pub we are in and tells me their story: "These are my friends from Crimea. Only a week ago they worked for an IT company in Sevastopol. Their company would make iPhone software for a British company. But the Brits terminated the contract because of the sanctions."

Crimea is an ideal place to see that the sanctions imposed on Russia have been successful.

Other western companies have also withdrawn from co-operation and investments even though a few years ago the authorities in Sevastopol received American money for projects aimed at the civil development of the city and the harbour.

"For several years now I have been working in Crimea trading high-end cosmetics. I used to sell western products, but representatives of western companies are no longer in Crimea. Now I have to order products from Russia, but the delivery takes up to three weeks. That is why it is difficult to plan ahead and develop, especially when the rouble is so unstable," complains Oleksandr. He is a young man who arrived in Crimea several years ago. His hometown is Cherkasy, in central Ukraine, but his wife was born on the peninsula.

Major Russian companies have also been hesitant to open offices on the peninsula because of the sanctions. There are no big and well-known Russian banks either. Large Russian mobile operators do not directly offer their services; for instance MTS officially provides an internal roaming service. It charges the usual Russian rate, but once you have inserted an MTS sim card into your phone, you notice an "R" on the screen. Even the first MTS sim cards sold in Crimea were white and devoid of any markings, which was another sign of the fear of sanctions.

"We will have to close down. There are no prospects for development here," Oleksandr finishes the conversation on a train from Kyiv to Simferopol. This train ran until December 27th 2014. Now, there are no longer any trains connecting Ukraine, Belarus or Russia with Crimea.

Island of Crimea

At the end of December 2014 Ukraine set up a blockade of occupied Crimea. Both Ukrainian and international long-distance trains and bus connections were eliminated. In 1979 Vasily Aksyonov, a Russian author, wrote a science fiction book

titled *The Island of Crimea*, and in 2015 another Aksyonov (but whose name is Sergey and who is a separatist and the current prime minister of Crimea) turned the peninsula into an actual island. On the two strips of land that connect Crimea with mainland Ukraine, temporary border checkpoints have been set up on the Ukrainian side. The first days of the blockade were tough. At the crossing in Chonhar people had to walk several kilometres between the Russian and Ukrainian posts. Cars would get stuck in mile-long queues. The situation has improved slightly now and buses drive people from one crossing point to another. However, the truth is that Crimea has been cut off.

The railway station in Simferopol, once so vibrant, is lifeless today. The taxi drivers hanging around in a hopeless search for clients remind us of the times long gone. The only regular connections between Russia and Crimea are provided by the airport in Simferopol and the ferry crossing in Kerch. The latter, although less costly and more convenient because it allows to get to the peninsula by car, has one significant drawback: time.

The only regular connections between Russia and Crimea are provided by the airport in Simferopol and a ferry crossing in Kerch.

"The crossing is being developed and soon up to eight ferries will be running simultaneously," I am assured by politicians from the Russian LDPR political party led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

Immediately after the annexation of the peninsula in March 2014 the Russian authorities drafted a plan to build a bridge that would connect Crimea with the Russian Federation. This is one of the promises that cheered the supporters of "Crimea is Ours". The bridge is estimated to be 19 kilometres long and will cost 228.3 billion roubles (3.5 billion US dollars). However, the question that is being asked today is whether Russia will manage to implement the plan, given its increasing economic problems. The scheduled opening date, which was recently announced, is 2018.

Transportation links connect Crimea with mainland Ukraine and supplies are dependent on these connections. Shops in Crimea are not as poorly equipped as some media have reported. I asked my friend from Simferopol whether I should bring something from Ukraine as I prepared for my visit.

"Come on," he replied, "We've got everything we need here." Indeed, products are available, but the choice has narrowed significantly when compared to what was offered before the annexation. The prices are also higher than elsewhere in Ukraine.

Beyond transportation links, Crimea is dependent on Ukraine for other things as well. For example, Crimea receives most of its electricity from Ukraine. Recently, Ukraine twice cut off power to the whole peninsula for several hours at a time. Inhabitants have become accustomed to blackouts in recent months but not on

such a scale. When the longer power outages occurred, the centre of Simferopol was packed with people who had abandoned their workplaces. Crimea is also dependent on water supplied by Ukraine. It is enough to take one glimpse at the map to understand that it was for practical reasons that the peninsula joined the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954. What is more, in subsequent decades Crimea developed primarily because Soviet Ukraine footed the bills.

A Crimea without tourists

"Look, we do not have those back home," says an elderly woman to her husband pointing at a napkin holder on the restaurant table. We are in Bakhchysarai, at one of the most popular Crimean-Tatar restaurants in the old town. The couple are retired and come from Kazan, in Russia. They flew in for a short winter vacation. The peninsula is clearly fighting for holiday businesses to be saved and, while last year was tough, it was not the most dramatic. It is feared, however, that 2015 might turn out to be much worse.

"Last year we ended up having 50 per cent less hotel and restaurant guests than in previous years," says Dilyara, a co-owner of a tourist resort in Yevpatoria. For her family it is not just about making money but also the idea of restoring the Crimean-Tatar culture in what was once the second most important city of the Crimean-Tatar Khanate.

When asked how to sum up the tourist season of 2014, Dilyara replies: "It was not so bad, but only because Crimean kids spent their summer holidays on the peninsula and not elsewhere. And there were some refugees from Donbas."

According to official statistics Ukrainians traditionally made up over 60 per cent of tourists in Crimea. This is understandable considering the relatively short distance and ease of access which they once enjoyed. The next largest group of tourists would most often arrive from Russia. However, in recent years the number of western tourists had been growing as well, but it is doubtful that they will return to the peninsula any time soon. Even if we cast aside some moral dilemmas related to the Russian occupation, there are also some practical obstacles that now prevent westerners from visiting Crimea. Visitors from EU countries, for example, need to have a Russian visa. Once they arrive on the peninsula, they will be unable to use credit cards and might have problems using their mobile phones.

Dilyara is also convinced that 2015 will be worse than 2014. The refugees from Donbas will run out of money, and some Russian tourists who came last year because of the "Crimea is ours!" campaign will not come again. Prices are higher here than in previous years and there is a problem with transportation. But above

all, for Russians, Crimea has truly become 'theirs', and it is no fun going to a place which is so similar to Sochi."

Tatars in the spotlight

The day after the so-called March 16th 2014 referendum was probably the most depressing of all the days I spent in Crimea. I was having breakfast in a Crimean-Tatar restaurant with the owner, who was nervously flipping through the news on TV. The main topic of all the programmes was Crimea. In front of his restaurant there were two flags flying next to each other: the Crimean-Tatar and the Ukrainian one.

"It was a year ago that I raised the Ukrainian flag. I will not take it down myself; I will let them do it," he said when we were parting. Nine months later the only thing left was the flag pole. I did not need to ask how and when the Ukrainian flag vanished. Ilmi Umerov, the president of Bakhchysarai District State Administration until 2014, gave me the answer: "They are using different methods against us. If the Tatars do business they need to be prepared for frequent raids. And it is not conducted in a normal way with a control unit arriving, asking for documentation. No, they prefer a show of force. During lunchtime armed and masked officers surrounded the restaurant and threatened guests. That is how it is carried out now."

Restricting business is just one way of placing restrictions on the Crimean Tatars. As many as 13 per cent of Crimea's inhabitants have now been put in the spotlight of the new authorities who approach this "problem" in a similar way as in other parts of the Russian Federation. Large meetings have either been banned or moved outside the centre. Such was the case on Remembrance Day which is celebrated every year on May 18th, commemorating the deportation of the Crimean Tatars ordered by Stalin. The Tatars clearly annoy the Russian authorities and, not surprisingly, their leaders and activists frequently emphasise their loyalty towards the Ukrainian state. The spiritual leader, Mustafa Dzhemilev, and the current president of the Mejlis (the informal Crimean-Tatar parliament), Refat Chubarov, are now members of Ukraine's new parliament in Kyiv. They have been banned from re-entering Crimea by the Russian authorities.

The Ukrainian flag which flew longest in a public place in Crimea was the one in front of the Mejlis building in Simferopol. It was taken down by the Russians during a search of the premises carried out by the police and the FSB in September 2014. In recent months the number of house searches by the police and FSB has been on the rise. They look for weapons, drugs and banned literature, in other words extremist papers which are prohibited in the Russian Federation.

"We'd better talk in the car. They might have installed some devices in our place," says Ismail Miemietov, the president of the local Mejlis. We meet with Mustafa whose place was searched by the police and FSB on December 17th 2014. The official reason was a tip given by a colleague. Mustafa worked in a utility company in the Bakhchysarai area for over ten years.

"On several occasions I pointed out to my colleagues that Russian television was propaganda and a lot of news was untruthful. The 'tip' [that the authorities received] mentioned that I threatened to 'slaughter all Russians in Crimea' and said 'rivers of blood would flow'. I would be out of my mind if I ever said things like that," Mustafa says calmly.

Mustafa was in the first wave of the Tatars who returned to Crimea; at that time he was an active member of the Crimean-Tatar national movement. Currently he is a member of a religious organisation. On December 6th he was ordered to the police station. It turned out that three witnesses from his workplace confirmed the tip. To Mustafa this came as a shock; they had worked together for so many years.

On December 17th, 15 OMON officers turned up at Mustafa's doorstep. They did not find any weapons or drugs but confiscated three religious books which were on the list of banned literature. One of them was published in Moscow. A wall map of Crimea where his son scribbled "Crimea Ukraine – Crimea not Russia" was taken along with computer hard drives, Mejlis meeting minutes from 1999, two photos of him with Dzhemilev and even old materials from a Polish foundation which organised a training course for Crimean-Tatar activists.

"Ukraine has abandoned us. Our only hope is Europe," are the final words of Ismail Miemietov. Conversely, Dzhemilev believes that there is a positive side of this situation as a consolidation of the nation is taking place. "Obviously there are people out there who have begun collaboration with the Russian authorities, but they are still a minority", Dzhemilev assured me in Kyiv.

The Tatars in Crimea are of a similar opinion. "When you meet Mustafa Dzhemilev, please pass it on to him that we still see him as our leader and we trust him," a Crimean-Tatar woman told me.

There is no war here

Some Ukrainian experts point out that in the last year Ukraine has lost the battle for the hearts of those of its citizens who have been left behind on the peninsula. There is no plan for a future policy towards Crimea. The war in eastern Ukraine has pushed the problem of the occupied territory onto the backburner.

In February 2015 the results of the first research carried out by Ukrainians on Crimea inhabitants after the annexation were released. They were criticised immediately as the respondents were surveyed only by phone and the surveyors questioned exclusively landline phone owners while leaving out the majority of small towns. Nevertheless, some experts agree that one year after the annexation, the inhabitants of Crimea believe in the brand of a strong Russia. What once used to be Ukraine's strength now works to its disadvantage.

"At least there is no war here," they say in Crimea now, as they did in 1999 during the war in Chechnya. However, a careful observer can notice "a war" on the peninsula. In front of a bus station, for example, or next to the railway station, there is a billboard saying "Hail the Defenders of Novorossiya (New Russia)!" In the centre of Simferopol there is a stand for volunteers to sign up to join "the defenders of Novorossiya". Numerous pensioners still believe that Crimea can be a paradise; in other words, that the Soviet times will return.

A common opinion is that Crimea just needs more time. But many are becoming disappointed, which is what the Crimean members of Zhirinovsky's LDPR party fear.

"We are a constructive opposition in the Crimean parliament. We are watching the ruling party so that corruption and negligence will not cause a wave of disappointment," says Pavel Shperov, a deputy of the Crimean parliament for LDPR. Since the beginning of the 1990s Shperov, along with his colleagues, has been pushing for Crimea to join Russia. That is why he is now critical about the Crimean politicians in power, who previously served Ukraine.

"I have also applied for my Russian passport; otherwise I would have problems getting a job. But for me this is a fake passport which I will throw away the minute Crimea returns to Ukraine," says my friend as we finish our conversation.

Translated by Justyna Chada

Piotr Andrusieczko is a Polish journalist. He is editor in chief of Український журнал (*The Ukrainian Magazine*) and a frequent contributor to Polish bi-monthly *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* and the Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In 2014, he was named Poland's journalist of the year for his coverage of events in Ukraine.

Stories from the Front Lines

IULIIA MENDEL

The fate of Ukrainian veterans coming back from the frontlines is a serious topic that no one is readily discussing in Kyiv, despite the horrors of war and the sacrifice they made for their country.

"You can fight without armoured vehicles, without water and ammunition. But you cannot keep fighting without support, without the children's love. A drawing means much more than a bulletproof vest."

It is memories like these, charged with emotions, that Konstantin Kasich, like many Ukrainian soldiers, has brought back from the ATO – the anti-terrorist operation against the Russian-supported separatists in eastern Ukraine. There, in the Donbas region, where a real, although undeclared, war began in May 2014, fully-grown men could stand in a group, forgetting about food, water and cigarettes brought by volunteers while carefully examining detailed drawings from children.

"We hung this drawing in our bunker. It was a regular drawing with a boy riding on a tank. The word 'Ukraine' was written above it and beneath it the kid had written 'Return Alive.' It is a pity, but this drawing was destroyed."

Konstantin's group of 17 soldiers barely survived. In early September 2014, when they were camped in the Amvrossiivka district, an area under separatist control, they suddenly found themselves surrounded by separatists, mercenaries and Russian soldiers. They spent four days trying to escape.

"We did not have any more water or food. Our artillery was spent; several people did not even have weapons, as they all had been destroyed. But we were permanently shooting and moving. We walked in minefields, we entered villages where separatists were and we fought. It always appeared that there were more of them than us…"

Deep fatigue

The unit of Ukrainian soldiers rarely stopped anywhere for more than 90 minutes. This strategy of staying on the move was inspired by the idea of following animal tracks, which is how they avoided stepping on mines. They have no doubt that they were walking through minefields: there were fresh signs of digging in an unmistakable pattern and small signs left by the separatists to warn each other about the danger. Although they all managed to stay alive, not all of them were lucky enough to avoid serious injuries: One of Konstantin's friends was not careful enough on his way to the river where he went to fetch water and he did not notice the mine fuse. He returned home without one of his legs.

Wandering around the perimeter, being shot at furiously, often at close range, on the fourth day, they accidentally came upon the enemy when they were completely exhausted. The separatists, astonished to see them alive, let them go. It may have been due to a strangely-awakened feeling of solidarity from the local separatists. The Ukrainian warriors could not have hoped for such a gift – maybe the greatest in their lives, the gift of life itself – from the enemy.

"It is difficult to explain what was happening there. Can you imagine? You are shooting, and you are being shot at. I remember being thrown from the Humvee. My friends picked me up. I remember we were on a hill, so we left some of the villages and then we found a way out."

All 17 soldiers from the 72nd Separate Mechanised Brigade returned from the ATO zone with posttraumatic stress disorder. They were first taken to the Melitopol hospital in one of the major cities of the Zaporizhia Oblast which borders the Donetsk Oblast. After receiving emergency help, Konstantin was taken to the main military hospital in Kyiv. This is where we met.

Our interview meant a lot for Konstantin. He texted me updates as he was preparing to meet with me: shaving, showering, and dressing. But nothing could hide the signs of deep fatigue and incomprehensible sadness on the face of this brown-haired man of modest stature. He was embarrassed, which was visible in his hunched posture, his anxiety, in the way he lowered his eyes and the hat he crumpled in his hands. He seemed to have a severe ailment, although his only affliction was shattered nerves. When he arrived at the hospital he spoke with a stutter. But now he spoke clearly.

Konstantin was recommended to me by a friend who himself had fought in Donbas and now works as a volunteer for the soldiers. Because of the support of such friends, Konstantin considers himself lucky. They brought him medicine, cigarettes, food and money. Konstantin tells the same story as nearly every Ukrainian soldier: Our army was found to be completely incompetent when it first stood

against the enemy. Almost every soldier complained that his battalion was supplied with the worst ammunition and equipment. Each and every Ukrainian military unit had shortages of everything, including soldiers themselves.

But, unlike some of his comrades, Konstantin was quite optimistic: "Sometimes the guns did not shoot, sometimes the Cheburashka [the name of a famous Soviet cartoon character that soldiers adopted for a joystick-controlled automatic cannon] did not work. Yes, some things were broken, but my car [by which he meant the armoured troop carrier] felt like a living being."

Every Ukrainian military unit faced shortages of everything, including soldiers themselves.

Reintegration

Believe it or not, Konstantin is doing relatively well. Unlike many other soldiers, Konstantin became aware that he needs psychological help. Many of those who underwent this four-day escape were in a much worse state.

"As soon as you return to your normal life, when you come home and you stop taking the pills, that is when you start failing. Friends of mine did not drink so much before. Now I see them drunk all the time."

Konstantin is unable to hold back his emotions when it comes to how this war has changed the people he knew. I see the fear in his eyes. He is not sure what will happen to him after he leaves hospital. This man's life is divided in two parts: before and after the war. After returning to Kyiv from the war zone, Konstantin faced problems that were new for him. While fellow Ukrainians often appeared grateful in words and generous in charity, the situation became more complicated when it came to finding a job or even a way back into society. All of those who returned from the east are still considered in active military service and they cannot be officially hired. Even if employers are ready for an under-the-table placement, an ex-soldier with physical or psychological trauma is a difficult fit for any position.

Veterans need work not only to help them reintegrate into civilian life but, first and foremost, for money to support themselves. The bloated machine of the Ukrainian state can hardly cope with the war itself let alone provide post-military support to its veterans. After returning from Donbas, Konstantin's income decreased almost eightfold, down to 1,000 hryvnia, or under 40 US dollars per month.

In Kyiv, he fights humiliation. Only after a huge amount of complex paperwork and after navigating the vast bureaucratic machine could he receive, or not receive,

an ATO veteran certification. This certification does not, however, provide any pension payments; it is essentially a discount card. Veterans can receive a reduction from their utility bills or priority consideration in purchasing land. Thanks to these meaningless gestures, the budget still loses money but the benefits to Ukraine's war fighters as individuals are immaterial. They are given nothing but scraps.

Cyborg with a soul

When I meet him, Slyvka ("little plum" in Ukrainian) is not thinking about the problems he and his fellow soldiers faced when returning to Kyiv. He is 18 years old and at the moment he is not concerned with social or political questions. He is completely preoccupied by the war in Donbas.

Slyvka was the youngest member of a military group known as the Cyborgs. This name was coined by a blogger covering the events in Donbas and spread widely in the mass media. Apparently the name was taken from the telephone conversation of a separatist, complaining to his friend about the seeming invincibility of the soldiers defending the Donetsk airport: "I do not know who is defending the Donetsk airport, but for three months we have not been able to knock them out of there …They are not human. They are cyborgs."

After the media picked up these comments, the Ukrainian Cyborgs became modern legends. The story struck a chord with a public feeling desperately fatigued from the seemingly endless lists of casualties and stream of bad news coming from the Donbas war. The media could not wait to interview these modern heroes. Although they were often eager to talk, it was not easy to find Cyborgs: many were still fighting in Donbas. When I finally meet him in Kyiv, the youngest cyborg surprised me with his sensitive soul.

"There is always fear. I do not understand those people who say they are not afraid and pretend to be Rambos." Despite his young age, Slyvka talks like an experienced soldier. He seems not to care about emotions, but puts practice and values first. In his hometown of Lviv, known for its chocolate, Slyvka was studying confectionary arts when the war started.

"I do not want the separatists to come to western Ukraine, to knock on my door and to tell me to get out. That is why I went to Donbas."

Slyvka has already lost friends among the Cyborgs. He does not use their names, remembering them only by their nicknames as Kasper or Kelt. The young man is calm on the outside, but he takes strong positions and is confident about the necessity of fighting for Ukraine. I cannot help but ask him what he was the most proud of from his time in the ATO zone.

After spending weeks and months on the frontlines with low supplies many Ukrainian soldiers and volunteers will find it difficult to integrate back into society.

Photo: Wojciech Koźmic


УКРАЇНА
СІЧ

Despite the thousands of soldiers and volunteers who have served on the front lines, the state has given no thought to the issue of post-war care for the veterans. The war itself consumes all resources.

Photo: Wojciech Koźmic

During the entirety of the war in Donbas so far, the Ukrainian army and its volunteer soldiers have survived thanks to donations by ordinary Ukrainians.

Photo: Wojciech Koźmic

He tells me about shooting a tank: "It was on the airport runway. I took the anti-tank RPG-7 and hit its side. The tank stopped and only then could Kobra and three guys from Pravy Sektor smash it."

Slyvka was in a medical unit and organised his unit in the basement of Donetsk airport, preparing IVs, giving care and bringing the wounded off the battlefield. Their company was looking for new vehicles as they had lost two at the same time. They received one replacement, a used car, a donation from a local Kyiv church. And there, near the church, is where we met.

During the entirety of the war in Donbas so far, the Ukrainian army and its volunteer soldiers have survived thanks to such donations. United by the scenes of tragedy playing across the national stage, the Ukrainian people have become more generous. During the last year alone, according only to the official count, they donated nearly nine billion hryvnia (over 500 million US dollars). There was also an incalculably large amount of donations in the form of material goods. These were mostly things that would help the soldiers: bulletproof vests, weapons, imagers, fuel, cars, tents, warm clothing, boots and even food.

According to the official count, Ukrainians in 2014 donated nearly nine billion hryvnia (over 500 million US dollars) to the war effort.

That is how the Cyborgs got their Volkswagen station wagon, equipped as an emergency vehicle, and why Konstantin does not stop praising the work of volunteers. The Cyborgs planned how many people the Volkswagen could retrieve from the battlefield and agreed on a number that seemed unreal to me: nearly ten of the wounded fit into one station wagon. In mid-January 2015 the Cyborgs experienced one of the most furious battles at the Donetsk airport. In a five-day battle that commentators compared to a modern Battle of Stalingrad, the airfield was totally destroyed and lost its strategic meaning. The Cyborgs retreated some 1.5 kilometres from the airport to a more favourable position.

Volunteers without alternatives

"It could take from an hour to several days to retrieve a fallen soldier from the battlefield. The bodies were sometimes waiting for two or three days. When we got them, they were in ice-cream freezers. We had to reassemble them before we could put them in the coffins."

This is how 23-year-old Emma Zinchenko describes her own experience in removing fallen soldiers from the battlefield last summer. She became a volun-

teer – a source of support from behind the front lines on which Ukrainian soldiers could rely during war. Emma started, but never completed, her medical education. She stopped her studies in the winter of 2014 to become an activist in Ukraine's EuroMaidan Revolution. When, in March, she was unable to return to her native Crimea because of the Russian annexation, she decided to go instead to where she was really needed – Donbas. Her skills as a medical assistant were in high demand in the conflict zone.

Still, it is difficult to find anybody else who can talk about the horrors of war so lightheartedly, talking about terror with something akin to cheerfulness or optimism: "They are also people. Even though they are dead. Someone has to do this."

What this really meant was that Emma was sewing together the body parts of the dead soldiers so that they could be buried at home. "There were 12 corpses we were sent from different regions. One was hit by a tank round. There were only twenty-five kilos left of a person whose weight was closer to a hundred. We collected the parts. It is a shame, but we never found his head. That is why we had to send the coffin to his wife closed."

Several times Emma was also on the battlefield herself, helping the wounded. There, during the fight, Ukrainians forgot about their gender stereotypes and debates: Everybody did what he or she had to do. Emma tells me about the emergency help she provided to one injured soldier; injecting an analgesic painkiller, applying a tourniquet and trying to coordinate the help of a helicopter. But for Ukraine, helicopters are, of course, in even greater shortage than weapons or bulletproof vests.

"One of our guys had a shrapnel injury that pierced his chest, another had a shattered knee. We were calling for the chopper for four and a half hours. But they refused to send it. They said they would not fly there. The guy with the wounded chest started driving himself off the battlefield. His friend barely survived, despite his profuse blood loss."

It is the calmness with which Emma tells these stories that strikes me the most. Despite being so young and having spent her entire life in a country at peace, she appeared to have been more prepared for the war than the state of Ukraine as a whole. It was from her that you could gather a real picture of the events and the people in Donbas, without any media spin. She talks about small-town mortuaries lacking air conditioners and about transporting corpses in common plastic bags, held together with tape, because they had no body bags. The worst thing was late in the summer when there were no refrigeration units. Bodies were left to decompose until a place was found for them.

"In Starobelsk, the morgue is even worse than in Schastia – there is only one refrigerator without shelves," she says, referring to two of the administrative cen-

tres in the Luhansk Oblast where she worked. "People are thrown one on top of another, they freeze together and then we just have to chip them apart."

The year 2014 forever changed the lives of Emma, Konstantin and Slyvka. They left their homes, abandoned their studies and their careers to devote themselves to fight for their country. Along with many other Ukrainians, they felt a strong, invisible connection to their homeland as never before. And since the crisis came to our country, they have bravely tackled immense challenges each and every day.

Whether Ukraine as a state will ever be able to pay these people anything in return for their sacrifices to preserve the state's unity and freedom remains an unanswered question. But for now, one thing is clear. The state has given no thought to the issue of post-war care for the ATO veterans. The war itself consumes all resources.

Whether Ukraine as a state will ever be able to pay veterans anything in return for their sacrifices remains an unanswered question.

What is worse is that there is no broader awareness of the importance of proactively reintegrating the veterans back into society, especially those handicapped by injuries. There is still no law to recognise the volunteer soldiers as veterans – even though, to be honest, it was Ukraine's volunteers that appeared to react quicker and more professionally to defend their country from the separatist threat than the generals and chiefs and ministers charged with the nation's defence.

Iuliia Mendel is a Ukrainian journalist and editor at Espreso TV.

Overcoming Soviet Regimes of Memory

The case of Ašmiany

STSIAPAN STUREIKA

The story of local history museums in the post-Soviet space provides a perfect case-study for understanding the difficulties in transforming and de-Sovietising not only museum exhibits and staff, but the whole approach to local history and heritage. The complexity of these issues can be seen through one small provincial Belarusian museum – the Francišak Bahuševič Ašmiany local history museum.

Unlike architectural heritage within historical city-centres that can be considered a result of different types of social, economic, political and other interactions, a museum exhibition is the fruit of its specific author. An exhibition is always a balance between personal intentions and public pressure and the creative energy of the museum staff is highly dependent on various factors. However, the role of an exhibition's author cannot be underestimated.

An exhibition is a set of artificially selected and combined objects, created with specific goals. This collection of artefacts is meant to present some initially uncharacteristic symbolic meaning – "to represent an epoch". It is precisely because of this fact that the museum's staff take full responsibility for the creation and translation of messages from a selected heritage. But who are these people that intermediate

our contact with eternity? Do they generally reflect public aspirations and do they participate in the process of rethinking history? To what extent do they contribute to the creation of the cultural landscape that surrounds us?

I would like to put forward an even more general question: are Belarusian museums independent, intellectual actors? Are they barometers of public opinion able to broadcast someone's historical policy? Or perhaps they live only by the inertia of the previous Soviet institutionalisation and the internal inertia of the employees in particular?

All these questions provide an inspiration to understand the complexity of the post-Soviet transformation inside historical museums in Belarus which are highly dependent not only on the intellectual process or financial welfare, but also on the need to overcome the passivity still found in the staff's mentality.

Multi-dimensional path

The complexity of these problems can be seen through one small provincial Belarusian museum – the Francišak Bahuševič Ašmiany local history museum. In 2012–2013, I became a member of the creative team of the Belarusian office of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) that was commissioned to redo the permanent exhibition for this museum. The work began simply as a contract for technical production under prepared preliminary plans (the installation of museum furniture and placement of objects) that later turned into full-scale design work from conception to conclusion. In fact, we made an overt attempt to break the usual concept of a Belarusian local history museum. The work was done in close collaboration (and strong tension) with the local museum staff. The most surprising aspect was that in the course of the work, the ICOMOS team faced differences in terms of the interpretation of the role and the nature of the museum exhibition itself. As unlikely as it may sound, this small case revealed a multi-dimensional depth of the issue of the de-Sovietisation of Belarusian museums.

The Francišak Bahuševič Ašmiany local history museum is a state museum subordinate to the district authorities. The museum was founded in 1952 and named after a famous Belarusian poet who is buried near Ašmiany. In 2000 the museum was entrusted with a new building that was originally built in 1850. Its reconstruction was completed only in October 2009 and the museum faced the need to create a new permanent exhibition. For over 60 years the museum had gathered a strong collection of household items from locals as well as a significant number of photos and documents. The museum had also accumulated information

about the historical sights of the area and stores archaeological finds from local excavations. Information about the achievements of local industry (both urban and agricultural) collected by the museum in the early years of its existence has a strong historical value now. The pearl of the museum collection is memorabilia from the house of Francišak Bahuševič itself and original photographs of his family members. However a simple description of the museum's history and collections does not fully express the nature of the local history museum.

The Belarusian movement of local history studies has had its ups and downs. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, local historians were on the very margin of the official historical discourse. They risked being accused of bourgeois nationalism or depreciation of the meaning of Soviet people. After the inclusion of western Belarus into the Soviet Union during the Second World War, Soviet historians arrived at Ašmiany to establish a new local museum to become an ideological core and source of propaganda. The museum being an instrument of power and ideology had to form a way of thinking for the Soviet man. Yet, it had to also build this man's relationship with the past and with local culture. This statement applies to all Soviet historical museums, but local history museums were at the forefront of this mission.

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, local historians were on the very margin of the official historical discourse.

General atmosphere of history

Local history museums created in Soviet cities were often based on previous models of history museums. Yet, generally speaking they were not true history museums at all. Although their exhibitions presented the past, an understanding of the real course of history was not easy to establish. Such museums usually had an official regional status, which meant that their exhibitions were mechanical combinations of objects from a particular administrative area (but less of a cultural or historical region). It often presented different artefacts found during various archaeological excavations from different ancient settlements located within the specific and artificial administrative borders. Understanding a city's history by looking at this strange set of objects was nearly impossible, especially because some settlements were mentioned in any given exhibition only once or twice. Such confusion allowed a visitor to grasp only a general sense of history. That is why the help of visual materials (maps, graphs, tables or statistics) was strongly needed. Typically such additional "ready-to-use" data occupied a great deal of the museum space.

However, none of this was an accident. The goal of this type of museum was not to show the true history of the region, but to confirm the Soviet concept of passing through successive Marxist-Leninist historical and sociological stages: from a primitive communal system to feudalism and then capitalism, with imperialism as the highest form of capitalism, and finally to socialism. The goal of an exhibition was not to show features of the region's historical development, but to prove that this region, just like other Soviet regions, passed through the same historical stages and developed by the same rules.

All these museums showed the struggle of the peasantry and workers for their rights, the participation of locals in Russian revolutions from 1905 to 1917 and of course the people's heroism during the Great Patriotic War. The museum in this case became not a keeper of the local story but a means of enforcing unified standards. The National Belarusian components of history and culture were reduced to a purely ethnographic framework with limited use of the Belarusian language. The main parts of the local history museums included the nature of the region; its prerevolutionary past; the Soviet period; and an ethnographic section. This last section was designed specially to emphasise the progress of the Soviet Union's everyday life, on the one hand, and the Communist party's attention to the national question on the other hand. It was an ethnographic exhibition for which the museum collected various items of peasant labour from the surrounding villages.

Frozen state

In just five years after the Second World War in Belarus, seven museums were remodelled or created in Hrodna, Brest, Pinsk, Slonim, Vaukavysk, Kobrin and Ivienec. In 1952, the local history museum of Ašmiany was established. During the decades that followed, local history museums played a leading role in Soviet museum building. It was the most popular type of museum. In Belarus alone 12 were built in the 1960s; 14 in the 1970s; and 19 in the 1980s. The overall number of state museums in Belarus nearly doubled from 48 to 90 between the 1970s and 1980s. By the beginning of 1993, the total amount of state museums reached 100. At least 61 museums out of 100 were local history museums.

The spread of such museums was typical not only of Belarus. Local history museums in the Soviet Union formed the largest group of state museums in general (519 out of 1,500 museums). The museums, however, occupied the lower level of the Soviet cultural pyramid and began to decline. The Soviet salary system was especially unfavourable for their development: there was no wage differentiation according to the qualifications and experience of museum workers, which led to a

gradual devaluation of the profession of museum researcher. Museums were losing highly skilled professionals. The same trend can be observed today in museums in independent Belarus.

Belarusian local history museums were generally in a frozen state until the mid-2000s when the relative stabilisation of the national economy made the serious renovation of cultural objects possible. Many museums were renovated, yet not all were de-Sovietised. Priority was given to the outer shell, but not to the changing of the museum's internal content. However we should place blame not only on the museum management. Belarusian museums faced a lack of intellectual resources. One of the essential problems of the transformation process in small Belarusian cities is the lack of academic communities able to generate new ideas on heritage. There are no universities in most of these cities and museum professionals alone cannot complete this intellectual mission. On the one hand, there are few highly qualified staff in museums while, on the other, the activities of the ideological office do not leave much room for creative experimentation with the museum's past and present.

One of the key problems of the transformation in small Belarusian cities is the lack of academic communities able to generate new ideas on heritage.

For the first time a team from ICOMOS visited the museum in Ašmiany in 2012. Upon reading the initial documents and after discussions with museum workers, it became obvious that the aim on the side of the museum was to continue the Soviet legacy of the museum. Yet, doing so would be strictly against the mission of ICOMOS. Hence, we had to reinvent the museum's permanent exhibition.

The creative team's vision is that the museum should demonstrate the importance of respecting local heritage in all its manifestations. After visiting the museum, locals should clearly understand the importance of Ašmiany's historical environment and associate with it. The museum's permanent exhibition was meant to become an important factor in shaping the city's image and identity.

To achieve this effectively the team decided to reject the classical principle of end-to-end historical chronology. Instead, the exhibition would be based on the principle that each section would be devoted to a separate subject of heritage. The aim of each section is to show the value of the subject and illustrate its historical path and cultural background. We decided, therefore, to limit the quantity of exhibits and refused to use replicas or reproductions. We also wanted to have a focus on historical inter-ethnic relations in Ašmiany (Lithuanian, Polish, Jewish, Russian and Belarusian cultures).

Dividing lines

It was planned that the opening room of the exhibit would tell the story of Ašmiany itself, its history and culture, and the second room would be devoted to the wider region. We wanted to show the culture and everyday life of both the local aristocracy and the peasantry. In the very centre of this room were some key historical sites: Muravana Ašmianka, Baruny, Halšany and Zuprany. The third room became a memorial room dedicated to Francišak Bahuševič (who died in 1900) with references to the present day cultural situation in Belarus. In accordance with the wishes of the museum workers, we also included here a discussion on the Second World War. The section stresses that war symbolised a turning point for Ašmiany: the end of the old life and a transition into a new stage of history. Probably for the first time in a Belarusian museum, the First and Second World Wars were portrayed as two significant events (as they were), but not in the traditional, Soviet style – as a series of victories and heroic deeds.

The team from ICOMOS was certainly hoping for co-operation with the museum staff, however the reality was different. The lines of disagreement can be divided into social, ideological and technological.

First of all, in the museum staff, there was an insufficient quantity of intellectuals who were able to think abstractly. There was a strong need for them to shed their old understanding of an exhibition as a set of artefacts with interpretation that comes from above. They had no idea how to start constructing the main message of the exhibition. Moreover, the museum was experiencing a generational turnover in personnel and that caused additional personal conflicts between the workers.

The main problem, however, was the perception that history is a linear process and that this should be reflected in the exhibition in the same linear way. In the eyes of the museum staff, the presentation of selected historical topics, tensions between different social and ethnic groups, and the special significance of certain historical processes, etc. all had to be kept in its certain chronological order and only illustrate history within the administrative territory of the modern Ašmiany district. A medieval castle located only 22 kilometres away, for example, had no chance of being incorporated into the exhibition.

Another problem was the lack of understanding of the goal of highlighting and discussing the challenges of modern Belarusian culture. For the museum staff, Francišak Bahuševič was a local writer who lived in the second half of the 19th century, achieved some success and appeared among the classics. Thus, his name should be remembered. They had no desire to draw parallels with the contemporary cultural situation, nor suggest Bahuševič as a modern cultural hero. Our plan to finish the exhibition with a memorial dedicated to Bahuševič simply shocked the

workers. "How can the story of Bahuševič follow the story of the Second World War; he lived before that time?" was the response.

Another problem related to the museum management was the lack of understanding of the role of the permanent exhibition in the museum's everyday life. It became clear that once oriented to school visits, the staff began to plan activities in terms of school trips only. The exhibition is no longer a means of communication with the wider museum audience – only with children.

It became clear that once oriented to school visits, museum staff began to plan activities in terms of school trips only, forgetting the wider museum audience.

Resisting change

It is important to emphasise the role that local museums play in resisting change during transformation. While they are often perceived as being at the forefront of transformation, the reality is quite the opposite. This fact is rarely mentioned during debates on contemporary cultural processes, but the complexity of the relationships within the museum micro-world dramatically slows down museum development. The conflict that took place in Ašmiany is neither a special case nor a purely provincial phenomenon. It can be considered typical for every museum, even in larger cities. The museum staff is a closed and very limited community framed within its institutional affiliation.

Museums that were created in the 1950–70s by Soviet propagandists (professional museum education emerged in Belarus only in 1992 with the opening of the programme of museology and archival science at the Belarusian State University) have become more professional and more resistant to influence from the outside. External influences are very often seen as a question to their professional competence and even more – as a threat to the calm and comfortable existence of museum work.

I would risk expressing another controversial opinion: our attempt to create a new exhibition can be considered in terms of "internal cultural colonisation"; or to put it more softly, as an element of national cultural policy. This process cannot proceed easily; it inevitably meets internal opposition inside older museum institutions. The new exhibition became an unwanted and alien cultural object in the museum. On the other hand, it now influences the museum's working conditions and establishes a new framework for everyday research, educational and other activities of the museum employees (sometimes even against their will). Time will tell whether the newly established exhibition can have a positive impact on the

cultural life of a small town or if it will be fully assimilated into the stagnant local cultural context.

The continuation of cultural policy in the region through the implementation of relevant cultural and social projects can significantly enrich the local cultural landscape making it more diverse and attractive. The new permanent exhibition at the Ašmiany local history museum in this sense is only the first step in the process of the de-Sovietisation of this wonderful region.

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Germans and Poles United in Suffering?

LARS BREUER

Memories of the Second World War in Germany and in Poland strongly follow national patterns, yet with a variety of different narratives. The national memory patterns show that the images of the past and, closely intertwined with this, a national self-understanding are challenged by a confrontation with transnational discourses, especially when it comes to attributions of victimhood and perpetratorship.

For various reasons, most empirical studies of collective memory tend to focus on public forms of memory narratives and their production. This could be references to the past in mass media, parliamentary debates or official speeches. However, this neglects a very important factor, namely the appropriation of those memory narratives by individuals. "Ultimately it is only individuals who do the remembering," American sociologist Jeffrey Olick once put it. And since public memory narratives can be dealt with in many different ways, this gap needs to be closed. In order to include the processes of appropriation, there needs to be an analytical division between three realms of memory: public, official and vernacular.

"Public memory" can be defined as the default. It refers to various forms of publicly available images of the past which are mainly distributed through mass media, like newspapers, books, TV shows, or movies. In this realm, the accessibility of memories is the essential factor. This is why economic figures like circulation numbers or TV ratings often play an important role in public memory. "Official memory" can be understood as institutionalised manifestations of hegemonic

public memory narratives. In this realm, the main agents are state institutions. Among the usual media are museums, memorials, commemoration days and official speeches. In official memory, narratives are chosen deliberately and reflect certain political rationales. "Vernacular memory" describes the appropriation and reproduction of narratives by so-called ordinary people. Here, face-to-face communication in everyday situations, among family members, friends or peers is the most important medium.

National memory patterns

It is important to stress that the three realms are not separated from each other, but do overlap and interact. For some people, personal experiences or "grandma's bedtime stories" might be crucial for their image of the past. For others it might be what they learn in school or a stimulating movie they have recently seen. In order to gain insights on vernacular memory, in particular, a research project conducted with 40 group discussions, i.e. interviews with groups of 4–8 people of different age, profession and background in Germany and Poland was carried out. Overall, remarkable and significant differences in how all the participants spoke about the Second World War, the Holocaust and forced migration stood out. However, the largest differences occurred between the German and the Polish groups. In other words, it is possible to observe strong national memory patterns, but also to find a variety of different memory narratives within these national frameworks. In all of the Polish groups, the relationship to Germans and Russians was by far the most vividly discussed topic, while the German respondents hardly spoke about Poles at all.

In Germany the discussions are rather consensual and self-referential in the sense that Germans mostly speak about themselves (albeit often implicitly). Many German respondents portray Germans as victims of the war or of the Nazi regime. Often, they collectivise individual experiences of suffering onto a national level. However, when they address perpetratorship, they rather avoid national categories. Instead, it often remains vague and blurred. A number of Germans still perceive the Nazi past as a burden that prevents them from expressing their national identity. There are two approaches they take as a reaction to this perception. One is externalisation, in which perpetratorship is often assigned to an allegedly distinct group of Nazis or even to certain individuals. In many cases, perpetrator-

A number of Germans still perceives the Nazi past as a burden that prevents them from expressing their national identity.

ship is not addressed at all so we actually get stories about victims, but without any perpetrator. The second approach is diffusion or blurring. Here, the crimes during the Nazi era are compared to or even equated with various events in other countries, like wars or atrocities. In this approach, it is pointed out that not only Germans have been responsible for crimes against humanity.

In Poland national categorisations are far more prevalent. This applies to addressing victimhood as well as perpetratorship. Participants use a clear pattern in depicting the Second World War where the Poles, as a nation, were the victims of Germans and Russians. Beyond that, Polish participants often recognise and comment upon memory narratives in other countries, especially in Germany. The discussions are often controversial. Broadly speaking, two views on how to deal with different and sometimes conflicting memories can be identified. In the first one, Polish victimhood is not being acknowledged enough at the international level or it is even considered to be threatened by a perceived falsification of history coming from abroad. Most advocates of this view treat perpetratorship and victimhood as national and mutually exclusive categories. This means for example that Germans, since they were responsible for National Socialism and the Second World War, cannot claim any recognition as victims. In the second view, suffering and responsibility exist rather on the level of individual experiences and highlight the variety of different wartime experiences. Thus, perpetratorship and victimhood do not necessarily exclude each other per se. However, these differentiated evaluations often lead to intense debates within the groups.

The role of victimhood

On a more general level the national memory patterns show how the participants' images of the past and, closely intertwined with these, their national self-understanding, are challenged by a confrontation with transnational memory discourses, especially when it comes to attributions of victimhood and perpetratorship. Several German respondents complain about being blamed for a past which they – according to their self-image – have nothing to do with. This usually refers to encounters with other nationals abroad. Many Polish participants, however, decry an insufficient acknowledgement of Polish suffering abroad. The common denominator of these cases is a feeling of being misperceived or of not receiving acknowledgement by others. It should be noted that this impression of a misperception is hardly about the interpretation of historic events themselves any more, but rather about different ways of dealing with this past. And here, the role of victimhood comes into play.

In recent years, victimhood, suffering and trauma have become key concepts in the representation of historical events. In the group discussions, narratives of past events are often centred on individual experiences of suffering. In many cases those stories are used to claim a collective victim status. In a way, victims have become the new heroes of memory. Yet, why exactly does it appear to be attractive to depict yourself as a helpless object of the deeds of others?

Victimhood, suffering and trauma have become key concepts in the representation of historical events.

The dominance of narratives about victimhood suggest that victimhood has become a desirable status first and foremost because it can serve as a resource for acknowledgement by others, especially in a transnational context. There is a transnational memory trajectory, which makes sense of remembering in a positive way: the so-called lessons to be learnt from the past. In this light victim status is desirable because it promises a moral surplus. Those who are victims can claim to have learnt their lessons without having to question themselves. And in some cases it even allows them to accuse others for not having learned enough.

Now the question is whether victimhood is a universal category that can lead to mutual understanding or even a shared transnational memory or if it is rather a particular claim of certain groups that conflicts with the claims of others. Usually the interplay between different claims of victimhood is conceived of as a victim competition, which resembles a zero-sum game: If one group of victims gains attention or recognition, other groups of victims are bound to lose it. At first glance, this pattern seems to apply to the group discussions in the research project as well. There were many cases in which the participants' identification with victim status goes along with denying the same status to other groups. However, a closer look reveals that there are also many cases that do not fit into this pattern.

Multidirectional memory

Facing similar findings, Michael Rothberg developed a concept of "multidirectional memory" that allows an understanding of different modes of interaction for memory narratives – and thus claims of victimhood. Rothberg suggests that memory is "ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing". To map different types of interaction, he proposes a matrix defined by two axes: The axis of comparison with the poles being equation and differentiation and the axis of political affect with the two poles competition and solidarity. Accordingly, there are four modes

of interaction, which illustrates the group discussions: competitive differentiation, solidary differentiation, solidary equation and competitive equation.

The first mode of competitive differentiation resembles more or less what is commonly understood as victim competition: Two different claims of victimhood excluding each other. When employees of a museum in Warsaw discussed a photograph showing a woman and her children escaping the ruins of a bombed city one of them stated: "A nation that causes a war, reckons with the fact that its civilians will suffer losses. This nation itself asked for these losses. And you cannot compare the suffering of this [German] woman to the sufferings in Poland and to what happened in Poland!"

Since the Germans are responsible for the war, the woman on the photo is explicitly denied any victim status. Moreover, victimhood as a universal category which covers German as well as Polish civilians is vehemently rejected. What we see here is a clear distinction between perpetrators and victims as both national and mutually exclusive categories.

The next mode, solidary differentiation, also highlights differences between different groups and their experiences, yet with a different intention. It recognises differences in the prospect of a better mutual understanding. For example a firefighter from Masuria, Poland, stated: "We do have a shared past. Just some were the oppressors and others were the oppressed. That is a shared past." This statement might be considered ironic, but similar views were expressed from other participants including a historian from Warsaw: "The Germans will remember the experience differently than the Poles … I do not think the idea is to bring about some uniformity … You have to understand these different perspectives to be able to work together on conflictual topics or with those that are on the edge." Although she refused the notion of a common memory, she stressed the necessity of an actual confrontation of different memory perspectives.

In the third mode of solidary equation, the intention of achieving a shared understanding is similar, but the way in which differences in historic experience are treated is entirely different. The most extreme case is reflected in this statement on the Holocaust by this pensioner from western Germany: "If we want to become one Europe, we all have to shake hands, and every country has its Holocaust, its war, its crimes as well. There is no European country that says 'I stayed clean'!"

Here, references to actual historic events are virtually absent. The Holocaust is blurred into just another generic wrongdoing. Although, as mentioned earlier, this blurring is typical for Germans, we found similar universal messages from Polish participants. Quite contrary to his colleague quoted earlier, another employee of the Warsaw Museum explicitly advocated an understanding of suffering as a universal category: "I think instead of arguing about who suffered more or less, the

Poles should see the suffering as such and respect it. If one sees the suffering as a common distress that could result in more than an argument about who or when suffered most."

In the last mode, competitive equation, the Holocaust is also equated with other events, but with the intention of justifying particular claims. Asked what the memory of the Holocaust should be like, an official of a Polish extreme right-wing party responded: "It depends on how the term Holocaust is understood, because we can speak of a Holocaust of the Jewish people, or of all the nations, to which a Holocaust was actually done to … quite often this terminology is associated with the Jewish people. Or can we also refer it to other nations, for example to the Polish nation? The Holocaust can be understood in different ways."

Victimhood as common currency?

The data from the research on vernacular memory in Germany and Poland show that there is actually a variety of modes of interaction between different narratives, the according claims of victimhood and related attributions of perpetratorship. Overall, the Holocaust plays an important role in all four modes. On the one hand, the Holocaust has become a universal container for large scale crimes against humanity as such. On the other hand, comparisons to the Holocaust often serve to legitimate different groups' particular claims of victimhood. Metaphorically speaking, victimhood has become a kind of common currency in which different memory narratives can be dealt with and in which the moral value of a given group is measured. In this currency trade, the Holocaust has become the gold standard.

The Holocaust plays an important role in all types of memory in Germany and Poland, becoming a universal container for large scale crimes against humanity

Applied to the national memory patterns in Germany and Poland the following modes prevail. In Germany, differences in historical experiences are often dissolved and Nazi crimes, including the Holocaust, are generalised into generic wrongdoings as a strategy to ease the perceived burden of the Nazi past. This also allows a claim to recognise German victims in line with other victims of the war. In Poland, analogies of the suffering of non-Jewish Poles with the Holocaust often serve to justify Polish claims of victimhood.

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The Dilemmas of Freedom

LEONIDAS DONSKIS

The epic Lithuanian play *Expulsion*, written by Marius Ivaškevičius, describes an anonymity-enabling system that consists of operators and those operated upon. The play is a tragedy in which a non-person becomes a person with dignity and a non-human becomes a human, enabling us to traverse the existential road from dissatisfaction, non-recognition and fluctuations of self-value in Lithuania through the biographies of its characters.

Zygmunt Bauman once wrote about human beings and their lives being rendered useless – reduced to throwaways by globalisation. No one needs or misses them; and when they disappear, the statistics, including various economic and security indicators, take a turn for the better. For example, the emigration of nearly one million people from Lithuania in just two decades was followed by the news that the country saw a remarkable drop in both unemployment and crime statistics. These people were not missed until somebody began speaking about demographics, especially the elderly, on a grand scale; the prospect that we and the two other Baltic countries might end up with a disproportionally large segment in the EU of retirees supported by emigrants and immigrants. Before this economic logic and argumentation were allowed into the discussion, one-third of the Lithuanian nation had been successfully pushed to the very margins of our conscious public life.

The superfluous human being

The turning of human beings into statistical units is one of the symptoms of modern barbarism and of the contemporary world's moral blindness. The same is true of the demotion of men and women into factors of production and calling them human resources. In all these cases human individuality and the mystery of being in this world are negated by turning them into objects of anonymous forces and systems as exemplified by public opinion polls, technocratic networks of marketing and politics, and statistics justifying the operations of these forces and networks.

The turning of human beings into statistical units is a symptom of modern barbarism.

In Spain in particular, young people became the focus of attention only quite recently, when thanks to the *indignados* protests the realisation sank in that over half of them were unemployed. In other words, over 50 per cent of the younger generation moved from the status of virtual non-existence, from a total absence in the public eye, into the bright limelight of public consciousness only when the fact hit home that these were indeed awful numbers. It was not the dashed hopes and lives, the loss of faith in the future of one's country and of Europe as a whole that frightened the political class and scared the masters of public opinion; it was only the blank statistics themselves that caused the anxiety.

I once asked the Russian writer Andrei Bitov to comment on the phenomenon of the superfluous human being in Russian literature. In a literary seminar that was taking place in Visby Sweden, he spoke about Alexander Pushkin, who not only used this concept but elucidated the phenomenon itself as well in his novel-in-verse, *Eugene Onegin*. Be that as it may, prior to this work and Mikhail Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, the first to call attention to the superfluous human being in Russia was Alexander Herzen, who immediately after the crushing of the Decembrist Revolt realised that there were people in Russia who would never find a place in politics or even society. They were in the wrong historical period and the wrong part of the world. Something or somebody had made a mistake: maybe it was God, or perhaps history, or was it fate? Perhaps they had to be sacrificed in the name of a brighter future, as in a Greek tragedy. Bitov told me, without any agitation, that everything might be even simpler: there are, to tell the truth, situations, epochs and societies in which human beings are simply redundant.

It strikes me that our epoch, too, can do perfectly well without human beings. We just do not need each other for any social plenitude, for human fulfilment. *Pars pro toto* is enough. We need parts instead of the whole. During elections, we need votes; in a situation requiring the lowering of production costs, we need

cheap labour; in order to create a safe, trustworthy, and business-friendly environment we need what is called solidarity (in other words, renouncing protest and not defending one's rights, instead choosing emigration or degradation). In some cases, an anonymous mass is precisely what fits the bill: it is intensely desired and eagerly sought after by vote-hunting politicians who before every election remember emigrants as an indispensable part of their electorate while electronic voting (something which we are about to, but have not yet adopted) is taking place. In other cases, this mass is what politicians try to run away from because they understand perfectly well that the problems which cause people to leave everything behind in their homeland and move abroad are not capable of being solved in economically weak countries no longer separated by borders from economically stronger ones.

Big Mr Anonymous

Ratings are impossible without an anonymous mass of spectators and voters; that is why we love Big Mr Anonymous, as long as he legitimises us with his faceless, soulless loyalty. We cannot do without this mass if we are politicians, television producers, stars, or anyone else desiring to be publicly known with a recognisable face and name. But as soon as the mass stops legitimising us and turns to us, not in gestures of recognition and thus of repeatedly recreating us, but in demanding from us that we take notice of their individual names and faces as they step out of the anonymous mass and thereby take on personal features of human pain, drama, and tragedy, then we begin to wish and wash this mass away. Why? It is because we almost instinctively realise that its problems – the problems of the individual souls making up this mass – are insoluble in a world in which everything they seek has been promised to them but without having been told when and at what cost. In their own country? At home? Why no, no way.

Hungarians who protest Viktor Orbán's authoritarian politics and his disgracing of liberal democracy are leaving their country in droves.

Mobility, freedom of movement and the freedom of choice – were these not promised to them? And was not one of the promises a world without borders as well? But such a world would not be conducive to small, economically and politically unstable countries who aim to gain strength. In such a world, powerful states would get stronger and weak ones would get weaker. Hungarians who protest Viktor Orbán's authoritarian politics and his disgracing of liberal democracy

are leaving their country in droves instead of creating their own parties, forming opposition groups and undertaking themselves to change Hungarian politics.

Unlike Slovakia or Hungary, Lithuania fortunately did not have a Vladimir Mečiar or Viktor Orbán: we are a democratic state with a reasonably liberal economy; we are more or less respectful of minorities as well as observant of human rights. Nevertheless, the absence of borders has become an existential threat for us. If you do not like Lithuania's system of higher education or its political class, or if you have lost your confidence in the Lithuanian state or its institutions, you just move to London, Dublin or Alicante. Instead of changing your country, you leave it. What effect will that have and on whom? That is the question. Will your country change you so much that you will no longer believe in the possibility of your changing anything at all in the world? Or will you change your country so much that you start to believe you are changing not something remote and abstract but changing yourself and your relations to people?

I will put the situation in the words of a character in Marius Ivaškevičius's play *Expulsion* as staged by Oskaras Koršunovas. Eglė, the protagonist, states that crossing the border will be easy, but there is one thing you will have to leave behind, one thing you will not be able to take with you: your self-worth. When did this change happen: before the expulsion or after? And what kind of expulsion are we talking about here? Is it a self-expulsion in the sense of "let's get out of here?" Or is it an expelling in the sense of "let's get rid of it" – a deliberate jettisoning of something that painfully testifies to your own or the system's faults? Moreover, will you be allowed to be yourself? Or will you have to transform yourself into a monkey, a pitiful socio-political parakeet parroting the accent, vocabulary, manners, tone, timbre, and body movements of upper-class people?

The collective actor in the drama of expulsion is Big Mr Anonymous. By the latter name I have in mind not so much the referent of a concept originally proposed by the Lithuanian philosopher Arvydas Šliogeris, but rather the whole anonymity-enabling system that consists of operators and those operated upon; of repressive organs and their victims trying to survive. The main characters in *Expulsion*, who before all else possess nicknames and only then first and last names, constitute our Lithuanian *precariat*. This is globalisation's new lower class in place of Karl Marx's proletariat: they are the precariously, unsafely situated people living in a zone of ever-present danger and risk. Nothing is guaranteed to them, they cannot be certain about anything. Yes, they can attain some prosperity, but only through a kind of social suicide by becoming part of the great nothing in a foreign country.

This *precariat* embodies and serves the global network of anonymous persons and organisations, a network which starts with statistics and ends with a truly existing variety that is held to be sufficient proof of the fact that society allows the

impregnable existence of shocking social contrasts and inequalities. These will be liberally explained away by cultural differences and their right to exist in dignity, as they are, and to be left alone, without imposing sensitivities and interpretations that are foreign to them, or even giving them any political or economic power. Thus, you become part of the workforce, with the right to imitate appropriate local accents and the consumption patterns of the jet-set classes, but without the right to your own authentic historical-political narrative and your own cultural ways of interpreting yourself.

Classical catharsis

In Ivaškevičius's *Expulsion*, a perfect representative of the *precariat* is the character Benas Ivanovas, who achieved something in a foreign professional system that was better than his previous one: a lowly policeman in Lithuania where this profession is openly denigrated, he turned into an honourable law enforcement officer in England – but he could have been, and still can be, expelled at any time, in Lithuania or in England, in the old system as in his new, foreign one. He will never experience peace, quiet and happiness: he will always have to put on a good face and make the best out of what is around him: parrot an accent, engage in mimicry, become a human being and move out of Genghis Khan's world (Eastern Europe) into Christ's world (the West). This play, perfectly illustrating and at the same time satirising Samuel P. Huntington's theory of the clash of civilisations, not only brilliantly hits upon the very nerve of Russia's revisionist politics and war with Ukraine, but also reminds us of the fragile foundation underlying the promise that in the West we will find jobs and be treated with dignity.

American economists use not only the concept of the *precariat* but also that of the *austeriat*, for those from Eastern Europe or the Baltic states whom economic hardship has forced into emigration – not indeed from the Third World to the First, but from one EU capital to another or from one EU town or village to that of another EU state. However that may be, the new Lithuanian *precariat* and *austeriat* paradoxically reveal a certain strength of ours, as well as new tensions and dramas within the world as a whole and Lithuania in particular. To my mind, *Expulsion* is the truest epic of today's Lithuania. Let us recall that the Lithuanian poet and playwright Justinas Marcinkevičius had a great political and literary ambition of having his dramatic trilogy become Lithuania's epic through tying to-

Marius Ivaškevičius's play *Expulsion*, as staged by Oskaras Koršunovas, is the truest epic of today's Lithuania.

gether the birth of the Lithuanian state, its literature, and its modern culture into a single knot of the country's political existence. It is perhaps no accident that there are resonances between Marcinkevičius's *Cathedral* as directed by Oskaras Koršunovas, and Ivaškevičius's *Expulsion*. One of the latter's anti-heroes, the Vandal (real name: Andrew but, as befits a hero from the *precariat*, no one calls him by that name), works in London as someone who tears down buildings and breaks apart equipment on construction sites. With his immense strength he demolishes objects that have no meaning to him but whose destruction puts food on his table. The same actor (Marius Repšys) who in *Expulsion* plays the Vandal becomes a master builder in *Cathedral*, playing the architect of the Vilnius Cathedral, Laurynas Stuoka-Gucevičius. Here two epic structures meet. *Expulsion* symbolises the end of the Lithuania that was born in *Cathedral*, but it does not disappear; not at all. Perhaps it is stronger and even safer than ever before. But it is another Lithuania in an entirely different world.

Expulsion is a tragedy in which a non-person becomes a person with dignity, a non-human becomes a human. Thus the tragedy's edifying consequence, like the classical catharsis of an ancient Greek tragedy, shakes us up but also saves us from mistaking bad error and sin for virtue. In our case, it saves us from the temptation to write off these people as remnants, social losses and unfit to live. This, incidentally, is the horrible Nazi concept of *Lebensunwertes Leben*, which the modern world has not renounced but has merely transformed and carefully hidden in democratic society under a veneer. These are people who are of no value to their home countries. They never get any attention; their death is never an event; no one who is important holds their coming to be or passing away as something that changes their own (that is, the important ones') lives. No one interrupts a BBC newscast or even a humour show on Lithuanian commercial TV on their account. Their life, their disappearance, or even their death is not worth noticing: it is never more important than a TV star's new love affair or weekend trip to an exotic island.

From No Man's Land to No Place

For a westerner, "No Man's Land" begins somewhere between Germany and Russia; therefore the difference between the good-for-nothing Ukrainian boxer Sashko and the Lithuanian police constable Benas Ivanovas, whose stolen passport allows the Ukrainian, for one round of boxing to become a Lithuanian, is something no one ever notices. Why should they? What do these people with their murky identity ever change for the better in the life of the United Kingdom? Nothing at all. What difference does a Briton see between a Lithuanian and a Ukrainian?

None, at least from the *precariat*'s point of view. At best, only the airplane-flying classes make an effort to sort out these geopolitical details, but to the rest – the statistical beings, the lower class, inferior race, and name-changing immigrants – all this means nothing.

From No Man's Land they are tossed into No Place. Exile is the true Utopia of the *precariat*. The Latin equivalent of the Greek word *utopia*, thought up by Sir Thomas More of London to name his famous book, is *Nusquamus*, meaning *No Place*. Only the narrator of the play changes: nowadays the *precariat*'s narrator in London is a Lithuanian with a Russian surname, Benas Ivanovas. His utopia is to move from the territory of Genghis Khan to that of Jesus Christ and thereupon to "form faces out of feces" while actively "ejecting shit from oneself." Where are they? In Lithuania? In the United Kingdom? They are nowhere. They got the hell out of No Man's Land and landed in No Place.

What do people without a clear and fixed identity (or, more accurately, with a mobile and mutually interchangeable identity) manage to change in London? Nothing. Even their names are nothing but social masks, changed and exchanged whenever one needs to become a labelled part of No Place. The constable Robert (Bobby) becomes Benas again and is removed forthwith from this festival of life as soon as his wife, a British policewoman, doubts his trustworthiness and loyalty to the system. To Paul Celan in his *Todesfuge*, death appeared as a maestro from Germany. In *Expulsion*, success is a systems engineer from calm-faced England who either accepts or expels us.

Benas Ivanovas will never find peace and happiness abroad – he will always have "to form faces out of feces." On the one hand, "ejecting shit from oneself" becomes a pedagogical and psychological programme whose pinnacle is tolerating things that for a post-Soviet person provoke instinctive disgust. If initially the information that his beloved Queen vocalist Freddie Mercury was gay and of Iranian decent (real name: Farrokh Bulsara) caused him great anguish, later he comes to accept it readily as an everyday reality in a normal country. On the other hand, overcoming the way an East European too reproachfully looks at things, his angry reactions, and his disgust with the world, clears one's path towards integration and success.

One person mimics the behaviour, manners, pronunciation and body language of the people he serves; in a society as sensitive to social status and class as the English are, such mimicking is pervasive and important. These English snobs were nothing but *sine nobilitate* – humble-origin Oxford and Cambridge students trying their best to imitate the manners and speech of aristocrats. In the case of Eddy, performing the functions of a retriever in sports hunting, a member of the *precariat* from Lithuania who had studied physics there becomes a grotesque snob in England. Benas tries to rid himself of the aggression, anger, and thirst for revenge

which threatens to overpower him totally. In both cases we see an Eastern European become a "human being for the West" by actively renouncing his own identity. Eglė strongly opposes this: she understands that preserving one's self-worth and self-identity is the last frontier, beyond which there is only the final renunciation of one's honour and liberty. She finds Benas still worth something because for a time he does not demean himself and does not try to wipe out his human self-identity. Later on he becomes, in her eyes, just a collection of alien phrases and ransacked "pearls" of safe situational wisdom.

East European traumas

East European self-contempt and self-hatred has deep roots, which in Russian culture are so profound that they can lead to a philosophy of history and culture well-expressed in Pyotr Chaadayev's *Philosophical Letters*, not to mention his contemporary Vladimir Pecherin, the 19th-century Russian poet and thinker, who wrote the memorable lines: "How sweet it is to hate one's native land and avidly desire its ruin – and in its ruin to discern the dawn of universal rebirth."

East European self-contempt and self-hatred is deeply rooted.

This is worth calling attention to, for such self-hatred is by no means to be found only in the 19th and 20th century trajectory of Jewish identity, something that the German Jewish writer Theodor Lessing called *jüdischer Selbsthass*. Nor is it characteristic only of African Americans, whose own self-hatred in their childhood and teenage years has elicited myriad studies.

What then is *Expulsion* about? Is it about the presence of pain and profundity in a criminal's personality? Or perhaps about the presence, in heroism and crime, of a transcendental remnant (as Tomas Venclova put it) about which we will never know, as we will never know why the criminal, Vandal, did not obey the gang leader's orders to kill the policeman Benas, who was pursuing him and thereby cutting off the possibility of his returning to Lithuania? Was it about the fact that "human waste products" and their "lives not worth living" are just awful and ethically blinding labels, insensitive masks beneath which hide the real reasons causing Lithuanians to embark on mass-scale emigration that can no longer be considered normal by any reckoning? Or about the fact that vengeance is rarely overlaid in us by a thin crust of civilisation; that barbarism hides in vengeance but no lesser a barbarism parades under the cover of respect for justice and the law?

Is *Expulsion* about the fact that the native tongue heard accidentally in London at a time you feel especially lonesome can make you fall in love with someone speak-

ing it whom you hardly ever know? About the fact that you protect, not only your dream of living honourably in your own country but also the fear of your becoming a statistic living namelessly abroad being discovered, so fiercely that you do not want to rent out your one-room flat in the Žvėrynas neighbourhood of Vilnius? Or is it about the fact that happiness and security are not friends and often negate one another, just as freedom and security do?

Expulsion enables us to traverse the existential road from dissatisfaction, non-recognition and the fluctuations of self-value in Lithuania over the trajectories of the global Lithuanian's social and émigré masks and fates in the United Kingdom through the biographies and little tragedies of Benas (Bosh, Marek, Bob), Eglė (Miglė), and Vandal (Andrew/Andrius). Together with the actors portraying them – Ainis Storpirštis, Vytautas Anužis, Monika Vaičiulytė and Marius Repšys – and the music of Saulius Prūsaitis proceeding the same way from the fear-inspiring world beyond us to the frightening reality of ourselves in that same world already discovered and tamed by us, together with Oskaras Koršunovas' magical contact with the Biblical theme of alienation and one's own.

Is *Expulsion* about being expelled and the power and attraction of exile which, like the medieval Pied Piper of Hamelin (in reality Satan himself in disguise), draws all the young people out of town leaving only the elderly behind? Or is *Expulsion* about the dilemmas of freedom which it is dreadful to experience and which you have to pay for with your own security and homeland, but which give you the chance to find and speak your own language and to grow up without waiting for others convinced of their superiority to you and your land to explain your condition?

Expulsion does not answer all these questions; nor should it have to. That is not an epic's task. Answers to them are provided by life, which is worth living, but only when you test yourself ethically in that life, perhaps even by paying the price of expulsion.

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The EuroMaidan in Focus

ROMAN KABACHIY

The Revolution of Dignity spawned a number of film productions aiming to capture the spirit of Ukraine's last civic revolt. This was achieved with variable success and it was not always the best projects which were presented to wider international audiences.

The 2014 EuroMaidan Revolution in Ukraine was captured by many film directors. They all had a sense that it was their obligation to film the protests and that their work was unique as they knew that they could have been filming the last days (or even hours) of a person's life. Today we have a plethora of visual documentation from Ukraine's latest revolution including works that are long, works that are short, works that are sophisticated and works that are incomplete, as well as stand-alone episodes and series. All of these productions contribute to the portrait of the last year's events that took place on the streets of Kyiv.

The revolution also bred some new film crews and their work also contributed to the greater mosaic of the EuroMaidan, as seen through the camera lens. Consequently, today's viewers can choose between watching films that show the revolution as a daily routine and the revolution as a holiday; its joy and its drama; the revolution as the work of an individual or the product of a group. Each of these productions stresses something unique and special.

An anthill

The first film that stands out is Sergei Loznitsa's *Maidan*. Thanks to the director's established reputation this film is better known around the world than the

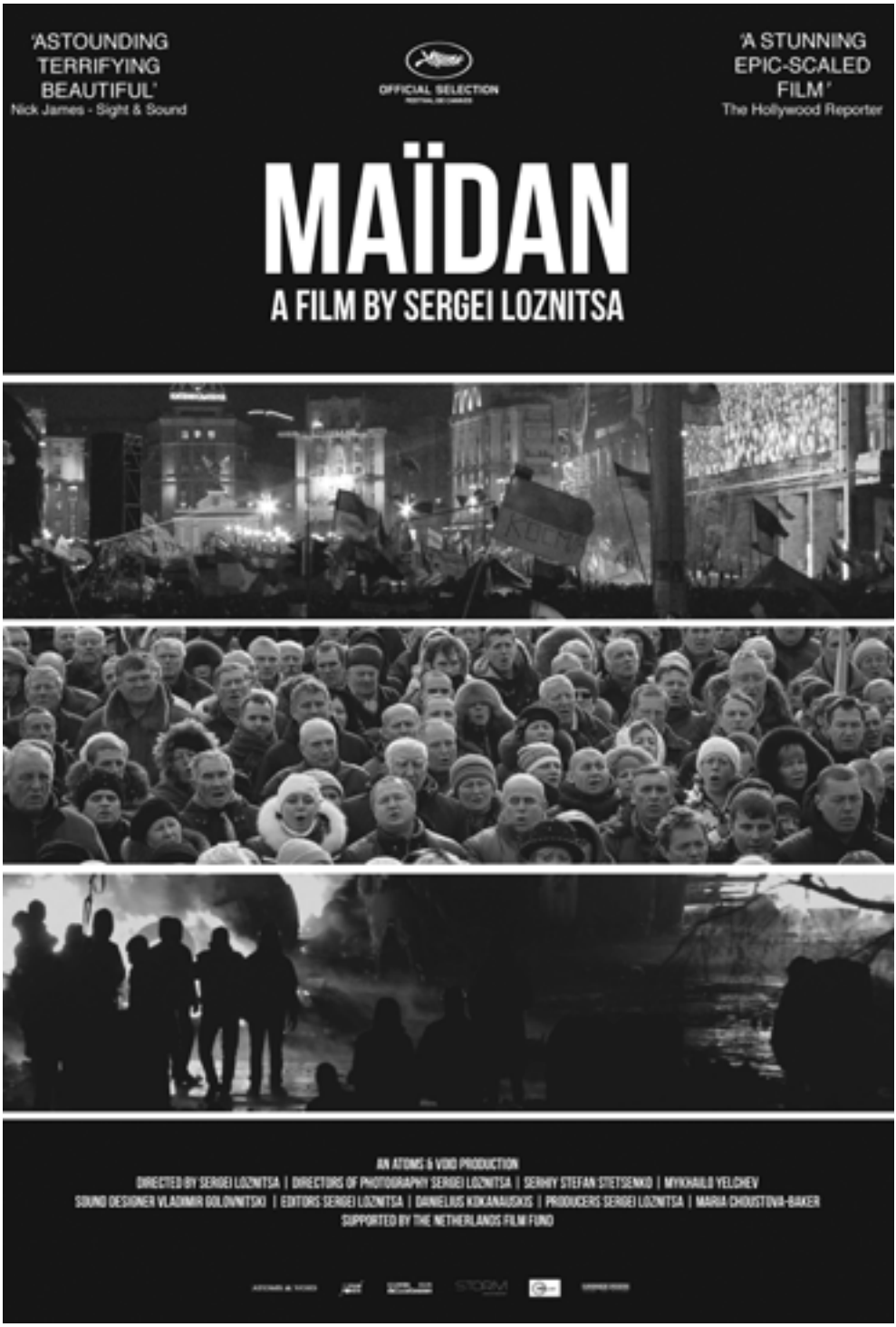
other productions which emerged. Interpreting Loznitsa's work, however, has to be done within a broader background of understanding of the causes and the course of the EuroMaidan. The film is not a straightforward illustration. The director's approach of observation, or "peeking from a frog's position" as Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk put it, only works for viewers who already have a broad understanding of the EuroMaidan. The lead character of Loznitsa's *Maidan* is the people: the crowd that gathered at Kyiv's Independence Square in the winter months. They are presented as constantly doing something and the whole Maidan acts like a large self-organised anthill. They are bustling, throwing stones, singing the national anthem, or shouting "Glory to the Heroes!", "Shame!", "Gang, get out!" and "Ukraine above all". By doing this, they create the revolution. They know that they are creating it, and they know how to create it.

The lead character of Loznitsa's *Maidan* is the people: the crowd that gathered at Kyiv's Independence Square during the winter months.

What is missing in Loznitsa's film, however, is that there were some specific leaders (and I am not referring to the political leaders) and some specific moments that prompted the crowd at the Maidan to act, to pick up cobblestones or to burn tires. Yet the only thing that Loznitsa shows is that the crowd is capable of automatically shouting slogans. Even though the viewer can feel the tension rising from the start of the film, because of the delicate manner that characterises the way Lozitsa presents the revolution *Maidan* does not do well in terms of explaining to a foreign audience (at whom the film was most likely aimed) why the protests emerged and why the protesters won.

An artistic revolution

An original interpretation of the EuroMaidan Revolution has also been offered by Antin Mukharskiy in a documentary entitled *Maidan. The Art of Resistance*. Mukharskiy is a well-known Ukrainian showman who has recently decided to focus on fighting against excessive, tawdry cultural productions from Russia as well as the dominance of less cultured people in power structures – the so-called *zhloby* (the word *zhlob* in Ukrainian means an ignorant, intolerant or uncultured person). Mukharskiy also established the Independent Artists Union and promotes the works of some well-known artists. This Union maintained its own *kurin* (a historical word for a combat unit) during the EuroMaidan, called the "Artistic Barbakan". There the artists' works were exhibited, meetings and debates were held and the artists kept watch 24/7. Mukharskiy's film is based on the Barbakan's activities,


'ASTOUNDING TERRIFYING BEAUTIFUL'
Nick James - Sight & Sound
OFFICIAL SELECTION
'A STUNNING EPIC-SCALED FILM'
The Hollywood Reporter
MAÏDAN
A FILM BY SERGEI LOZNITSA
AN ATOMS & VOID PRODUCTION
DIRECTED BY SERGEI LOZNITSA | DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY SERGEI LOZNITSA | SERHIY STEFAN STETSENKO | MYKHAILO YELCHEV
SOUND DESIGNER VLADIMIR GOLOVNITSKI | EDITORS SERGEI LOZNITSA | DANIELIUS KOKANAUSKIS | PRODUCERS SERGEI LOZNITSA | MARIA CHOUSTOVA-BAKER
SUPPORTED BY THE NETHERLANDS FILM FUND

which were used as a pretext that provided Mukharskiy and other artists with an opportunity to analyse the cause of the EuroMaidan Revolution as a phenomenon of cultural resistance.

In the film one of the key figures of the Union, artist Ivan Semesyuk, introduces a theory that "the revolution was initiated by the creative class: the students came out to Kyiv, as well as the intellectuals". Mukharskiy elaborated this idea even further: "The whole artistic revolution was spontaneous. A new Zaporizhian Sich was growing before our eyes, *sotnias* (i.e. "hundreds of soldiers") were arriving where people held the line. The stories from history that we knew from textbooks became reality, and the textbooks turned out to be 'useless'". Semesyuk also notes: "We lived inside a history textbook."

Another artist, author of a series on various historical types of Ukrainian warriors and rebels, Andriy Yermolenko, compares the EuroMaidan Revolution with the Koliyivshchyna of 1768, when Ukrainians rebelled against the economic domination of the gentry and the Jewish usurers – when peaceful peasants turned into bloodthirsty *haidamakas*. The aesthetics of the EuroMaidan Revolution also drew inspiration from history. The painter Oleksa Mann noted that "a new Middle Ages appeared with pernachs (a type of mace), shields, helmets, homemade armour, Molotov cocktails, trumpeters and pipers". Semesyuk added: "this guy has a high-tech gadget which he uses to log in to Facebook, most likely he knows English, and in spite of this he is wearing knight's armour from the 16th century".

Not surprisingly, given the title of the production, *The Art of Resistance*, the film presents different stages of the revolution from a very artistic perspective. For example, the December 1st 2013 riots on Bankova Street, when around 60 journalists were beaten, is presented as an element of a show. It all started with a bulldozer which was brought out by the authorities and from which hired thugs (*titushki*) organised a provocation and attacked the militia with long chains, which enraged Berkut forces who then attacked the crowds and the journalists from behind their backs.

People's rebellion

The EuroMaidan is probably most fully represented in the series of documentaries called *The Winter that has Changed Us*. The series was jointly produced by the Ukrainian TV-channel "1+1" (owned by oligarch Ihor Kolomoyskyi) and filmmaker group Babylon'13. The series is made up of seven episodes: "The Heavenly Hundred" (about those who died on the Maidan), "The First Death" (about Serhiy Nihoyan, an Armenian from the Dnipropetrovsk region, original from Nagorno-

Karabakh, who was shot by snipers on January 22nd 2014), "Hrushevsky Cocktails" (about a standoff at Hrushevskoho Street in Kyiv which began on January 19th 2014, after the draconian laws of January 16th were adopted), "Mezhyhirya. Batya's Mansion" (about Viktor Yanukovych's estate on the banks of the Dnieper river), "Self-Defence" (about the resistance groups organised by the Maidaners), "Fire in the Trade Unions Building" (about one of the key moments of the standoff – the arson of one of the EuroMaidan bases where wounded protesters and doctors were burnt alive, along with equipment and supplies), and "The AutoMaidan" (a Maidan movement which used cars to block the *titushki* and special forces as well as boycott the estates of the regime representatives).

The documentary series *The Winter that has Changed Us* is a bold work and a real analytical attempt to look into the causes of the EuroMaidan and to capture the lives of its key characters (some of whom are no longer alive). The directors of the film portrayed the functioning of the EuroMaidan somewhat differently than Loznitsa's anthill in which everything happened by the unseen wave of someone's invisible hand. In contrast, *The Winter...* presents comments from the direct participants of the protests. Some of them reveal some lesser known details about the EuroMaidan. For example, the audience learns of Serhiy Samulak, the sub-commander of the "3rd hundred", and his scepticism of his compatriots after January 19th 2014, when Samulak said that the activists were divided: "into those who enthusiastically film these events, and their number is growing, and those who were actually doing something." Yet, we learn later that Samulak changes his attitude after February 19th, when the activists had withstood the Berkut assault despite several casualties: "As people were working like little ants … one could realise that there was indeed something worth dying for."

The documentary series *The Winter that has Changed Us* is a real analytical attempt to look into the causes of the EuroMaidan and to capture the lives of its key characters.

While according to Loznitsa the assault at Hrushevsky Street starts "on its own", in *The Winter...* it begins after an appeal by one of the AutoMaidan leaders, which is in fact correct. This person was a thin guy named Koba who from the stage gave the public a piece of his mind about the opposition leaders. I remember during the EuroMaidan when the Polish media would call me and ask whether the opposition had lost control of the protests. I had to explain to them, and more generally the outside world, that the EuroMaidan had never been "owned" by the opposition; this was a people's rebellion which spawned its own leaders and heroes. One of the AutoMaidan leaders Dmytro Bulatov both during the EuroMaidan and afterwards

said in his comments, which we hear in *The Winter...*: "You cannot put all of us behind bars. You cannot close everyone's mouth."

Perhaps the biggest AutoMaidan action was a procession to Yanukovych's residence before the 2014 New Year. Ukrainian road police estimated 1,800 cars, but AutoMaidan movement statements put the number higher. There were attempts to prevent these cars from getting closer to Mezhyhirya, the president's residence.Mezhyhirya was among the causes of the EuroMaidan, reflecting the people's hatred of a modern "Sultan". This issue is the topic of one of the episodes of *The winter...* where the directors also try show Yanukovych's almost physiological addition to wealth. The episode starts with a visit to Yanukovych's hometown of Yenakiieve and shows the poverty in which he grew up. Conversations with Yanukovych's former neighbours also offer a good explanation of what happened later, with the emergence of separatism and the rejection of the change of power in Kyiv. Yenakiieve fell under the control of the separatist so-called "Dontesk People's Republic".

Yanukovych's residence, Mezhyhirya, was among the causes of the EuroMaidan, reflecting the people's hatred of a modern "Sultan".

Female faces

Speaking about the casualties of the EuroMaidan can be difficult and take different forms. The directors of *The Winter that has Changed Us* present both the overall result and some particular effects of the revolution. They do this through the words of commentators. After watching the film we are convinced that there were many more casualties than were recorded in the list of the Heavenly Hundred. This number remains, for the moment, unchanged because the number of people who died in the fire at the Trade Unions' Building still remains unknown. Mariya Nazarova, one of the activists and a medical volunteer, says that the real number of the Heavenly Hundred is in fact a thousand: "During the fire there were many wounded people on the upper floors of the Trade Unions Building".

As to particular figures of the Heavenly Hundred, the film highlights 19-year-old Ustym Holodnyuk from the Ternopil oblast. His story is told by his father. Ustym believed in guardian angels, but was shot dead at Instytutska Street in Kyiv. His father says: "He painted his helmet blue and by doing this he wanted to show that he was not an extremist; that this was a peacekeeper's helmet and it was meant to protect him. Their [government's] aim was to shoot the brave hearts, so that the

others would be scared. Ustym told his colleagues to shout 'The sky is falling!' in case of danger. Now he is going to support the sky that is falling and his words will remain with me forever."

The TV channel 1+1 also presented a documentary titled *The Female Faces of the Revolution*, in which it tried to show the EuroMaidan through the fates of several women. One of them is the mother of Roman Guryk from Ivano-Frankivsk, another hero of Instytutska Street. "I do not believe that the sniper who was shooting did not see at whom he aimed", she says. The face of the forever 18-year-old Roman is one of the most recognisable among the Heavenly Hundred. Diana Gerbe, another heroine of this film, unveils the figure of Serhiy Nigoyan, with whom she had a very close relationship. Nigoyan was the first victim of the EuroMaidan and became one of its symbols. The film also includes the story of a woman who stood side-by-side with her husband on the Maidan, a mother of an officer, a woman who herself became a warrior.

The topic of women involved in the EuroMaidan was also addressed by directors Olia Onyshko and Petro Didula, who are associated with the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. The filmmakers produced several documentary pieces titled *Female Faces at the Maidan*. This production presents the different initiatives run by women at the Maidan which included activities such as painting images of the activists, making body armour for protesters, etc.

Mini-projects

Despite the major productions about the Maidan over the last year, we should not forget about some of the remarkable mini-projects that also emerged. One of them is called *New Generation*. Similar to *The Female Faces at the Maidan*, this series of short films presents the stories of individuals, highlighting new initiatives, opinions and concepts. It features individuals who are well-known, like the above-mentioned Bulatov, as well as lesser known ones, like Vadym Vasylchuk or cultural manager Tina Peresunko. Peresunko explains the purpose of her participation in the EuroMaidan: "Each person can create and offer something. We have to be prepared to support each other. Co-operation is a much more relevant process than leadership. We have to establish new principles of social life. There are representatives, delegates, but everyone must play their part".

Our Shevchenko, a video project by theatre director Serhiy Proskurnia, was another film which fits naturally in the EuroMaidan, although it was made several months earlier. It was devoted to the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, which was commemorated on March 9th 2014. The

Yanukovych regime and the Ukrainian authorities in general, were neither prepared nor keen to celebrate this anniversary on a large scale. Thus, ordinary Ukrainians decided to honour Shevchenko on their own. Proskurnia's project aimed to record 365 recitals of Shevchenko poetry and prose recited by more and less famous people throughout the year. After the outbreak of the EuroMaidan (as the anniversary was approaching) the selection of participants became more dependent on their civic position, giving Shevchenko's works an acute political connotation. Among those people filmed by Proskurnia was also Serhiy Nigoyan, who recited a passage from the poem "Caucasus". The video has since become a piece of history considering that, as mentioned above, Nigoyan was the first activist killed. Many other readings of Shevchenko's works were recorded at the Maidan, including on the barricades during the standoff at Hrushevskoho Street.

The last video that deserves mention is a clip of Maidan life with the performance of the "Dakh Daughters" band on the Maidan stage. This female band, which calls itself a freak-cabaret, is now gaining global recognition. In the video we see that the girls participate in the EuroMaidan as volunteers and make political jokes, yet the main theme of the video is their performance of "Hannusia" with the video sequence of the Lenin monument being toppled in the centre of Kyiv on December 8th 2013.

"The land can no longer prop up all these [Lenin statutes]!" one of the girls shouts from the stage as the EuroMaidan agrees with her. And she was right, it could not. Therefore Lenin fell and the Ukrainian EuroMaidan won.

Translated by Olena Shynkarenko

Roman Kabachiy is a Ukrainian historian and journalist.

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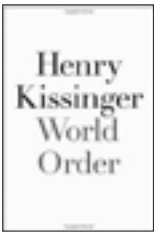
The Foreign Policy Wiseman Speaks Again



World Order. By: Henry Kissinger. Publisher: Penguin Press, New York 2014.

Let us briefly consider the epic career of Henry Kissinger – for in this case, "epic" really is the correct word. This is a man (a German Jew who fled Germany in 1938) who fought in the Second World War in the European theatre, earned his PhD in political science at Harvard University and later went on to serve as both national security adviser and secretary of state to US President Richard Nixon (for a time holding these positions simultaneously), and finally as secretary of state to President Gerald Ford. Between 1969 and 1977 Kissinger maintained a large degree of influence over US foreign policy, particularly in pursuing détente with the Soviet Union; establishing formal diplomatic relations between the US and China; and also in his efforts to help end the Vietnam War, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. It is no exaggeration to say that in certain areas his legacy as secretary of state is still felt today. When reviewing his accomplishments, it is hard to draw parallels between the career of Kissinger and those of other statesmen.

And even though Kissinger's peak years of influence were nigh on half a century ago, he still remains a significant thinker in international relations to this day, if not a direct shaper of policy. Now at the ripe old age of 91, in his unofficial role as "Foreign Policy Wiseman" of the Republican Party, he continues to advise US presidential candidates, pen op-eds and book reviews in major newspapers, and chair his own consulting firm. On top of all this he manages to periodically churn out tomes on international affairs. Thus, any time Henry Kissinger writes a major book, the establishment generally listens to what he has to say.

From his lofty perch as the preeminent elderly statesmen of our time, Kissinger's meditations on the nature of international relations have become inseparable from his professional legacy. Moreover, at this stage of his life Kissinger represents a more general phenomenon: When a man or woman becomes one of the last remaining figures of a particular era their words begin to carry a different kind of historical weight. It is as if they are speaking on behalf of the past, bestowing long-forgotten wisdom onto younger generations, lest the mistakes of history are repeated. It is in this context that one should evaluate Kissinger's new book, simply titled *World Order*.

For those wondering what the titled "world order" actually is, the answer is that there is not one. True world order, in Kissinger's view, has never existed. Rather than predict what world order will look like or offer a view of what it might or should be, Kissinger's main point is simply that there have been various conceptions of world order throughout history. Of particular interest are: the Westphalian system of Europe; the Chinese conception of itself as a great Middle Kingdom; the Islamic world's desire for an ever-expanding caliphate bringing enlightenment and peace to its inhabitants; and, by the 20th century, the American mission of spreading democracy and capitalism around the globe to ensure peace and prosperity. Now, in the early 21st century,

with all of these conceptions of world order increasingly coming into contact and at times clashing with one another, the main job of today's policymakers, according to Kissinger, is to midwife a new, workable world order for future generations.

The scope of the book is certainly broader than it is deep. Kissinger devotes much time to general historical overviews of different civilisations and sprinkles his own analysis throughout, often at the beginning and end of each chapter. He covers so much geographical and historical ground, in fact, that the reader wonders if one person can possibly have a serious academic interest in such a wide number of places and eras of history, or if the author is merely regurgitating the work of more narrowly-focused scholars.

One chapter in particular seems wholly original, and that is the discussion of how modern forms of technology are impacting and changing the way foreign policy is formulated and executed. While there is a general tendency in most societies to see technology as bettering the human condition, Kissinger offers a more nuanced view of why, in some cases, this may not be the case. His distinction between information, knowledge, and wisdom, and his discussion of the possible (negative) effects of social media on policy formulation, are particularly thought-provoking.

So how does this all relate to Europe, and the post-Soviet space in particular? The great irony of modern Europe is that even "though [it] invented the balance-of-power concept, it has consciously and severely limited the element of power in its new institutions". Europe in our time is, in essence, transcending the very foundation of world order that it did so much to establish in the 17th and 18th centuries. Will Europe remain stuck "between a past it seeks to overcome and a future it has not yet defined"? Is Europe leading the way towards a world in which "regional blocs … perform the role of states in the Westphalian system"?

From the viewpoint of post-Soviet states and those that aspire to integrate with the European Union, these are questions worth considering. As Kissinger points out, many of these states, "suppressed for forty years (some longer), [have begun] to re-emerge into independence and regain their personalities." It is ironic, then, that just as many of the post-Soviet states are beginning to take on meaningful roles in international relations, the nature of the international system is on the brink of redefining itself yet again. And even though Europe as a whole may be moving in the direction of a post-state entity united by common values, last year's annexation of Crimea and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine make one stop and wonder if we really are moving forward. While Europe may hope for a more enlightened version of interstate relations, current events remind us that realist geopolitics have not gone away. Old habits die hard. Therefore, another question might be: Is the post-Soviet space forever destined to occupy an ambiguous grey area between multiple loci of world order?

All in all, the book is most valuable when one considers Kissinger's unique perspective as a seasoned statesman, and as someone who is plumbing the depths of seven decades' worth of foreign policy study and practice. It is rare to read a book by an author with so much direct life experience in the field. The content of the book, while in most cases not groundbreaking, is nonetheless a useful collection of

insights and analysis proffered by one of the most authoritative voices in foreign policy of our time. Indeed, Kissinger's main strength is more as an analyst and synthesist of trends and concepts than as a researcher or theorist. Students of history and foreign policy alike would do well to read *World Order*, since books like this do not come along every year, or every decade for that matter.

Alex Jeffers

A Catastrophe in the Making

Stalin: Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878–1928. By: Stephen Kotkin. Publisher: Penguin Press, New York, 2014.

In 1923, a year after Joseph Stalin was appointed General Secretary of the Soviet Union's ruling party, two of his rivals met in a cave to discuss a plan for his removal. They had as their weapon a typed note purporting to be the Testament of the ailing Bolshevik leader, Vladimir Lenin. Directly calling for Stalin's removal, the text could have been explosive. So the experienced revolutionaries Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev did the last thing any plotter bent on political assassination would do: they wrote Stalin a letter.

Lenin's Testament forms the crux of Stephen Kotkin's first volume in an ambitious new biography of Stalin. Plausibly written by the debilitated Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, the document became a rallying call to the anti-Stalin Left Opposition. It "gravely threatened Stalin's embryonic personal dictatorship, and became an enduring, haunting aspect of his rule," says Kotkin. Yet it failed to achieve its aim and even rebounded on his enemies.

In hindsight, the plotters appear nothing if not reckless, confronted by a man later described by memoirists as displaying psychopathic tendencies from a tender age. Of course, they were neither reckless nor stupid, so Kotkin reasonably draws the conclusion that Stalin was not actually viewed as psychotic until much later. Ever since the dawn of psychoanalysis, the "monster" biography has become almost a genre in itself, with historians competing to explain how the likes of Napoleon, Adolf Hitler and Mao Zedong became the perpetrators of ever-greater horrors. Stalin, in particular, has received plenty of this treatment in the past several decades, reversing the previous view of his role as a mere functionary.

The Trotskyist view (ironically, it was the loser of this battle who for a long time dominated the historiography of Stalinism) pegged Stalin as an "outstanding mediocrity," whose bureaucratic approach to communism undermined the Revolution and perverted its course. EH Carr believed that Stalin was a prime example of the theory that "circumstances maketh the man," a view Kotkin describes as utterly wrong.

The turning point came with Robert Conquest's treatment of *The Great Terror*, in which he pinned the blame on a paranoid Stalin for the first time. This in turn provoked a reaction from revisionists, who argued that the social dynamics of the Soviet Union were to blame for the carnage of the late 1930s. After the opening of the archives in the late 1980s and

early 1990s, Conquest would come to write an update to his bestseller, suggesting to his publisher that the new edition be subtitled "I told you so, you f****** fools."

Now Stalin is in vogue again in western historiography, even as his crimes are downplayed in an increasingly nationalistic Russia. Simon Sebag Montefiore scored a hit with his biography *Young Stalin*, the cover of which showed what has been interpreted as "hipster Stalin", an image of the dictator in his dandified mid-twenties. Montefiore's historical argument was simple – Stalin's childhood and young adulthood had a crucial impact on his later rule. "The formation of Stalin's character is particularly important because the nature of his rule was so personal," Montefiore tells us. So much for the circumstantialists.

Stephen Kotkin has a brilliant record of wading into complex debates and setting new terms of reference. His *Magnetic Mountain* redefined the concept of Soviet civilisation and suggested new ways of interpreting the breadth and depth of Stalinism. The author has said that, from believing that there were too few sources with direct access to Stalin, a cascade of archival collections made him believe the book was possible. Since then it has become more difficult, as some archives withdrew the access they had granted liberally in the *Perestroika* era, and others remained shut. Yet twelve years after signing a contract to deliver a biography of Stalin, Kotkin is a third of the way through (the second volume is currently in editing). And while the project seems somewhat laboured at times, with few of the paradoxes promised by its subtitle, it does go some way to explaining Stalin's extraordinary role in the history of the Soviet Union.

His attempt to view civilisation from the dictator's office is replete with lengthy passages about the Russia Stalin inherited: its economy, bureaucracy and above all, its geopolitics. These were all important influences, Kotkin argues, yet it was the struggle for power that shaped him the most.

This reviewer's prejudice was that the series as a whole would stand or fall on Kotkin's treatment of the Terror, but that view may be worth revising. Up to now this and the beginning of the Second World War have been taken as the key moments in Stalin's life. For Kotkin, however, the key to understanding Stalin is how others saw him. When Lenin's Testament was produced, Stalin's rivals had a perfect opportunity to remove him. So why would Zinoviev and Kamenev tell Stalin they were plotting his removal? Perhaps the young Stalin, for all his barbarism, was merely another Bolshevik schooled in the ends justifying the means?

Clearly though, there was something unusual about this son of Georgia. How Stalin won power against improbable odds is the focus of much of Kotkin's first volume. Sheila Fitzpatrick, in a review of the book, has rightly suggested that "Kotkin's *Stalin* is a striver and an autodidact of talent and determination." Kotkin himself says "History is made by those who never give up."

Stalin, who practically missed the Revolution and does not even appear in John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*, realised that intimacy with Lenin and his ideas was almost everything. He grew close to the ailing leader, accumulating praise and positions. He took over the party apparatus and press. Trotsky, who could compose brilliant polemics, failed to cultivate alliances and appeared aloof fol-

lowing Lenin's death. Stalin helped Trotsky miss the funeral by supplying misleading information, but Kotkin repeatedly asks why the former Menshevik was so apparently cavalier with his image; in contrast, Stalin's eulogy to Lenin came to play a significant role in the power struggle.

The Soviet historian Dmitri Volkogonov has remarked on how boring and derivative Stalin's *Problems of Leninism* were. But following the death of his mentor, Stalin began to develop an independent theory of geopolitics to replace the craven insularity that had led the Bolsheviks to Brest-Litovsk. This became "Socialism in One Country," a rally to preserve the Revolution even in the face of hostile powers in the West, where Trotsky predicted only failure if the Soviet Union stood alone. Stalin's view could lead to idiocy, such as the constant provocation of the Soviet Union's one true ally, Germany, but it proved infinitely more hopeful during the leadership struggle.

Only after 1927 when Stalin decided to pursue forced collectivisation as a response to growing fears of a war between the Soviet Union and the West, did this take a tragic turn. The decision, apparently made in the middle of Siberia on a rare inspection, could not have been made and pursued with such zealotry by any other leader, Kotkin argues. It led to famine and misery; only the Wall Street crash a year later prevented the regime from becoming fatally isolated in the global economy. This tragedy is the centrepiece of Kotkin's *Stalin*. Whether academics will find it truly revolutionary, or a mere sharpening of the centre-ground, remains to be seen.

Josh Black

A Ride on the (Post-Communist) Express Train

Die neue Ordnung auf dem alten Kontinent: Eine Geschichte des neoliberalen Europa (*The New Order on the Old Continent: The History of Neoliberal Europe*). By: Philipp Ther. Publisher: Suhrkamp, Berlin, Germany, 2014.

The fall of the Eastern bloc in 1989 paved the way for the creation of a new order in Europe. It was a time of euphoria, hope and new expectations. However, the joy surrounding the resignation of the communist government and the enthusiasm for the first free elections seems far away today. A new generation has been taking the place of the former revolutionary leaders. Protagonists of the historical change like Václav Havel or Tadeusz Mazowiecki have passed away, while trailblazers like Mikhail Gorbachev have reached old age; for Ther this is the time to reflect and put these events in a historical context. In his new book, *Die neue Ordnung auf dem alten Kontinent: Eine Geschichte des neoliberalen Europa* (*The New Order on the Old Continent: The History of Neoliberal Europe*), Ther writes in opposition to this fading memory. It does more than heroically commemorate the recent 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Ther is interested in what happened after and what is left of the ideals and demands of this revolution.

Philipp Ther is a professor of East European history at the University of Vienna. As a writer he draws his material from different roles. He is a historian, an expert and a witness. As Ther

admits, the origins of this book lie in his first visit to the Eastern bloc in 1977. Ther revives his memories as a teenager who comes in contact with the power of economic forces. He experiences the value of foreign currency, learns about economic shortages and finds that his pocket money can buy him much more there than in Austria. But what these economic signals meant and what they would lead to was neither clear to him nor to most western experts at that time.

When the author returned to Czechoslovakia in November 1989 the situation had changed. He noticed the anger and the frustration boiling up within the society, and felt the power and will of the masses for change. As a member of the crowd on Wenceslas Square in Prague, Ther witnessed the peaceful overthrow of the communist regime. What had started out as spontaneous gatherings around the country led to the demise of a system, gaining its final momentum with Gorbachev's reforms. It marked the beginning of a complex transformation process.

Who are the winners and losers of the transformation? Which reforms were more successful – radical or moderate? What were the side effects? And what lessons can we draw from this experience for other states such as those in Southern Europe like Greece and Spain? These are the questions that Ther attempts to answer in his book. Ther looks at the transformation process from a socio-economic perspective with an emphasis on the social consequences of the new order, but his methods are most intriguing. Despite being an academic, Ther is interested in individual stories; he wants to know how the ordinary citizen was affected. It is these anecdotes that make his writing so clear and compelling. His book is a fascinating mix of historical analysis, reportage and crime story.

With the fall of the Soviet Union socialism had failed as a political and economic system, giving way to a convenient field for experimentation. This facilitated the rise of neoliberalism, which returned to a fundamental belief in the efficiency and self-regulation of the free market. The concept that owed much of its popularity to the efforts of Margaret Thatcher ("There is no alternative") and Ronald Reagan ("Government is not the solution to our problem, it is the problem") became the leading dogma for the reconstruction of the former command economies. Ther finds a suitable image when he writes about the "sparkling express train that promises growth and wealth" that everybody wants to hop onto. However, the author is not keen on a general criticism of neoliberalism. His focus is rather on the impact these changes had impact on everyday life: what was promised, and which promises were kept?

In fact, the initial consequences of the reforms were neither "flourishing landscapes" in the former German Democratic Republic, as promised by then German chancellor Helmut Kohl, nor a second economic miracle. Instead, unemployment and inflation rose. Production declined and the first waves of emigration started. Even the immediate effects of Leszek Balcerowicz's shock therapy in Poland, or of the more moderate Hungarian Bokros Package, were dreadful, and the situation in other countries did not look much brighter. The Czech Republic was on the brink of a banking crisis and in Russia and Ukraine the weakness of the state paved the way for corruption and oligarchy, while Romania and Bulgaria strug-

gled with the resistance of the post-communists. This led to rising social inequality and a distaste for the reforms which had induced what Ther calls a transformation crisis.

Yet, despite the public's disillusionment, there was no general questioning of the neoliberal reforms. Even the victory of the socialists in Poland, Hungary and East Germany did not lead to a fundamental deviation from the neoliberal direction of the reforms. Instead, the growing economic and political divergence between the post-communist states led to a second wave of neoliberal reforms. A beauty contest of neoliberal models ensued. Terms like "reform states", "emerging markets" or "tiger states" characterised an increased equation of states and markets: the more radical the reforms, the better the rating of the domestic economy – a scenario that would repeat itself during the recent economic crisis. The Baltic states in particular, but also Slovakia, lured foreign investors with their neoliberal shape; that is to say low income taxes ("flat tax") and a restriction of social services by the state; a trade-off that they would have to pay for.

The costs created a new division between rich and poor, strong regional discrepancies and low trust in the political elite – as illustrated by decreasing election turnout. The emerging financial and economic crisis of 2008 ruthlessly exposed the weaknesses of the neoliberal order. The former economic role-models – in particular the Baltic states – that were applauded for their radical market deregulation received an unpleasant lesson. A mix of speculation in the financial and real estate sectors, high government debt and foreign currency credits gave rise to a bursting bubble in Central and Eastern Europe. For Ther, this marked the preliminary end of the converging economies between the old and the new EU member states.

Poland, the only EU member that generated economic growth during the crisis, is an exception. In a subtle and comprehensive way, Ther explains the Polish success story, whose foundation he finds in the mixture between shock therapy, state supervision and substantial human capital as well as the advantage of geographic proximity to the West.

What does this experience teach us for the economic reconstruction of the new crisis states in the south of Europe? Is it wise to treat them with the same neoliberal recipes? Ther provokes essential questions that are immensely relevant for today's order. Twenty-five years after the fall of communism, the transformation in Central and Eastern Europe is still in progress. While some states have consolidated democratic systems, other states have moved further away from it. The revolution in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea as well as the recent revival of the East-West conflict characterises the instability of the new order. Again, Ther was on the ground – among the crowd on the Maidan Square in Kyiv. He demands solidarity with the masses and that the European Union supports the freedom of the people; an interpretation of freedom that is based on individual freedom and not constrained to the freedom of the market.

Above all, Philipp Ther emphasises how important it is to invoke basic European values and calls for a return to the real meaning of the revolutions of 1989: solidarity, freedom and humanity. He highlights the need for an attractive alternative to Vladimir Putin's concept of "state capitalism as a hybrid variant of

neoliberalism constrained by an authoritarian system" and the Eurasian Economic Union. The author compels us to look back into history in order to avoid past mistakes and to find a future and to take the European welfare system as a future transformation model. Otherwise, the "express train" could derail.

Paul Toetzke

Language as a Drug

Мова. (*Mova, The Language*)
By: Viktor Martinovich.
Publisher: Knigazbor, Minsk, Belarus 2014.

Mova is the fourth novel by the Belarusian author Viktor Martinovich. But unlike Martinovich's previous novels, *Mova* has attracted wide attention in Belarus, with the first edition selling out within a week. Belarusian literary critics and readers even named *Mova* the book of the year for 2014. But the book has also stirred controversy, with participants cleared away by police during a presentation and discussion of the book in Grodno. This, however, only boosted the book's popularity. What makes this book attract so much attention?

The style of the book is very original and it is defined as linguistic action and anti-utopia. Martinovich himself defines his novel as a "social fiction". Originally, the book was written and published in Belarusian, but soon after its release it was translated into Russian and it has been available for free on the internet. In Belarusian "Mova" means "the language". However, even in the Russian-language version, the book has kept its Belarusian title and original quotations. It highlights the key role of *Mova* – the language – which is indeed the protagonist of the book.

The plot takes place in a not too distant but fictitious future in which the territory of Belarus has been incorporated into the Union State of Russia and China. Minsk has become a "small insignificant provincial town" with its heart now Chinatown. The Chinese yuan has become the national currency and Minsk's city centre has been transformed into the square of the Eurasian Economic Community, decorated with a Mao Zedong statue in the centre. The border with the European Union features the real physical isolation of Belarus. Despite the fact that many areas of the country have developed, Belarus also resembles a relic of the past. Even in the future, after major transformations, the country still uses the death penalty and people disappear. All this takes place even though the TV hosts talk widely about peace, tranquillity and stability.

Interestingly, the term "Belarus" in the geographical sense is not mentioned in the book at all. Everything happens in a territory called either "Russian China", "North-West territories" or the "outskirts of the empire". The citizens of these lands are simply named *tuteyshyia* – the locals. Although the term "Belarus" is not used, what the characters remember are such things as the Belarusian partisans, the Great Patriotic War, "Belarus" tractors or the fact that one day Belarus was a "historical region of Russia". The notion that Belarus could have been once an independent country with its unique history, culture and own language seems ridiculous for them. What is certain about the true Bela-

rusian language for them, is that it was a "funny dialect" and "decadent mixture of Russian and Polish". The idea that *mova* could be heard on the streets of Minsk seems like pure nonsense.

In Martinovich's world, *mova* is a hard and illegal drug. Excerpts of texts in Belarusian are secretly passed from hand to hand, darkening the minds of those who read them. What is more, *mova* influences only the locals; for others it is nothing but mere words. The "consumption" of *mova* is one of the most severe crimes and is punished brutally: starting with ten years' imprisonment for its personal use, up to the death penalty for its distribution. For the authorities, *Mova* constitutes a threat to the Union State of Russia and China, which claim that there is a correlation between the distribution of *mova* and the spread of international terrorism.

There are three main story lines which the reader follows through the whole novel and which are intertwined in the end. The first is the story of Sergey, a *mova* distributor. The second is the story of a current *mova* user, "Junkie" and the final one is the story of several characters who form the Belarusian Armed Uprising. The representatives of the Belarusian Armed Uprising develop a plan to bring *mova* back as an active language by capturing the television station and launching a programme explaining that *mova* is our cultural heritage and should be protected. However, the ambitious plan fails, the uprising is suppressed and almost all participants are killed. As time goes on, infected excerpts start to appear in *mova*, instead of texts. These excerpts contain a virus replacing *mova*. Those who speak *mova* are the first ones to lose the ability to communicate in the Belarusian language, and the same result is prepared for others.

Of course, such a plot is an exaggeration, but by using such hyperbole, Martinovich highlights the existing problems of Belarusian society: the status of the language, Belarusian culture, identity and self-perception. The book serves as a warning about what could happen to the Belarusian language if Belarusians do not change their attitudes.

Another Belarusian thinker, Valentin Akudovich in his book *Code of Absence*, outlined some reasons for the decline of the Belarusian language. First, it is connected with the fact that the modern Belarusian language, as opposed to the old Belarusian language, has always been the "language of the commons", the language of the lower social class, the language of villages and common folk. People with higher social status were predominantly Russian-speakers. This has shaped a stereotype that speaking Russian gives you much more than speaking Belarusian and it is, in a way, an ennoblement. Consequently, a change of social status inevitably led to a change of language, and the Belarusian language received a label of "Belarusian outsider" and a stereotype of being a "shameful and degrading" language that should be eradicated.

The second reason for such an attitude is connected with the defeat of the Belarusian national idea in the first half of the 20th century, which was accompanied by repression and the persecution of its supporters. One of their symbols was the Belarusian language. Therefore, by the imprisonment of its users, the Belarusian language received one more label – the "language of problems".

"The language of problems", "the language of outsiders", "a shameful and degrading language" – these are the labels used to character-

ise Belarusian. As Akudovich noted, language is "the ozone layer, which allows other cultural factors to function, develop in a more or less stable manner and augment their potential even in disadvantaged circumstances". And what could be said about other cultural factors if the "the ozone layer" – the Belarusian language – is in such a bad condition?

It is nonetheless important to note that the current situation with the Belarusian language is not necessarily so gloomy. In fact it is quite the contrary; currently the Belarusian language is becoming increasingly popular and is becoming the language of nationally-conscious youth, politicians, poets and other representatives of intelligentsia. As Akudovich puts it, the Belarusian language, culture and history are a "refuge for intellectuals". Hopefully, Belarusian will become a language with a reputation comparable to that of Russian or Polish, as it enjoyed in the past, and the dark visions of Victor Martinovich will never come true.

Kseniya Pavlovich

A Diary of Ukrainianness

R2U. By: Yuriy Makarov. Publisher: Nora Druk, Kyiv 2014.

How did the identity of Ukrainians exist and develop during the time of the Soviet Union? What contributed to it and how did Ukrainians live with it after independence? These are the central questions asked in Yuriy Makarov's *R2U*. In presenting the story of his life in the book, Makarov gives the reader a clear taste of a contradictory reality: the unbelievably strong desire of the Ukrainian people for national consolidation, unity and political change against all the internal and external evil that has been played out against Ukrainian independence.

Yuriy Makarov is a well-known journalist of over 35 years' experience, starting his career during Soviet times. Living in Ukraine with a last name like Makarov – which is considered to be Russian – he has always been a person with a "difficult identity". Despite this, the story of Makarov is a prime example of a Ukrainian who sought his own path from being a Soviet to being a Ukrainian citizen, and who is aware of the differences of his state's neighbour – Russia.

The author's life serves as the basis for the plot of the book, where the social, cultural and political environment of late Soviet Ukraine is described as well as the first steps of Ukrainian independence and Ukraine before the Euro-Maidan Revolution. *R2U* is clearly an important source of information on the history of the emergence of the political nation of Ukraine. It describes in detail the development of Ukrainian journalism, a new generation of non-Soviet Ukrainians and many other things which have determined contemporary Ukraine. *R2U* could be also called a "diary of Ukrainianness" – with the core topics of the book being culture, the protests and an emergence of a middle class.

The book consists of two sections. The first is devoted to the author's personal reflections about his perception of Ukraine and how it transformed his own personal identification from Russian to Ukrainian. The second part of the book includes the author's materials

from the Ukrainian weekly magazine *Ukrainian Week* – with essays, articles and columns which were published between 2010 and 2014. Devoting half of the book to memoirs, the author teaches us a lesson on the philosophical component of self-identification. Makarov argues that, contrary to the view that genetics are the determining factors in belonging to a certain nation, identity is something psychologically influenced by the condition of life and by awareness, as well as the social and political environment. To illustrate this fact, the author looks back at his own family tree and comes to the conclusion that he does not have a lot in common with his ancestors.

Another reason why this book is interesting is Makarov's excellent language. The description of the author's life, being born and raised in the Soviet Union, reflects the long and dramatic epoch which determined the lives of millions of Ukrainians. But the late 1980s and the time of Ukrainian independence revived Yuriy Makarov as a Ukrainian. This process was also paralleled by the rebirth of the Ukrainian nation.

The second part of the book offers some short articles and personal reflections on issues such as injustice, corruption, emigration, the emergence of a middle class, protest movements and the high level of social discontent with the Ukrainian authorities. At times, the author's description of the facts of Ukrainian history over the last 23 years in chronological order allows the reader to chillingly follow his predictions through to the EuroMaidan events and the Russian aggression in the east.

The book is also a very easy read. It brings us back to Soviet Ukraine and explores life in Ukraine as a creative state with potential for innovation, science and industry, but one that is also filled with an ideology directed against personal development and expression. *R2U* is a journey through the 1990s to the present day, providing lessons on the cultural, psychological and political transformation of Ukraine as a new state. One of the most interesting sections of the book is the description of the realities of the Viktor Yanukovych regime, starting in 2010 when he became the president of Ukraine and his "Donbas mafia family" started stealing money, factories and national heritage, and began bringing the Ukrainian economy to ruin. This period was also characterised with injustice, pressure on the media and the manipulation of "language issues". In *R2U* there are also such characters as Berkut and *titushki* as negative actors in various events, which took place well before the EuroMaidan.

The Russian reality is not the most important part of the book. However, there are some interesting points about Russian attitudes concerning the Customs Union, *Russkiy mir*, the importance of protecting the Russian language and Russian relations with Ukraine, as Russia often perceives its western neighbour as a younger brother. It is surprisingly terrifying to find out from the simple facts of the events which took place two or three years ago that Russian propaganda had a large role in Ukraine through its agents in the Ukrainian parliament and politics. By reading the daily observations of Makarov, it is possible to see the roots of Russian rhetoric today against Ukrainians – labelling them "fascists" or "anti-Semites".

The book, however, is not entirely positive about Ukraine. The author recalls many examples that divided Ukrainians and prevented the country from achieving economic and political prosperity. Makarov writes widely

on the internal peculiarities of the Ukrainian mentality. Between the lines, the author reveals some interesting facts about Ukrainian culture and its psychological issues. Describing various cultural reasons for Ukrainian problems, Makarov pays special attention to social aggression, distrust, miscommunication, and the absence of motivation.

Another valuable aspect of the book is its deep analysis regarding the involvement of Ukrainians in their protest against the "old political elite" – Yanukovych and company. The author describes the rise of Ukrainian national awareness and argues that the events of the last year were the last straw which led to the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation. Makarov puts an emphasis on the Ukrainian context reflecting the unique social phenomenon of the EuroMaidan, which changed the identity of Ukrainians.

Overall, *R2U* is an interesting read for anyone interested in Eastern European politics and the reality of the Soviet Union. The book can especially help anyone engaged in the search for an answer to the question why Ukrainians, who lived together with Russians for more than 60 years in the Soviet Union, have developed a completely different mentality, ideology and identity; one which is much more European in nature.

Lisa Yasko

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