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New Eastern Europe

Judy Demspey Russia needs a strong Europe
Ivan Krastev We can no longer take the EU for granted

ON CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION

ISSN 2083-7372

New Eastern Europe

NEW EASTERN EUROPE IS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN THREE POLISH PARTNERS

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The European Solidarity Centre is a multifunctional institution combining scientific, cultural and educational activities with a modern museum and archive, which documents freedom movements in the modern history of Poland and Europe.

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 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,

It has been over 18 months since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the start of the conflict in Ukraine's east. Despite efforts by the international community, namely the OSCE, to enforce a ceasefire brokered in February 2015 in Minsk, it seems that there is no letting up in the battle between Ukrainian forces and Russian-supported separatists. As we have discussed on the pages of this magazine previously, this conflict is as much about Russian influence in the region as it is about the future of Europe; and is rife with geopolitics.

Yet, this situation calls us to once again dig deeper and ask the question: how can such a state of affairs be possible? Two neighbours on the continent of Europe with close history, relations and culture are now unofficially at war with each other. And the disinformation campaign launched by Russian propagandists is tirelessly working to divide Europe. That is why this issue focuses on two key concepts: conflict and reconciliation. First, we explore this notion of conflict with input by Judy Dempsey and her take on Europe's Russia strategy. She is followed by a survey of seven experts from the region and the world who describe their understanding of the conflict's global impact. Second, we wonder if it is not too early to start talking about reconciliation by exploring this concept's many European variations and bluntly ask if reconciliation between Russia and Ukraine is possible. Our authors, Mykhailo Cherenkov (Ukraine) and Oleg Kozlovsky (Russia), agree that while reconciliation is possible, it does not mean returning to the *status quo ante*. It requires a change.

We also provide a special section on the life and inspiration of Tadeusz Kantor, a Polish artist and theatre director who this year is being honoured worldwide on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Lastly, we want to thank all of our readers and supporters who not only purchase and read the magazine, but took one step further and donated to support our non-profit publication. It humbles us to know so many of you are as passionate about the issues as we are.

We are continuing to accept donations to help offset our budget cuts this year. To learn more please visit: http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/donate.

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How to Avoid Europe's Disintegration

IVAN KRASTEV

There is a new trend that is developing in Europe – a rebellion against the elite. In my view, this rebellion represents the biggest challenge that Europe faces today. This type of anti-elite sentiment is becoming stronger and stronger while there is no clear positive agenda of what those who rebel really want. It is clear, however, that perpetuating the status quo will only make this group angrier.

One of the main plots of the storyline of the current European debate is that we are too Euro-centric to understand that we cannot explain ourselves to others. The Ukrainian conflict is a perfect illustration here – as it is viewed in a totally different way inside and outside Europe. Clearly, the current crisis in Europe, which has been taking place for seven years now, is very different to other crises which have taken place in the world. I remember when the crisis began in 2008. In a conversation with José Manuel Barroso, the then President of the European Commission, he asked us analysts and experts a straightforward question: "What can you do for us?" My response was also straightforward: "Not much," I said honestly.

I am not a specialist on integration. I am an expert, however, on disintegration. I know how things collapse; this is what I have been studying all my life. I was working on the Balkans and I know how they collapsed, and before that I studied how the Soviet Union had collapsed. That is why what I said to Barrosso was: "What we can offer you is a project on the political logic of disintegration".

As a result, for almost two years at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, we held seminars and conversations. We invited historians and politicians to participate with us in discussions focused on different examples of disintegration, including that of the Habsburg Empire, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Signals of collapse

Three major themes emerged from these discussions that are critical to understanding the current crisis in Europe. The first is the fact of the unforeseen collapse. Let us not forget that even a year or two before the collapse of the Soviet Union such an event was perceived as unthinkable. Consider a senior panel of Pentagon experts, gathering the most experienced authorities on the Soviet Union in December 1990, which declared the chance of the Soviet Union collapsing was around 20 per cent. In a similar vein, the communists claimed that due to the very strong level of interdependence, the demise of the USSR was not possible and would not make sense. As later events have shown, many things that do not make economic sense often do happen.

To put this point another way: part of the problem that we have today is that we take the European Union for granted. The more we do this, the higher the risk of its disintegration. The belief that something cannot collapse leads to high-risk behaviour.

A part of the problem that we have today is that we take the European Union for granted. The more we take the EU for granted, the greater the risk for disintegration.

The second theme that came out of the discussions in Vienna was that disintegration was always the result of an internal cause. And while indeed the anti-integration bloc never prevails over a pro-integration one (even in the case of the Soviet Union a majority wanted the Soviet Union to persist), it is a certain type of political dynamism that is created and starts to develop a logic of its own. It is this logic that begins to build and nurture itself within society.

The third feature that emerged from our discussions was an observation that big projects do not collapse from the periphery. Hence, Bulgaria or Greece will not disintegrate the European Union, no matter how hard they try. Disintegration takes place from the centre. It starts to take place when the winners begin to get the feeling that they are the losers in the project. This is why Poland is such an important country for many in Europe. If Poland, which is often perceived as one of the biggest winners of European integration, starts to have second thoughts about

Photo: Dawid Linkowski | Archiwum ECS

Ivan Krastev at the "Europe with a View to the Future" Forum held in the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk.

the EU project, then other countries, including Germany, would themselves start to question the project.

Yet this does not mean that the European elite needs to force an "identity" on its people. By doing so, it forces a synthetic structure into society, one that is not real and will not take hold. In Europe, nevertheless, there have already been several attempts made to create a European identity similar to a "national" one. However, these attempts have failed and will continue to fail. There will always be divisions in Europe, such as in the case of the 2003 Iraq war when Europe was divided between its East and West; or now with the crisis in Ukraine. This time Europe is divided between the North and the South. The latter is not interested in having Europe turn into an anti-Putin project. This sentiment has emerged not because there is a great affinity for Vladimir Putin in the southern half of Europe, but because they do not believe it is so important for Europe. The southern states are much more concerned with the immigration crisis than Putin's proxy armies in a localised area in Ukraine.

I do believe, however, that the Ukrainian crisis will lead to identity building in Europe. But it will not be an identity building of Europeans, rather of Ukrainians. We can see that a new Ukrainian nation is being born. Unfortunately, this is an identity-building opportunity for Russia as well. We will start to see a new, more extreme Russian national identity emerge as a result of the crisis and the propaganda that is being pumped by the Kremlin to its citizens.

A new paradox

On the European level, a new paradox has also emerged as a result of both the European crisis and the situation in Ukraine. In recent years we have witnessed the Europeanisation of broad policies while we see an emergence of a renewed national sentiment on the nation-state level. Citizens across Europe are beginning to feel frustrated with the EU. You can see how solidarity and borders can be redrawn. Germans are not ready to do for the Greeks what they did for East Germans in the 1990s. What is more, Germany's approach to Greece was not a decision of one government or one party; there was a general consensus in Germany towards Greece. And this sentiment is not limited to Germany, but most of the EU states as well.

In his 1992 book *The European Rescue of the Nation State*, British economic historian Alan Milward argued against the thesis that European integration would break up the nation state. Indeed, European integration re-legitimised the nation states. Since one of the outcomes of the Second World War was the collapse of the nation state, integration brought back legitimacy to these nation states. This was generally the case since about ten years ago with the success of European integration in Central Europe, which highlights the fact that many of the problems that we face today are not a result of failure, but a result of success. This is why it is so difficult to respond to these problems.

Much of the problems that we face today are not a result of failure, but a result of success. This is why it is so difficult to respond to these problems.

As a result of European integration, we see regional identities emerge and put pressure on the nation state, such as in Scotland or Catalonia. The Catalans, for example, said that as they were fine being a part of the European Union, why should they be a part of Spain? This was also the Scottish attitude. These are the moments when the nation states, for the first time, were being challenged by the success of European integration.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a new trend that is developing in Europe – a rebellion against the elite. In my opinion, this rebellion represents the biggest

challenge that Europe faces today. This type of anti-elite sentiment is becoming stronger and stronger and there is no clear positive agenda of what those who rebel really want. It is clear, however, that perpetuating the status quo will only make this group angrier. We can see a consequence of this in many recent European elections where protest votes are widespread.

Protest waves

This rebellion can also be seen in the waves of protests that have swept over Europe in the last several years. Therefore, the worst thing that can happen to the European project is if it becomes framed as a project of the European elite. We can expect an even stronger rebellion if the EU ceases to be a project about Europe and becomes a project for its elite. Then an attack on the elite will be an attack that can destroy the whole European project. This is despite the fact that people on the streets are not necessarily anti-European; in a way they are the most European-minded generation that we have had.

The worst thing that can happen to the European project is if it becomes framed as a project of the European elite.

In 2013 we had two major protest waves in Bulgaria. First in February, where hundreds of thousands of people in the countryside, organised via social media with no political party or trade union involved, protested against the outrageously high price of electricity. These people camping on the streets did not demand the resignation of the government, but merely wanted a reduction in prices. The movement did not have leaders. They had no clear political message and sang patriotic songs from the 19th century. Their biggest issue was related to big companies from Austria or the Czech Republic – the major electricity providers. The message to the elite, which could be seen as quite nationalist, was: "We are Bulgarian, just like you. Why aren't you taking care of us?"

In June 2013 there was another wave of protests which was much more centred on Sofia. This protest was against the seemingly unimaginable appointment of Delyan Peevski, a Bulgarian oligarch, to head the Bulgarian security agency. Hundreds of thousands of people once again came out to the streets with no political party or trade union affiliation. The protesters carried EU flags and demanded to be treated like Europeans. But when comparing these two protests, it would be wrong to say that there are two Bulgarias (one pro-EU and one more nationalist). In fact many of those involved in the first protests were also involved in the second one. Both

Europe and nationalism became a way for the people to seek accountability on the side of the elite. Both of the protests had the same basic feeling – that perhaps we are now freer than before, but we have lost power over our elite.

From this point of view, the best chance that the EU has for success is when the people see it as an instrument to gain control over the elite and not as a haven for the elite. If it becomes the latter, we will see an even greater level of frustration between the elite and the people. This is the lesson that Europe's leaders need to understand today. If this lesson is not learnt, we will see the disintegration of the project in the future.

This essay is adapted from a lecture given during the "Europe with a View to the Future" forum held at the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk, May 14–15th 2015.

Ivan Krastev is the chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia Bulgaria and a permanent fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna. He is also a member of the editorial board of *New Eastern Europe*.

Farewell, Europe

LYUDMILA ULITSKAYA

I am not involved in politics, but I say what I think when asked. It is for this reason that I have been identified as an element of the "fifth column" in Russia. I am accused of hating my country, but I have no hatred in myself, just shame and helplessness.

Salzburg is like a magic box, an ideal tourist town where time seems to have stopped. One's imagination creates the picture of an old, extinct and nostalgically beautiful life. The shining Salzach River, a rocky mountain with a fortress atop its peak, some monasteries, several cathedrals, a university – all look the same as they must have looked in ancient times.

Salzburg is a mythical town, a phantom town, but also a fictional town. The locals wear uniforms – receptionists, waiters and maids. Sometimes the chefs' caps flash behind them. The beggars are dressed like Mozart, wearing synthetic wigs and carrying small violins. Yet there are also a few beggars without a disguise: the local Roma or the refugees from Eastern Europe. But they are a part of the minority in Salzburg that reminds us about the problems of today.

I was taken from the airport to the hotel by a driver with a perfect appearance who spoke such perfect English that I did not dare to give him a tip. I stayed at the "Sacher" hotel: an antique and luxurious place which my simple, non-aristocratic soul shunned. There was a smell of "old money" and old-fashioned luxury. One could almost touch the aristocracy and bourgeoisie of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The former empire was visible with my first step out the door and ended with the première of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. The opening of the festival in which I was participating took place in the morning on the same day, between these two events.

Slight envy

The theme of the festival I was invited to attend was the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the unlearned lessons that remain. This is also the topic that I wanted to speak about most. Preparing myself for this solemn event, I asked my old German friends and colleagues – translator Hanna-Maria Braungardt and editor Christina Links – whether I should take a small book to read during the festival, in order not to die of boredom. They know perfectly well that official speeches usually give me migraines, allergies and depression simultaneously.

In the end I decided not to take a book out of politeness. The event started with a performance of the Austrian national anthem. Like all the other spectators, I stood up. I thought to myself, "lucky you, Austrians! The music of your anthem was written by Mozart and the lyrics were written in 1947 by a decent person, Paula von Preradović."

The history of Russia is on a trajectory consisting of circles and zigzags so that soon it will be possible to return Stalin to the lyrics of our national anthem.

At that moment I experienced a slight envy. We have been ashamed of our Russian national anthem for a long time. The first version of it, based on music by Alexander Alexandrov, was written by Sergey Mikhalkov, a state poet in 1944. Mikhalkov's words were powerful: "We were raised by Stalin to be faithful to the people, he inspired us to work and to bravery". When Stalin was demystified, the same Mikhalkov adjusted the text. Instead of Stalin, a party was introduced (you can guess which one). From 1955 to the 1970s we sang about the party. From 1971 to 1991, the national anthem was usually performed with no lyrics at all – just the naked and cheerful music by Alexandrov which woke up the whole country at six o'clock every morning.

Then the new century came and in 2000 a newly revamped text was legalised. The same old Mikhalkov, a professional of professionals, has taken his deft pencil, and once again replaced some of the words. Instead of "party", there is now "God" with a capital letter, as it should be in the newly Orthodox country. And now we have an anthem once again, though since both the author and the composer are now resting comfortably by the side of God, it is difficult to guess who would make any subsequent adjustments to the Russian anthem. However, the history of our country is developing on a trajectory consisting of circles and zigzags so that soon, seemingly, it will be possible to update our national anthem, restoring Stalin's name in it.

While I was thinking, two wonderful actors were reading a dialogue from the strange 800-page-long work *The Last Days of Mankind* by Karl Kraus, one of the

prophecies about the death of humanity, written between 1915 and 1919. I asked myself, "What has happened to this world if it has to remind itself once again of a 100-year-old prophecy?" I listened to the speeches of the Austrian leaders – the head of Salzburg, the minister of culture and the president of the republic. Astonishingly, they touched me deeply. It was a feeling completely incomprehensible to the citizens of European countries. These were voices of cultured and educated people whose speeches were much more similar to the speeches of university professors than to performances by party functionaries, to which we Russians are so accustomed from birth.

They spoke about the interaction between culture and politics and provoked thoughts about the possible destruction of the world. There were comparisons of two moments in history: the pre-war years at the beginning of the 20th century and the present, the years at the beginning of the 21st century. All speakers came back to this topic in some way: the enthusiasm of the people, the acclaim of war among European intellectuals at the beginning of the century or rare voices of protest. Yet, the most important thing was the uncanny similarities in the unprecedented rise of nationalist sentiments in European societies. When comparing these two historical points, one can see dangerous similarities: the same rise of nationalism in different countries, the exploitation of the concept of "patriotism" and the support of sentiments of national exclusiveness and superiority.

Russian policy is suicidal and dangerous. It constitutes a threat primarily to Russia, but it may become the trigger of a Third World War.

Shame and helplessness

Living in Russia, I feel the latter sentiments in a particularly acute way. I am not involved in politics, but I say what I think when asked. It is for this reason that I have been identified as an element of the "fifth column". I am accused of hating my country and it is stupid and unproductive to justify myself. I have no hatred in myself, just shame and helplessness. Russian policy is suicidal and dangerous. It constitutes a threat primarily to Russia, but it may become the trigger of a Third World War. In fact, it is already taking place. Local wars in Chechnya, Georgia and now in Ukraine are its prologue. And there will probably be nobody to write the epilogue.

On that day in Salzburg while listening to the speeches of the Austrian leaders, I returned to my old thinking about the nature of the state, which is similar to the nature of cancer. With all its dangerous aspects, democracy is the only mechanism able of dealing with this inherent property of any state. There are strictly limited

duties that the society delegates to the state, to the government and to the people in power. Due to its nature, the state has a tendency to pursue self-preservation. It undertakes great efforts to be eternal and irremovable. The government starts a metastatic growth in areas not under its control, like culture, subordinating it to its own interests; like the privacy of individuals, trying to manipulate consciousness.

The higher the level of democracy, the bigger the guarantee of public control over the state. For a state focused on its own self-preservation, there is a powerful mechanism for managing national crowds and that is by controlling all of the media. This is what happened in Russia and this is the main danger of democracy – under an authoritarian regime, it easily becomes a "controlled" state.

The Austrian politicians spoke exactly about those things which are most interesting for me – the relationship between politics and culture. But the most accurate and reasonable thought was expressed by the Australian historian Christopher Clark, author of the book *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. He provided a brilliant analysis of the pre-war situation in Europe. The enthusiasm and excitement experienced even by outstanding intellectuals of Europe after the beginning of the First World War only confirm that even the most advanced intellect loses the confrontation with the natural aggression rooted in the human being. It can easily be caught in the net of nationalism and the exceptional position of his or her nation. Even Sigmund Freud was blinded by the brilliance of this supposed greatness. The man who wrote just a few years before the outbreak of war: "The sense of guilt and frustration experienced by people because of pressure from their primitive instincts and the inability to cope with them is the price of civilisation." Yet, after the declaration of war, Freud wrote enthusiastically: "I have never felt myself more Austrian as I feel now".

Freud had time to think. During the First World War, he lost two sons and the Second World War forced him to escape his beloved Austria. But in those early days Freud's delight was shared by other intellectuals of the time like Thomas Mann, Robert Musil or Hugo von Hofmannsthal. For them, the war was a way of purging themselves from bourgeoisie and stagnation. So, the people of culture, who have always been a counterweight to politics, betrayed their mission and ignored their own moral guidelines. Today the choice is not between war and peace, it is between war and the complete destruction of humankind. The world today is not divided between whites and blacks, Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians, rich and poor, educated or ignorant, but between the ones who understand it and those who do not.

Too late?

Civilisation has come to an impasse. Aggression, which is a definite part of human nature, has not been tamed by the achievements of science, education, knowledge and art. It seemed that culture could tame this suicidal passion for self-destruction, but I am afraid that humankind is running out of time. Civilisation itself, as well as its outstanding technical achievements, may lead to nothing more than an opportunity to conduct its complete self-destruction in a short period of time. We cannot blame some mystical forces of evil, like Satan or his servants, any more. In the recent movie *Faust* directed by Alexander Sokurov, humanity was given a diagnosis, which Goethe did not know: the evil which lives in the depth of human soul is much greater than the evil ascribed to Satan in the Christian theology. In other words, a human being has overcome the devil in terms of evil and does not any more need any outdated concept of demonic nature. Humankind copes with this task on its own. Josef Ostermayer, the minister of culture of Austria, recalled the names of those who raised their voices against the First World War – Stefan Zweig, Oskar Kokoschka and Bertha von Suttner. They constituted an insignificant minority, but today no one can assess how the developments in Europe would have looked, had the majority of intellectuals held this view at that time.

The programme of the Salzburg festival went on. We listened to music by Richard Strauss and the songs of Anton Webern; music which continues the conversation about life and death. By the end of the evening the president of Austria, Heinz Fischer, spoke words of great importance: "Today there is no opposition between culture and politics. People of culture often protest against politics, against neo-Nazism. Politics and culture are like partners in a long-lasting marriage: they quarrel and conflict, but cannot exist without each other. It is very important that artists maintain a critical attitude to reality". For the first time in my memory, politics appealed to culture through the words of the Austrian president. But unfortunately it may already be too late.

My country has declared a war on culture, a war on the values of humanism and the idea of individual freedoms and human rights.

I live in Russia. I am a Russian writer of Jewish origin and of Christian education. Today, my country has declared a war on culture, a war on the values of humanism, on the idea of individual freedoms and human rights. My country suffers the disease of aggressive ignorance, nationalism and imperial delusions. I am embarrassed about our parliament which is ignorant and aggressive. I am ashamed of our government, which is aggressive and incompetent, and of our country's leaders who are toy su-

permen, fans of force and cunning. I am ashamed of all of us, the Russian people, who have lost our moral guidelines.

Culture has suffered a severe defeat in Russia. We, the people of culture, cannot change the suicidal policy of our state. There is a split in the intellectual community of our country. Once again, just like at the beginning of the previous century, the minority advocates against war while my country pushes the world to a new war every day. Our militarism has sharpened its claws in Chechnya and Georgia and now training in Crimea and Ukraine.

Farewell to Europe! I am afraid that we will never be able to enter the European family of nations. Our great culture – Tolstoy and Chekhov, Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich, painters, artists, philosophers and scientists – has not been able to stop the policies of religious fanatics, of communist ideas in the past and the policies of greedy fools today.

For 300 years we, the people of culture, derived strength and inspiration in the same sources common for all Europeans: Dante, Bach, Beethoven, and Shakespeare. We did not lose hope. Yet, today we, the people of Russian culture, or rather the small part of it to which I belong, can say only one thing: "Farewell, Europe!"

Translated by Igor Lyubashenko

Lyudmila Ulitskaya is a Russian novelist and scriptwriter. She is the author of 13 fiction books and recipient of the prestigious Austrian State Prize for European Literature in 2014.

DOUBLETAKE: Does Russia divide Europe?

JUDY DEMPSEY

Because of its inability to influence real change in Russia, both Germany and its European partners need to think long and hard about what kind of security strategy they need for and with Russia. This is also something that NATO yet needs to consider, and which the EU can no longer continue to ignore.

In early 2015, analysing Russia's foreign policy, the *Economist* argued that "the European Union and NATO are [Vladimir] Putin's ultimate targets. To him, western institutions and values are more threatening than armies … From France to Greece to Hungary he is cultivating parties on Europe's far right and left: anyone who might lobby for Russian interests in the EU, or even help to prise the union apart." American scholar, Timothy Snyder, put it even more bluntly when he wrote that "the essence and explicit purpose of Russia's war in Ukraine is the destruction of the European Union as a universalist project that Ukraine could join."

It has been over a year since the Russian Federation occupied and annexed Crimea, which led to the imposition of western sanctions against Russia. In July 2015 European heads of states agreed to extend these sanctions until the end of the year, despite many concerns that Greece (or another EU state such as Hungary or Slovakia) would veto this extension. This led many to ponder the question whether Russia is really dividing Europe?

In this issue's "Doubletake" we asked Judy Dempsey, a foreign policy expert at Carnegie Europe, to address some of the common assertions which positively answer this question. There is no doubt that a divided Europe is in the economic interests of Putin and the Kremlin, but is it equally clear to what extent this division

is real? Has Europe showed its weakness in the face of Russia's aggressive policy in Ukraine? If so, who is at fault for such a state of affairs? Lastly, is a weak Europe really in Russia's best interests?

Assertion one: European states will never have a common position towards Russia.

Actually, European countries do not share common positions over many issues. Why should Russia be any different? In fact, it is quite remarkable that EU member states have been united over continuing the sanctions on Russia. Yet this does not mean that they have a common position. A common position entails having a shared perception of the threat and having a shared perception of a strategy. When it comes to Russia, the member states lack both.

The northern countries, including the Baltic states and most of the Central and Eastern European countries, certainly see Russia as a threat. But they cannot agree on how to counter that threat. The United Kingdom has recently adopted a much tougher stance towards the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, but the UK's threat perception is entirely different from states like Sweden or Poland. The southern countries understandably have a completely different threat perception. These threats come from North Africa and the Middle East.

Despite these differences there is one person that has been key to keeping the EU countries united over Russia – Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor. It is Merkel who has been driving the EU's Russia policy, and it is Merkel who is in for the long haul over Russia – in other words, Putin. I do not see Merkel changing course as long as Putin is in power and as long as Russia continues to meddle in eastern Ukraine or elsewhere. The few tools at Merkel's disposal are the EU's soft power instruments, particularly sanctions. There is always the worry that some of the member states will wobble over Russia the longer the sanctions continue. Yet so far when it comes to sanctions the Europeans have maintained a common position towards Russia, largely thanks to Merkel.

Despite differences, there is one person that is key to keeping the EU countries united over Russia: Angela Merkel.

This common position, however, is short term and not sustainable. It does not deal with the most important questions that the Europeans have so far avoided: what kind of security architecture do Europeans envisage now that Putin has torn up the elements of the Cold War and post-Cold War security structures? Do they really believe that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) can be made to work or that some co-operative relationship between the West and Russia is still possible? Answering these questions requires a strong political will and staying power.

Estonian troops during the May 2015 Steadfast Javelin NATO exercise.
"The Baltic states and most of the Central and Eastern European countries see Russia as a threat. But they cannot agree on how to counter that threat."

Germany's Social Democrats and the older generation mentored by the former Free Democrat foreign minister Hans Dietrich Genscher still cling to the idea of *Ostpolitik*. That policy did serve some purpose during the Cold War, but the truth is *Ostpolitik*, particularly the strategy pursued by the former Social Democrat Chancellor Gerhard Schroder, has failed. The persistent German belief that trying to modernise the Russian economy could lead to a gradual political transformation of the country has not materialised. Russia under Putin rejected the partnership that it was offered by Germany, including Merkel. Thus, it is hard to see Merkel putting any offer back on the table.

Even if there was a sea-change in Russia, it is difficult to imagine Germany under Merkel (or the Greens) reverting to the old German-Russian relationship. That relationship and strategy had two flaws. The first was that Russia could use Germany as its main ally in Europe. The second was that the policy did in some ways undermine the transatlantic relationship, which was of course Russia's inten-

tion. It could then and continues now to tap into Germans' ambiguous attitude towards the United States – and NATO. Because of its inability to influence real change in Russia, both Germany and its EU partners need to think long and hard about what kind of security strategy they need for and with Russia, which is also something that NATO has yet to consider. And it is something that the EU can no longer continue to ignore. Above all, it is a debate that Merkel has to start. However, I would not expect any common position with regards to this essential issue for some time to come.

Assertion two: The European project is no longer an attractive perspective for Eastern European states.

The issue of the attractiveness of the European project is not so clear-cut. Certainly, it is extremely unattractive for the leaders in Yerevan, Minsk and Baku. Until recently, the European project for these leaders was an economically driven one. As long as the EU reduced trade tariffs and encouraged closer economic ties then the project was indeed attractive. It became highly unattractive for the states' leaders only after Viktor Yanukovych was chased out of the presidency of Ukraine in February 2014 and when supporters of the EuroMaidan movement decided that they wanted to be a part of Europe. The movement had had enough of failed revolutions and of their political elite playing lip-service to the EU or, worse, playing the EU against Russia. The civil society movements that sprung up over the past two years see what Europe stands for: the values of freedom, of a free media, of fair elections and accountability. Hence, the ousting of Yanukovych and the emergence of a civil society movement determined to change the status quo shook the leaders in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. They understood the attraction of the EU, which is why they themselves find the EU highly unattractive.

For the independent civil society movements across Eastern Europe, the European project is their attraction. Yes, the model is clumsy and bureaucratic, but the attraction is about how societies can be given space to develop and modernise and how state institutions should function and be made accountable. Yet for all the attractiveness of Europe for civil society movements and individuals in Eastern Europe, they are not naïve in assuming that the EU is their saviour. They are not naïve in assuming that the EU will embrace the spirit of enlargement that it did in 2004.

Instead, something is changing in civil society across Eastern Europe. This younger generation realises that they have to remake, or rather make politics. They have to complete the transformation of their own societies still locked in a kind of post-Soviet space and of the state institutions that stifle change that, after all, is their raison d'etre. The EU is not going to do this for them.

Indeed, the EU is very poor at state-building. Greece's institutions, decades since it joined the EU, testify to this. So does the way in which the political elite in Moldova squandered EU goodwill and funds over the years, negatively affecting the public yearning to get closer to Europe. The constant infighting and corruption has given the EU a bad name in Moldova allowing pro-Russian political movements to exploit it while Moldova's civil society is almost at a loss as to how to influence the elite. The EU, on the other hand, could do far more to sell itself to Eastern Europe. For all its staggering weaknesses, its inability to understand its own attractiveness is on the top of the list.

The European Union is very poor at state building. Greece's institutions, decades since it joined the EU, testify to this.

Assertion three: A weak Europe is in Russia's best interest.

This assertion is true, but requires a big caveat. The last thing Russia wants is a strong Europe. A strong Europe means having a coherent and united foreign, security and defence policy. Europe lacks these three essential elements that would make Europe think and act strategically. Without them, Europe is weak. Europe has such a weak foreign, security and defence policy because the member states cannot agree on what these policies should mean in practice. These disagreements and the consequent weaknesses play into the hands of Russia. It has long been adept at playing off the member states against each other and exploiting the divisions.

Remarkably, the one area in which the EU has shown unity has been over imposing and prolonging sanctions on Russia. That actually took the Kremlin by surprise. It has since retaliated not only by banning certain food produce from EU countries but by embarking on an intense, extremely well-funded and organised propaganda campaign to discredit the West, particularly the United States, and to propagate a nasty anti-Ukraine campaign.

The Greek financial crisis – which is far from over – has also shown the inherent flaws in the EU's common currency, particularly how the political out-weighed the economic, monetary and financial considerations when it came to admitting Greece into the Eurozone in 2001. But that is history. Europe has emerged weaker not stronger since the Greek crisis.

All the member states have tenaciously avoided the issue of what the Greek crisis really means. It is about the future of European political and economic integration. And it is the issue of integration, whether among the core Eurozone countries, or some kind of two-speed Europe, or among all 28 states (which is just so unthinkable given today's political climate in Britain) that has to be addressed. Europe's weakness is the blindness, or rather the persistence, of the states in put-

ting their national interests before integration. It is the unwillingness by the elite to tackle the growing populism, the growing Euroscepticism and the growing hostility towards refugees and immigrants. The EU's weakness is about globalisation and all its concomitants: of the meteoric rise of digitalisation, of the demographic crisis facing nearly all EU member states, of what happens to the workplace as technology powers ahead and of the very important debate about inequality and opportunity.

Russia under Putin can well take heart that Europe is weak. But a weak Europe is not to Russia's advantage.

Russia under Putin can well take heart that Europe is weak. But watch out Putin: a weak Europe is not to Russia's advantage. Russia will have to embrace globalisation, and at the moment it is doing a very bad job of establishing a competitive, open economy based on rules. Putin's political system and the structures of an economy that has failed to diversify cannot be sustained. Putting aside the demographic, social and environmental problems it already faces, Russia needs a strong Europe in order to modernise. China is certainly not going to help it to achieve that. In that sense, a strong Europe, not a weak one, might well be to Russia's advantage, when it decides to look forward and not delve in the past.

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How Global is the Ukrainian Conflict?

Photo: Wojciech Kośmic

By September 2015 the conflict between Ukraine and Russian-supported separatists in Ukraine's east has entered the 18th month since its onset. The "hot" conflict has worn down Ukraine's already struggling economy and is stifling any chances for real reforms that the country desperately needs.

September 2015 is also the one year anniversary of the first Minsk ceasefire agreement which aimed to freeze the conflict between Ukraine and the separatist regions in Luhansk and Donetsk. This ceasefire protocol, however, quickly failed and clashes between the two sides flared up again culminating in a second ceasefire agreement being signed in Minsk in February 2015. Yet, despite the international community's efforts towards a diplomatic solution clashes continue, lives are being lost and over one million people have left their homes as a result of the conflict. Europe and its western allies have instituted sanctions against Russia for its support of the armed conflict while Russia has responded by conducting its largest military exercises since the end of the Cold War.

This tenable situation in our region provoked *New Eastern Europe* to ask the question: to what extent is the conflict in Ukraine a regional matter and to what extent is it a global matter?

We polled foreign policy and security experts from the region and around the world for their opinion on this question. While we leave the conclusions to be drawn by the reader, the results show that perspective in conflicts matter.

Russia is not our "Frenemy"

IULIAN FOTA

The Russian aggression towards Ukraine marks the first Eastern European conflict of global importance in the 21st century, and also serves to contest the West's influence on globalisation itself. By doing so, Russia not only questions the current European order, but goes further in contesting the dominant role the West plays in international relations.

The war against Ukraine, along with an enhanced collaboration with China and the development of the BRICS as an alternative organisation, is part of a new Russian strategy to remodel the international liberal order. Therefore, what is usually referred to in the international press as "the conflict in Ukraine' is, in fact, an act of aggression on Russia's part, similar to past hostility towards the Republic of Moldova in 1991–92 and Georgia in 2008.

There is, however, a noteworthy difference between these cases. The conflicts in Georgia or Moldova had a single purpose: to prevent western expansion towards the East, particularly NATO expansion. The war against Ukraine is fuelled by two motives. One of them, in keeping with tradition, is to avoid losing Ukraine to the western value system. The other is related to the high level of western involvement and its influence in international affairs, particularly the United States.

Since 2007 Russian behaviour towards western countries, and the US especially, has become increasingly aggressive. At the Munich Security Conference in February 2007, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, sent a verbal warning towards the West insisting upon the high level of peril Russia associates with the extension of NATO to the East. Putin also solicited a new international order. His message was reiterated that year in April in front of the Russian parliament when he accused western countries of financing protests in Moscow and suspended the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

In 2008 after NATO's decision to open the door to Georgia and Ukraine, Russia proceeded with a war against Georgia, essentially punishing the country for its courage in successfully developing an alternative political solution. Despite all the evidence pointing to the contrary, the West remained in a state

of denial even after the war in Georgia, still hoping to pursue a balanced partnership with Russia.

In 2009, less than a year after the war, the US debuted its mission to reset American-Russian relations in an effort to overcome the stalemate. Those who criticised Russia most ardently dubbed it a "frenemy" to western values. The word "frenemy" is a combination of "friend" and "enemy" and was used to show that despite all misunderstandings between the two opposing sides, there was still room for co-operation.

Although Russia defined NATO and the US as threats to its security, both Washington and Brussels still perceived a partnership with Russia as a possibility. In 2010 Russia decided to reinstate long distance air force flights, a military decision not far from Cold War tactics. At the same time it coins a new confrontational diplomacy to use in its main international issues, such as with Syria, or Iran's nuclear programme.

The year 2014 saw the European order shattered due to the Russian annexation of Crimea and subsequent political destabilisation in Ukraine through Russian encouragement of the war in the country's east. The US, Canada and some of their European allies have finally become convinced that Russia can no longer be perceived as a possible ally, not even a "frenemy", but should rather be as an undeniable enemy. The Kremlin's aggressive rhetoric – Putin's nuclear threats in particular – reached a level the world last witnessed during Nikita Khrushchev's reign. Those threats were made in order to ensure the successful annexation of Crimea.

Encouraged by the success of its hybrid operations in Ukraine, Russia blatantly affirmed the similarities between the Ukrainian and the Russian people, even going so far as to refer to them as a single people (although each nation has the right, affirmed by international law, to define itself). Furthermore, Russia continuously employs large-scale military exercises, spreading from the Black Sea to the Arctic, the largest in the last 25 years, to intimidate and send a message of power. The Crimean peninsula has been transformed into a Russian aircraft carrier for the Black Sea region. It was rapidly militarised, including through the deployment of strategic TU 22M3 bombers, capable of transporting nuclear weapons.

Time and again, like during the Cold War era, Russia is playing with strategic (even nuclear) ambiguity in order to blackmail and intimidate those around it. NEE

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In the Network Age, the Real Battle for Ukraine is Global

JOHN KORNBLUM

One reason for the confusion which continues to burden the debate on Russia's aggressive behaviour is that the old categories do not fit anymore. The radical integration of the world through high-speed information networks and modern logistics is redrawing the global geostrategic map before our eyes. Vladimir Putin may seem to be looking back to a long-lost era of Russian imperial glory, but his skilful use of 21st century "messaging" offers a self-confident view of the future for adherents around the globe. The story of Russian "victimisation" by an aggressive West echoes successfully in many parts of the non-western world. Putin's archaic view of history fits well with a variety of resentments in conflicted societies in many parts of the world.

No number of diplomatic conferences or peace plans is going to have much influence on this unavoidable fact. The search for dialogue on "new security structures" in Europe, forgets the fact that relationships across Eurasia no longer fit the détente-era framework so favoured by Germans and others. New realities will emerge from radically changed global dynamics and not from think tanks.

We cannot now foresee how these new factors will function in practice. But one thing is certain: they will be based on the inexorable spread of a new sort of radical meritocracy defined by complex algorithms and "Big Data" of the digital age. Only the openness and tolerance embodied in the principles of the European enlightenment can provide the diversity of thought and opportunity necessary for their operation. The West can help most in this uncertain period by underscoring the need for such an open and tolerant operating system, through repetition of first principles. Our goal should not be an arrangement with Putin, but rather a weakening of his message through demonstrating the attraction of civil society in the countries bordering on the Russian Federation.

Supporting democracy in Ukraine is a vital first step. Russia's long-term dilemma is that in addition to destroying co-operation with the West, Putin also opened Central Asia and Eastern Europe to a debate on the attraction of digitalisation which current Russian thinking

cannot influence. The real dynamic in this region in the future is likely to be a German-Chinese one, with strong support by India. Russia can, at best, play a secondary geographic role.

Thus, getting the story right in Ukraine is important not just for the Ukrainian people. Of greater historic significance will be how this confrontation affects the West's ability to manage the globally integrated information networks that increasingly form the heart of 21st-century life. So far, Putin has been able to use his agitprop to stimulate the world's first truly digital confrontation. Western democracies have a major technological advantage and control the hardware but they are losing the war of words and thus control of the software. Even the nations of the European Union have begun to echo Moscow's claim that modern information technology is threatening human values, as seen in the regular diatribes in Germany and France against American companies leading the world in information technology.

Today's technological challenges demand a strategic, but also a societal response. We should not assume that Putin and his clique speak for all of Russia. Rather than Putin's negative message, we can best champion a democratic operating system for the digital society which speaks to the real needs of the Russian people. This calls for a battery of initiatives that are today's equivalent of western support for political democracy during the cold war.

The radical integration of the world through high-speed information networks and modern logistics is redrawing the geostrategic map. Everyone, including Russia, will profit if the principles of western democracy are firmly established as the basis for global integration. If, however, the debate lends credence to those who reject the functioning of western values, the rebuttal will not stop at Russia or Ukraine, but will progress throughout Europe and beyond.

In a networked world, no country is too unimportant and or too far away. A new generation of digital diplomats will have to learn how to master the new rules of network democracy. If the West fails to rise to the challenge, the drawbacks for all of our societies will reverberate for years – and will affect many areas of life that we in the West today take for granted. In the network age, the West must reinforce digital democracy, and that is why the real battle for Ukraine is global.

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Divide and Conquer

ROBERT KUPIECKI

The annexation of Crimea and the direct participation of the Russian army in the war in eastern Ukraine have become a tool for Moscow to attempt to keep Kyiv (with the use of force) within its sphere of influence and to impede the process of Ukraine's integration with the European Union and NATO. In addition, the Russian authorities strive to secure public support based on a widespread sense of insecurity, powered by state-controlled political propaganda. In effect, the Kremlin is attempting to find a way to rule indefinitely without the risk of a social revolt or the pressure of modernisation. Most importantly, however, Russia wants to maintain a level of instability in Ukraine with its "burning" borders, explosive amount of social dissatisfaction and the risk of the implosion of the political system. From such a perspective, Moscow could also promote itself as a stabilising factor and a desired partner for the West, already fatigued by the lengthy crisis. Russia could present itself as a fireman putting out a fire that it in fact had caused.

The Kremlin's broader goal is the consolidation of the territory of the former Soviet Union based on its own political and economic vision and its exclusion from European integration processes. This implies an extension of the conflict and the tools that are being used to exhaust the West, to show to it the growing cost of its involvement in the East as well as undermine its integrity. In other words, Moscow is seeking to "play the game" according to its own rules.

Therefore the current conflict in eastern Ukraine is also Russia's conflict with the West. It is a conflict with western values, institutions and democratic aspirations. Clearly, the goal of today's Russia is no longer to be an equal partner for the West, but rather an alternative model for the others. This also applies to its global competition in Asia, the Middle East and Africa; however in those cases, Russian ambitions collide with the plans of China and Iran. The truth is that Russian leaders care little about partnership and co-operation with the West. As a result of the weakness of its political and economic system, Russia is not able to build co-operation based on the principle of sharing benefits and responsibilities. There is no doubt that Russia knows that the West has a lot to offer when it comes to financial instruments or modern technology. Yet, using

this potential (without changing Russia's own policy) would require a disruption in NATO's and the EU's solidarity, dividing their members and making a selective choice of partners that would have to accept proposed forms of co-operation.

The global implications of the conflict in eastern Ukraine include the not as yet fully known consequences of Russia's violation of international law, the militarisation of the dialogue between superpowers, the disintegration of the requirements of the treaty for the conventional disarmament in Europe and the limitations to Russia's co-operation with the West, with all its negative impact on global security issues. NEE

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Towards a #UkraineDeal?

DOMINIK P. JANKOWSKI

In 2015 the power of diplomacy is back. In late June the Iran deal was reached at the time when Europe (primarily, but not only) continues its search to find a diplomatic solution to end the war in eastern Ukraine. The latter negotiations have not resulted in a major breakthrough, despite the signing of the so-called "Minsk agreements". Hence, the question: Can diplomacy also bring peace to Ukraine?

In June 2014 a Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine was created. It is composed of representatives from Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Its goal is to facilitate a diplomatic resolution to the Russian-Ukrainian war. On September 5th 2014 the group worked out an initial agreement that was signed in Minsk by Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE as well as the leaders of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.

The frequent violations of the ceasefire in the subsequent weeks, however, forced the negotiating sides back to the table. As a result, on September 19th 2014, again in Minsk, a "Memorandum Outlining the Parameters for the Implementation of the Commitments of the Minsk Protocol" was signed. Among the nine provisions included in the document a line between the armed formations

Twelve Points of the "Minsk Protocol"

- An immediate bilateral ceasefire;
- A monitoring and verification of the ceasefire by the OSCE;
- A decentralisation of power in Ukraine;
- A permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border by the OSCE;
- An immediate release of all hostages and illegally detained persons;
- A law preventing the prosecution and punishment of persons in connection with the events that took place in particular departments of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts;
- An inclusive national dialogue;
- An improvement of the humanitarian situation in Donbas;
- Early local elections in accordance with Ukrainian law;
- A withdrawal of all illegal armed groups and military equipment as well as fighters and mercenaries from Ukraine;
- A programme for economic recovery and reconstruction of the Donbas region;
- A guarantee of personal security for the participants of the consultations.

The package – which should be perceived as a complimentary document to the "Minsk Protocol" – has foreseen some concrete deadlines:

- A ceasefire as of February 15th 2015;
- A withdrawal of heavy weapons to start on day two of the ceasefire at the latest and be completed within 14 days;
- An effective monitoring and verification of the ceasefire regime and the withdrawal of heavy weapons by the OSCE from day one of the withdrawal;
- A release and exchange of all hostages (based on the principle "all for all") – to be finished on the fifth day after the withdrawal at the latest;
- A reinstatement of full control of the state border by the government of Ukraine throughout the conflict area – to be finalised by the end of 2015.

was established. It served as a reference point for the withdrawal of the military personnel and all types of arms, weapons and ammunition.

The memorandum created a demilitarised area of 15 kilometres on both sides of the line where no military units, weapons or ammunitions were allowed. Any offensive actions as well as flights by combat aircraft over the security zone were prohibited. There was also an agreement on the monitoring of the provisions of the "Memorandum" by a special monitoring mission of the OSCE.

After five months of intense violations of the "Minsk Protocol" and the "Memorandum" the parties searched for another political deal that would provide new impetus for a ceasefire. For the third time a deal was brokered in Minsk. This time the leading role was taken by the "Normandy format" (France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine). The deal resulted in a "package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements" which was adopted on February 12th 2015.

What went wrong?

Sadly, the violations of the "protocol", "memorandum" and "package" are numerous. First, none of the deadlines has been met. Second, the military incidents – including the use of the heavy weapons – continue to occur on a regular basis. The Ukrainian government assesses that since the signature of the "package" more than 8,000 incidents have taken place. Almost 70 per cent of them were incited by the so-called "separatists". Third, the OSCE mission cannot effectively monitor a vast territory of Donbas as the so-called "separatists" have created special "no-go zones" and continue to jam the OSCE drones and radar equipment. Fourth, Russia continues the military build-up in Donbas and along the border as well as remains committed to supporting the

so-called "separatists" (think about the 32nd "humanitarian convoy" that on July 23rd 2015 entered the Ukrainian territory). Finally, the release of all hostages has not been finalised, including the iconic case of Nadiya Savchenko. With these facts in mind, can we say that we are getting closer to a political solution to the conflict? Regrettably, we are not there yet.

What's next?

On July 13th 2015, Ertugrul Apakan – head of the special monitoring mission of the OSCE – assessed that the security situation in Donbas had considerably worsened. Yet, as the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate, the pressure on Ukraine mounts. There is a rising expectation in some European capitals that Ukraine will unilaterally speed up the full implementation of the political and social elements of the "Minsk agreements" including the decentralisation process.

This asymmetrical situation – where one party does more in practice and gets less in return – cannot even be mitigated by EU sanctions imposed on Russia. Even if European leaders stated on March 20th 2015 that "the duration of the restrictive measures against the Russian Federation adopted on July 31st 2014 and enhanced on September 8th 2014 should be clearly linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements", we should rather expect a recurring debate about their necessity and effectiveness in the upcoming months.

Make no mistake, the world is still far away from brokering a comprehensive deal which will bring peace and stabilisation to Ukraine. To make it happen there needs to be additional means to exercise pressure on Russia to fully comply with the "Minsk agreements" such as maintaining sanctions and broadening the format of the negotiating parties to include both the European Union and the United States. NEE

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There is still much Work to be Done

MERLE MAIGRE

The ongoing conflict in Eastern Europe has put the international community's relationship with Russia on a new footing. From the perspective of Estonia, the war in the eastern regions of Ukraine is not solely a fight over Donetsk and Luhansk; it is also a fight over the fundamental assumptions that underlie European security. This is reflected in the words of Estonia's President Toomas Hendrik Ilves who, in March 2014, wrote in the *Washington Post* that: "Russia's aggression in Ukraine marks a paradigm shift, the end of trust in the post-Cold War order."

Clearly any assessment of the scope of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict needs to account for several dimensions. First and foremost are security concerns. In Estonia, for example, the information on the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation brought back to many people the memory of the trauma of their country's quiet submission to Soviet occupation in 1940. In other words: the military occupation of the peninsula and the subsequent referendum reminded Estonians on how the Soviet Union deprived them of their own country's independence during the Second World War. Russia's actions in Ukraine, as well as its surroundings, have reinforced a conviction that the security environment in Europe is becoming increasingly unpredictable. For this reason the security debate has now started to pay more attention to issues such as different types of warfare, especially hybrid warfare.

Since 2014 an increased number of Russian provocations have been seen in the Baltic Sea region, including frequent military exercises and airspace incursions by Russian bombers. This situation has raised serious questions about the security of NATO member states through collective defence. Therefore for Estonia it was very important that the 2014 NATO summit confirmed the alliance's political unity and military preparedness as well as strengthened its position of deterrence. In this context, the military presence of the United States in Europe is seen as a guarantee of peace, security and stability both in the Baltic Sea region and on a wider scale. The crisis has also made it quite clear that when it comes to security and defence there is still more work that needs to done in Europe.

On the level of the European Union, the crisis has showed the importance of

a strong and united EU foreign policy. The EU's response so far has been built on phased sanctions, a concept it has successfully developed over the years. This was the right approach at the right time. However, the question is what will remain of the sanctions beyond January 2016.

Another dimension in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine deals with a values-based foreign policy. Again, as Ilves said during the meeting of the heads of states of Estonia and Ukraine: "What is currently happening in Ukraine is a battle between Europe and non-Europe; it is not solely a military issue with Russian aggression as one party; instead, it is a conflict of values."

The importance of a values-based foreign policy, meaning one that expresses strong support for democracy, a market economy and the rule of law, is a principle that is strongly rooted in Estonia's own experience while joining the EU and NATO. Consider the Copenhagen criteria, i.e. the rules that define whether a country is eligible to join the EU in regards to its functioning of democracy and the rule of law, as well as NATO's growing emphasis on principles such as democratic control of the armed forces. Finally, when scoping the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it is essential to recognise the importance of the international order which is based on the respect for territorial sovereignty as well as the integrity and inviolability of borders. Speaking at the UN General Assembly in September 2014, Estonia's president listed several principles of international law that have been compromised by Russia, namely the 1945 UN Charter, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, and the 1990 CSCE Charter of Paris. He insisted that "if instead of agreements and laws, raw, brutal force will apply in international relations; if changing state borders by force will become an accepted norm, then the stability of the whole world is threatened."

At the moment, we are still faced with the question of what to do about it all. A question of great importance is how Europe should approach Russia. In answering this question Kadri Liik, an Estonian scholar and expert on Russia with the European Council on Foreign Relations pointed out in her study that: "It is important to remember that the end goal is not to isolate or destroy Russia, but to find a way to make Russia modify its behaviour to correspond to international law and to an OSCE-based international order, and thereby, in the end, to arrive at a new level of co-existence and co-operation." NEF

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The opinions expressed in this article are personal and do not reflect the official positions of the Republic of Estonia.

A Regional War that may Turn Global

JELENA MILIĆ

In order to answer the question as to what extent the conflict in Ukraine is global, the European Union and NATO first need to be defined as functional regional institutions. The OSCE, on the other hand, should be seen as seriously impeded in the wider regional arena while the United Nations is a failing global institution. In fact, the UN has become a hostage of its own architecture and the long-term UN Security Council blockade as a result of powers like China and Russia, which do not want to see a more active and functional UNSC.

The fully-fledged war in Ukraine is a matter for Ukraine, Russia, Europe, NATO and the OSCE. Therefore, it can be defined as a regional war. However, it may easily have global implications as it also illustrates the growing gap between the political East (not only Russia) and the political West (which reaches all the way south-east to Australia and north towards Japan and South Korea). Cases such as the war in Ukraine can help set the global debate about those who want to act globally based on commonly declared values and principles, such as the concept of a "concert of democracies" as suggested by Robert Kagan. While on the other side, we can witness the growing trend of promoting Russian exceptionalism, which has no clearly defined ideology behind it.

I belong to the school of thought that highlights the fact that even during the Cold War there were no sanctions imposed on the Soviet Union nor was there a direct armed confrontation as is the case now, despite all the euphemisms used to avoid stating the obvious (and all the denials coming from the Russian side). On the other hand, coming from Serbia, but following both western and Russian media intensely, I must say that Ukraine has lost its position as a major issue. For Sputnik and Russia Today, Ukraine is still a central theme in most reports and news. In Serbia Ukraine is mentioned only in the context of comparisons with Kosovo, the visit by French MPs to Crimea, or when Pravyy Sektor (Right Sector) challenged the government in Mukacheve. This is particularly odd as Serbia is chairing the OSCE this year.

Or perhaps Serbia's chairing the OSCE is actually the reason behind there being so little coverage of Ukraine? Serbia announced big plans to become "the bridge between the East and the West",

but seems to have discovered that in the East there is quicksand and that it is difficult to build a formidable pillar that can hold such a bridge. In addition, in reference to the 2013 Brussels Agreement on Kosovo, Serbia implicitly acknowledges that Kosovo is a "unique case" and that its status, and therefore borders, are negotiated by two sides, not forcefully changed as claimed by those who would like to present Kosovo as a precedent that violated the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Therefore, anything is permitted, including the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation.

Nonetheless, Ukraine is first and foremost a matter for Ukrainian citizens. It is they who have to understand that any kind of the assistance from the West will come with more and more strings attached related to the rule of law, democratic oversight of the security sector and other necessary reforms that will help Ukraine escape from the edge of becoming a failed state, the ultimate goal of the Kremlin.

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Common but Differentiated Concerns

IPPEITA NISHIDA

From the Asian perspective, the crisis in Ukraine is not something that can be easily dismissed. While it may appear to be a remote regional matter with few economic consequences and entailing no immediate security threats, the very attempt to disrupt regional stability by force is a direct challenge to the post-war liberal international order. Japan has been a major beneficiary of this order and today it is proud to uphold such liberal values as freedom, democracy and the rule of law. In this regard the conflict is global and highly relevant to Asia's peace and stability. At the same time, for reasons quite different from those espoused by our European friends, Japan finds dialogue with Russia important. This year's G7 Summit at Schloss Elmau highlighted these common but differentiated concerns over the crisis in Ukraine.

For Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, demonstrating solidarity with the G7 has been high on his agenda. Immediately before the summit Abe made an official visit to Kyiv where he attended the signing ceremony for Japanese aid to Ukraine, totalling 1.1 billion US dollars. In his meeting with Ukraine's president, Petro Poroshenko, Abe emphasised that Japan "would not tolerate any attempts to change the status quo by force" and would respect "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine". The same targeted message appears in the summit's joint declaration: "We strongly oppose the use of intimidation, coercion or force, as well as any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo, such as large scale land reclamation." Although it was not named, this call was clearly directed at China and its landfill activities in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea lies directly on the sea lanes between Europe and East Asia and is an area where six countries have competing territorial claims. China's unilateral actions, endorsed by its communist party and the military, represent a real security concern in Asia. Japan and other coastal states have been warning of China's aggressive behaviour in the East and South China Seas for some time, but this was not taken seriously by the Europeans until the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis. The community of countries with shared values has finally taken a common stance against such aggression.

However, Abe was careful not to alienate Russia. He skilfully conferred

with the leaders of countries like France, Germany and Italy and later announced his intentions to invite Vladimir Putin to Japan by the end of this year. He hopes to advance negotiations for the return of the Northern Territories (four islands under illegal occupation by the Soviet Union and Russia since 1945), an issue that has prevented the two countries from concluding a peace treaty. Another interest and a part of Abe's economic growth strategy is facilitating bilateral trade and investment, including the expansion of natural gas imports from Russia, which currently meets 10 per cent of Japan's gas needs.

Politically, many in Japan point to the importance of keeping Russia as a viable, independent player in Asia. Forcing Russia to align more fully with China, beyond the current gestures of closer economic and political ties, could adversely affect the regional balance of power in the long run and is not an acceptable option. This, besides the need for Russia's positive engagement on issues concerning Iran and Syria, is what informs Japan's views of Russia. The bilateral relationship has been bumpy and it was only recently that momentum began building for an improvement.

Moscow is aware of Japan's position. Abe's trip to Kyiv was simply described by the Kremlin as "a matter of bilateral relations". Both countries find it imperative to resume the high level talks which have been on hold since the crisis in Ukraine erupted. Washington is strongly opposed to the idea of inviting Putin to Tokyo, but Abe is already paving the way for such an event. On May 21st 2015 he received a visit by Sergey Naryshkin, the chair of the State Duma. This was reciprocated with a visit by Japan's top national security council official to Moscow on July 6th to set the tone for the upcoming summit.

As the G7 chair next year, Japan needs to maintain and consolidate G7 unity while seeking to gain diplomatic advantages. Moscow, meanwhile, hopes to drive a wedge between Japan and the West and get the sanctions lifted. Japan is at a crossroads of conflicting concerns – a test that Japan has self-imposed. As the Ukraine conflict drags on, Abe must find a credible solution that is consistent with the policies taken to date and is agreeable to all.

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Reconciliation: Europe's impossible and necessary task

STEFAN AUER

Twenty five years after the demise of communism, the EU has succeeded in giving itself a new institutional architecture. However, the new Europe of 28 member states needs more than new institutions – it requires a new self-understanding.

The European Union loves anniversaries. To the extent that the EU seeks to foster European identity, it is not surprising that it is increasingly deploying tools and methods that states have used to create nations: commemorations of key moments in the nation's history have served as rallying points for national attachments, creating, or strengthening a sense of national identity.

Yet Europe is different than nations. The European Union is not a state and Europe struggles to turn its many histories into one unifying narrative. From the outset, the European project was based on a somewhat paradoxical relationship with its past. Europeans were initially united more by that which they rejected rather than that to which they aspired. In 1945 the great French poet, Paul Valéry, described the European predicament: "We hope vaguely, we dread precisely." What people vaguely hoped for was peace, what they dreaded was the devastation of past wars.

However successful the project of Europe's unity has been in securing peace and prosperity underpinned by a strong commitment to liberal democracy, the European project was initially limited to Western Europe. The collapse of communism enabled Europe to reach beyond these limitations. For the first time in their turbulent histories, the nations of Europe in the West and in the East could pursue unity together. The peaceful revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe

gave the EU a new set of images and a date to remember: November 9th 1989, the day on which the Berlin Wall lost its purpose. Yet Europe's post-war developments also show that a true reconciliation between nations remains an elusive goal. If any reminder was needed, the recent tensions and conflicts that have arisen over the last five years testify to this: whether we think about the mismanagement of the Eurozone crisis that appears to have alienated a great number of Greeks from the European project, or the breakdown of EU-Russia relations owing to the ambitions of Ukrainians towards a return to Europe. Regrettably the latter conflict places a question mark over the EU's key ambition as a peace project: "soft power" Europe appeared inadequate when confronted by Russia's neo-imperialist ambitions over Ukraine. The better to deal with their current challenges, Europeans would be well-advised to draw lessons from the ongoing process of integrating the countries of New Europe.

A European problem

Twenty five years after the demise of communism, the EU has succeeded in giving itself a new institutional architecture through the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. However, the new Europe of 28 member states needs more than new institutions – it requires a new self-understanding. Judging from a number of recent attempts by key EU actors, achieving a basic agreement about the "meaning" of decisive events in Europe's recent past might prove at least as troublesome as the protracted process of institutional reform. The Schuman Declaration of 1950 harks to the legacy of the Second World War. The French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, was fully aware of the significance of its timing, "almost five years to the day since Germany's unconditional surrender" even though the actual release date of his plan was contingent on a series of negotiations between French, American and British partners. The declaration aimed at the preservation of peace in Europe by elevating West Germany into an equal partner in pursuit of a European federation, which was to be accomplished by means of piecemeal economic co-operation.

Achieving a basic agreement about the "meaning" of decisive events in Europe's recent past might prove as troublesome as the protracted process of institutional reform.

As Jean Monnet, the architect of the Schuman Plan, later recalled: in order to overcome traditional enmities between France and Germany, "the Franco-German problem" had to be turned into "a European problem". From the very beginning,

the project was open to other European nations with the notable exception of the countries within the Soviet sphere of influence. It is worth remembering that the Schuman Declaration was not perceived as a major event with far-reaching consequences by many contemporaries at the time. The fact that it is considered a milestone in Europe's integration today is largely a testimony to the success of the European Commission and other EU institutions in making it so, while Europe Day has been only officially celebrated since 1985.

Yet, there are limitations to Europe Day as a symbol that unites all the peoples of Europe. Unwittingly, it is also a reminder of the elitist and secretive nature of the project, at least originally. It remains one of the paradoxes of post-war European history that the western part of Europe gained an institutional dimension through the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958 at precisely the time when popular European feelings of community were at a low point. To safeguard peace in Europe the peoples of Europe had to be protected from themselves: their fear, their distrust of their neighbours and their desire for revenge. Owing to such sentiments, a people's Europe had to be built largely without the people's knowledge of it.

It is worth remembering that the Schuman Declaration was not perceived as a major event with far-reaching consequences by many contemporaries at the time.

The post-war transformation of Western Europe amounted to a "quiet revolution" of a peculiar kind. This top-down revolution radically changed the relationship between nation-states by subordinating them to a supranational legal order, which was, however, created by distinctly moderate means. It was only in the 1980s and the 1990s that the European elite owned up to these revolutionary changes and embarked on ambitious institutional reforms that culminated in the creation of the European Union. With the increased push towards closer integration through the Single European Act in 1986 and the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993, questions of legitimacy and popular consent gained importance, leading to a concerted effort to foster European identity.

Almost at the same time as Western Europe accelerated its quiet revolution from above, a bottom-up revolution was taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. This took the political elite in the West completely by surprise. The EEC and EU took a long time to develop an adequate response to a dramatically changed geopolitical situation, much like what is happening in Ukraine today. Nevertheless, 25 years later, insofar as the EU wants to be seen as a "people's Europe", it seems to make sense for it to claim ownership of the people's revolutions of 1989.

German *Ostpolitik* before reconciliation

Before 1989, however, West German governments had to deal with a fundamental dilemma with its eastern neighbour of Poland, namely how to bring about a process of genuine reconciliation with a nation that was not ruled by a legitimate government. Official gestures of friendship and humility that became prevalent under the Social Democratic strategy of *Ostpolitik* – which aimed to defuse tensions between East and West (including between Poland and West Germany) – unwittingly strengthened the legitimacy of the communist rulers. Even the most memorable image of *Ostpolitik*, Willy Brandt's *Kniefall* in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument in December 1970, was not free of such entanglements. In the view of many Poles, it occurred in "the wrong place at the wrong time", particularly because the gesture could not have been protected against abuse as Polish communist propaganda.

Another key aim of *Ostpolitik* was to improve the relationship between the two German states in order to ease the predicament of many Germans affected by the division. Implicitly, this strategy was based on the understanding that the division of Europe could not be changed in the foreseeable future. Helmut Schmidt, as chancellor of West Germany, sought to build on the legacy of Brandt's policies towards the East. In one of the most difficult moments of his political career, he found himself visiting East Germany on December 13th 1981, the day on which General Wojciech Jaruzelski proclaimed martial law in Poland. Schmidt was unwilling to jeopardise the progress made in the German-German relationship, even if this required a more muted response to the events in Poland. Queried by West German journalists about the events in Poland, he ended up agreeing with his host, the leader of the East German state Erich Honecker, that Jaruzelski's radical step was necessary to preserve peace and political stability in Europe. Schmidt continued praising the visit as a sign of "good neighbourly relations". The editorials in the major left-wing weekly, *Der Spiegel*, shared Schmidt's concern with political instability, dismissing "Polish romantic dreams of greatness" and blaming the Solidarity movement for endangering peace in Europe. Years later, Schmidt sought to justify his stance by arguing that his government was indeed supportive of the Solidarity movement by passing a resolution in the Bundestag and by encouraging German citizens to provide practical help. However, he had no doubts about the validity of the basic premise of *Ostpolitik: Wandel durch Annäherung* (change through rapprochement). Schmidt strongly opposed the more confrontational attitude towards the Soviet bloc represented by Ronald Reagan as irresponsible and naïve.

Helmut Schmidt epitomised the serious difficulties faced by left-wing politicians in Western Europe and their attitudes towards Central and Eastern Europe.

While many were clearly sympathetic towards the first genuinely independent trade union in the Eastern bloc, they resented their anti-communist elements in Poland and amongst their supporters in the West. Major left-wing parties in the West (e.g. in France and Italy) were hence divided about the appropriate response to the crisis in Poland.

German Europe or European Germany?

In another twist of history, the German-German relationship interfered with the German-Polish relationship on November 9th 1989. Just at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was visiting Poland. Confronted with the rapidly changing political situation in East Germany, Kohl felt that he had no other option but to interrupt his official visit and fly back to Germany. Kohl recalled in his memoirs that his Polish hosts were understandably displeased about the interruption of the trip, particularly against the background of the "growing awareness that they were witnessing a development at the end of which Poland would find itself next to a reunified Germany with the population of 80 million". Many Poles, alongside people in France, the UK and, indeed, a number of intellectuals and politicians in both East and West Germany were wary about the emergence of a powerful Germany that might destabilise Europe.

Given the traumatic history of the Polish-German relationship, it is surely not surprising that a large proportion of Poles were against German reunification: 36.5 per cent according to a snapshot survey published in the Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* on November 10th 1989. It is remarkable that almost 40 per cent of Poles were in favour of it (according to the same survey). This might partly be explained by the fact that Polish dissidents were well-prepared conceptually for the new situation, having contemplated the possibility of German reunification long before it was considered a realistic proposition even in Germany.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall there was a widespread consensus that the success of German unification was predicated on its strong commitment to Europe.

Unsurprisingly, after the fall of the Berlin Wall there was a widespread consensus among Polish, French and US political leaders that the success of German unification was predicated on its strong commitment to Europe. Even the German elite accepted that "the European Community was needed to save Germany from itself". Yet, under the skilful leadership of Kohl, West Germany showed itself capable of pursuing national interests in a way that would

have been inconceivable before the dramatic events of 1989. Notwithstanding the repeated and heart-felt assurances of all mainstream post-war politicians in West Germany that their aim was "not a German Europe, but a European Germany", Kohl accomplished a number of goals post-1989 that were seen as corresponding primarily with German national interests.

The main tension that arose in the Franco-German relationship, as an immediate result of the fall of the Berlin Wall, emerged from differing perspectives on the future of Europe against the background of possible German unification. The perception of France's strong opposition to German unification might have been exaggerated, but there can be little doubt that French President François Mitterrand was suspicious of the prospect of a more powerful Germany dominating Europe. To counterbalance this, French politicians favoured the intensification of European integration, making their support for a unified Germany dependent on ever-stronger German support for a unified Europe. Mitterrand, in particular, feared that the EU's enlargement would dilute the European project. Instead, he proposed that the whole of Europe, including the Soviet Union, be integrated in the form of a loose "European confederation". In essence, France was initially attempting to postpone EC/EU membership for Central and Eastern European countries.

Significant setbacks

The first post-1989 lesson for the French elite, alerting them to the limits of their influence in the "Europe to come", was the defeat of Mitterrand's project for a European federation. Yet France managed to reassert its leadership by enlisting Germany to speed up the introduction of a common European currency, which was meant to contribute to the creation of a more deeply integrated and truly political union. It seemed that the Franco-German tandem had prevailed once again. It became textbook wisdom that post-1989 Europe needed both "deepening" and "widening". However, the defeat of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 and the difficulties with ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 represented significant setbacks in this process.

Increasingly, the European elite struggled to persuade their electorates that an ever closer and an ever wider union was in everyone's interest. Whatever the EU's future is going to be, recent developments suggest that it can no longer remain centred exclusively around France and Germany. In fact, one of the paradoxical results of the introduction of the single European currency is that it achieved exactly the opposite of its initial aims. In mid-2015 Europe appears more divided than at any

point in its post-1989 history, with Germany finding itself in a position of leadership for which it did not aspire.

There are new divisions between the West and the East caused by the rise of Vladimir Putin's more aggressive Russia and there are divisions between Greece and the rest of Europe caused by the mismanagement of the Eurozone crisis. What is more, both problems are related: the EU's weakness translates into Russia's strength.

A shared Europe

It is clear that any attempt to reach a common understanding about the "true meaning" of key moments in history – such as the demise of communism in Poland, East Germany, or Europe at large – is fraught with difficulties. Such a consensus is difficult to achieve at a national level; to aspire to achieve it at the EU level is bound to end in disappointment. The juxtaposition of uplifting narratives produced by the European Commission, with the many, messy histories of participating nations points towards the limits of the usage of history for political aims, however worthy those aims might be. Yet there are also some positive lessons that can be drawn from the dissonance caused by EU attempts to appropriate the legacy of 1989.

France, Germany and the supranational institutions of the European Union, such as the European Commission, will need to learn to accept that they are no longer exclusively at the heart of the European project. In line with this, some of the key assumptions that drove the European project from its early stages are being challenged as a result of the massive political transformation brought about by the events of 1989. The post-war project of European unity in the West was informed by the rejection of nationalism as a destructive force, whereas in the communist part of Europe, nationalism was experienced as a liberating force. The project in the West was shaped by the experience of Nazism; after 1989, the notion of "never again Nazism" had to be complemented with "never again Stalinism".

France, Germany and European institutions, such as the European Commission, need to learn to accept that they are no longer exclusively at the heart of the European project.

Reflecting on the changed nature of Europe 25 years after the collapse of communism, William Outhwaite, a perceptive British sociologist, proclaimed boldly that "we are all post-communist now". This is to be understood not as a description of the political reality in contemporary Europe but rather as a challenge that the European nations and the elite in both East and West must take seriously. In a similar vein, when Jerzy Buzek, upon

his election as president of the European Parliament, proclaimed in his acceptance speech that "there is now no 'you' [in the West] and 'us' [in the East]: we live in a shared Europe", it was a statement of intent, rather than a statement of fact. There are still significant divisions between the two parts of Europe that used to be divided by the Iron Curtain, just as there are divisions between the nations of Europe regardless of their geographic locations.

Yet, to accept that a Europe of 28 nation-states must live with discord is true to the legacy of EU founding fathers, such as Jean Monnet and Konrad Adenauer, as much as it is to the legacy of the architects of the revolutions of 1989, such as Adam Michnik and Václav Havel. With their mixture of idealism and pragmatism, these Europeans understood that the true meaning of politics consists in accepting dissonance, while not giving up aspirations for more harmony.

This essay is based on an earlier version of the author's text titled:"Die EU und die Geburt des freien Europa Identität, Legitimität und das Erbe von 1989" published in *Osteuropa* issue 8/2010.

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Can we ever be Brothers Again?

OLEG KOZLOVSKY

Over a short period of two years, two countries and two peoples that had been closely linked for centuries became bitter enemies. Can we hope that such quick changes will turn out to be short-lasting? What should be done to find a path towards Russian-Ukrainian reconciliation? Is it possible at all? And is it even necessary? The last question is the most serious since the longer the conflict lasts, the more people adapt themselves to the new status quo, losing faith in the possibility of reconciliation.

Last autumn I was heading back to Moscow from a trip to several countries, including Ukraine. Upon my return, my passport attracted special attention from the Russian border guard. He flipped through the pages for some time, looking at the different stamps of entry and exit, and then looked at me seriously, blinked and asked: "Why did you go to Ukraine?"

A few months later I heard the same question from the Ukrainian border guard after landing once again at the Kyiv airport. I was taken to a separate room and questioned in a polite but meticulous manner. They wanted to know who I was and what the purpose was for my visit.

Not surprisingly, regular trips from one of the former "brotherly" countries to another cause suspicion among representatives of both border services. Over the last year, the antagonism between Russia and Ukraine has emerged not only at the governmental level, but in the attitudes of both peoples. Flights and trains have

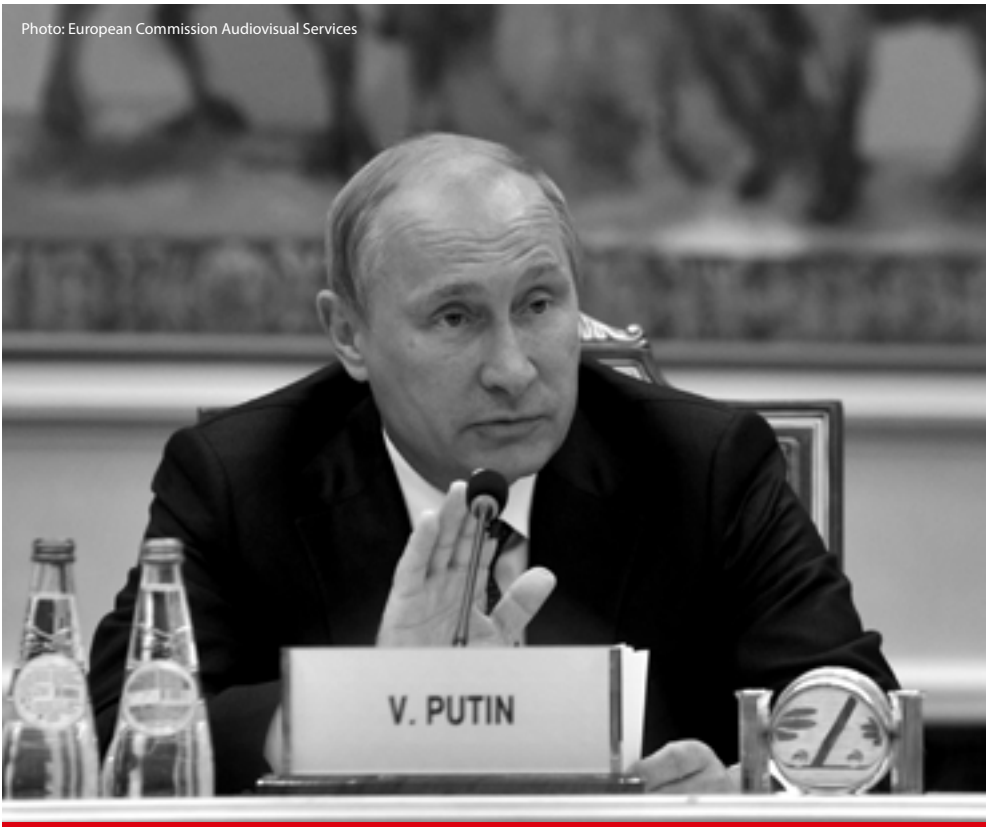

Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Services

Although the policy of Vladimir Putin is extremely dangerous for his own country, it has its own internal logic, only obvious to Putin himself.

been cancelled. Projects on economic, cultural and scientific co-operation have been shut down. But the most painful thing has been the disruption of personal ties between friends and relatives on both sides of the border. I have heard dozens of such stories.

Bitter enemies

The hostility between the two countries is clearly reflected in the results of opinion polls. According to a study conducted by the Levada Centre about a year ago, 63 per cent of Russians had a positive attitude towards Ukraine with 25 per cent having a negative attitude. Now, the picture is the exact opposite: only 26 per cent of respondents gave a positive assessment of the neighbouring country while 59 per cent expressed a negative assessment.

The most interesting thing is that these figures almost exactly coincide with data from the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. According to the latter, 30 per cent of Ukrainians today have a positive attitude towards Russia while 56 per cent have a negative one. The changes in Ukrainian public opinion are starker than in Russia. At the beginning of 2014, before the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, 78 per cent of Ukrainians were positive towards Russia while 13 per cent of Ukrainians were negative.

Over this period of time, very short from a historic perspective, two countries and two peoples that had been closely linked for centuries became bitter enemies. Of course, the sincerity of mutual assurances about eternal brotherly friendship was doubtful even before. However, this implicit hostility never turned into official state policy or was a theme in mainstream culture. Can we hope that such quick changes will turn out to be short-lasting? What should be done to find a path towards Russian-Ukrainian reconciliation? Is it possible at all? And is it even necessary?

The last question is more serious than it may seem at first glance. The longer the conflict lasts, the more people adapt themselves to the new status quo, find personal reasons for hatred (like killed or wounded relatives and friends) or simply lose faith in the possibility of reconciliation. A year ago many Ukrainians carefully separated the "bad Putin" from the "good Russians". Now they are tired and have simply given up on such distinctions. Many have lost hope for the liberal part of the Russian society, believing this group to be either too weak and without any chance of influencing government policy, or having similar imperial sentiments as the Kremlin. As a result, there is a growing number of those who do not support a resolution of the conflict as such, but rather isolation from Russia.

A year ago, many Ukrainians carefully separated the "bad Putin" from the "good Russians". Now, they are tired and simply gave up on such distinctions.

In May 2015 almost half of Ukrainians supported the closure of their state's border with Russia and the introduction of a visa Regime – three times as much as in early 2014. There is a similar trend in Russia, although less pronounced. After the annexation of Crimea, Kyiv-born Anastasia Dmitruk expressed this frustration in a poem titled "We Will Never Be Brothers". Its video clip was watched by millions of people on the internet and gave rise to a series of equally unfriendly responses from the Russian side.

And yet Ukraine cannot afford to ignore reality, no matter how strongly it would like to turn away from Russia and remain in the pleasant company of peaceful European countries. The reality is that without Moscow's participation it will not only

be impossible to solve the Crimea and Donbas problems, but will also be extremely difficult to carry out the internal reforms Ukraine desperately needs. Vladimir Putin is certainly interested in Ukraine's failure (for both domestic and foreign policy reasons) and he has powerful levers that can slow down development of Ukraine and block its joining of the EU and NATO (which is already hard enough).

Russia needs reconciliation with Ukraine no less than Ukraine needs reconciliation with Russia. Economic sanctions, political isolation and instability in the immediate neighbourhood add up to a recipe for disaster. Getting out of this impasse is only possible after the restoration of normal relations with Ukraine. Finding solutions to the critical problems between our countries is only possible when there is co-operation with Ukraine as well as the whole international community.

Zero-sum games

Many of these problems have been created by the Russian leadership itself. However, it would be wrong to write them off as "mistakes". Although the policy of Vladimir Putin is extremely dangerous for his own country, it has its own internal logic, only obvious to Putin himself. Apparently, he is convinced that the war he is waging is not against Ukraine, and certainly not against fascism, but against the West, and the United States in particular. Brought up during the Cold War, Putin understands international politics as a zero-sum game. He is accustomed to thinking in terms of "special operations" and is more and more fearful of losing power.

Putin is convinced that the fight is not against Ukraine but against the West, and the United States in particular.

The aging Russian dictator sincerely believes that the events in Ukraine (as well as many other events all over the world unrelated to the Ukraine crisis) are an element of the West's undeclared war against Putin himself, and against his Russia. In his mind, the annexation of Crimea was a response to the Revolution of Dignity which had been inspired – as it seems to him – by the White House. And the intervention in Donbas is Russia's proxy war against NATO conducted with the hands of Ukrainians (and some gullible Russians). It is obvious that having such deep-rooted beliefs about the world, Putin will not seek reconciliation with Ukraine, which he considers a battleground and a prize, not an independent actor, except if the latter actually is "won" by Russia from the West.

But sooner or later Putin's regime will go. And there is a chance that after the bankruptcy of his policies, a more modern-minded, pro-western and liberal-oriented

generation will replace him. It may be then possible to seek solution to some of the problems in Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Pressing issues

One of the most urgent issues is the fate of Ukrainian citizens who are being held in Russian prisons. Over the last year, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation and other repressive structures fabricated a number of criminal cases with varying degrees of absurdity. As a result, dozens of Ukrainians, including military personnel, Crimean activists and random people have landed in prisons and prison camps. This number is likely to grow and these prisoners often face the perspective of spending decades deprived of freedom, with no hope of a fair trial.

Ukraine considers its citizens imprisoned in Russia to be hostages and illegally detained persons (as they are also called in the Minsk agreements). The Kremlin, of course, does not agree with this interpretation and is in no hurry to release or exchange the Ukrainians. Yet legally, it would not be difficult to hand detained Ukrainians back to Ukraine. And whoever replaces Putin would not have to make much effort to make a gesture of goodwill by freeing these hostages.

Speaking of Ukrainians on the Russian territory, there is another category of Ukrainian citizens who are wanted by their homeland – Viktor Yanukovych and his entourage, who fled to Russia after the revolution. There are open criminal cases against them in Ukraine. The former president is also on the wanted lists of Interpol. Although Putin is unlikely to have much respect for his former colleague, who has failed to cope with the EuroMaidan, he will not hand over Yanukovych under any circumstances. Equally important for Ukraine is the question of assets owned by its former leaders, misappropriated during years of unchecked power. Though European countries have met Kyiv's request to seize the accounts of corrupt officials, it is too early to speak about such steps in Russia. Once again, one would have to wait for a new political leadership that would take such decisions.

No simple solution

However, not all the problems in Russian-Ukrainian relations can be solved by the stroke of a pen. The most difficult question is the status of Crimea. Its annexation in March 2014 was one of the most popular, domestically, steps of Putin in the 15 years of his rule. And it was also one of the most harmful steps for the country in the long run. International sanctions, expulsion from the G8, a sharp

and lasting deterioration in relations with western countries and even with its allies in the Commonwealth of Independent States – these are the first results of the Crimean adventure. Further consequences may be even more serious, from full-scale international isolation to the growth of separatism within Russia itself.

Unfortunately, the problem of Crimea has no simple solutions, even if the most liberal and pro-western forces were to come to power in Russia. The return of the peninsula to Ukraine, although the most ideal solution from the perspective of international law, will be virtually impossible. Even if one succeeds in navigating its return through the Russian political system (which is doubtful), such a decision would be suicidal for the new government. Moreover, it would raise the popularity and could lead to a return of imperialist or nationalist forces. Obviously, this is what Alexey Navalny and Mikhail Khodorkovsky meant when they addressed this issue last year. Yet, their words about the impossibility of returning Crimea caused outrage in Ukraine.

The return of Crimea to Ukraine would mean the recognition by Russia of the act of aggression and of seizure of foreign territory. The overwhelming majority of Russian citizens, who enthusiastically supported the 2014 annexation of new territory, would have to share the responsibility, even if only moral one, for this crime. It is extremely difficult to do even for one person, let alone a whole nation. Such recognition can only happen if Russians shed the imperial consciousness and the idea of self-righteousness, which is formed by the official version of history. If such a fundamental change in the national worldview occurred, it would be the result either of a generations-long evolution or of some kind of catastrophe (like the one, which happened to the Germans after the defeat in the Second World War).

The problem of Crimea cannot be solved by Russia or Ukraine unilaterally. Barred any aforementioned "catastrophic" scenario, it will require complex negotiations and – most probably – unpleasant compromises on both sides. Today, the political elite of both countries are ill-prepared for such discussions. Perhaps a generation change in both Russian and Ukrainian politicians is necessary for such discussions to even take place. On the other hand, it does not mean that nothing can be done now. The opinion of the residents of Crimea should be the most important, though not the only, factor. If they loudly and clearly express their desire to return to Ukraine, it will be a weighty argument in favour of restoring the former status of the peninsula. Of course, much depends on the success of Ukraine's economic reforms and of its European integration. In other words, Kyiv should convince Crimeans to come back.

Moscow also has to find a common language with Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar communities, protect their cultural rights and involve them in the decision-making process on the peninsula. Although these measures are not enough to determine

the final status of Crimea, they will help to alleviate the problem and pave the way for both parties to eventually sit down at the negotiating table.

Fundamental distrust

The most dangerous and unpredictable of all the Russian-Ukrainian problems is, of course, the war in the east of Ukraine. Even during the period of relative calm there are new dead and wounded every day and escalation can happen at any moment. Nevertheless, in some sense, the situation has not gone as far as in the case of Crimea. The point of no return has not been passed and Russia can theoretically draw back without catastrophic consequences for itself or Ukraine.

Unfortunately, neither Russia nor Ukraine can decide what their exact goals are in Donbas. If the Russian opposition unanimously calls for an end to the war, withdrawal of troops and equipment and restoration of the border, the authorities seem to hesitate between escalation, transformation of the occupied territories into a new Transnistria and returning them to Ukraine under conditions favourable for the Kremlin. Similarly, some forces in Ukraine call for martial law and a decisive offensive against the breakaway republics while others want their peaceful reintegration, yet others are principally satisfied with the status quo.

The fundamental distrust of both parties towards each other is an equally important barrier. Since the first day of the first ceasefire, which was signed in autumn 2014, both sides have been constantly and often correctly accusing each other of violating it. Ukrainians have many reasons to doubt that Putin is interested in the stabilisation of Donbas; while Moscow accuses Kyiv of provocations. The political leadership of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics, although subordinated to Moscow, has its own interests, and they can easily derail the reconciliation process if they regard it as a threat to their own position.

Equally dangerous are the paramilitary groups in these areas, many of which have semi-feudal autonomy and whose activity has turned into a lucrative criminal business. They will neither enthusiastically disarm, nor accept criminal prosecution. Finally, there are difficult questions of who will reconstruct the war-ravaged infrastructure of Donbas and who will pay for it. Ukraine is in no position to massively invest in such a project and Russia is not ready to take responsibility for the economy of Donetsk and Luhansk. If the EU, the US and international financial institutions do not interfere, the chances for the restoration of normal life in eastern Ukraine will remain low even if the fighting ends.

Ukraine will never be the same

The most important first step to breaking the geopolitical impasse in Eastern Europe requires that Russians accept the fact that Ukraine has changed irreversibly and understand that there is a need to build a new relationship. As time passes, Ukraine will drift even farther from Russia in cultural, civilizational, economic and political dimensions. In several decades, there will be as much in common between Russia and Ukraine as there is between Russia and the Baltic states, Poland or Finland today.

The most important first step to breaking the geopolitical impasse in Eastern Europe requires that Russians accept the fact that Ukraine has changed irreversibly.

There will be many (probably still a majority) Russian-speaking Ukrainians, although young people will prefer English and German. Nevertheless, Russians will stop being surprised that Ukrainians speak a language other than Russian. And maybe a new generation of Ukrainians will stop associating Russians with the Soviet Union. Old resentments will eventually lose their sharpness. There will be a common history containing both light and dark pages. Economic co-operation will eventually resume. New global and regional problems will emerge requiring common solutions. We may never truly be brothers again, but it is still not too late to be good neighbours.

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Reconciliation Begins at Home

A conversation with Mykhailo Cherenkov, vice president for strategy and education at the Association for Spiritual Renewal in Ukraine. Interviewer: Iwona Reichardt

IWONA REICHARDT: We met during the London Consultation which was held in late April 2015. This meeting gathered religious leaders from different countries, including Ukraine and Russia, who passed a resolution urging an international reaction to the war in eastern Ukraine. In its text we read: "This crisis presents an urgent opportunity for the global Church to demonstrate solidarity with those who are suffering, to advocate for religious freedom, and to help restore peace, justice and reconciliation." Coming from Donetsk and experiencing first-hand the ongoing war, do you think this really is the right moment to start talking about reconciliation?

MYKHAILO CHERENKOV: Like the majority of the participants at the London Consultation I am convinced that we should start speaking about reconciliation now, even while the war is ongoing and the attempts to stop it continue to be unsuccessful. The more people pray and talk about peace and post-war reconciliation, the faster the war will come to an end. In other words, the sooner we begin, the better. At the same time we have to be realistic. As long as there is military action, reconciliation with enemies is out of the question. During the gathering in London the Bishop of Ukrainian Pentecostals, Mykhailo Panochko, brought up this problem. I can imagine that his sober words may not have been welcomed by all, mainly because Russians and Ukrainians are still referred to as "brothers".

The true tragedy of the Ukrainian-Russian war is that the fraternal people have turned out to be an aggressor. Those who were our brothers yesterday are our enemies today. Yet we need to do everything we can so that today's enemies become our brothers tomorrow. However, when our brothers are still our enemies we need to protect ourselves from them. The enemies need to repent and admit their guilt in order to become

our brothers again. Only then will we be able to make peace.

Thus, the Christian leaders from all over the world who gathered at the London Consultation did not call for surrender. On the contrary, they supported Ukraine in its resolute struggle for freedom, while encouraging us to anticipate and prepare for the day when the enemy asks for peace and forgiveness. The challenge of reconciliation needs to be addressed by both Russians and Ukrainians.

In other words reconciliation between Russia and Ukraine is possible?

Yes, but we need to keep in mind that for the moment this is a matter for the future. There is also another urgent matter that needs to be tackled, but no one is really talking about it. And that is reconciliation among the Ukrainian people. Admittedly, before reconciling with Russians (and I stress we are talking here about a very vague and remote future), the Ukrainian people must first reconcile internally. What I am mainly referring to here is a regional reconciliation between the country's east and west. And this reconciliation needs to take place on a number of levels, including political, social, cultural, linguistic and religious.

Today Ukraine's internal diversity is perceived as a problem. But once there is an internal reconciliation, this diversity will turn into a great asset. And this is something that totalitarian Russia fears the most: a peaceful and plural Ukraine. Therefore, reconciliation becomes a process which begins inside the nation, unites it and makes it invincible. Only then it can expand to its neighbours and enemies.

As a former provost of the Donetsk Christian University and a religious leader of an organisation that suffered harm from the pro-Russian separatists how can you envision a process of healing wounds?

Reconciliation, healing and recovery mean something more than just a return to the *status quo ante*, a time when there was no war. Reconciliation implies renovation, upgrading to a new level of relationship. Once war has occurred, no one is able to live as they did before. Life is possible only on the other side of the war – after the war. This means that reconciliation opens the door only to one direction – the future. Recovery by means of a return to the past is doomed to reproduce the same cycle of war. Moving to the future is needed but it shall be based on remembering what happened in the past. I am talking about the relationship model that people have with each other, with the world around them and with God. We cannot necessarily learn about these relationships from history books but rather from the Bible. There, love reigns and is the motif of reconciliation, its purpose and means.

Keeping in mind the Biblical model of reconciliation where God does not turn a blind eye to sins, but sacrifices Himself to save the world, we should not speak about reconciliation with the reality of evil and lies, or giving in to

Photo courtesy of Mykhailo Cherenkov

"The true tragedy of the Ukrainian-Russian war is that the fraternal people have turned out to be an aggressor. Those who were our brothers yesterday are our enemies today."

their inevitability. Reconciliation requires meekness, not to evil but to the higher Truth. It requires an acceptance of personal responsibility and guilt for what has happened. Meek people admit their guilt and the relative character of their rightness, not justifying the perpetrator nor agreeing with the prevailing opinion, and therefore do not judge in their own name, but pass the judgment to God, asking for mercy: "forgive us…, as we have forgiven".

We usually think of reconciliation as a restoration of a disrupted relationship. However does not this tragedy demonstrate that there is actually nothing to restore? What used to be has turned out to be untenable. Is it worth restoring? That is why, at the end of the day, maybe we should not speak about a restoration or a reformation but rather about a revival or a birth? Something new has to be born, something that did not exist in the past.

If peace is possible, it can be only attained by a deliberate and unanimous effort. If unity is possible, it is the unity of the engaged and not of the indifferent. In this respect, we are witnessing the creation of a new Ukraine. Previously, there was a Ukraine that did not know itself nor self-reflected on its existence. It was a Ukraine that was not able to answer its own or other's questions about the nature of its unity, conditions for peace or the distinctiveness of its historical fate. Today it starts to painfully understand and accept itself and others, its calling and shared responsibility, its internal complexity and a future full of opportunities.

You come from a household where one parent is Ukrainian and one parent is Russian. You speak Russian openly and without embarrassment, which is quite common in Ukraine. Yet, unquestionably, parts of your country are torn and divisions run deep. If language is not a problem, what are the barriers to a peaceful co-existence between people, especially in eastern Ukraine?

The language division of Ukraine is only the visible tip of the iceberg. This division goes deeper and is reflected in people's attitude to the Russian and the Soviet empire. Thus, the main division lies on the Soviet/Ukrainian line, although there is also an internal line which divides a Soviet-Ukraine and a European-Ukraine. As a result, supporters of the Soviet past obstinately speak Russian, while supporters of Ukraine's European future speak Ukrainian and English (as well as Polish, German and French). Language preferences of Ukrainians are clear markers of their regional, national and cultural identity.

The Russian language in Ukraine is a residual trace of the targeted colonial policy of Russification, denationalisation and cultural assimilation. For many western Ukrainians the Russian language is a language of occupants and torturers. For the inhabitants of the eastern regions it is a part of their common Soviet heritage. I actually divide all Russian-speaking Ukrainians into two groups: those who speak both Russian and Ukraini-

an and those who only speak Russian. People from first group fit well in the Ukrainian culture while those from the second group oppose Ukraine and identify themselves with Russian and Soviet cultures.

Where do you see yourself in these divisions?

I belong to the first group and to the best of my knowledge the majority of Donbas (up to 70 per cent of the locals) also belong to it. With the consistent soft cultural integration of the region these people will shift to seeing themselves as strictly Ukrainian, especially the younger generations. The remaining 30 per cent make up the reserve of the Soviet past and, as was demonstrated by the events of 2014, are ready to defend their cultural reserve with arms. What is more, they dream of expanding it to the whole of Ukraine. Thus, the Russian language is associated with the Soviet past while Ukrainian with the pre-Soviet past, and most importantly, with the future.

However, two clarifications should be made in relation to the perspectives that both languages have. Firstly, the Russian language can have a new future in Ukraine; it can become a "Russian Ukrainian" or a "Ukrainian Russian" (similar to "American English"). In other words, it can be the language of the Russian speaking population who look not to Moscow, but to Kyiv, not to the totalitarian model of the Russian culture, but to the tradition of Ukrainian freedom which dates back to the Kyivan Rus'. Secondly, the prospects of the Ukrainian language are associated with the plethora of European languages and cultures. It can develop not in opposition to Russian and not in obstinate provincial self-containment, but in enriching cultural and linguistic co-existence with European influence.

Since last year's EuroMaidan Revolution, also known as the Revolution of Dignity, the role of churches and religious organisations has significantly increased in Ukraine. Today, social trust in these entities is estimated to be at the highest level, also when compared to other public institutions. However, this picture is far from simple, especially given the role the Ukrainian Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the lack of canonical legitimacy of the Kyiv Patriarchate. What do you think is the future of Eastern Orthodoxy in Ukraine and how may the future of these two churches affect the situation in the country?

Indeed, the level of social trust in the Church is higher than ever before. Accordingly, the expectations of it are also very high. And if these expectations are not met, the pendulum of public opinion will swing from a position of high trust to a position of great disappointment. This is well illustrated by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. It was, and so far remains, the largest and most influential religious denomination in Ukraine and was expected to give a casting vote capable of ending confrontation between the government and the people during the EuroMaidan

Revolution and the following war. Unfortunately, even though the voice was uttered, it was soft and unclear.

Today it should be acknowledged that the UOC (MP) is perceived as anti-Ukrainian. At the same time, the Kyiv Patriachate, which is not officially recognised by Constantinople, is viewed as national and patriotic. People prefer not the canonical ("right") and the anti-Ukrainian ("not ours") church, but the one that is pro-Ukrainian, although non-canonical. Ukrainians have progressively been losing interest in the canonicity of the Church and are more concerned with its practical service for the society. In fact, canonicity is the last argument the Moscow Patriarchate has. Once Constantinople decides to recognise the Kyiv Patriarchate, it will become the main denomination of the country and the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate will simply shift to it.

Europe and the whole world should understand that the Moscow Patriarchate has no rights to the Ukrainian territory and the concept of the "canonical territory" and the "canonical Church" are hardly applicable in the current context. Besides, the Moscow Patriarchate is schismatic as it opposes and distances itself from global Orthodoxy (by the doctrine of concordance, unconditional support of the Kremlin, aggressive denial of democracy and human rights, abjection of other Orthodox Churches as "small" and "weak", the doctrine of representing Moscow as "the third Rome", after which "there will be no fourth"), and self-confidently equates the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodoxy as such.

Looking into the future, do you think that you will ever be able to go back to Donetsk and continue the work you were doing there before the war?

What is going on in Donetsk now is almost impossible to imagine. It is difficult to comprehend all that has happened. People are different now, even the air is different. I was there incognito in late December 2014. Everything was strange, as if it was a bad dream. As a matter of fact, I often have nightmares about Donetsk – a city covered in darkness where zombies hunt the last survivors. My nightmares are filled with fires and shootings, tortures and murders.

When I went back to Donetsk, I felt that this was a different world, like another planet. People were afraid to speak and nobody was certain of anyone. They were closed to any talk about faith, conscience, God and the soul. I noticed something similar in Crimea in the spring of 2014 – people with St. George ribbons behaved like other human, or even non-human, beings. The Donetsk Christian University, where I previously worked, has been taken over by pro-Russian separatists. The academic buildings and dormitories have been converted into warehouses. Hostages are being held there and rooms have been transformed into torture chambers. A classroom of a private Christian school on the university campus has been turned into a shooting range where rebels shoot at

Ukrainian symbols and children's drawings. These activities are recorded and exhibited like trophies. Where my children once planted trees, now there are trenches and guns.

I find it hard to believe that all this can ever be returned and sanctified, cleared from sin. But we have to have faith. Otherwise hundreds of thousands of scattered Ukrainians will live with emptiness in their souls, without any hope of returning to their homes. I very much hope that we will never come back to the remains of Soviet nostalgia. We need to build a new Donetsk and a new Ukraine. I want to believe that something new is being born out of the flames of war, that the Soviet past is destroying itself and that there will be no alternative to the European future in the absence of the old shores. And above all, I want to believe that the point of no return has been crossed and Ukraine will become a part of the commonwealth of European states.

Translated by Olena Shynkarenko

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Diplomacy of Pastoral Letters

PAWEŁ KOWAL

"Honourable Brothers, we ask you: let us try to forget. Let there be no further polemic, no further cold war, but a beginning of dialogue". It is with these words, 20 years after the Second World War, that a group of Polish bishops approached the German episcopate in an unprecedented proclamation. In democratic Poland, the 1965 pastoral letter became a model and point of reference in the reconciliation process, not only with Germany but also with Poland's other neighbours, especially Ukraine and Russia.

In 1965, 20 years after the Second World War, the Polish clergy came to an agreement that the position of German Catholic bishops was key for the stability of Poland's post-war borders. The rationale behind this thinking was the significant influence enjoyed by the German bishops in the Holy See which, faced with opposition from the German episcopate, was strengthening its formal approach to the issue and refusing to establish a normal church administration in western Poland without the signing of a pact between Poland and West Germany according to the rule: "there is no peace treaty – there are no final decisions".

At that time, Poland's primate was Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. He had been granted special status to make Church decisions on behalf of the pope in Poland. He also enjoyed immense popularity among Poles. Thanks to his personal involvement in efforts to establish new dioceses in western Poland, Wyszyński could not be attacked by the communist authorities under the pretext of "supporting Bonn's

policies". This meant that despite some fundamental differences between the cardinal and the authorities, on this matter there was an overlap; both sides wanted confirmation of Poland's post-war borders. However, the "wait and see" position of the Vatican gave the communists a pretext to attack the Church and accuse it of succumbing to the West German lobby.

We ask for forgiveness

The process of Polish-German reconciliation, initiated in 1965, was extraordinary in the sense that Cardinal Wyszyński took on the role as both a politician who understood the strategic goal of reconciliation and as a spiritual leader who justified this process with religious arguments, all happening in communist Poland. Wyszyński's engagement with the German bishops also created an additional opportunity to influence the German Christian Democrats (who were in power at that time) and get them to form an opinion that would be favourable for Poland and its post-war borders. Therefore, there was a serious political rationale which pushed Wyszyński to sign the letter to the German bishops. There were also some religious presumptions for his signature, namely the practical implementation of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). It is worth noting that on October 4th 1965, Pope Paul VI delivered a historic speech at the United Nations headquarters in New York where he called for a solution to the effects of the Second World War.

The process of Polish-German reconciliation was extraordinary in that Cardinal Wyszyński took on the role as both a politician who understood the goal of reconciliation and as a spiritual leader who justified this process with religious arguments.

The 1965 "Pastoral Letter of the Polish Bishops to their German Brothers" included an invitation addressed to the German bishops to participate in the celebration of the millennium of Poland's baptism, which was planned for 1966 and marked the religious beginning of the process of forgiveness and reconciliation after the Second World War. This letter addressed to the German bishops was not the only invitation sent out by the Poles. It was actually one of 56 letters written by Polish bishops who, after the completion of the Second Vatican Council, issued similar invitations to other episcopates throughout the world. However, in the German letter, the bishops treated the situation very differently, conducting consultations regarding the content of the pastoral letter with the German bishops. The tactical mistake by the Polish bishops was that they

did not get a promise from their German counterparts as to what their answer to the letter would look like, and did not attempt any formal consultations about the letter's content with the communist authorities.

The letter to the German bishops was signed by 34 participants on November 18th 1965. The signing took place during the Second Vatican Council. The letter started with an invitation to Poland for the anniversary celebrations and included a summary of the history of Polish-German relations since the rule of Otto III. The authors decisively assessed 19th century German policy towards Poland, especially the period covering the Second World War. They pointed out the victims, millions of murdered Jews and Poles and brought up the issue of material damage to Poland in great detail. Characteristically, the bishops made a special gesture: they invoked the memory of the victims among Hitler's opponents – both Christians and communists.

In reference to the Vatican Council, the bishops called the German episcopate to start a dialogue: "Honourable Brothers, we ask you: let us try to forget. Let there be no further polemic, no further cold war, but a beginning of dialogue –one that is being sought by the Vatican Council and Pope Paul IV." The letter became historic because of its political and religious message. Its most well-known passage states: "In this most Christian, but also very human, gesture we reach out to you, sitting here on the benches as the Vatican Council nears its end, with our hand extended and while forgiving you, we ask you for forgiveness."

Tactically, the letter brought no benefit to the Polish Church. Not only did it fall victim to an aggressive propaganda campaign launched by the communist authorities, but it also clashed with the public mood in Polish society at the time, which was still very hostile towards the Germans, who were perceived as the perpetrators of the Second World War. The communist authorities in Poland attacked the bishops. Their main accusation focused on the bishops' acknowledgment that the Germans were also the victims of war crimes. Importantly, the Polish bishops were pointing out a fact that today is obvious, but was not necessarily clear in the 1960s – that Poland had not emerged from the war victorious. Realising what kind of propaganda attack they were about to face, which could have included another wave of anti-church repressions, the bishops in Poland began to claim that the letter was not political but religious in nature, and started to modify its interpretation.

Under the influence of the Second Vatican Council, the bishops were taken by surprise with the lack of understanding shown by Polish society. The bishops were accused of offering forgiveness to the Germans without any act of remorse on their part. They were also accused of speaking on behalf of all Poles who suffered under German policies. Crucially, the Catholic clergy in Poland was one of the social groups against whom the Nazi terror was particularly acute. The situation that the

bishops found themselves in could have been saved only by an adequate reaction on the part of the German bishops. As it turned out, that was impossible at that time. On December 5th 1965, the answer, signed by 41 Catholic bishops from both German states, was received in Poland. The German episcopate decided to issue a very diplomatic answer which was far from the intention expressed by the Polish priests. The letter also failed to express any support for Poland's post-war border.

Should the German answer have been in line with the expectations in Warsaw, it would have been a success for Wyszyński, and his position in relations with the communists would have been much stronger. However, the pastoral letter did not bring the Polish Church hierarchy any benefit. Wyszyński was the letter's staunchest proponent because he seemingly understood the strategic importance for Poland and the role of the Church in the future. History did eventually prove his instincts correct. In Poland, after the collapse of communism in 1989, this course of reconciliation started by the bishops' letters was continued and developed for both political and social reasons. Therefore, the 1965 letter has become a model and point of reference in the reconciliation process, not only with Germany, but also with Poland's other neighbours, especially Ukraine and Russia.

Forgive us our sins

The message of the 1965 letter has become one of the most inspiring Polish foreign policy documents since 1989 because it did not fit the ideology of communist Poland. The 40th anniversary of the letter's signing, which was celebrated in 2005 (its 50th anniversary will be celebrated this year), brought about a new, special initiative – a letter concerning relations with Ukraine. It is worth pointing out that even though the analogies between these two events are justified, the scale of historical issues and emotions was very different, as were their historical and legal contexts. The essence of historical problems in Polish-Ukrainian relations are the events that took place after 1943, namely the genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Polish population by Ukrainian nationalists and the subsequent retaliation undertaken by the Polish Home Army (AK) and other units, as well as the displacement of Ukrainians in communist Poland. From a formal point of view, the majority of these events took place within one state, where both Poles and Ukrainians were citizens, and were not of an international nature (unlike the events that characterised the history of Polish-German and Polish-Russian relations).

In both cases, namely in 1965 and 2005, the letters were political in nature. In 1965 the letter resulted in an attack by the communist authorities on the Catholic Church. However, the 2005 letter was compatible with the policies of the govern-

ment, as well as the opposition, towards Ukraine and it corresponded with the public social attitudes of many Poles towards Ukrainians, which had improved since the 2004–2005 Orange Revolution. This time around, the positive message of the letter was determined by the state.

Significantly, the letter to Ukrainians was still being prepared during the papacy of John Paul II who, as a signatory of the 1965 letter, was very supportive of the initiative. However, this time around there was no exchange of letters, but rather the creation of one document that was addressed to the faithful of two Catholic observances: Roman and Greek. The context of the preparations for the 2005 letter should be seen as consistent with the policy of John Paul II who, even during the period of Soviet rule, had made gestures towards the prosecuted Greek Catholic Church.

John Paul II also maintained contact with Polish Greek Catholics and since 1987, had been convincing Poland's Primate, Józef Glemp, to engage in a dialogue with the Greek Catholic Church, whose followers also included Ukrainians living abroad. A breakthrough moment in the history of these relations was the pope's visit to Ukraine, including Lviv, in 2001. During this visit, both John Paul II and Cardinal Liubomyr Husar brought up the issue of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation and the closing of historical disputes, while the leader of the Greek Catholic Church publically asked for forgiveness for the sins conducted by Greek Catholics during the Second World War.

Signs of peace

On June 18th 2005, at the 332nd plenary convention of the Conference of Poland's Episcopate, a common letter on forgiveness and reconciliation was signed by Polish and Ukrainian bishops. The document's Polish patrons were Primate Glemp and the chair of the Episcopate, Józef Michalik. The Ukrainian patrons included the leader of the Greek Catholic Church, the greater archbishop of Lviv and Cardinal Liubomyr Husar. On June 26th 2005, the letter was publically announced at a ceremony in Lviv. Its message was straightforward, stating: "Let us move beyond our political views and historical disputes, beyond our church observances, and even above our nationalities – Polish and Ukrainian." These words framed the bloody Polish-Ukrainian conflict in a strictly religious, maybe even "final" perspective. Moreover, the context of the letter's signing was special as it was issued just two months after the passing of John Paul II on April 2nd 2005 and after the Eucharistic Congress in Poland. These two events determined the religious message of the letter. Glemp and Husar did not just issue a document. They also decided to

make a public sign of peace during the ceremony in Warsaw. It was witnessed by thousands of attendees.

The political context of the letter was clear. The signing of the document took place months after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the strengthening of Polish-Ukrainian relations in the face of an increasingly more aggressive Russia. As many Poles personally supported the process of free elections in Ukraine, the attitude of Ukrainians towards Poles also improved. In one commentary, Cardinal Husar put it simply: "Together with the Polish Primate, we thought it would take us seven to ten years. Yet, last year, the atmosphere changed so much that the reconciliation may start taking place right now." The 2005 document had its political consequences in the sense that it responded to the objectives of the policy towards Ukraine that was carried out by two Polish presidents: Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Lech Kaczyński.

The results of this were noticeable. On June 24th 2005, after years of Polish perseverance, the cemetery of the "Defenders of Lviv" (also known as the Cemetery of Eaglets, where Poles who defended the city against Ukrainians in 1918–1920 are buried) was re-opened. Until then, it was a serious point of dispute in Polish-Ukrainian relations. The ceremony was attended by both the presidents of Poland and Ukraine, as well as Cardinal Husar, representing the Greek Catholic Church and Cardinal Mieczysław Jaworski of Poland, an informal confidante of John Paul II. On May 13th 2006, the Polish president, Lech Kaczyński, together with the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, Cardinal Husar and Archbishop Michalik, participated in a ceremony to dedicate a monument to the memory of the Ukrainian victims of the Polish Home Army (AK). On April 27th 2007, on the 60th anniversary of Operation Vistula (Akcja "Wisła") Cardinals Glemp and Husar conducted a service in the Presidential Palace in Warsaw. It was attended by the presidents of both countries. A ceremony of this kind had never taken place before.

Unlike in Polish-German relations, the political will and religious sanction have not been enough to create a full network of institutions responsible for the process of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation.

The political context of the 2005 letter could give hope for its breakthrough meaning. Unlike in Polish-German relations, the political will and religious sanction were not completed with the creation of a network of institutions responsible for the process of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, under the aegis of the authorities. The reasons for this situation include, among other things, existing historical emotions, which are especially heightened during political debates in Poland. This

is primarily because several million Poles still have some kind of connection with the "Kresy", the territories east of Poland that before 1939 belonged to the Polish state, while several thousand Polish citizens have lost a family member as a result of the activities undertaken by Ukrainian nationalists during the Second World War.

Conflict between neighbours

Another church activity aimed at furthering Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation took place on June 28th 2013, on the 70th anniversary of the Volhynia massacre. A special declaration was issued in Warsaw by the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland and the Ukrainian and Greek Catholic Churches. What was notable about this document was the strengthened position, as signatories of the declaration, of the Lviv archbishop Mieczysław Mokrzycki and the Greek metropolitan of Przemyśl, Józef Martyniak, as representatives of minority Catholic observances in Poland and Ukraine. The letter described the events that took place in Volhynia in 1943 as "a crime and ethnic cleansing". It avoided the term "genocide", which is rejected by the Ukrainian side. Nevertheless, it concentrated on forgiveness and included references to religious terminology with phrases such as "Our Father" and "and forgive us our sins", which increased the document's religious persuasiveness.

The letter included a short summary of the recent historical relations between the Polish and Ukrainian churches, starting with the Rome meeting of Cardinal Glemp and Myroslav Lubachivsky in 1987 and the 1988 celebration of the thousand year anniversary of the baptism of Rus', which Greek Catholic bishops from around the world celebrated in Częstochowa (Poland), upon the invitation of Polish bishops, as they could not visit Soviet Ukraine. This was referred to by alluding to the words of Cardinal Husar and John Paul II during the pope's visit to Ukraine in 2001, as well as the 2005 letter. The 2013 document also made references to the 1000th anniversary of the baptism of Rus' and the upcoming 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Rus', as well as the 1050th baptism of Poland.

In the letter the bishops condemned: "extreme nationalism", "chauvinism" and "atheistic and totalitarian communism" as well as Nazism, highlighting them as the causes of conflict between neighbours. The bishops also spoke of a need to increase and deepen the research about war crimes, to create a list of their victims and commemorate the memory of those who were murdered. The ceremonies were concluded with an official dinner hosted by Poland's president, Bronisław Komorowski. This clearly shows that the bishops' letter was met with recognition and respect on the part of the Polish authorities. However, at that time, Ukraine's president was still Viktor Yanukovych, who showed little interest in the issue of

Polish-Ukrainian historical dialogue. As a result, the importance of this event was not sufficiently recognised in Kyiv.

The political message of the letter referred to the need for a deepening of Polish-Ukrainian co-operation, especially in the context of European integration at a time when the signing of the Association Agreement by Ukraine with the EU was being decided upon. It was this call for greater European integration and co-operation that most accurately reflects the political meaning of the letter.

To see a brother and a friend

On August 17th 2012 Archbishop Michalik, the metropolitan of Przemyśl and the chair of the Polish Episcopate, and Kirill, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', signed a "Joint Message to Polish and Russian Nations" at the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Unlike the 1965 and 2005 letters, this document was prepared by representatives of different Christian denominations, namely Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, representing the "majority" churches in their respective countries. Representatives of minority religious communities, including the Roman Catholic Church in Russia and the Orthodox Church in Poland, were not invited to sign the document. The international dimension of this document gave it some importance in the ecumenical dialogue. It is worth noting that in the 1980s a dialogue between the Polish Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church was treated as an element of wider inter-church negotiations. This context became even more meaningful during the pontificate of Benedict XVI, who focused on improving relations with the Orthodoxy in Russia.

Similarly to the 2005 letter issued by the Polish and Ukrainian bishops, references to the historical 1965 proclamations were made. Priest Henryk Paprocki, the spokesman of the Orthodox Church in Poland, bluntly said: "The proclamation that was addressed to both the Polish and Russian nations will be an equivalent of what happened in Polish-German relations in 1965." The circumstances under which this letter was prepared were special too. After the 2007 elections, the Tusk government began a process of improving relations with Russia. However, the signing of the joint religious announcement took place at a time when disappointment with Kremlin policies was predominant among the Polish elite. The statement was issued almost two years after the Smoleńsk plane crash, during which President Lech Kaczyński, along with 95 others accompanying him, was killed en route to commemorate the anniversary of the killing of Polish officers by the Soviets in Katyń in 1940. In Poland, rumours abounded that the crash investigation had been manipulated.

The joint message was signed in a secular setting, the Royal Castle in Warsaw, but it opened with a religiously motivated call for reconciliation. An additional chapter to the document was devoted to the issue of common history – the authors of the document placed the blame for poor Polish-Russian relations on the communist system and the policy of atheism. They clearly refrained from putting the blame on the Russian state. The central part of the letter did not, in fact, refer to Polish-Russian relations but corresponded with the ongoing European debates on issues related to the protection of family rights, the right to publicly practice the Christian faith, etc. This letter should be read as a step in bringing the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church in the EU, as well as the Russian Orthodox Church, closer together in their defence of Christian values on the European continent. Michalik and Kirill jointly wrote: "In the name of the future of our nations, we support the respect and protection of every human being from their conception to natural death. We believe that not only terrorism and military conflicts, but also abortion and euthanasia, are sins against life and dishonour modern civilisation."

The authors of the "Joint Message to the Polish and Russian Nations" placed blame for poor Polish-Russian relations on the communist system and atheism. They clearly refrained from putting the blame on the Russian state.

The last two paragraphs of the letter called, in a very vague way, for Polish-Russian reconciliation: "We are convinced that the risen Christ is the hope not only for our Churches and nations, but also for Europe and the whole world. Let Him, through His Grace, make it so that each Pole will see a brother and a friend in each Russian and each Russian a brother and a friend in each Pole." It was clear that the letter was highly politicised. As there was a need for improvement in Polish-Russian relations, the Polish government needed to promote itself in the international arena as a state that is seeking good relations with Russia and the church objectives of tightening relations with the Eastern Orthodoxy in the European forum to protect Christian values.

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In Christianity, the tradition of expressing something important in the form of letters has an archetypic meaning since the time of the apostles. The letters of Saint Paul to Christian communities included not only words of reassurance but also referred to the most difficult problems of faith and tradition. Of similar importance

in the work of every bishop are their letters to the faithful. The 1965 pastoral letter from Polish bishops which, from a formal point of view, was only an "innocent" invitation addressed to their German counterparts to come to Poland, can also be added to this tradition. It was a message from one Christian community to another.

It was also issued in a very specific historical context. Poland was a communist country and its authorities were engaged in a conflict with the Church. The proclamation also had a political dimension. It referred to relations with Germans and the stability of Poland's western border. In Poland, where the Church plays an important social role and Catholics constitute the majority of the population, every statement of this kind becomes an event of significant importance, even in the context of Poland's foreign relations. Such was the case in 1965, as it was in 2005 and 2013.

Translated by Iwona Reichardt

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Why Peaceful Conflict Resolution Matters

KETEVAN TSIKHELASHVILI

Based on its internationally respected sovereignty and territorial integrity, Georgia has a conflict resolution policy that rests upon peace, pragmatism and reconciliation. Georgia's European integration as a process and the EU as an actor can be a part of the solution. Considering Russia's continuing breaches of international norms and attempts to keep conflicts alive, the task is very challenging. Nonetheless, a sustainable peaceful resolution of conflicts is within reach if the proper measures are taken.

It is no coincidence that five out of the six countries in the European Union's Eastern Partnership have unresolved conflicts involving Russia. Trouble is stirred up by Russia in an attempt to exert pressure and influence over its "area of privileged interest". "Privileged", in the Russian political lexicon, translates as "exclusive". Conflicts are mounted when and where Russia considers its influence to be challenged, particularly when the challenge manifests as a result of a European and EuroAtlantic attempt at integration.

Unresolved conflicts, however, are not used merely to knock the development of individual countries off course, but to challenge regional and wider European security, both in terms of geography and fundamental values. In fact none of the stakeholders concerned, apart from Moscow, has an interest in unresolved conflicts. This is not in the interest of Georgia, its numerous communities of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from its two Russian-occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, or of those people who live in or near these territories. Moreover, it can also be argued that unresolved conflicts are against Russia's own interest, as

Photo: International Crisis Group (CC) www.flickr.com

An EUMM monitor points toward Tskhinvali, the regional capital of South Ossetia and across the Russian-guarded boundary line.

Moscow would benefit from a stable, peaceful and developed neighbourhood in the long run. Yet this is not the view of current Kremlin leadership.

While Russia persists with its old strategy of "divide and rule", the alternative costs for all affected are high. All lose the potential gains of sustainable peace, stability and co-operation in terms of social-economic development, welfare, infrastructure and quality of life.

Dramatic impact

In addition, the security risks continuously breed tension. In Georgia, barbed wire fences, entrenchments and other fortifications have been periodically installed around occupied territories since 2009. These objectionable constructions straddle a perimeter of over 60 kilometres and offer no real strategic importance for the occupying forces, yet they threaten to provoke tension and heat up confrontation locally and on a wider scale.

The humanitarian impact on the ground is also dramatic. Barbed wires mar the lives of hundreds of families living on both sides of the artificial divide, split villages and households and deprive around a thousand farmers access to their land. People living on the other side of the divide are no less affected. For instance, Russian FSB guards who control the occupation line detained twice as many people attempting to reach the rest of Georgia from the Tskhinvali Region than vice versa in 2014. Human rights are widely ignored within the occupied territories, particularly in the areas where ethnic Georgians still reside, such as Gali in Abkhazia and Akhalgori in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. These populations often face pressure and restrictions on documents, education in their native language and freedom of movement. Hundreds of thousands of other Georgians still cannot return to their homes.

Russia is very active in pulling the strings and is steadily marching from occupation to de facto annexation of occupied Georgian territory.

Meanwhile, the Abkhaz and Ossetians face high risks as well. Even if the conflicts remain unresolved, they are not frozen. Russia is active in pulling the strings and is steadily marching from occupation to de facto annexation of Georgia's territories in the absence of any international actor on the ground. As the Russian grip becomes tighter those critical of Moscow are becoming more vocal in both occupied regions, especially in Abkhaz circles. Paradoxically, they are losing what they allegedly fought for – their identity – in the ongoing process of intense Russification.

Based on its internationally respected sovereignty and territorial integrity, Georgia has a conflict resolution policy that rests upon peace, pragmatism and reconciliation. Yet, it is a challenging task considering Russia's ongoing breaches of international norms and attempts to keep the conflicts unresolved. The government, which came to power in October 2012, inherited a heavily stalled peace process. Links between Georgians and Abkhazians and Georgians and Ossetians were deeply compromised in the absence of direct communication. All previous peace formats had collapsed in the aftermath of the August 2008 war. The international presence was squeezed out, including the UN (UNOMIG) from Abkhazia and OSCE from Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. The Russian "peacekeepers" had quickly transformed themselves into regular army divisions. The Russian military build-up and installations in both territories have been substantially increased, with the capacity to intrude far beyond Georgia's two small regions.

International norms and commitments continue to be breached by Russia, including the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement of August 2008. The unilateral Russian "recognition" of these territories was the next illegal step. The EU Monitoring

Mission (EUMM) set up in autumn 2008 to fulfil its mandate on both sides of the dividing lines is still barred from access to the Russian-controlled area.

Dialogue and reconciliation

The only vehicle for talks has been the Geneva International Discussions (GID) set up in 2008 between Russia and Georgia as parties to the conflict, under the co-chairmanship of the EU, the UN and OSCE and with participation of the United States (participants from Sokhumi and Tskhinvali [respectively of Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions] also attend). Despite heavy politicisation, the GID remains an important platform for Georgia-Russia discussions with its objectives of tackling critical security and humanitarian challenges on the ground related to the non-use of force, international security arrangements, the return of the displaced, and other acute humanitarian problems. The Georgian government is also trying to normalise relations with Russia in certain bilateral areas, even though these efforts have clear limitations as long as Russia continues to occupy Georgia's territories. Georgia's prime minister has a special representative who regularly meets the Russian deputy foreign minister to discuss concrete bilateral humanitarian, economic and social issues with implications for many Georgians. This format is also intended to mitigate the risks that may result from Russian strategies in the region and to symbolise a message that Georgia's path is not directed against anyone, Russia included.

Georgia is trying to normalise relations with Russia in certain areas, even though these efforts have clear limitations as long as Russia continues to occupy Georgia's territories.

While taking an overarching approach towards a solution to the Russian-Georgian conflict, the government is also ready to engage in direct dialogue with Abkhazians and Ossetians. This offer has been on the table since 2013 despite the cautious response from the Abkhaz and Ossetian sides thus far. Some channels of communication have been carved out, yet still modestly. Reconciliation is a key notion in the peace policies of Georgia. The title of the state minister's office which deals with conflict resolution issues was changed from "reintegration" to "reconciliation" in January 2014 to emphasise the vision of how reintegration goals are to be achieved. This policy is about people, not just territories.

The government has dismissed confrontational rhetoric and taken constructive unilateral steps to build confidence and address the humanitarian and social needs

of the populations in its two regions. Georgia continues to provide services such as free healthcare to an increasing number of residents of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia in line with its engagement strategy. Opportunities for education in the rest of Georgia are increasing. For example, students may enter Georgian universities through a single exam in Abkhazian or Ossetian languages.

The Georgian government is also addressing the needs of people living near the dividing line. A special inter-agency commission was set up in October 2013 to assist with inhabitants' basic needs and work towards social and economic development of these regions. Unfortunately, limitations on access make the outreach to the two occupied territories virtually impossible at the moment. Nonetheless, the government's social and economic development strategy and its action plan envisage benefits in the future for the people living on the other side of the divide as well. Both regions are isolated or, to put it more accurately, self-isolated. More so, the Tskhinvali region increasingly resembles a modern-day ghetto or an extended military base of Russia. The region is economically depressed and virtually depopulated with nearly 80 per cent fewer inhabitants than in the early 1990s, before the conflict. Abkhazia's population has been more than halved, with the majority of its ethnic Georgian population living in exile.

Georgia seeks more momentum to the peace process. Despite complexity, peace resources are available and time is of the essence. Time lost means opportunities missed for peaceful conflict resolution.

An offer of a future

A special working group chaired by the prime minister was set up in June 2015 to examine the issues of conflict resolution and explore concrete initiatives on how to invigorate the peacemaking process, find creative solutions and use the existing space for as much flexibly as possible before the longer term concrete political models for conflict resolutions are crafted. In its efforts to implement such a policy, Georgia counts on the support of its partners, including international organisations, the US, neighbouring countries, and, most importantly, the EU as a key player on the ground. Both the EU as an actor and European integration as a process are of crucial importance and can be a part of the solution.

Europe is the choice for the model of development made long ago by the Georgian society, including the IDP communities from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. For the vast majority of Georgians, Europe equals freedom, respect for human rights, democracy, development, prosperity, peace and stability. And this is a future we offer to the residents of the both occupied regions, including

the Abkhaz and Ossetians. This is their only alternative to ever increasing Russian domination. More so, there is a clear, expressed interest towards the EU both in local societies, especially in Abkhazia. Hence, the EU is not only the most concerned, but is also the best placed party to play a central role in a peaceful conflict resolution, given its widely championed soft powers.

Firstly, there is the EU's unwavering respect for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as valuable support in neutralising potential threats and provocations on the road to our deepening integration. Secondly, the EU's continued efforts and leadership in formats which are already in place, such as GID and the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), are vital for attaining the important original aims in these frameworks. Thirdly, the EU's engagement on the ground is also encouraged by the Georgian government, particularly in light of our co-operation within the Association Agreement framework. To this end, it is critically important to promote an understanding of what the EU and its Eastern Partnership policy represent (counter to Russia-sponsored efforts to propagate pseudo-western negative stereotypes and address the areas where Georgia has limited possibilities to engage, such as human rights protection or other actions of humanitarian importance). Fourthly, fostering people-to-people contacts becomes even more important, given the high potential of face-to-face interaction for reconciliation between conflict-split communities. Georgia greatly appreciates the support of the EU and other partners, particularly for confidence-building efforts and bridge-mending between conflict-split societies. And finally, and most importantly, the country-wide deliverables of EU-Georgia co-operation are the best incentives for the peace process. This is to demonstrate that the European choice and the efforts on that way actually deliver. Together with the independent endeavours of the Georgian government, the EU's tangible and timely reciprocity will help generate the power of attraction of a European Georgia as opposed to the only other option Abkhazia and Tsikhinvali region/South Ossetia face: that of being de facto annexed and Russified.

It is critically important to promote an understanding of what the EU represents and counter Russia-sponsored efforts to propagate western stereotypes.

As a part of its reconciliation policy, the Georgian government is ready to share the benefits and opportunities stemming from its EU integration agenda with the populations across the divide. These benefits include better education, quality healthcare, business and trade opportunities and improved access to scientific, energy or environmental initiatives. Importantly, this also concerns mobility and travel, namely Georgia's prospects for a visa-free future with the EU whereby every

holder of a Georgian passport could travel freely across Europe. Notably, apart from tangible and measurable deliverables, the European path also brings values and standards regarding respect for individual freedoms as well as protection of the identity and diversity of different groups and communities. Combined, these are the crucial elements of our common European future in a common state, and our task is to communicate this credibly across the dividing lines.

Georgia's ever-closer relations with the EU offer new opportunities and strengths to be utilised for the ultimate goal of a peaceful conflict resolution. After all, Europe, where Georgia belongs, has its own valuable experience of building not only a successful project of welfare and prosperity, but also a project of peace and celebrated diversity.

Ketevan Tsikhelashvili is the Georgian first deputy state minister for reconciliation.

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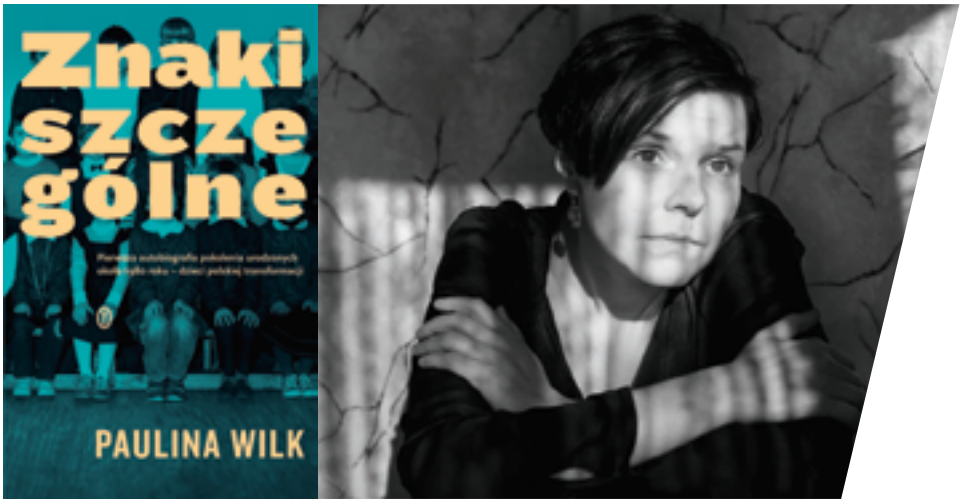

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EUROPE
WITH A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

John C. Kornblum, American diplomat and businessman, former Ambassador to Germany:
After 1990 both the European countries and the United States abandoned the idea of a strategy for Europe. (...) Just agreeing on sanctions is no strategy. If we are going to have a strategy we need to firstly turn around the narrative. And to remind everybody that our goal was not to reach a new security arrangement with Russia. Our goal was to bring democracy as far into Europe as we could.

Ivan Krastev, Chair of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia, and Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences, in Vienna:
We should try to consolidate the European space, which is why we advocate Russia's expulsion from the Council of Europe. We should not pretend that we share values when clearly that is no longer the case.

Victor Erofeev, writer, poet and literary critic with a PhD in Language Studies:
Europe thinks that Russia is a big, dirty room in the European house, where cockroaches and mice run around. One needs to buy a hoover or two, hire the cleaning-ladies and clean everything up. Then everything will be fine. This is a big mistake. Because it is not a room, it is a house. A house that stands next door but serparately. This is a difference between Russia and Ukraine.

Donald Tusk, President of the European Council:
The Greek crisis has not only a financial dimension – it is really very serious geopolitical discussion, taking into consideration the situation in the region of both sides of the Mediterranean, but also in the Balkans.and more.

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Why Crimea is still Legally a Part of Ukraine

PRZEMYSŁAW ROGUSKI

Part of the challenge in forming a clear and coherent European policy response to Russia's actions towards Ukraine are the differences in public perception among the EU member states of what exactly happened in Ukraine. International law, however, provides an unequivocal answer to the question of how to assess and understand the current status of Crimea, setting a legal framework under which a policy towards Russia should operate.

A lot has happened since the "little green men" first appeared on the streets of Crimean cities in late February 2014: a "referendum" followed by the annexation of the peninsula by the Russian Federation; sanctions by the European Union and the United States in response; presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine; an overt and covert Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine; two shaky ceasefire agreements in Minsk; the list goes on. So much has happened in fact that Crimea has dropped off the radar of international mainstream media almost completely. While the US was focused on concluding negotiations with Iran and Europe struggled with another Greek bailout, Crimea became an issue of secondary, if not lesser, importance.

In late July 2015 the peninsula made a brief comeback in the news: a visit by a group of French members of parliament from the main opposition party *Les Re-*

publicains provoked anger in Kyiv, embarrassment in Paris and much rejoicing in the Russian media. The former French transport minister, Thierry Mariani, who led the group praised Crimea's "return" to Russia and called for an end of the sanctions imposed by the EU. Apart from being a clear public relations stunt for the Kremlin, the visit underlined the fact that the European narrative of what exactly happened in Crimea in February and March 2014 is far from being unanimous. The political parties of France's Front National, Greece's Syriza or Hungary's Fidesz are openly contesting the current sanctions policy towards Russia and while the policy is still holding, elections in France and Spain may further complicate the task of finding a common narrative.

In consequence, forming a coherent strategy towards Russia in general, and Crimea in particular, is and will remain a challenge for Europe, both as a matter of domestic policy as well as of international relations.

Various interpretations

Part of the difficulty in forming a clear and coherent European policy in response to Russia's actions towards Ukraine are the differences in public perception among the EU member states of what exactly happened in Ukraine and how to assess it. Various historical and political interpretations of last year's events are being put forward in the debate. Admittedly, one can discuss at great length Russia's historical ties to Crimea, the ethnic and linguistic composition of the population or the political situation in Ukraine after the flight of Viktor Yanukovych, the previous president. But, in the author's view, all these discussions are incomplete and may lead to false conclusions if they leave out a legal analysis of these events. This is because international law provides an unequivocal answer to the question of how to assess them. This assessment in turn allows us to understand the current status of Crimea and sets the international legal framework under which a policy towards Russia may operate.

Before we come to this framework, however, it is important to start by looking at how the Russian takeover of Crimea can be interpreted under international law. Since these events have been covered extensively by *New Eastern Europe* and other journals, a quick overview of the facts will suffice. After the EuroMaidan protests culminated in the overthrow of the Yanukovych regime in late February 2014, Russia reacted by sending troops without insignia, the so-called little green men, into Crimea to take over government buildings. While Russia denied any involvement at the time, its president, Vladimir Putin, has since confirmed that it was indeed Russian troops that carried out those actions. We know now that those troops came

mainly from the brigades stationed in Sevastopol and in bases around Crimea and were later joined by Spetsnaz and paratroopers from the Russian mainland.

On February 27th 2014 with Russian troops and local militias occupying the parliament building, some representatives of the Supreme Council of Crimea (the peninsula's autonomous legislative body) held a closed session during which they elected Sergey Aksyonov, head of a minor pro-Russian party, as prime minister. The new de facto authorities, supported by Russian forces, called for a referendum on the status of Crimea to be held on March 16th 2014. Although the referendum was illegal under Ukrainian law, Kyiv was powerless to prevent it and the plebiscite went ahead amidst widespread accusations of fraud and vote-rigging, yielding a result of 95 per cent of the ballots in favour of joining the Russian Federation. As a consequence, Crimea declared independence on March 17th 2014 and formally asked to be incorporated into Russia, which happened with the treaty of accession on March 21st 2014.

It is important to stress at the outset that international law is based on the notion of the sovereignty of states and the inviolability of state borders. The prohibition of the use of force in international relations is one of the central pillars of the Charter of the United Nations and guarantees a state's territorial integrity against forcible change of frontiers through conquest or annexation. Thus, the only way a state can legally acquire a portion of another is if that second state voluntarily cedes the desired territory – as happened for instance when the United States purchased Louisiana from France in 1803 – or if the territory becomes a state in its own right and then voluntarily joins the other.

However, the fact that some entity declared independence from its motherland does not automatically create a new state under international law. For this to happen the new entity must have first obtained such a degree of control over the territory as to form an effective government which, with the support of the people inhabiting the territory, is able to assert the attributes of statehood. Secondly, while effective control over territory is a necessary prerequisite, it is in itself not sufficient to form statehood. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Transnistria, Abkhazia or South Ossetia are all entities which undoubtedly exert effective control over their respective territories but are nevertheless not recognised as states. The reason for this is that international law generally protects the territorial integrity of existing states and accepts territorial changes without the consent of the parent state only in exceptional circumstances, such as decolonisation.

The fact that some entity declares independence from its motherland does not automatically create a new state under international law.

In consequence, the only way Crimea could have legally joined Russia is if it successfully seceded from Ukraine. This, in turn, requires that it had acquired effective and independent control over its territory and, in the face of Ukrainian opposition, could provide reasons which overrode Ukraine's claim to territorial sovereignty. In the case of Crimea, both requirements have not been fulfilled.

Independence from Kyiv, no independence from Moscow

When addressing the issue of whether Crimea was able to assert its independence in order to display and uphold the attributes of statehood, the answer is a clear no. Even if we assume that Aksyonov and his supporters commanded the loyalty of certain forces within Crimea and were joined by part of the local police and disgruntled members of Yanukovych's Berkut forces, it is clear that their control over the peninsula and the referendum process rested on the support of the Russian army. So while they managed to contain the Ukrainian army in their barracks and thus assert their independence from Kyiv, this was achieved through Russian intervention. Moreover, in an interview held in January 2015 Igor Girkin, the former "defence minister" of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, admitted that the Crimean Supreme Council's vote to hold a referendum was obtained under duress and was steered by Russian agents (of whom he was one). Thus, even if there was independence from Kyiv, there was no independence from Moscow.

On the second point concerning the circumstances justifying Crimea's secession from Ukraine, we hear lots of arguments about the historical and cultural significance of Crimea for Russia, about the peninsula and its inhabitants belonging to a "Russian world" or about the purported illegality of Khrushchev's "gift" of Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR. Even taken at face value, these propositions cannot override the fact that Russia has recognised Ukrainian independence within borders which included Crimea. Therefore, the main argument provided by Russia and its supporters is that Crimean secession from Ukraine and reunification with Russia was an act of self-determination.

International law recognises and protects the right of peoples to self-determination. Yet there is no right to unilateral secession by popular demand or historical sentiment. Outside of the context of decolonisation, self-determination is to be achieved internally, within the framework of existing states. This can be done through full participation in the political system of the parent state as well as through various degrees of regional administrative, cultural and/or fiscal autonomy. Of course it is possible that a state denies a certain group the right to self-determination up to the point of oppression, subjugation and even assault on basic human rights such

as the right to life. Whether in such extraordinary circumstances international law grants an exceptional right to secession is highly controversial and the subject of a hot debate among international lawyers. States tend to be – understandably – highly reluctant to acknowledge the existence of such a right to "remedial" secession. Russia, for example, stated in its written submission to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the context of the proceedings on Kosovo's declaration of independence that secession may be authorised solely under "truly extreme circumstances, such as an outright armed attack by the parent state, threatening the very existence of the people in question". Other states and some national and international courts framed the conditions differently, but all agree on a high threshold of exceptional circumstances for a right to remedial secession.

In the context of Crimea such exceptional circumstances have not arisen. The inhabitants of Crimea were neither physically threatened, nor did the Ukrainian post-EuroMaidan government resort to discriminatory measures. It is true that the attempt to repeal the language laws was unnecessary and provocative at the time when gestures of reassurance and reconciliation were needed, but it was vetoed by the acting president Oleksandr Turchynov and, in any case, would not have reached the threshold legitimising secession.

Counterarguments

Russia has put forward three counterarguments to the above facts. First, there was indeed a real threat to the lives of Crimean Russians as evidenced by the events in Odesa where dozens were killed or horribly burned to death in clashes between pro- and anti-Maidan-protesters. But this is pure speculation without any substantial evidence and is thus not sufficient to prove the existence of a danger of persecution by Ukrainian authorities. On a different note, the investigation of the events in Odesa by Ukrainian authorities should be conducted much more thoroughly and swiftly than it is at present.

Secondly, President Putin repeatedly argued that since the legitimate government of Ukraine was overthrown by the EuroMaidan protesters, state power – and with it Ukraine as a state – ceased to exist. Accordingly, Russia was not bound by its treaty obligations towards the "old" Ukraine, because it had vanished. In this post-revolutionary chaos, the people of Crimea chose to exercise their right to self-determination by joining Russia and could not be prevented from it by a non-existing state. In this narrative, Ukraine later re-emerged with a new legal personality and within different borders. Of course, such arguments find no support in international law. A change of government does not alter the legal personality of

the state nor the validity of its treaties. Even revolutionary change does not affect the continuity of a state, as Russia should know from its own history: the Bolshevik Revolution overthrew absolutist tsardom and transformed the Russian Empire into the Soviet Union, but did not alter its international legal personality. The state remained legally the same.

In terms of international law, revolutionary change does not affect the continuity of a state, as Russia should know from its own history.

Thirdly, Russia argues that the secession of Kosovo and the subsequent advisory opinion of the ICJ changed the content of the right to self-determination, putting popular will expressed in a referendum before territorial integrity. Furthermore, it accuses the West of hypocrisy, in that the US and most EU member states that bombed Serbia without the authorisation of the UN Security Council recognised the unilateral secession of Kosovo, but failed to recognise the unilateral secession of Crimea. To be fair, the western states' position on Kosovo is not legally watertight. They go to great lengths to stress that Kosovo was a unique case, arising from an "illegal but legitimate" military intervention whose outcome was later sanctioned by the UN Security Council and the failure of the subsequent peace process.

Yet many of these arguments remain blurry, unconvincing and prone to misinterpretation. The weaknesses of the western position notwithstanding, Russia's Kosovo-analogy is untenable. It reads the ICJ's statement that declarations of independence are not prohibited by international law as implying that the right to self-determination now includes the right to secede by popular will. This, however, is clearly not what the ICJ intended to say. The court simply declared, taking a very narrow view, that the fact of somebody issuing a declaration of independence is not regulated by international law. Having established that Kosovo's declaration of independence was not illegal, it did not decide on the consequences of such a declaration, that is, whether Kosovo has become a state or not. It did, however, point to a crucial exception: if a declaration of independence is brought about by external intervention and the use of force, it is illegal and cannot form the basis for the creation of a new state.

Crimea's current status

So even if we take Russia's arguments at their strongest, i.e. that the Crimean referendum was an act of self-determination by the people of Crimea and even if we ignore the obvious procedural deficiencies of the referendum, the use of force

by Russia to initiate and facilitate the referendum negates the legality of any territorial change. This has been reaffirmed by the UN General Assembly, which passed a resolution with overwhelming majority of 100 votes in favour to 11 against, with 58 abstentions, underscoring the invalidity of the March 16th 2014 referendum, affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and calling on all states to refrain from actions aimed at disrupting Ukraine's national unity.

After concluding that Crimea and Sevastopol have not become part of the Russian Federation, the next question must be: what is their current status? To this, international law provides a straightforward answer: they remain de jure, if not de facto, part of Ukraine. Since Russia has assumed control over the territory and its presence is not covered by the 1997 Status of Forces Agreement, one must further conclude that Crimea is currently under Russian occupation. The fact that the Russian army has encountered little to no resistance from the Ukrainian forces stationed in Crimea and most of the population acquiesce in or even support the Russian presence does not alter the assessment.

Reports indicate widespread and systematic human rights abuses in Crimea, directed especially towards Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian nationals who refuse to take on Russian citizenship.

The 1907 Hague Regulations provide that a territory "is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of a hostile army". So belligerent occupation automatically occurs when a foreign army exerts effective control over the affected territory without a right to be there. This is clearly the case, since the 1997 Status of Forces Agreement, which was extended until 2042 and allowed Russia to deploy up to 25,000 troops in the city of Sevastopol and military bases around Crimea, confined those troops to specific locations and prohibited any activity which interfered in Ukrainian internal affairs. The blocking of Ukrainian military bases, takeover of public buildings etc. must be counted as such an interference and even fulfils the definition of aggression as laid down in the UN General Assembly Resolution 3314.

Apart from the Hague Regulations, Russia is also bound by the European Convention on Human Rights vis-à-vis the territory of Crimea. According to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, the nominal sovereign and the state exercising de facto jurisdiction over a territory are both bound to ensure the full implementation of the Convention in the disputed territory. Sadly, reports by Human Rights Watch and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights indicate widespread and systematic human rights abuses, directed especially towards Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian nationals who refused to take on Russian citizenship.

Stalemate

It is impossible to predict future events regarding Crimea. But based on the legal assessment laid out above, international law presents us with a framework for possible future policy decisions. It seems clear that under the current Russian leadership, a swift return of Crimea to Ukraine is unlikely, if not impossible. Vladimir Putin is not a man who backtracks from decisions once taken and the huge popularity of Crimea's annexation within the Russian population presents an enormous political obstacle for anyone who would attempt to roll it back. Equally, the assessment made by the western states and the UN General Assembly that the Crimean referendum was illegal and the Russian takeover of the peninsula violated international law still stands. There is a good case to be made that states are not allowed to recognise changes in territorial status brought about by the use of force. If the US and EU want to remain credible in their adherence to international norms, any acceptance of Russian claims to the territory of Crimea is impossible as long as Ukraine does not voluntarily cede the peninsula. So the West may accept that Russia has de facto control over Crimea, but will not accept that it has sovereignty.

The immediate consequence of all this is a stalemate. This may seem unsatisfactory, but actually stalemate is quite common in international affairs. For instance, Northern Cyprus has been occupied by Turkish forces since 1974. Since 1983, there exists a "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", an entity recognised as a state only by Turkey but for more than 30 years exercising effective control over parts of the island. Similar situations prevail in Western Sahara which is occupied by Morocco, and existed from 1975 to 1999 when Indonesia occupied East Timor. International law is patient in this regard and title to territory does not pass from one state to another due to a mere passage of time.

Since nobody wants a military confrontation over Crimea, its future status will need to be resolved at some point in a peace process. The UN have spearheaded such peace processes a couple of times, sometimes with good results (East Timor) and sometimes with mixed results (Kosovo). However, the fact that Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, is a party to the dispute, makes an effective UN process rather unlikely. Some other formula, possibly on the grounds of a wider accommodation between Ukraine and Russia, will need to be found.

In the meantime, there are some things Ukraine and the West can do. Sanctions imposed by the West after the forcible takeover of Crimea are an effective legal tool to counter violations of international law and should be upheld. The sanctions regime against Crimea currently includes travel bans, asset freezes and trade restrictions. The EU and the US should continue to control economic activity of their corporations with Crimea and not extend the benefits owed to Russian products

and services under international agreements to those originating from Crimea. Clearly, any sanctions regime is only effective when it is properly implemented, thus the US and EU should be strict towards entities trying to find workarounds, such as most recently Siemens.

But the main tasks lie with Ukraine. There is no denying that while the annexation of Crimea was illegal, it was popular with at least a portion of the peninsula's inhabitants. Some supported it out of ideology, some out of pragmatism in the hope that life under Russia would be economically better than under Ukraine. Twenty-three years of neglect means that many opportunities to present Ukraine as a good state to live in were lost. It is therefore critically important that Ukraine does not lose the hearts and minds of those still loyal to it. If Ukraine ever hopes to get Crimea back, it needs to show to the people that it is a better alternative to Russia.

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Ukraine should also try to defend those inhabitants of Crimea whose human rights are being violated by Russian authorities. While it cannot do so on the ground, it can defend those rights in court, as the inhabitants of Crimea are still, legally speaking, Ukrainian citizens. The European Convention on Human Rights provides an inter-state application mechanism and Ukraine should make use of that as well as encourage and help individual applications by those whose rights have been infringed. Currently there are two inter-state cases between Russia and Ukraine pending before the Strasbourg Court and Ukraine should pursue them with great resolve. In 2014 Cyprus obtained a judgement against Turkey for pecuniary damages to the amount of 90 million euros arising from Turkish human rights violations during the takeover of northern Cyprus. It is quite probable that the Court would grant such damages also to Ukraine.

In short, Ukraine will further its chances of regaining Crimea if it manages to become a better alternative to Russia. A country with a growing economy, which reins in corruption, respects the rights and freedoms of its citizens and offers the chance of a good career and personal development may through its appeal influence the political dynamics within Russia and Crimea. Sadly, there is still a long road ahead. NEE

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The Eastern Partnership's Swan Song

ADAM BALCER

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) summit in Riga in May 2015 can be regarded as the beginning of the end of the EaP. Its conclusions showed that the EU has lost touch with reality. In order to reverse this trend, the EU must take into consideration the social dimension and identity as the key policy-shaping factors in these states. It also requires more engagement on the side of the EaP supporters within the EU.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) Summit in Riga has been presented by its organisers as a relative success. Why? Largely because it was attended by heads of state and top EU officials. Their presence at the summit apparently testifies to the fact that there is still political will to support the EaP. What is more, as the EU representatives commented, the Riga Summit's outcome was "perhaps the most that could be achieved in the geopolitical circumstances in the region". Defenders of the summit suggest that such enigmatic phrases as "the sovereign right of each partner freely to choose the level of ambition and the goals to which it aspires in its relations with the European Union", "it is for the EU and its sovereign partners to decide on how they want to proceed in their relations" and "the summit participants acknowledge the European aspirations and European choice of the partners" are reasons to be proud. However, such statements have become merely a mantra that has appeared in the joint declarations of previous EaP summits.

These words are meant to be proof of the firm and continuous EU support for strengthening co-operation with the EaP states and a sign of opposition to Rus-

sian neo-imperialism. But this does not sound so convincing. After reading the documents prepared during the summits in Warsaw or Vilnius, the Riga statement seems far less courageous. This is astonishing when one considers that the process of European integration in certain EaP states – notably Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine –has significantly advanced. These three countries have successfully pursued negotiations with the EU which resulted in the signing of Association Agreements and its economic core, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Moldova was even granted visa-free travel to the EU in April 2014. Georgia and Ukraine are also on the fast track to join the visa-free regime and will likely do so in 2016.

A step backwards

More importantly, Ukraine in 2014 experienced radical, positive changes. The EuroMaidan Revolution and its consequences aimed to bring about democratisation, bolstered support for the EU accession in Ukrainian society and substantially decreased support for the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. For the first time in Ukraine's history, EU sympathisers are now an overwhelming majority. In parliamentary elections in Ukraine in October 2014, the vast majority of seats were won by pro-European political parties. Yet surprisingly, the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga does not mention the EuroMaidan even once. Furthermore, the declaration fails to formulate a road map for future co-operation between the EU and EaP states. Unlike the Vilnius Summit in 2013, it is not even certain when the next summit will be held. Thus, the EaP Summit in Riga appears to be a step backwards rather than a continuation.

Declarations by EU officials that there is no acceptance of Russian interference in EU-EaP relations seem like wishful thinking and a detachment from reality. In the joint declaration Russian aggression in Ukraine, which has led to at least 6,500 casualties, two million refugees and billions of dollars of lost, is described as "acts against Ukraine" (sic!). In fact, Russia is mentioned only once in the document in the context of gas negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv. Such Orwellian Newspeak can be explained only by a fear of Russia's reaction to greater EU engagement in the post-Soviet states. Paradoxically, while Russia's aggressive foreign policy leaves no doubt that Kremlin decision-makers perceive international relations as a geopolitical zero-sum game, the EU's approach towards the EaP states is becoming increasingly cautious and meaningless.

It seems as though the EU still thinks that it can placate Russia despite the fact that Russia has already blatantly stated that any EU involvement in the post-Soviet

area will be perceived as a threat to its vital interests. The Riga Summit fits well into the scheme of growing sensitivity in the EU to the fickle moods of its Russian partners. One of the symptoms of this has been the postponement of the trade agreement with Ukraine until the beginning of 2016 and the enforcing of consultations on the implementation of the DCFTA in Ukraine with Russia. Another good example is the Minsk ceasefire agreement for the conflict in the east of Ukraine, some of which points which can be used by the Kremlin to block Ukraine's rapprochement with the EU. These steps may be treated by Russia as a precedent and a green light for further interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours.

Equal and more equal

How would the Riga Summit look in a perfect (and at the same time rational) world? In such a world, EU states would unequivocally condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine as well as its belligerent policy towards Moldova and Georgia, voice strong support for the EuroMaidan and declare that the implementation of the Association Agreements and the DCFTA will lead to the next steps in the European integration, ultimately allowing these countries to apply for EU membership. Of course, taking into account the "enlargement fatigue in the EU" and Europe's other problems, such as the crisis in the Eurozone, the "Brexit", the Islamic State or the Mediterranean migrant crisis, such conclusions of the Riga Summit seem unreal.

Yet the EU could do more than just declare its acknowledgement of the European aspirations of the EaP states. The EU could voice its support for these aspirations and the need for the consolidation of Europe within the EU as well as underline that, according to the Treaty of Rome, "any European state may apply to become a member of the Community", including EaP states. An assumption that even conclusions like those above are too far-reaching to be included in the summit's declaration undermines the EU's credibility and creates a schizophrenic situation in which the EU declares sympathy towards the EaP states, but only a platonic love, one that does not imply accession.

It is a sad paradox, but the EU in fact devotes a lot of energy to discouraging the EaP states from applying for membership, although they are fully entitled to do so as European states. Such an inward looking attitude on behalf of the EU certainly does not stimulate reforms and is one of the factors that causes support to decrease for European integration in these countries. Russia easily exploits this with the message that "the EU is probably the best place to live but you (EaP countries) will never join it because nobody wants you there". This leads to EU fatigue in some of the EaP states. The best example is Georgia, perceived until recently as

an Eastern Partnership stronghold. However, between November 2013 and April 2015, support for EU membership in Georgia declined from 85 per cent to 68 per cent while opposition to it increased from 5 per cent to 16 per cent. At the same time, support for Georgia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) increased from 11 per cent to 31 per cent. More than a quarter of Georgians do not even have an opinion on this while only 41 per cent of Georgians are now opposed to membership in the EEU.

By granting all the Western Balkan states EU potential candidate status despite the fact that the situation in some of those states is sometimes worse than in Georgia, Ukraine or Moldova, Brussels has silently admitted that all countries are equal but some countries are more equal than others. The reluctance to recognise the EaP countries as potential candidates implicitly means that the EU perceives them as the Russian sphere of influence. Until the EU is ready to truly support the EaP European bid, Riga-like declarations remain nothing but lip service. Still, there will come a time when one of the EaP countries will change the rules of the game and eventually apply for EU membership, leading to a panic attack among the Eurocrats.

There will come a time when one of the EaP states will apply for EU membership, leading to a panic attack among the Eurocrats.

Questions of identity

The EU's Achilles heel is that not enough attention is paid to the social dimension of the EaP states: the cultures, identities and systems of values shared by the societies of Moldova, Ukraine etc. While talking with European diplomats working in EaP states, one can sometimes get the feeling that these officials are enjoying an all-inclusive holiday without really ever leaving their hotels. As the EuroMaidan and the war in Donbas illustrated, historical memory and national identity play a very significant role in the EaP states and are strongly linked to the issue of civilisational belonging – Europe versus Russia. Unfortunately, the knowledge of European diplomats on these complex issues is often very shallow.

What we are seeing today is that Ukraine is building its new national identity based on a reinterpretation of history. The EU does very little to engage in this extremely important process. It went largely unnoticed in Europe when former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili not only modernised Georgia's economy and public institutions but created a new identity narrative of Georgian nation. The key point of reference for this narrative was the state integrating all citizens

including the ethnic and religious minorities. Such discourse was based on the Georgian medieval tradition of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious regional empire. Today, this identity has been called into question by Saakashvili's successors, who closely co-operate with the conservative Orthodox Church which is largely under the strong influence of Russia and the "born-again" Christian Vladimir Putin, who has been calling for a crusade against "Gayropa".

The question of identity is even more important in Moldova. The country's problems with identity underlie its instability: "Are we simply Romanians or their brothers?" "Are we very different from Romanians as we are closer to Russians due to the tsarist and Soviet heritage?" "Or perhaps we are simply Moldovans equally different from Russians and Romanians?" "Maybe we have a multilayered identity?" These are the questions troubling many Moldovan citizens. Moldova's dilemmas are connected with its geopolitical choice between Europe and Russia: some claim support for both and there are a few undecided, in addition. In Moldova support for EU membership dropped recently to its lowest level in history. This was accompanied by a rise in the number of people who favour integration with the Eurasian Economic Union. Experts explain these trends by the general social dissatisfaction with the pro-European political parties discredited by numerous corruption scandals. However, such a radical geopolitical turn would not be possible in some traditionally pro-western parts of Ukraine – Galicia or Volhynia. Yet, many in Russia think that the "Moldovan scenario" is possible in southern and eastern Ukraine where, in spite of the recent strengthening of Ukrainian identity, a large number of people still favours the Eurasian Union or, at least, are hesitant when it comes to geopolitical choices. The Kremlin hopes that they will become tired of the permanent economic crisis and withdraw their support for the new Ukrainian government and the EU. Both the Ukrainian and Russian identity narratives are now fighting each other in a battle to win the hearts and minds of these undecided.

Both the Ukrainian and Russian identity narratives are now fighting against each other to win the hearts and minds of the undecided in southern and eastern Ukraine.

It is alarming how little such issues as basic as identity or historical memory are addressed by numerous EU reports and analyses produced by European think tanks. If the EU wants to have meaning in the EaP states and have influence there, it cannot stay indifferent to the ongoing debates on identity or history. Russia, on the other hand, has been deeply engaged in these debates for a long time.

Gloomy perspectives

Another challenge for the EU are the European societies themselves. A vast majority of Europeans are convinced that the most recent enlargements did more harm than good to the EU. A negative stereotype of Romania as a wholly corrupted state still exists, even though the country should be presented as a successful example of the fight against corruption. Ukraine's or Moldova's membership application is a taboo in the EU, which simply makes no sense since granting candidate status does not equate to immediate accession. In fact their accession process will take years. To a large extent EU member states and European institutions are responsible for these fears themselves as they never pursued any significant positive information campaign that would explain to Europeans the benefits of enlargement.

The Greek crisis once again illustrated that the member states are the ones calling the shots in the EU, not European institutions.

Hence, it is no coincidence that the EU does not consider the social dimension of EaP states. When the idea of the Eastern Partnership was born in Poland, its first assumptions were that the key players within the EaP would belong to civil societies (NGO, media, trade unions, local administration, universities, religious communities, etc.). The EaP was aimed at establishing connections between the societies of the EU and the EaP which could lead to a wide, bottom-up transformation of the EaP societies by "injecting" western values into them. This strategy correctly assumed that in order to create a common Europe it is necessary to create a community of values rather than merely adopt a set of bureaucratic procedures. It was a very EU-style approach.

However, the governments of the EU member states quickly took the lead in the EaP and the bureaucratic model eventually dominated. Of course, a platform of co-operation between civil society organisations was created, but it plays second fiddle. Without a decisive strengthening of the EaP's civil society pillar, the deep transformation of the EaP states – in spite of other agreements to come – will be a much longer and more difficult process.

The gloomy perspectives of the EaP are closely linked with the unsatisfying performance of its most important advocates within the EU. The Greek crisis once again emphasised that the member states are the ones calling the shots in the EU and not European institutions. In the EU, there are clear regional specialisations that belong to particular member states, such as France and North Africa. The same is with the EaP. It was a Polish initiative joined by Sweden. The strongest supporters of the EaP, other than Poland and Sweden, are the Baltic states and Romania. Other EU members are reluctant, indifferent or mildly sympathetic to the Eastern

Partnership. Germany is the only EU "superpower" really supporting – although half-heartedly – the EaP initiative.

But even for the Germans, Ukraine is a state of secondary importance. The war in Ukraine changed Germany's attitude to some extent, but it was not a revolutionary shift. Germany's foreign policy is focused mostly on geoeconomics. The volume of trade between Germany and Ukraine is less than half that between Germany and Vietnam, for example. Germany invests significantly more in South Africa than in Ukraine. Before the war broke out in 2014, Ukraine held a distant place on the list of recipients of development aid from Germany. Between 2012 and 2013 Morocco and Tunisia – also covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy – which together have a similar population to that of Ukraine as well as a similar size of economy and living standards, received more than twice as much development aid from Germany as Ukraine.

Sweden supports the EaP initiative mostly because it fears Russia and it gives Stockholm a tool to co-operate with the Baltic states and Poland. Economically, however, Sweden is barely present in the EaP states. Although Sweden's development assistance budget is very large, only a fraction of it goes to Eastern Europe. At this point, when the EaP is on a knife's edge, a lot depends on Poland, Romania and the Baltic states. Sadly, these countries too often limit their foreign policy to empty phrases and do not develop serious actions.

Second-rate player

There is no doubt that Poland is one of the most important actors as both the architect of the EaP and the largest state in the eastern part of the EU. However, looking at Warsaw's policy towards Kyiv it is difficult to be optimistic. Polish officials have repeated for years that Ukraine is Poland's strategic partner. Of course since the very beginning of its independence Ukraine has been facing enormous corruption and unpredictable bureaucracy. But it does not explain why, until 2013 (the beginning of the economic crisis in Ukraine), Austria invested almost four times as much in Ukraine as Poland. In 2014 Polish development assistance to Ukraine increased significantly but it is still on a very low level. In January 2015 Poland signed a 10-year loan agreement on favourable conditions with Ukraine. The total amount of money assigned for the loan programme is a mere 100 million euros. To compare, Turkey, which is poorer than Poland, besides loans allocated a billion US dollars (905 million euros) as a donation to Egypt after the revolution in 2011.

Taking into account Ukraine's needs and size of aid of other countries, Poland appears to be rather a second-rate player. What is even more concerning is that

Polish development aid overall decreased in 2014 and, instead of an already low level of one per cent of GDP, makes up now only 0.08 per cent of GDP. In 2013, Angola – one of Africa's richest countries – received more development aid from Poland than all the EaP states combined. Nearly 70 per cent of Polish development aid goes to the EU budget but between 2004 and 2013, Polish organisations dealing with development aid received only 0.025 per cent of the European Commission's grants. It comes then as no surprise that the Polish prime minister visited Kyiv only once since the EuroMaidan Revolution. In the meantime Kyiv is continuously visited by top US officials and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel. If the war in Ukraine did not force a change in Polish foreign policy, then it is difficult to imagine what would do so.

It will also be difficult to expect that other EU member states would treat the Eastern Partnership initiative seriously if even its founder supports it in deeds at such a low level. There is a common belief in Poland that it has the proper know-how to modernise Eastern Europe and that the West has the money. Sadly, the Eastern Partnership's future does not look bright if such immature thinking prevails.

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Searching for a New Narrative

VÍT DOSTÁL

When analysing the European Union's Eastern Partnership policy, one can objectively say that there has been some success. Three countries have signed Association Agreements and some progress has been achieved in the area of individual mobility. But how do the Eastern Partnership states appraise this success? A recent survey provides some insight into the perceptions and faults of the EU's Eastern Partnership policy.

The European Union's Eastern Policy has been challenged since the Vilnius Summit in November 2013. It has transformed from being an extensive bureaucratic (both in a good and bad way) exercise into a policy issue with a high priority. The reason is obvious: the Ukrainian EuroMaidan Revolution, the subsequent annexation of Crimea and – as a result – the deterioration of relations between the EU and Russia. Moreover, the new European Commission has decided to review its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), of which the Eastern Partnership is a part. However, expectations should not be exaggerated. There will not be a new, grand European strategy.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the EU's neighbourhood policy, member states are divided. The eastern policy is no exception. The Riga Summit of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in May 2015 produced no breakthroughs. The search for a new narrative continues. A recent research project called "Important, Forgotten, or Irrelevant? A Stakeholders' Survey on Post-Vilnius Eastern Partnership" conducted

by the Association for International Affairs (AMO) attempted to map the ideas and opinions of influential figures from EaP partner countries regarding the EaP initiative and was aimed at understanding how the project can move forward. The findings noted, above all, that in order to make the new policy successful, the views and expectations of the partners, or neighbouring countries, need to be better reflected in the policy.

Frank assessment

A broad range of contributors to the public debate were approached to participate in the research survey. In all, 918 people from EaP states were contacted, of whom 213 (23.2 per cent) responded to the questionnaire. The response rate varied from 5.2 per cent in Azerbaijan, 16.2 per cent in Georgia, 23.9 per cent in Armenia 25.3 per cent in Ukraine, 29.3 per cent in Moldova to, interestingly, 40.4 per cent in Belarus. We addressed stakeholders who were involved in, or had the opportunity to engage in, the EaP on a regular basis and were theoretically in a position to offer a frank assessment. The group was made up of politicians (9.3 per cent selected members of national parliaments, members of governments, selected politicians active at regional level); civil servants (24 per cent diplomats, employees of state administration); people in business (4.8 per cent representatives of chambers of commerce); analysts and researchers (25.8 per cent); journalists (8.9 per cent) and NGO workers (27.2 per cent). The respondents' shares differed. Therefore, the data mainly consists of the opinion of analysts and researchers (37.8 per cent) and NGO workers (25.3 per cent). The final third of respondents was divided accordingly: civil servants 11.5 per cent, journalist 8.8 per cent, politicians 6 per cent, and business representatives just 1.4 per cent. 9.2 per cent of respondents declared that they do not fit into any of the pre-selected categories. The questionnaire was dispatched electronically and had 15 questions grouped in three categories. First, was an evaluation of the EaP since its inception in 2009. Second, respondents were asked to give their expectations regarding the EaP's future direction. The final set of questions asked for recommendations.

While evaluating the EaP, one has to take into account several features which are part of its architecture. First and foremost, it is an asymmetric partnership. The EaP is in fact a tool for Europeanisation. It allows for Eastern European countries to reform legal structures to meet EU standards. Therefore, it relies on the EaP countries' – or perhaps, more precisely, their political elite's – will to do so. There is no stick on the part of the EU. The only "punishment" from Brussels would be that relations would remain underdeveloped. Yet, the EU can offer some carrots,

such as trade liberalisation and economic development resulting from the proper implementation of EU norms and the easing of individual mobility.

Objectively speaking, there has been some positive developments which should be noted. Representatives of EU institutions often point out that three countries (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) have signed Association Agreements and that progress has been achieved in the area of individual mobility. A clear majority of respondents from EaP states confirmed that there has been some progress in the categories of political association (77.8 per cent) and economic integration (68.5 per cent) with the EU. Not surprisingly, however, there are sharp differences. Belarusian, Armenian and Azeri respondents do not, for obvious reasons, see such progress. Despite these variations in individual states, the shared opinion remains that political co-operation, political integration and economic development are the major benefits of the EaP.

Mixed feelings

As mentioned above, the principal goal of the EaP was to make Eastern Europe look more like the EU. The key findings from the research indicate that interviewees overwhelmingly (84.8 per cent) believe that the EaP represents a tool for the transformation of the legal systems of participating countries up to European standards. However, the detailed picture is quite complex. Examining legislative approximation, which was one of the goals of the 2009 Prague Declaration, two-thirds of respondents think that there has been some or significant progress. Once again, the countries which have signed Association Agreements, as well as Armenia, believe that progress has been made, whereas Belarus and Azerbaijan do not. When it comes to upholding good governance, only 51.1 per cent of respondents believe that the EaP has created any progress. Moreover, in bolstering the pro-reform cause in partner countries, the EaP received the fairly low approval rating of 58.8 per cent.

The principal goal of the Eastern Partnership was to make Eastern Europe look more like the European Union.

There were mixed feelings regarding the EaP's achievements in the area of individual mobility. Generally, respondents recognised some or significant progress here (63.4 per cent) and saw it as the third most important benefit of the EaP. Again the variation between individual states was quite noticeable. Moldovans were the most optimistic, Georgians and Ukrainians less so, whilst Belarusians, Armenians and Azeri were pessimistic.

Naturally, there are areas where the EaP has failed. The most commonly aired concern about the shortcomings of the EaP was its "ineffectiveness". Apart from a lack of will on the part of domestic political elite, there were three other factors which slowed down the policy's success. First, the weak security of partner states combined with the second factor, Russia's aggressive behaviour towards them. Thirdly, energy dependency made political association less conceivable. The same factors were also challenged by respondents. The Prague declaration states that the goals of the EaP were to "serve the shared commitment to stability, security and prosperity of the European Union, the partner states and indeed the entire European continent." This has not been the case as the respondents noted. Weak security was the second most expressed criticism vis-à-vis the EaP. Only 35 per cent of respondents stated that there had been some success in security and stability promotion, while 33 per cent did not see any progress at all. What is more, 31.1 per cent thought that the situation had worsened. Moldovans and Georgians were the most positive in that regard, whereas Ukrainians, understandably, were the least so. Only 22.5 per cent of interviewees agreed that the EaP has served as a key security guarantee for its partner countries.

A significant number of Eastern Europeans believe that the Eastern Partnership is actually an EU geopolitical instrument aimed against Russia.

The EU fiercely denied that the EaP is aimed against Russia's interests, something that later became a part of the Kremlin's propaganda. The results of the research show that a proportionately large share of respondents (43.1 per cent) supported the statement that the EaP is actually an EU geopolitical instrument aimed against Russia. The greatest level of support for this statement came from Georgia. Indeed, there is a question as to whether respondents ticked this option because they thought Brussels is plotting against Moscow or just because they think the EU fulfils the necessary role of challenging Russia.

Best incentive

The overall result indicates that the EaP has brought some general progress. However, it is also clear that there are areas (and countries) which still need to do a lot of work in order to achieve the policy's aims. The logical question that arises is: how to revamp the Eastern Partnership as an instrument to meet the partner states' needs and expectations.

The EU has repeatedly stated that the EaP is not about enlargement. Even the respondents from partner states do not perceive it as a precursor for future candidate status. On the other hand, 91.1 per cent believe that the membership perspective would be the best incentive for future reforms. If the more for more principle should be upheld – something that the interviewees also believe – then there must be some offer after association. Anything but institutions means nothing in the long term. The EU has to face the fact that if Ukraine sustains its current challenges and after five or ten years is still told that "membership lies beyond all horizons", the EU may end up with another Turkey on its border. It may co-operate, it may struggle for good trade relations and people-to-people contacts, but it will have its own values and interests. Perhaps the most important risk would be that a country which feels abandoned by Europe could become quite unpredictable and EU integration would no longer been seen as an attractive aim.

There were some indications of disillusionment among particular respondents (who were recruited mainly from the NGO and expert communities). A significant share of interviewees signalled that the EU should provide partner countries with assistance without affecting the political and economic foundations of those states. This claim was raised mainly by Armenians, Belarusians and Georgians. Such an attitude goes against the principle of conditionality, the cornerstone of political and economic approximation with the EU.

Though the political elite are important players and the most influential partners in the implementation of EaP goals, they are not the only power. The pressure from civil society is very important and may ignite fundamental changes. That was the case in Ukraine. Similarly, society has protested against a corrupted political class in Moldova, one that had claimed to be pro-EU. Therefore, for further EaP progress to be made, the EU must be aware of the situation in partner states and cannot rely solely on the political elite. The tool of mobility is just as important. Together with economic development and security, mobility should remain a key area of EU focus. Partner states also share the view, that the EaP's participation in community programmes like Erasmus+ should receive more funding over the next five years.

The question as to where EU money should be streamed was also part of the survey. The answers varied considerably. Georgians emphasised comprehensive institution building, Moldovans preferred regional development programmes, while Ukrainians pointed to integrated border management. The regional energy market and energy efficiency was also perceived as a high priority for EU funding, mainly by Moldova and Ukraine.

Without a doubt, there is a need for change in the EU's neighbourhood policy and especially in its eastern dimension. It might be possible to amend the EaP as

an instrument; to channel funds into new areas or to devote more attention to the work on the ground with civil society. However, the EaP needs to be approached as a policy, not as a tool. Demonstrable shortcomings such as the lack of membership perspective, a non-existing security dimension and a poor energy security element, all of which were stressed by the survey respondents, signal that the EaP needs more than a "red-tape" approach. It needs politics because the lack of political decisiveness and interest from the EU would, in the long term, endanger the EaP as an instrument of political approximation.

The Eastern Partnership needs to be approached as a policy, not as a tool.

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This text is based on findings from the research project "Important, Forgotten, or Irrelevant? Stakeholders' Survey on Post-Vilnius Eastern Partnership". It was conducted by the Association for International Affairs (AMO) in partnership with research institutes and individuals from the Visegrád Group (V4) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. This article deals only with the data collected in EaP partner countries. Full data is available at trendy2015.amo.cz.

Same Old Song and Dance?

ANNA MARIA DYNER

At first glance, the presidential election in Belarus is of very little interest to the wider public. There is only one serious candidate and it is nearly impossible to imagine that Alyaksandr Lukashenka will not be sworn in for another term. Nonetheless, given the current situation in Eastern Europe, it is worth taking a closer look at the current developments in Belarus. Is this state really as unimportant and unproblematic as it may seem to some in the West?

In Belarus, the presidential election, or "voting" as some simply call it, are in fact a very special moment for the economic and political life of that country. This is a time when Belarusian politics, both at the domestic and international level, become intense. Paradoxically, on election day, as the 2006 and 2010 elections illustrated, the final results are far less important than the reactions of the authorities. On the other hand, the international community mostly focuses on what happens before the election and how it was carried out.

In Belarus it is actually the date of the election that has the greatest meaning, both in regards to the campaign process and the final result. The truth about the latter, as all independent experts in Belarus admit, is only really known to Lukashenka's inner circle. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the decision to move the election date from November 15th 2015 to October 11th 2015 was widely commented on.

The decision to move the election could be interpreted as an attempt to make life difficult for the opposition. Indeed, summer is not the best time for running political campaigns, especially when one has to collect signatures for candidates intending to run. However, the truth is that for the opposition, which is divided, has no leader, no united idea for its campaign and no programme for Belarus, one additional month more would have made no difference.

Two important events

Some experts, probably rightly so, attributed the change of date to the worsening of the economy. It seems that the Belarusian president was looking to accommodate two important events: the election and negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The latter refers to another loan (as the 2009 loan has already been paid off) for Belarus and has already reached an advanced stage of negotiations with the IMF mission coming to Belarus in July 2015. It is almost certain that IMF support will not come by the time the campaign ends. At the same time, it is also quite clear that Belarus badly needs cash and the faster the talks come to a conclusion, the better for Minsk.

A different yet related issue is that of the need to introduce necessary reforms. Nobody, not even the government, expects that the IMF will lend the money unconditionally based solely on some foggy assurances from Belarus this time around. After the experience in 2009, when the IMF succumbed to these types of promises, expectations this time will be much higher. This, in turn, could lead to some real changes in the Belarusian economy, including, for example, a significant increase in waste service fees, something that the voters would be very much against.

In addition, an October date for the election decreases, to some degree, the probability of strikes breaking out in Belarusian state-owned enterprises. Although nerves are high due to the worsening condition of the economy (which can partially be blamed on the crisis of the Russian market deepened by the sanctions), the summer period is a time when everybody either relaxes in their dachas or prepares canned food and pickles for the winter. After that, it is back to school – another period when nobody is thinking about organising a protest.

However, Belarusians quite often show their discontent in unexpected ways. Take the example of the recent, already legendary, football match between Belarus and Ukraine. Not only did the fans of both teams greet each other in both Ukrainian and Belarusian, but they were also chanting anti-Putin slogans. The effect was immediate. After the match, the Belarusian secret service put the fans under surveillance. And while prior cases of political engagement by sport fans were rather few and far between, it is clear that, just like anywhere else in the world, Belarusian football fanatics are well-organised and can easily turn into protest agitators. Therefore, the possibility that the autumn football season will be hot, and not just in terms of the sport on offer, cannot be ruled out. This will be especially true when the Belarusian and Ukrainian, or Belarusian and Russian teams meet during European matches (e.g. the Europa League or the

Belarusians quite often show their discontent in unexpected ways.

Champions League). Moreover, from a political point of view, football matches have an additional advantage: they are transmitted live around the world.

Even though one swallow does not make a summer, we cannot forget that some seemingly unimportant events – such as the students' protest at the Maidan in late November 2013 – have already proved that a course of events can go in a completely unexpected direction. Aware of such a threat, the Belarusian authorities will try to do everything they can to prevent the protests, at least until the election. What happens after is less of a concern, at least for now.

Explosive combination

Nevertheless, appeasing society will only get more difficult as time goes on. This is mainly because of an increased number of strikes where workers demand higher salaries. Given the state of the Belarusian economy at the moment, it is quite clear that these expectations may become increasingly difficult to meet. As a matter of fact, this year, for the first time in a long while, Belarusian workers have started to experience the threat of losing their jobs. Some forecasts indicate that in late 2015, the unemployment rate may exceed six per cent. This indicator may not seem high at first, but its interpretation needs to take into account the fact that such a large number of people without jobs has not been seen in Belarus for over 15 years. In previous years, the official unemployment rate never exceeded one per cent.

In addition, more and more Belarusians are being employed on a part-time basis. This, together with shrinking salaries (data offered by Polish-owned Belsat TV suggests that in the first months of 2015, salaries in Belarus decreased by seven per cent) makes for an explosive combination. Furthermore, the salaries, which are not high to begin with (an average salary in Belarus is around 440 US dollars per month) are gradually being eaten up by inflation. For the period of January 2015 to June 2015, inflation was at 15.4 per cent when compared to the same period in 2014. This has led to a situation where a decrease in income automatically translates into a decrease in internal demand for goods and a direct blow to Belarusian enterprises, further negatively affecting the economy.

To make matters worse, there seems to be no relief on the horizon. The reason behind this situation is the poor state of the Belarusian economy, but the real underlying cause is the economic crisis in Russia, which is not only the primary market for the sale of Belarusian goods but also the biggest investor and creditor to Belarus. The only thing that Russia can offer that country at the moment is to provide some loans to pay off its previous debt obligations. At the moment, it is difficult to expect much more, which means that Lukashenka will not be able to

save the budget by selling strategic enterprises. However, it is also fair to say that if Belarus's military companies, like the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant, were offered for sale, Russia would not have trouble finding money to buy them.

Deep divisions, once again

Normally, this kind of situation would be paradise for the opposition. It would not only highlight all the weaknesses of the current government, but also include those who demand change. However, in Belarus, independent movements and organisations have no potential for significant social mobilisation. It is also difficult to imagine the divided Belarusian opposition unifying under one banner. The weakness of the opposition groups, especially the lack of unity among them, can be seen in the fact that only a few people opted to participate in the election. This includes Tatyana Korotkevich, (an activist backing the "Speak the Truth" campaign), Anatoly Lebedko (the chairman of the United Civic Party of Belarus), Sergey Kalyakin, (the leader of the Belarusian Left Party "A Just World") and Sergey Gaidukevich, (chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party).

As a result, the opposition has, time and again, squandered its chance to create an election product called "a common candidate". Research by the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS) has shown for years that such a candidate would have around 25 per cent share of the vote. However, even before the election campaign was officially launched, the idea of having a unified opposition candidate – Mikola Statkevich, a respected prisoner of conscience and a former candidate in the 2010 presidential election – had already been lost. His candidature would have had two advantages: firstly, it would acquaint Belarusian society with Statkevich's situation and secondly, it would demonstrate a real boycott of the election or, as some people wanted, a withdrawal from participating in an electoral farce (since it would be impossible for Statkevich to be registered at all). However, the representatives of different parties did not agree with such a decision, showing once again the deep divisions that characterise Belarus's opposition.

The Belarusian opposition has, time and again, squandered its chance to unify and put forward a common candidate in presidential elections.

It is important to note that not all of the blame should be placed on the opposition. Other major obstacles faced by political parties include the lack of opportunities to raise funds for a campaign and the advantage enjoyed by Lukashenka

Photo: Courtesy of the Office of President of the Republic of Belarus

Belarus's president, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, visiting the countryside on the campaign trail with French actor Gérard Depardieu.

when it comes to media access. This is especially true during the summer when Lukashenka is in his element, making field trips and visiting farmers in the regions.

Guaranteed victory

At the time of writing this article, we can say with almost near certainty that Lukashenka will once again be elected Belarus's president. While the final result is uncertain, nobody will be surprised if the president gets around 80 per cent of the vote. While it is difficult to question the support that Lukashenka enjoys in his country, which guarantees him victory in the first round of voting, it is clear that such a high score does not reflect reality. As a March 2015 IISEPS research poll showed, the answer to the question of Lukashenka's support is two-fold. Firstly, there is nobody to replace him (38 per cent) and secondly, under Lukashenka, life will be better in the future (35 per cent). At the bottom of the list were Lukashenka's achievements and the quality of his governance. In June 2015 as many as 40 per

cent of Belarusians declared their intention to vote for him again. However, since the EuroMaidan Revolution in Ukraine, Lukashenka's ratings have not gone below 30 per cent and in September 2014 even reached 45 per cent – a level of support which even in a democratic country (and without a strong opposition) should guarantee Lukashenka victory.

Nevertheless, the voting process in Belarus remains highly opaque. The biggest criticism levelled by the OCSE regarding the Belarusian electoral system relates to the way that votes are counted. The Central Election Commission may have tried to reach out to disabled voters (for example, by improving access to visually impaired voters), which was one of the complaints made by the OCSE observers, but this alone is not going to solve the critical problem of electoral procedures. Moreover, it is simply not enough to install new, see-through ballot boxes, when the entire voting system needs an overhaul. The authorities have also barred representatives of the opposition from participating in the electoral commissions and make it impossible for observers to be present at vote counting. This is, of course, the most delicate point in the process, especially when you consider the old Soviet saying that "it does not matter who votes, it matters who counts the votes". Furthermore, given that around one-third of the voters vote before election day (this is a Belarusian characteristic which is meant to increase turnout), nobody really knows what happens to the votes cast before election day. With all this taking place, Lukashenka has invited "all interested parties" to observe the 2015 election in Belarus.

Lukashenka's goal is clear and includes not only a victory in this year's election but also recognition of its legitimacy from EU states, which would significantly increase Belarus's chances in receiving economic assistance from western countries. This is precisely where some people see a chance for Statkevich to be released from prison. The recognition of Lukashenka as a "legitimately elected" president by the West can give him a chance to strengthen Belarusian security and its position in the region, especially considering the highly uncertain future of the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the overall situation in Ukraine. Having friends amongst the EU states could become an important bargaining chip for Minsk. Unlike Ukraine, Belarus does not have many allies in the West.

What's next?

Despite some similarities with previous campaigns, the current presidential campaign is taking place at a point where there is significant upheaval taking place in the region. Lessons from the Ukraine crisis have been learnt not only by the authorities but by society as well, which was terrified by the bloodshed that took

place on Kyiv's Maidan in 2014, as well as the aftermath with the loss of Crimea, the war in Donbas and the economic crisis. Paradoxically, the Ukrainian situation is an advantage to Lukashenka, whom a majority of Belarusians perceive as a guarantor of their country's stability. However, the "new-old" president is facing some new economic and security challenges. Unquestionably, the issue of relations with neighbouring states will be of great importance in this regard. These neighbouring states do not only include Russia, but also Ukraine and the regional states that are members of the EU. The latter can play an even more important role given the fact that now, more than ever, the EU seems ready to start a dialogue with Minsk and is only waiting for a gesture of goodwill from Belarus, i.e. the release of political prisoners. Above all, to ensure Belarus's independent position, Lukashenka must guarantee himself as much independence as possible, both in the economic and military spheres.

The situation in Ukraine is an advantage to Lukashenka, whom a majority of Belarusians perceive as a guarantor of their country's stability

The Belarusian president will also try to take advantage of some of the EU's own (internal and external) problems, including the issue of North African refugees and the difficult situation in Ukraine. It is clear that when put in a wider context, Belarus can be a normal neighbour to the EU. Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that some EU states will be able to accept another term of Lukashenka's presidency. By acting this way, the EU states should also be aware that Russia is quietly counting on EU support to help Belarus which would somewhat ease the Russian economy, as the collapse of the Belarusian economy would also be Russia's problem.

All in all, the presidential election is a good opportunity to remind everybody about the issues inside Belarus. More importantly, it is a chance to reflect on the fact that if the EU does not take a pro-active policy towards Minsk (at least one that is based on Andrei Sannikov's rule: one gesture towards the regime, two towards the opposition), it would be implicitly acknowledging that Belarus belongs in the Russian sphere of influence.

Translated by Iwona Reichardt

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Ukraine's Decentralisation: So close, yet so far away

SHANE QUINN AND LUDMILA CEBAN

The current state of affairs in Ukraine does not make for positive reading. Even without the current instability in the east, the challenges are numerous for the present government. The most pressing challenge is how, as well as what, to prioritise.

Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the occasion. (Benjamin Franklin).

In the specialised world of international development co-operation, there can be a tendency to simply plough a furrow through, rather than actually pause to reflect on what the grand designs could bring about in a country's reform process. Evaluations are conducted and recommendations made but what, in actual fact, do people get out of them? The statement that it is necessary to bridge the state-citizen credibility and trust gaps is obvious, yet what are the modalities for achieving this?

In trying to answer this question, we are reminded of the general mood following the Eastern Partnership's Riga summit this year. It was upbeat amongst decision-makers, safe in the knowledge that they did not have to venture into the maelstrom of trying to reach a consensus on the tricky issue of concessions for the Eastern Partnership. Amongst partner countries, civil society and those hoping for a more engaged and responsive EU, it was very much downbeat. Unsurprisingly, the Greece debt crisis, Russian aggression and the Mediterranean migrant crisis ensured that the EU had its focus elsewhere.

Shared commitment

Yet, in some ways this can have a galvanising effect on countries' willingness to push ahead with reforms and initiatives regardless. It is not a question of partner countries waiting for the EU to say "yes", but rather for them to get ready for an eventual accession process (whenever that may be). One such way is to address the long overdue public administration reforms that have a direct bearing on the local level, which in turn can have a spin-off effect on the national level. The so-called democratic deficit is not only a recurrent theme in the discourse on the European Union; it is front and centre in the question of why Ukraine has undergone two revolutions in the space of just ten years.

The EU Association Agreement with Ukraine clearly states that there should be "a shared commitment to a close and lasting relationship based on common values, in particular full respect for democratic principles, rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms". Over the last several years, there has been a recognition by bilateral, international and regional organisations that the rule of law is a vital component in the governance processes in developing countries, especially those undergoing phases of transition and post-conflict recovery. This is not to say that the process has been a painful one. Rather, it has forced a number of organisations to re-align their approaches to meet the challenges of constantly shifting political dynamics. This shift reflects a confirmation that the rule of law is part of a universal "constitutional" framework of essential and interlinked principles that should be respected whenever individuals and legal persons interact with the state and each other. On the flip side, a weak culture of the rule of law correlates with high levels of corruption, which also undermine the general ability of the state to implement laws and policies, as it creates incentives to keep norms and practices complex, opaque and arbitrary.

A weak culture of the rule of law correlates with high levels of corruption, which also undermine the general ability of the state to implement laws and policies.

As the main interface between the state and the people, public administration has a key role and obligation as a duty bearer to uphold international human rights principles and standards and to ensure equal access for all to quality services. Each country's constitution sets the rules of the game for public administration through ensuring that decision-making follows a clear set of procedures and functions and guarantees predictability in the implementation of administrative procedures; something that, according to Sergei Vlasenko, chairman of the Verkhovna Rada committee on state building, local self-government and regional policy, Ukraine has

not been getting much of since independence. Rule of law systems create a space of freedom where people can develop and be protected from disenfranchisement. This is essential to even the most rudimentary acts of claiming services, as reform works when the incentives are right.

Half-hearted reforms

The current state of affairs in Ukraine does not make for positive reading. Even without the current instability in the east, the challenges are numerous for the present government. The most pressing challenge is how, as well as what, to prioritise. The economic situation is acute – lessened somewhat by the recent 40 billion US dollars assistance package from the IMF in March 2015, addressing the issue of decentralisation and allowing local governments a greater say in their own decision-making processes, and not least, convincing the electorate that the authorities will work for the people and not for their own vested interests. This is not to say that the country is not committed to its reform agenda, particularly with the surge in pro-EU parties during the 2014 elections. Yet decentralisation reform has lost a certain amount of momentum since the formation of the new government. It is de facto one of the most contested areas for reform. The broad citizen-state lacuna is all too evident amid the thorny issue of how to entrench reforms that respond to citizens' demands of increased transparency in decision-making processes and improving the quality of the laws.

With 11,500 councils and 177 city councils at the regional level, local government plays a key role in delivering a number of basic public services in Ukraine. Despite attempts to implement changes in this area since the 1990s it was not until the events of the Euro-Maidan that the political will was finally established to pursue the reform of local government and territorial organisation through decentralisation. The fragmented administrative structure was consolidated, creating larger and more economically self-sufficient administrative units, and a local government reform was implemented focusing on creating clearly defined powers for local authorities vis-à-vis government funding for specific tasks delegated from central government. Political wrangling has tempered initial optimism, resulting in a much more diluted reform package than initially planned. The hope is that the reform will be pushed through by the time the upcoming local elections are held in October 2015. Otherwise, the likelihood is that it will be put off for four more years.

Political wrangling has tempered initial optimism, resulting in a much more diluted reform package than initially planned.

At the municipal level, local government covers a very wide range of issues that are crucial to the everyday lives of individuals. Administrative authorities at the local level represent the front lines between the state and private persons and as such, they effectively determine rights and entitlements. From the point of view of anchoring and upholding democratic principles, local government allows for a decentralisation of decision-making best suited for addressing peoples' concerns, bringing governance closer to the people. The advent of the EuroMaidan moved the debate and momentum swiftly to the importance of entrenching what can effectively be termed the "local" rule of law.

In Ukraine there is a high level of centralisation and nationalisation of public services, resulting in wasteful administrative divisions, administrative and financial failure of basic units of local self-government, a lack of proper local government at the district level and significant differences in the size of areas. This is also reflected in the imbalance in capacity and resources in the event of a lack of cohesiveness in public administration at the local level, affecting the local authorities' autonomy in decision-making and management and their financial autonomy (80 per cent of revenues depend on allocations from the state budget). In a number of oblasts and rayon (regional) administrations, the playing field is uneven, with many of these preferring to push ahead with their own service delivery remedies. Many bottlenecks in the different cities' service provision come down to legislation gaps where the main challenge lies in the discrepancy between the authority prescribed in the law on local government and the specific laws governing the mandate of the agencies, thus creating confusion in the decision-making processes on services and inadvertently increasing the risk of corruption.

Political resistance

The concept of procedural economy, or one-stop shops, is designed to alleviate these bottlenecks and make services more accessible for citizens. Although commendable and filling a quality gap in service delivery, it tends to deal with more simple and routine processes such as the issuance of business licences and business registration. Yet, they preclude a host of other matters that cannot be solved instantly if an application requires multiple permits or physical inspection (where there is a matter of deciding the appropriateness of an application). To complicate matters further, central government transfers certain services to districts (i.e. land registration) without any proper consultation in advance. Other significant challenges are the centralisation and concentration of power in the office of the president thereby lowering the constitutional status of the cabinet of ministers

of Ukraine as well as the unconstitutional subordination of the executive to the head of state.

Many of these instances of centralisation contradict the European Charter of Local Self-Government. As outlined in the preamble of the charter, it is vital to remember that the local authorities are one of the main foundations of any democratic regime. Yet a robust legal framework does not always make a smooth decentralisation process. It is at the local level that the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs can be most directly carried out. The existence of local authorities with fully delegated responsibilities for service provision can provide an administration that is both effective and brings the state closer to the citizen. Ukraine has signed and ratified the charter and while it has informed the past and current reform efforts, the to-and-fro developments indicate a certain political resistance to delegating power to local governments and implementing the principle of subsidiarity. The situation becomes even more complex with the office of the president being represented in each municipality, leading to overlapping mandates with the municipality itself and indicating a distinct unwillingness at the central level for wholehearted systemic change.

A robust legal framework does not always make a smooth decentralisation process.

Local government is established in the Constitution of Ukraine and in a series of legislative acts – most notably the law "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine" (1997) and "On Local State Administrations" (1999). The bulk of provisions relate to the structure, organisation and composition of local government or that of state administrative bodies, including the issue of elections to villages, towns, city mayor and to rayon and oblast councils. Though it is far from coherent, the regulatory framework concerning the delegation of power and the structure of local government bodies stands in clear contrast to the much weaker regulatory regime for how local government should exercise their power vis-à-vis their constituents. Tellingly, there is inadequate legal regulation of the relationship between individuals and local self-government agencies, with overly dominant departmental interests, bureaucracy and corruption.

Essentially, there is no uniform general administrative law code in Ukraine that sets out specific principles for the exercise of power by local self-government, as found in many other European countries. Further, in parallel to city council or rayon local government agencies there are state administrative agencies with duplicating roles and responsibilities. In spite of the number of legal acts on public service delivery in specialised fields such as property or land use, there is still no benchmark setting out uniform practice regarding core rule of law principles such as the

right to be heard, the right to appeal, transparency and accountability. The law on administrative service provision, adopted in 2012, is currently being amended by the Verkhovna Rada and will take some time to be implemented in practice. This law has the scope to cover both state administrative agencies as well as local self-government bodies. Moreover, there are two laws that the Verkhovna Rada recently adopted (with the president already having signed them on February 5th 2015). These are the law "On the State Regional Policy Framework" and the law "On the Voluntary Union of Territorial Communities" and will give even more impetus to addressing shortcomings in the regional and local government frameworks.

Between a rock and a hard place

The legal context is a fraught and complex one. Since 2012, the law "On Administrative Services" stipulates the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of individuals and legal entities in the provision of administrative services. While the law defines principles of state policy in the sphere of administrative services, it does not encompass local self-government. Some areas of service delivery at the local government level are thus insufficiently regulated. Some of these laws are in need of updating and harmonisation with the overall constitutional and legal framework. For example, the housing and utilities sectors alone, which has the most direct impact on the quality of life of citizens, is regulated by 17 laws and more than 35 normative acts of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Economy.

Generally, there is a lack of hierarchy of the normative acts and the matter is further compounded by the distinction between service delivery by state civil service and local government service, making it difficult to organise the professional development of employees. The current legislation of local self-government in Ukraine also supports a close relationship between executives and political (elected) leaders, and the Ukrainian Law on Municipal Service, for instance, includes elected officials in the local government service.

Be that as it may, legal reform is incomplete and partly inconsistent in certain areas, and several international provisions and recommendations remain unimplemented. Even in a forward-looking city such as Lviv (where the Folke Bernadotte Academy conducted a pilot project together with the UNDP) local government employees deny that bribery exists, but 70 per cent of the users of its services believe that the agency personnel can accept bribes and remain unpunished, despite the strict prohibition of bribery by law. The case of Lviv is not unique and reflects a deeper malaise within the country as a whole.

The research also showed that laws alone are insufficient. There was a significant gap between policy-makers and the agency staff who enforce agencies' mandates on the understanding of the laws and how they are applied in practice. Most civil servants understand and have access to the general laws and regulations, but many are of the opinion that the rules do not provide sufficient guidance on different situations they may face. They must therefore rely on internal or administrative rules which do not have the force of law to fill in the gaps. This is particularly the case for local government bodies where the main challenge lies in the blurring of the lines between the authority delegated to them by law and the specific laws related to services under their responsibility.

Making local governance more responsive

Decentralisation reform is formally up and running in Ukraine, but it will take a good deal of political will and engagement from civil society to ensure that its benefits reach local constituencies. The upcoming local elections in October 2015 are the first since decentralisation reform was tabled last year and should prove to be the barometer the government needs to see if it is on the right track. But the debate should not only be about implementing structural, top down reforms; it should also be about making local government and, by extension, central government more responsive and accountable to its citizens. Emphasising the rule of law as an integral part of public administration reform can help decentralisation reforms take root and ward off further frustration amongst ordinary people.

The debate should not only be about implementing top down reforms; it should also be about making government more responsive and accountable to its citizens.

In the context of the hopefully increasing interest in benchmarks of tried and tested practices of quality service delivery, the Folke Bernadotte Academy has embarked on a new initiative to assess the demand and respect for the principles of the rule of law in local self-government. Spanning a new mix of twelve municipal and regional administrations of different sizes, the project is kicking off with the self-assessment of land resource services in Mykolaiv with the aim of essentially linking grassroots to policy-making. Land registration has been one of the most convoluted and tainted administrative services in Ukraine since independence and the south of the country is no exception. The recent appointment of Mikheil Saakashvili as governor of Odesa resulted in the immediate creation of administrative service centres "so

that employees would look people in the eyes, not hands or pockets" when they legally claimed services.

Perhaps this is the start of something big for lifting up the rule of law as a central and high profile issue in decentralisation reform in Ukraine. At this late stage in the game, it definitely should be.

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Some Countries Envy our Energy Independence

A conversation with Rokas Masiulis, the Lithuanian minister of energy. Interviewer: Linas Jegelevicius

LINAS JEGELEVICIUS: Only in its 26th year of independence has Lithuania finally gained real energy independence with its liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in operation at the seaport of Klaipeda and the LitPol and NordBalt interconnectors to be inaugurated by the end of 2015. Has it taken too long for Lithuania to reach this point?

ROKAS MASIULIS: It is really hard to say whether it has taken too long or not. Not all the energy projects in the past needed a relatively long time to get them completed. The Butinge Oil Terminal, for example, was built in 1999, nine years since independence. I believe we all understand that for certain decisions there has to be what I call "a ripe situation". It was only after the privatisation of part of our gas infrastructure that we understood that Lithuania could not expect from Gazprom, a long-time partner, a favourable decision on the price of gas. And after we understood that the business partner could not be trusted, we scrambled to pursue the idea of an LNG terminal and, moreover, its implementation. The construction has been swift, but the entire process that led to it was not always smooth, to put it mildly.

As far as the grid interconnectors are concerned, again, it is hard to say whether they could have been pursued earlier, quicker and more efficiently. We all have to take into consideration the significant amount of work that had to be done in removing all the roadblocks on the path to these projects. This included finding common ground with the project partners, Poland and Sweden, and resolving all disagreements to find optimal, mutually acceptable solutions. All of this certainly came naturally, as all of it would be characteristic for any energy project like the Lithuanian-Polish grid link LitPol and the Lithuanian-Swedish link NordBalt.

Looking back today at what has been done, I believe that we can be proud of these achievements. In fact, some of the

countries around – I won't mention any names – envy the decisions and pace we have taken on the way to our energy independence. Not surprisingly, on the EU scale we are among the leaders in terms of energy integration and the implementation of such huge projects like the Klaipeda LNG terminal and the electricity interconnectors. In fact, the EU puts us as an example to the rest of the world as a country that has made huge strides on the energy front, and that is the best acknowledgement we can possibly receive.

Yet it is all about energy security for the state and lower energy costs for the end-consumers. While all experts agree that NordBalt Link will be pushing the electricity price down on the Lithuanian trading zone at the Nord Pool Spot Exchange (NPS), the assessment as to how much it will go down varies considerably. Some say a couple of percentage points, while others say up to 15 per cent. How do you explain the differences in these estimations? What do you believe is the most realistic reduction in the price?

The assessments are based on the NPS data and year-ahead electricity base-load contracts. So far the price for Swedish electricity for the next year on the exchange is 13 per cent lower than it is now. Such a decrease in price would be considerable. With the Lithuanian-Swedish interconnector in operation, we will be able to satisfy our domestic electricity demand with cheaper Nordic electricity imports by 30 per cent. Sweden, however, relies much more on local hydro generation, which means it is dependent on the level of rainfall and cannot be predicted a year ahead. Sweden's domestic generation is also contingent on three operational nuclear power plants with ten nuclear reactors producing about 35–40 per cent of the country's electricity. And electricity output from the nuclear power plants, in contrast to the hydro power plants, can be easily predicted. Both types of plants have been running smoothly in the country for many years now. It eases the task to have prognoses which are quite precise and reliable.

Lithuania has long been lobbying hard for a more significant EU contribution to the LitPol Link that would integrate the power systems of Lithuania and other Baltic states with the synchronous grid of continental Europe. How realistic is such support?

Indeed Lithuania has asked the EU to help with the massive project costs and the EU has never said "no". The investment is worth over 550 million euros and the project is due for completion in December 2015. The LitPol grid link has been recognised as one of the strategic priorities of the EU. Its significance can hardly be overestimated in the Baltic region as it would allow integration of the Lithuanian power system into the grid of continental Europe.

It will also diversify the sources of electricity supplies and will contribute to the establishment of a single electricity market across the EU. It will contrib-

ute to the closing of the "Baltic ring", a chain of electricity interconnections around the Baltic Sea. The investment will strengthen the reliability and continuity of power supply and will open up new commercial opportunities in energy trading. None of the so-called project beneficiaries comprising of the Baltic Sea region states has ever had any negative responses to the project. We expect to hear from the European Commission on the request by the end of July.*

Some independent Baltic power traders insist that the Baltic states should pursue a single electricity market, in terms of single regulatory legislation and perhaps of a single bidding area on the NPS. What is your take on this? Would it make the Baltic region more attractive for Nordic investors, especially bearing in mind that now the combined electricity market of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia equals just one-eighth of the Danish electricity market?

I would say that all three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have done quite a lot towards that aim already – legislatively too, which has led to a more common, viable and attractive Baltic market. That the electricity trade relations among the countries are shaped only by the market and the exchange says a lot about transparency and the progress that the countries have made. I do believe that each and every one of the Baltic states is attractive to investors. In the gas market, however, we are lacking that kind of integration.

How much of the Baltic states' grid will be interconnected with the western transmission network once the LitPol and NordBalt connectors are in operation?

With their launch, the grids will be fully integrated with the West, but the synchronisation of the transmission systems will not happen immediately. As of now, we are fully dependent on the Russian electrical power system. To have our grid synchronised with continental Europe, we need to build another major power line going to Poland and synchronise the power frequencies. For that we need to build a converter on the Lithuanian and Belarusian border and one has to be put up on the Estonian and Russian border. Such a link with Poland is in our plans, but we still need to work out an agreement. Only with the link and frequency synchronisation could Lithuania disconnect itself from the Russian network. Wary of their reliance, the Baltic states have set themselves an objective of joining and synchronising with the EU internal electricity market by 2025.

Outside of electricity, how far has the gas link with Poland, also known as the GIPL, advanced? Has the Polish government answered the Lithuanian prime min-

* The European Commission and EU member states have approved financial support of 27.4 million euros for the LitPol power interconnection link in July 2015. The project will be financed under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), an instrument for funding European infrastructure networks development. The sum accounts for 67 per cent of the amount applied for.

ister's recent call to allot Polish financing for the project?

At this stage a joint commission made up of representatives of all three Baltic States is in talks with representatives of Poland over the plans. I believe that in the course of a few months we will have a clearer situation. Still, some Lithuanian experts note the Polish side has not shown much eagerness to pursue the project, hence the Lithuanian PM's call to his Polish counterpart.

What do you believe is behind the hesitant Polish position?

It's hard to speculate, frankly. The Poles were expecting greater EU support for the project, perhaps. Both sides have asked the EU to earmark 75 per cent of the necessary funding for the project but the European Commission has come up with 60 per cent for it.

Do you share the belief that the GIPL would significantly boost the attraction of the Lithuanian LNG terminal?

I believe that such a gas link would be positive not only for the Lithuanian terminal but also for the whole gas situation in the region. First and foremost, with the gas interconnector we see Poland as a gas aggregator, one capable of buying large volumes of energy. The idea has been well-received in Europe and Poland is keen on it. If implemented, it would help get discounts for gas purchases.

The Poles might be dragging the decision on the GIPL because of their own LNG terminal in Świnoujście which, regionally, competes with the Klaipeda LNG facility.

I do not want to speculate, but I disagree with the juxtaposition as both terminals are too small to have a bigger impact on the Polish gas market. The terminals, however, invigorate the sector and provide more security to it. The GIPL as a single pipeline, I believe, would give both countries a better position in future negotiations. Besides, the gas link would open new opportunities for gas sales to Ukraine.

The expectations of the Klaipeda LNG terminal becoming a regional one have never come true. Why is that?

Let me stress a few points here. First, the key objective of the terminal was to secure a continuous gas supply, one resistant to any geopolitical shake-up. We have achieved this with the Klaipeda facility. Second, it has been a big boon in our negotiations with Gazprom over a new gas price. The new price is 23 per cent lower than in the old contract. With the discount the terminal has already paid itself off. In fact, to offset the terminal construction costs, Lithuania needed a 10 per cent discount from Gazprom and we managed to get more than twice that.

Third, Estonians are already buying our LNG gas, although the volume is not large. We all have to take into account that the old agreements which the countries have cannot be rewritten just because a new liquefied natural gas terminal pops up somewhere. Signing

new LNG supply contracts takes time, especially in the energy sector. We certainly did not expect a lot of countries to come forward (for Lithuanian LNG) from the very start of the terminal, but the message about it, and the gas, has been sent. Such LNG projects like ours require five years at least to find their spot on the map. I am convinced that the Klaipeda LNG terminal will find its spot, too.

Meanwhile, we are not wasting any time. Lithuania is already looking to expand the LNG infrastructure at the seaport of Klaipeda so that we can cover the complete LNG value chain – from sourcing and transport through storage and distribution to refuelling ships with LNG in strategically important ports. We are also considering using the gas in liquefied form for fuelling vehicles and factories that are not connected to the centralised gas mains. Hence, the terminal has met expectations and its larger capacity and use is the topic for the next five years.

Some of the LNG buyers, like Estonia, have concerns about the terminal's future after the contract with the Norway-based Höegh LNG for floating storage and regasification ends. Can you address these concerns?

In any case, Lithuania must have a second source of gas supply. This is stipulated by EU directive. We abide by this and will be adhering to it in the future. The liquefied gas terminal in Klaipeda is the guarantor of this directive. The facility will be around, without a doubt, well beyond the 10-year lease time.

Nevertheless, you cannot deny that economically the LNG facility is not making a profit since only one-third of its capacity is being used thus far…

As I said before, the launch of the LNG facility has helped us get the 23 per cent gas discount from Gazprom, so taking into account the price we could be paying without the discount, it has paid off already.

In that case, how are the terminal's prospects for the next five years, a time line you already mentioned as being important?

First of all, the terminal's prospects would be very different if Latvia and Estonia, addressing their own energy security concerns, decided to exploit the potential of the Klaipeda facility. As its capacity is not endless, timely reservations of gas would ensure the neighbours' energy security even now. Some orders we would also expect from Poland and even from Ukraine or Belarus in the future. I really would like to encourage Latvia and Estonia to think about making the LNG bookings now.

Latvijas Gaze, the Latvian gas distributor, has said it is sticking with Gazprom for the time being…

Well, that might change if the country resolves to carry out gas sector reforms within the EU's Third Energy Package, which stipulates ownership unbundling – the separation of a companies' generation

and sale operations from their transmission networks. Latvia has indicated that it will pursue the directive.

Do you still believe that Lithuania can carry out a new nuclear power plant project in Visaginas? With just over a year until the new parliamentary elections, the Lithuanian government does not seem to be pursuing it.

Assessing what has been done and what still needs to be done to get the project off the ground, I believe one year is enough to get things moving. Construction of most nuclear power plants takes decades and experience shows that getting the projects under way is always the hardest task. The Lithuanian nuclear project is unique in the sense that it is a regional project – to be developed with Latvia and Estonia – and Lithuania cannot decide on its own. We have already agreed on the improvement of the project and on how to scale down the initial capacity. Besides the main question – shall the construction be pursued? – we have to make up our mind how it should be carried out. And the last thing would be getting the green light from the public.

I still believe the government, along with the Latvian and Estonian governments, can work out a clear position on the nuclear power plant project before the next election. Certainly, there are many different opinions out there. Nevertheless, we still believe that such a plant would be viable and would satisfy the need for power.

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The Mountain Lama

A tale of a theocratic utopia

ALBERT JAWŁOWSKI

Lama Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov enjoyed great reverence in Transbaikalia. Therefore, even when he was captured during the Bolshevik siege in 1920, Tsydenov's followers never believed that their master had been executed. They were convinced that the siddha was immortal and would safely lead them through the chaos of revolutions or civil wars.

Large, wet snowflakes are dancing on the wind in the wide asphalt square of a bus station in the capital of Buryatia – Ulan-Ude. Hopefully, someone will opt for a ride. To Khorynsk? Kyakhta? Or Barguzin? Drivers of shabby buses are shaking their heads. "Kizhinga, a mere 500 roubles per person!" shouts someone, suddenly. People react immediately. It does not matter that the owner of the off-road Nissan demands twice as much as the marshrutka drivers. Today, going with him is the only way to get to the valley. The roads are already covered in snow and the first snow storm is just beginning.

Outside the city, the cracked grey road disappears under heavy white snow, meandering through the valleys of the steppe. Here and there, small bushy hills and sparse forests appear. After a few hours of slow, careful driving, I can finally see the smooth landscape of the Kizhinga valley.

"How can this region develop properly if at times you cannot even get here," the driver, a Kizhingan Buryat, complains. He has lived and worked in Ulan-Ude for many years. "People endlessly say that we need to do something here, but everyone who is given that chance runs away!" he concludes and speeds up.

Wily ancestors

We pass a snow-covered Kizhinga datsan*. This Buddhist monastery was destroyed by the communists in the 1930s and rebuilt in the early 1990s. Further down, on the left, I see a large stupa – Dzharun-Hashor. It looks almost exactly the same as the stupa located in the heart of Kathmandu in Nepal, which is not a coincidence. The Nepalese stupa served as a model for the local builders. Today, its copy resides here as a lonely guard, securing the northern frontiers of the Indo-Tibetan civilisation which reaches as far as the Mongolian steppes and Siberian taiga.

"The communists blew it up, but the locals have always remembered where it was located. They rebuilt it around ten years ago. At the time, it appeared that many people had secretly kept pieces of the old stupa in their houses. One such piece was built into a new stupa," the driver said, staring at the building and not paying attention to the road, as if nothing unexpected could happen to him here.

Apparently, as far back as one hundred years ago people who lived here would do whatever it takes to have the main communication routes avoid their land. Even today, one can hear stories of wily ancestors who tricked the Russians when they planned to set up a branch of the Trans-Siberian railway here. A bag of valuable ornaments collected in nearby ulusses** was enough to convince geologists that the soil was too swampy to build a railway. Locals living in the valleys sighed with relief. They became convinced that the wooded mountain chains would always protect them from intruders. However, the events that were to take place in the 20th century would completely shatter such illusions.

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June 1914 was not a particularly notable month. The steppe was covered by the fresh, juicy grass which had been feeding hordes of horses throughout the ages. The smell of wormwood was in the air during the short summer nights whilst the hot days were helping to erase the memories of harsh continental winters. Somewhere far away, in Europe, a Serbian student shot an Austrian duke. A month later the First World War broke out.

* A datsan is a Buddhist university monastery which can be found throughout Mongolia, Tibet and Siberia – editor's note.

** An ulus is a type of rural locality in Buryatia – editor's note.

In 1915 the central powers' offensive broke onto the Russian front. Moscow and St Petersburg were falling into chaos. At the beginning of 1917 an unexpected piece of worrying news spread across the valleys: Tsar Nicholas II had abdicated. The almighty "White Khan" had been knocked from his throne and was not expected to be succeeded. At the end of that year, the Bolsheviks overturned the powerless provisional government. The February Revolution was quelled by the October Revolution.

Under these circumstances, another war began; a war of the cruellest kind that pitted neighbours against each other. It was a war that tore families apart and led the inhabitants of lands which they had inherited from their ancestors to kill each other. Soon the war spread all over the collapsing empire and started to reach even the most remote areas. A bloody fight for power started on the wild steppes beyond Lake Baikal.

An independent khanate

In 1918 ataman Grigory Mikhaylovich Semyonov, a leader of the White movement in Transbaikal who was supported by Japan, began implementing a plan. He had already entered Ulan-Ude that summer, which at the time was called Verkhneudinsk. Semyonov, despite regarding the Bolsheviks as his main enemy, did not want to shed blood in defence of White Russia. This son of a Buryat mother and Cossack father dreamt of creating a central Asian superpower. As a strong supporter of the pan-Mongol concept, Semyonov planned to merge the lands of southern and eastern Siberia, Manchuria, eastern Turkestan and outer and inner Mongolia.

Recruitment to his Buryat regiment – the "White Riders" – was announced in the valleys of Kizhinga and Kodun but the local clans refused to join the fight. Only when Semyonov threatened to take recruits by force did the residents realise that the only way out of the situation was to form their own structures of power and separate themselves from the rest of the war-torn empire.

The Great Sulgan – an assembly of clans – was organised on Gora Chelsana, a sacred mountain in Buryatia. Many years before the Buryats came to these lands, Tungusic peoples controlled the territory and used the sacred mountain for their rituals. The site also served the Buryat shamans, and in the 18th century their place was taken by Buddhist lamas. When something important was to take place, the elderly would gather there to decide the future. Eventually, after several days of discussions, a hundred delegates decided to proclaim an independent khanate, a self-determined state located by the river Kodun. The delegates appointed ministers and the prerogatives of their new government were established. It was also

decided that the leadership would be given to a Buddist lama, Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov. Clearly, the inhabitants of the valleys came to an understanding that only this respected scholar was able to lead them safely through the civil war. This is how one of the most interesting social experiments in war-torn Siberia began.

It is difficult to give a simple description of Tsydenov. He was a Buddhist scholar, a philosopher, a poet, a political and religious leader, and a reformer of Buddhist doctrine. Taller than most, he was also silent, nonchalant and private. Conversely, he had a great gift for influencing people. His intelligent eyes gave Tsydenov's face a noble look despite the smallpox scars and black/grey marks of alleged poisoning by a witch.

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Tsydenov had equal numbers of enemies and followers and he was not an easy person to deal with. He was unpredictable, uncompromising and sometimes arrogant. Many lamas were aware that his knowledge was much greater and his tantric experience deeper than theirs. His abrupt behaviour affected even the most powerful people in the country. However, the truth also is that this gruff troublemaker and recluse was, in his lifetime, worshiped like a god.

An outstanding expert

Archives do not offer much to those who want to research Tsydenov's life. His biography is largely based on oral tradition. That is why, in many aspects, it is more akin to a folk tale than a historical study. One thing that is known is Tsydenov's place and date of birth, which occurred in 1851 by the river Kudun, not far from the Shuluuta ulus, the location of modern Kizhinga. At the age of six, he was sent to Kizhinga datsan. After a few years spent as one of the best students at the datsan, he was moved to Tamchin datsan, the most important Buryat temple. It was the seat of Chambo lamas, the superiors of the east-Siberian Buddhists.

After a few years of education, Tsydenov was awarded the title of lama. According to Buddhist custom, a student should prepare a feast to mark this occasion and invite teachers, lamas and family. Tsydenov arranged a feast for the stray dogs that congregated around the temple. He fed them soup with goat meat. It is unclear what drove him to make such a decision. Perhaps it was the old Buryat legends which stated that the dogs living around the temple were in their previous life lazy and greedy monks.

Tsydenov had a strong position among Buddhist scholars. He gained a reputation as an outstanding expert in Buddhist philosophy. As a result of his knowledge and skills, a superior from the Buryat Buddhists, XI Pandito Khambo lama Iroltuyev, included him in the Buryat delegation to the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II. Even though Iroltuyev had some doubts about this decision, he clearly wanted to send a signal to the capital that in Buryatia, there were skilful philosophers being educated. He was afraid of confronting Russian academics but was sure that Tsydenov would not have problems with them in a public forum.

Therefore, in 1894 Tsydenov, together with a couple of Buddhist hierarchs and leaders from Buryat clans, travelled to St Petersburg. His difficult personality became a real problem there. He ostentatiously ignored professors who wanted to debate with him. Eventually, he agreed to have a short conversation with Aleksei Pozdneev, a Russian specialist in Mongol studies. Pozdneev often recalled that meeting later in life, emphasising how much this lama from Buryatia had impressed him.

It soon became clear that the affront to the St Petersburg professors was just a minor incident. During an audience with the newly crowned Tsar, Tsydenov refused to bow to do obeisance unto the king. Such behaviour could be interpreted as a clear signal that not all Buryats are loyal to the tsar. When an argument broke out among the delegates, Tsydenov informed his colleagues that he did not think it was proper for a Buddhist monk and tantric master to bow before a secular person. According to him, a secular ruler could not be more important than Dharma Raja, the king of Buddha's teaching.

The head of the Buryat delegation later explained to the Russian interior minister, Ivan Goremykin, that the behaviour of the lama was not a sign of disrespect. On the contrary, the lama was so paralysed by his love for the tsar that he lost consciousness and was simply unable to move. The tsar's officials could hardly believe this story but, in the end, they accepted the explanation, leaving the problem to be resolved between the Buryats themselves.

After returning home Tsydenov was stationed for a short time in the Kizhinga datsan where he met a Buddhist scholar from Tibet. As a result of this meeting Tsydenov said that "datsan is samsara" and called his associates to leave their datsans and practice their faith outside of the traditional monastic schemes. The core of this reform was a return to certain old Indian practices of classic Buddhism. Referring to the Mahasiddha tradition, Tsydenov claimed that the relationship between a student and a master is more important than the hierarchy. This claim was nothing new since giving priority to the relations between a student and a master is the essence of Vajrayana and tantric traditions. However, to openly question hierarchy was dangerous as it caused anxiety among the religious establishment which tried

to confine Tsydenov within its monastic structures. In 1908 he was offered the seat of shireete-lama (the head) of Kizhinga datsan.

Tsydenov rejected this offer and his authority continued to grow. People in the Kizhinga valley saw him as more than just a sacred scholar. Many locals perceived him to be a community and spiritual leader. This led to divisions amongst the Buryat Buddhists between those who followed the traditional monastic tradition and those who supported Tsydenov, called balagats (a Balagat is a term used by Tsydenov and other participants of the movement. It meant a person who detaches him/herself). Local religious reform, which led to the creation of a Buddhist sect, evolved over time into a utopian, theocratic khanate, hidden at the frontier of the collapsed Romanov Empire.

A state of the "sacred lama"

The territory of the theocratic Buddhist state consisted of 11 units, the so-called balagat communities. Its centre was the small village of Soorhoy where, near to Tsydenov's hermitage, his closest students settled. At that time Tsydenov was in a state of deep meditation. He would contact his followers through his trusted student Agvan Silnam (Dorje Badmayev). Balagats strictly observed the rule about not using violence. However, spiritual practice and neutrality did not stop the armed forces.

Ataman Semyonov, angered by numerous refusals to provide him with recruits, sent a punitive expedition with the aim of arresting the leader of the rebellious valleys. Tsydenov was imprisoned for the first time in his life but he was released after a short period of time. Perhaps considering the threat of confrontation with the Bolsheviks, Semyonov wanted to avoid riots and resistance from the balagats. Pacifist balagat communities were not very useful but neither were they a big threat.

In the spring of 1920 the communists entered Verkhneudinsk and it became clear that it was just a matter of time before they took control of the whole Transbaikal area. Semyonov ordered a retreat to Manchuria but he did not want to surrender without a fight. He continued to believe that the course of the war could change. That is why he once tried to convince Tsydenov to gather his followers and send them to fight against the Bolsheviks. Semyonov was trying to convince Tsydenov that sooner or later they would come and destroy his theocratic khanate as well. Tsydenov's reply was that in that case, fighting them would make as little sense as an old lady attempting to calm a horde of wild, raging horses. He was right.

In May 1920 the Bolsheviks took over the Kizhinga and Kodun valleys. Tsydenov knew the end was near. He gathered his students and gave them his final lesson. According to oral tradition, he said: "The inevitable has happened. You have to

continue living. If they ask something from you – give it to them. If they ask you to do something – do it. But do not ever abandon the teaching of Buddha and stay faithful to dharma." Soon after, the Bolsheviks captured him.

One thing ends, another begins

The utopian, theocratic khanate was collapsing. After Tsydenov's arrest, the desperate balagats decided to undertake an armed resistance and formed guerrilla groups. However, they were easily overpowered by the Bolsheviks who successfully besieged the state of the sacred lama. In June 1921 some of Tsydenov's students created a new community in the village of Huhe Shuluta. It was the first time that they paid tribute to Tsydenov's spiritual successor, Bidia Dandaron, son of the late Agvan Silnam. Bidia Dandaron, who was seven years old at that time, was dressed in Tsydenov's clothes. The tribute ceremony was in line with Tsydenov's will which he communicated from prison. It was also one of the last acts of his life.

It is unclear when exactly Tsydenov was executed. There are even some claims that he committed suicide. Other sources suggest that he died in prison as a result of long, exhausting interrogations. Tsydenov's students never believed that he was executed. They were sure that he, as a siddha, had attained immortality and defeated death. For some time the Bolsheviks tolerated the existence of the Kizhinga datsan, a Buryat Buddhist temple that Tsydenov was associated with. However, in the early 1930s the datsan was closed and the last lamas were chased away or arrested. The project of a new world and the new Soviet man was under way.

The local historical memory was destroyed by the Soviet authorities. However, this did not stop Tsydenov from becoming a legend.

Consequently, the local historical memory of the balagat movement was destroyed by the Soviet authorities. This, however, did not stop Tsydenov from becoming a legend. Stories about his supernatural powers spread widely. Some of the most notable include Tsydenov transforming himself into the wrathful god Yamantaka, which almost scared the Bolsheviks to death, or escaping from prison via teleportation.

Today, when we can freely discuss the "lama from the mountains", people talk about Tsydenov with respect. In their view it was thanks to him that the Buryats did not fall into fraternal infighting. Residents of Kizhinga and other locals often keep pictures of Tsydenov in their houses as shrines. I spotted one of them in Sendema's house. Her son, Radna, graduated from the Buddhist academy in Nepal. Today, he teaches a new generation of Buryat lamas.

"After all this, nobody had an easy life. It was difficult for people from Kizhinga to get a proper job or trust. Our fathers and grandfathers were usually suspects," Sendema says. "Some say that Tsydenov's ambitions were too grand and that it was his fault we faced such terrible repression. I disagree. If not for Tsydenov, Seymonov would have enlisted our boys into his army and then the communists' attacks would have been even worse. Our grandfathers had little choice: join Tsydenov or Seymonov. It was horrible. However, the elderly respected him even though they were afraid of talking about him. They even came up with songs of praise for him," she says and starts to sing.

In Soviet times the tradition of Tsydenov's teachings did not die. The locals preserved memories of him. In the valleys of Kizhinga and Kodun, there was even covert tuition of tantra which also made its way to the European part of the Soviet empire. Tsydenov's teaching tradition reached as far afield as Moscow, St Petersburg, Kyiv and the Baltic states. It was all possible thanks to Bidia Dandaron, the man who developed Tsydenov's thought and gave it a universal and philosophical character.

Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

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The Problem with Memory

KINGA GAJDA AND MONIKA ERIKSEN

Kosovo is a perfect illustration of how the concept of memory and living experiences align to create two very different visions of the same idea. Both Kosovo-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs remember the past wrongs which each side inflicted upon the other and have used the past to mould an identity. Yet the idea of a unified Kosovar identity can only be constructed within a state (polity)-oriented identity framework.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the field and topic of memory in research and academic discourse has gained considerable interest and momentum. This trend can be seen as directly correlating with the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. Following the collapse of communism, the countries of this region faced the immense task of redefining the history of its collective societies. Hence, memory studies became one of the primary approaches in this new context.

Yet, there is not one single understanding of the definition of the term "memory". In a general sense, the idea of memory is connected with fulfilling the role of creating individual and collective identity. The past and its associated memory are a part of a process of describing the individual and collective place in contemporary world and culture. Hence, in order to understand themselves, people have to analyse, interpret and know the past which is linked to common or personal history. However, one has to come back to past facts in order to justify choices in life. Therefore, the process of consistently returning to the past often involves repeating and sometimes even transforming it. Sometimes this means a process of an endless search for some solutions or inspiration.

Memory as a destructive power

The process of describing and defining identity is changeable and constantly evolving. In some cases, memory serves the purpose of solidifying one's identity, while in others memory can have a destructive effect on the very same process of identity formation. Despite most theories presenting the positive impact of memory on the processes of defining and creating identity, most researchers believe that the "preservation of group identity must have its own memory of the past". There are instances where memory is not a part of social, cultural and political customs. Furthermore, memory is not a factor in integration, nor does it possess adhesive power in moulding or defining a collective sense of self.

The mechanism of the use of the past and the building of a collective memory is one of the pillars of modern ethno-nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. For the existing political order, ethno-nationalist movements still pose a huge challenge, including their spread across the world and their influence on millions of people. These movements identify more closely with particular cultural traditions than with the state. Global changes have undermined traditional values and beliefs about the existence of one valid national identity.

Additionally, collective memory is an ideologically-rich concept that has the power to transform groups and communities that can either "use" the past to embrace a positive and inclusive sense of national identity or stand in opposition to "the other", especially in multi-ethnic post-conflict states. This is particularly evident for example in today's Kosovo.

This post-independent country is a perfect illustration how the concept of memory and living experiences align to create two very different visions of the same idea. These identities are multi-dimensional, constructed on the basis of normative viewpoints within a shared community, with a mutual culture, language and history. And history after all, is an accrual of factual events which are often interpreted by those directly and indirectly involved. Memory of the past is intensely and intrinsically interconnected with history and often serves as a filtering apparatus in "remembering" or "forgetting" those elements which are deemed relevant to a foreseen outcome.

To further elaborate on this point, both Kosovo-Albanians and Kosovo-Serbs collectively remember the past wrongs each side inflicted upon each other and have consequently and systematically used the past to mould an identity. Both sides cannot deny that war and bloodshed took place in history, but both sides nonetheless invoke only certain events and, more importantly, interpretations of these events in order to justify their position. It is what Gerald Hauser regarded as competitive vernacular narratives, where both groups evoke personal histories and experiences

of their collective memories to substantiate their nationalist claims and forge an identity based upon these claims.

Also, collective memory often reinforce a "coherent victimisation narrative". And here it is equally important to emphasise two points: Firstly, the idea of collective memory does not exist in the traditionally understood confines of the term, because in essence there is no real collective Kosovar identity; the two main ethnic groups possess two very different notions of what aspects of this memory are accurate and therefore convenient to realise their goals. Secondly, when using this respective collective memory as an agent in an identity-forming framework, we must not forget that the Kosovo-Albanian and Kosovo-Serbian vision of what that identity should be is also startlingly different.

Opposing narratives

The past manifested within narratives is rooted in culturally-shared frames of often deeply emotive images, meanings, symbols and metaphors, playing the role of building blocks in forging an identity and meaning. These narratives are particularly important in post-conflict transition states where two or more groups are competing for control, both political and symbolic, whereby they invoke the past in response to contemporary needs. For example, the Kosovo Serbs often recall heroes and villains, provide accounts of historical events such as battles (i.e. the defeat of Prince Lazar in the Kosovo Polje Battle of 1389), including the origins of the Serbian nation, invoke past conflicts and enemies as a conscious effort to develop and sustain a sense of national identity.

Kosovo Albanian nationalism is very unique in that it is comprised of two, often colliding views of how the past should in fact transform the present. The Kosovo Albanian identity, as it is for the Serbs, stems from the memory of war and repression. They legitimatise their nationalist tendencies as a by-product of decades of Serbian hegemony and oppression. This, alongside years of political inefficiency under Ibrahim Rugova and his non-violent approach, and the international community's failure to properly address the Kosovo question, led them to assert their national identity with a framework of a new and independent state.

Kosovo Albanian identity is influenced by memory of the past, but it manifests itself in two distinctively different and often opposing narratives. At the outset, the first strand is closely related to Albanian nationalism originating in 19th century discourse where the other is seen as a more progressive strand, closely focusing on a supranational association within Euro-Atlantic structures. Although these two views can clash in ultimately defining the exact nature of what an Albanian identity

A Primer on Kosovo

Kosovo, a breakaway province that was formally a part of Serbia, is now enjoying almost full independence. The case of Kosovo has been cited by the international media many times within recent months especially when comparing to the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia on February 17th 2008. It has been recognised by more than 100 states around the world but the international community remains divided on the recognition of Kosovo. In spite of the ongoing normalisation process Serbia still considers Kosovo to be part of its territory.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, Kosovo was the cultural and administrative centre of the Serbian state, under the Nemanjić dynasty. Kosovo was also an important seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In 1389 the Battle of Kosovo took place, which is now generally seen as a turning point in the history of of Serbia and Kosovo. The Serbian army, led by Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, was defeated by the invading army of the Ottoman Empire. From then on Ottomans retained control over the territory of Kosovo for more than 500 years, losing it only in 1912 when it was recaptured by the Kingdom of Serbia.

Over centuries, the ethnic and religious composition of Kosovo has changed to the favour of Albanians and Muslims. The Battle of Kosovo constituted one of the most important myths in Serbian national identity – the Kosovo Myth – which is seen as martyrdom of the Serbian people in defence of Christianity against the Turks. After the Second World War, Kosovo was absorbed into the Yugoslav Federation as an autonomous province of the Socialist Republic of Serbia.

The 1974 Yugoslav Constitution significantly narrowed the powers of the federation and extended more powers to its entities, including Kosovo. It gave Kosovars a sense of freedom and indirectly fuelled a wave of protests that broke out in Kosovo in 1981. Yugoslav policymakers based in Belgrade did not want to accept the protesters' demands which included even wider autonomy, not to mention full independence. During the 1980s tension and nationalism began to rise throughout the country. These processes were also fostered by the death of Yugoslavia's long-time leader, Josip Broz Tito.

At the end of the 1980s communist-turned-nationalist Slobodan Milošević took the lead in the Socialist Republic of Serbia. Under his rule Belgrade stripped the rights of autonomy given to Kosovo in the 1974 constitution. This step led ethnic Albanians from Kosovo to declare independence from Serbia for the first time, but did not lead to international recognition. In 1998 an open conflict between Serbian police and separatists from the Kosovo Liberation Army broke out in Kosovo which led to a brutal crackdown by the Serbian army and, eventually, to the NATO bombings of Belgrade in 1999.

For the next nine years Albanians and Serbs lived next to each other in one country until Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008. The Republic of Kosovo is now a partially recognised state, mostly by western countries including the United States, Canada and 23 out of 28 member states of the European Union. Kosovo has not been recognised, however, by states like Russia and China (both members of the UN Security Council), Ukraine or India, as well as many states that face their own problems of ethnic-based separatism. Although Serbia considers Kosovo to be a part of its territory, the governments of Serbia and Kosovo since 2013 – when they signed the Brussels Agreement – have been on the path towards normalisation, and high officials from both sides have been meeting regularly under the auspices of the European Union.

Kosovo's sovereignty is limited by various external factors such as the Kosovo Force (KFOR), a NATO-led international peacekeeping force stationed on its territory or the fact that is not a member of the United Nations. However, Kosovo joined numerous international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Council of Europe. It is also a potential candidate for future membership in the EU.

should be, it nonetheless acts as a fortifying force in creating a pronounced unique Kosovo Albanian identity.

When talking about the birth of a national identity, whether based on the past or forged through recent political developments, we often think about a holistic ideological attribution of symbols, images, beliefs, and traditions that incorporates all citizens who occupy the given space. With respect to Kosovo, this is precisely not the case. First of all, it is important to emphasise here that Albanian identity – to be

treated separately from the notion of 'being' Albanian in Albania, but rather solely in the context of Kosovo – underwent a long period of cultural misery characterised by suppression and underdevelopment during Serbian occupation. Albanian identity was denounced in various ways, from suppressing textbooks in schools in the Albanian language to referring to Kosovo Albanians as *Šiptari*, rather than *Albanci*; the former having a pejorative connotation. This was done in order to stifle the duality of this identity, as a way to prevent any latent unification efforts and dilute ideological ambitions of creating a *"Greater Albania"*.

The absence of mutual identitarian cohesion between these two ethnic groups in Kosovo is further illustrated by divergent cultural symbols. For the Serbs, for example, one symbol of considerable recognition is a cross with four fire-steels pointing outwards, based on a Byzantine symbol called a *tetragramme*. Interestingly, this cross is very often inscribed with a Serbian motto, which in itself already underscores its unique and indivisible national identity: "Only unity saves the Serbs". The Albanian equivalent is the iconic double-headed black eagle, which incidentally is also a part of the Albanian national flag. Even with respect to social stratification, both groups have safeguarded their own unique styles.

Albanians often wear what is called *qeleshja*, a white hat made out of felt. It is still often worn on a daily basis by older men. The Serbs have traditionally worn the *šubara*, a black hat made out of sheep or lamb fur, however it is for the most part reserved for folkloric events, rather than daily life. Lastly, it is fair to point out that despite the plethora of cultural differences there is one element that, at least in theory, accounts for the potential of a unified Kosovar national identity sometime in the years to come: the flag. The Kosovar flag in light of the country becoming independent in 2007 contains five stars, each representing one of the five ethnic groups (Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Gorani, Roma, and Bosniaks) that currently make up the country.

The Kosovar flag in light of the country becoming independent in 2007 contains five stars, each representing one of the five ethnic groups that currently make up the country.

In the years following independence the internal realities quickly became ideologically detached. Kosovo-Albanians attempted to construct a Kosovar identity that is not synchronous with their Serbian counterparts, nor with any other sub-minority groups.

In essence, the concept of a unified Kosovar identity does not exist, which is a result of several factors. Firstly, the very concept of a Kosovar distinctiveness is created by mostly a fraction of the country's citizens, where the minority have both overtly and surreptitiously denied any participation in formulating such an

identity. Collective identities as represented by both ethnic groups are related to their respective national, cultural identities – Albanian and Serbian. Therefore, the prospects of constructing a new identity are damned from its conception and can create a conflict of allegiance. Consequently, creating a unified Kosovar identity is a difficult task as both groups already possess a well-established identity. Anything in addition would be attributed to a polity- or state-oriented identity. This is exactly what is referred to as nested identities – an identity that is comprised of both a cultural association and is state-oriented.

This too, however, is an arduous task since Kosovo Serbs do not recognise Kosovo as a polity in its own right, but rather retain the firm belief that Kosovo is and always was a part of their unique Serbian history and heritage. Their collective memory virtually prevents them from entertaining such a possibility; continually reaffirming the various historical milestones and commemorative sites such as the Dečan Monastery. For the Kosovo Albanians, the city of Prizren, for example, as the birth of the Prizren League also represents such a memory site. After all, collective memory is more than just about sharing a common story, but about conflict. In the case of Kosovo, the struggle over identity is related to "memory sites".

Memory as a disjoining force

National identity is not an inborn trait but one that is created and does not necessarily depend on one's ethnic roots. It is formulated upon the presence of certain common links as defined by the British sociologist – Anthony Smith. Smith claims that the concepts of autonomy, identity, authenticity, unity and fraternity "form an interrelated language or discourse that has its expressive ceremonials and symbols. These are so much a part of the world we live in that we take them, for the most part, for granted. They include the obvious attributes of nations – flags, anthems, parades, capital cities, oaths, folk costumes, war memorials, passports, frontiers – as well as more hidden aspects, such as national recreations, popular heroes, forms of etiquette, styles of architecture, legal procedures, educational practices and military codes – all those distinctive customs, and ways of acting, feeling that are shared by members of a community of historical culture".

These elements are mutually exclusive for Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. They do not represent a unified "community of a historical culture". On the contrary, each group possesses its own set of intrinsically unique commonalities and therefore retains a separate and completely distinct identity. In this particular case memory, instead of serving as a bonding element in forging a common Kosovar identity, actually serves as a disjoining force between the two groups, consequent-

ly disabling the process of a unified Kosovar identity towards full recognition. Memory has been a crucial element in shaping modern day Kosovo, reinforced by conflicting narratives. Going back as far as hundreds of years, the Serbs have claimed that Kosovo is the cradle of its civilisation and have continuously referred to various historical milestones, such as the struggle against the Ottoman Empire, to sustain this claim. The Kosovo Albanians have therefore created counter-myths to justify their claims of ownership to the land, by stressing that they are actually descendants of the ancient tribes of Illyrians who have settled in the Balkans around 1000 BC. These varying historical accounts, coupled with other elements have a considerable impact on shaping the Kosovar identity.

Memory has been a crucial element in shaping modern day Kosovo, reinforced by the conflicting narratives.

Both ethnic groups retain an unbreakable bond to their ethno-national roots which supersede any other identity. Consequently, the idea of a unified Kosovar identity can only be constructed within a state (polity)-oriented identity framework. In other words, bearing in mind that elements such as language, culture, religion, traditions, are not the same for Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, the only viable option for creating an identity-like link, interconnecting the two groups, is by creating a state-based identity. Instead of trying to reconcile two opposing worldviews and ethnos, a Kosovar identity can in fact be a social condition that only reinforces a state-building process rather than a nation-building process. This serves as the only viable option which opts out of any dichotomous divisions between the two groups, allowing them to mutually address relevant citizen-related issues such as citizenship, rights, rule of law, and the economy which are crucial to their everyday existence.

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Forum Dziedzictwa Europy Środkowej | Heritage Forum of Central Europe

Exploring Cities and Heritage in Central Europe

Every two years, the International Cultural Centre based in Kraków (Poland) hosts the Heritage Forum of Central Europe – an international conference where specialists from Central Europe, as well as researchers and experts from all over the world, discuss issues of cultural heritage. The Kraków conference is the voice of Central Europe on the philosophy, management, protection, economics, politics and social issues of cultural heritage. The Forum is organised under the auspices of the Visegrad Cultural Heritage Experts' Working Group, made up of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Gyula Forster National Centre for Cultural Heritage Management in Budapest, the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and the International Cultural Centre in Kraków. The third Heritage Forum of Central Europe will be held on September 16–18 2015. The theme of this year's forum is "The City". *New Eastern Europe* sat down with Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga from the International Cultural Center in Kraków to discuss in detail what this year's Heritage Forum will entail.

NEW EASTERN EUROPE: The topic of this year's Heritage Forum organised, for the third time in Kraków by the International Culture Centre, is "The City". Why? Isn't this a topic that has already been discussed at great length?

JOANNA SANETRA-SZELIGA (International Cultural Center): Cities can be discussed in many different ways. It is indeed a topic that cannot be exhausted and our conference aims to show a different aspect of this debate about cities, an aspect that is rarely covered in debates of urban planners, economists or even activists. We chose the topic of the City because it seems to be one of the main challenges faced by the contemporary world. Urbanisation, especially in the West, has been becoming increasingly intense in the last decades. More than half of all people live in cities and this percentage increases every year, despite urban flight. In fact, the phenomenon of urban flight should be discussed as a part of the problem of urban sprawl rather than groups moving out to rural areas to lead a rural life. In a great many cases people want to have bigger houses and green spaces, and at the same time keep an urban lifestyle. What we would like to show in our debates and presentations is how cultural heritage fits into the pictures of a contemporary city and ask what role it has to play.

At first we thought we would focus primarily on historical cities, but we quickly discovered that all cities have their own history, be it a ten or a 50 year history. In Poland, for example, a few cities have been established after the Second World War. Still, these cities can also be called historical cities with their own both intangible (city narratives, customs, a way of life) and tangible heritage (such as industrial heritage). Heritage is not a synonym for a monument. Quite the contrary, heritage is this part of our past that we chose to use for contemporary purposes, economic, social, cultural, political and pass on to the next generations. If we look at the problem from this angle, all cities have their own heritage.

How would you describe this contemporary city, one that will be the topic of discussions in Kraków? From the perspective of cultural heritage, what challenges will be discussed?

Cities are very complex organisms and our intention is to try and show this complexity in a number of sessions. There will be a session which illustrates the challenge of heritage in conflict. During this session we want to talk about different types of conflicts that emerge in the discussions on heritage. There is a rivalry between preservation and protection and using heritage for contemporary needs. This is the conflict between the developer and a conservator. We are also planning a discussion about what heritage is. There is dissonant heritage. In other words, all kinds of post-communist or Second World War objects which constitute our identity and memory. They say a lot about us and our history. And then there is the question of whether we can internalise this unwanted past and use it in our modern functioning. The ICC has invited a number of experts on these subjects, including researchers from Central Europe and the Balkans. The latter especially will discuss the issue of post-conflict heritage.

Heritage is also a part of the very important process of building a city's identity. On the one hand, it is a bottom-up process initiated by the residents who select the objects they want to protect or customs they want to preserve. But there are also elements of a top-down, political approach which is aimed at creating identity, or a brand, of a city. Krakow is an obvious example of a city whose brand is mainly built on cultural heritage that attracts millions of tourists a year. Yet, during our forum we will also talk about other, lesser known, cases of heritage being used to create new city narratives. That might include recently discovered (or re-discovered) heritage, e.g. the Jewish past that is being explored in many Polish towns now.

For some time already we can notice a qualitative change in the approach to urban space and financial management. Not only do we notice an increase in the so-called urban movements and local initiatives, but also in the approach of the local authorities towards planning and urban investments. A good example of this change is the Polish institution of participatory budgeting. Is this a topic that will also be discussed during the forum?

Re-fashioning a city by its residents and groups of activists (in many cases also with some co-operation with local authorities) will be the topic of our last session, open to the general public and concluding the whole event. Our guests from Slovak Žilina (who among other initiatives, adapted an old synagogue for a cultural centre), Czech Pilzen (this year's European Capital of Culture) and Łódź (with its Mia100 Kamienic project of revitalisation of heritage buildings in the city centre) will present their projects and then debate on heritage contributing to the quality of life in cities. What we find crucial to present here is how urban activism can play a role of a intermediary between residents' needs and a local government's actions. In our view it is not enough to simply renovate immovable heritage – we must always ask how the residents (and not necessary tourists nor investors!) will benefit from such projects. Here we aim to present good practices and contribute to the general discussion on this subject.

What are the threats and challenges to a city's heritage?

Certainly one of the most important challenges is too little resources for heritage protection. However, there is also a problem of using or abusing heritage. Should it be used commercially or just be protected? I think that in cities such as Kraków where there are many tourists, there is also a problem of Disneylandisation. Residents move out of

the centres leaving them only to tourists and tourist businesses ("local" food, bars and pubs, souvenir shops, hotels, etc.). Such a city centre loses its authenticity and could discourage development of valuable cultural tourism.

Recently, at the International Cultural Centre we conducted a two-year research project which aimed to show the impact of heritage on different aspects of life: economy, culture, society and environment. By collecting reports, studies and material from all over Europe we managed to collect arguments and real life examples proving the role of heritage in many different aspects of our lives. It is not only the tourism business that is affected but the whole economy. It is not only city branding for marketing purposes that uses heritage but also the process of building the sense of belonging and local identity, crucial for the subjective quality of life. Heritage also impacts the environment – properly done renovation saves energy, lengthens the life of a building and avoids waste. We will show the details of our findings during one of the forum's plenary sessions.

Why do you think that Kraków is the right place to talk about today's cities in the context of cultural heritage?

By all means Krakow is a heritage and historical city – with all the benefits and challenges of such a status. It can be shown as a laboratory of experiments on urban heritage tissue. Also, the forum itself is an initiative of the Visegrad Group. That is why we have partners from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Together with our partners we have been organising this forum over the last several years. These meetings are thus not to talk only about Kraków, but more broadly about the situation in Central Europe which will also be put in a more global context.

Traditionally the forum gathers world renowned experts in the area of heritage but also local activists and representatives of different institutions. Who will be this year's guests at the forum?

Overall, the forum is mixed. On the one hand there are many experts, including academics and practitioners. This year we are inviting Professor Gregory J. Ashworth (University of Groningen) and Prof. Christer Gustafsson (University of Uppsala) to deliver the introductory lectures and talk about this broader context of heritage as well as the challenges that it faces.

We also have a few plenary sessions for which we invited special guests and experts, usually from Central Europe. During these sessions we will talk about the issue of these cities' transformation, globalisation as well as regional co-operation. The second part includes parallel session for which we had an open call. There will also be sessions opened to general public (opening lectures as well as the last session) and I think this is where most of the grassroots initiatives will be presented. Naturally, we invite everybody to come and listen to all of these presentations.

Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga is a lecturer, researcher and author of publications on EU cultural policy, the role of culture in development strategies and inter-cultural dialogue. She is the Chief Specialist at the Research Institute for European Heritage in the International Cultural Centre coordinating this year's edition of the Forum.

Learn more about this year's Heritage Forum at: www.mck.krakow.pl

Tadeusz Kantor

Inspiration and legacy

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The year 2015 marks the 100 year anniversary of the birth of Tadeusz Kantor. It is being honoured worldwide as the "Year of Tadeusz Kantor" announced by UNESCO. Kantor (1915–1990) was an avant-garde Polish painter, stage designer and theatre director. Kantor is renowned for his theatre performances which were staged in Poland and abroad. In 1955 Kantor established a theatre ensemble called Cricot 2. Among its performances the most well-known is "The Dead Class" (1975). In this play Kantor played the role of a teacher presiding over a class of dead characters.

Kantor's life and art reflected the Polish reality of the different periods of the 20th century. They included the multi-cultural towns of the inter-war period, the harsh times of the Nazi occupation and the post-war period of communism. In 1990 the artist passed away in Kraków, a city where he spent most of his professional life.

This section of *New Eastern Europe* aims to present Kantor's legacy today. By intermingling texts written by authors who either knew Kantor personally (his daughter, Dorota Krakowska; the trustee of Kantor's ideas and an actor in his theatre troupe, Krzysztof Miklaszewski; and his professional colleagues from his time spent in Florence, Dani and Hava Karavan) or who are inspired by Kantor's work (Anna Królica and Anna Kaszuba), we would like to show that on this 100th anniversary of his birth, Kantor's legacy is alive and well. And it continues to inspire…

Zośka Papużanka and Iwona Reichardt

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

A Bizarre Kind of Loyalty

A conversation with Dorota Krakowska, daughter of Tadeusz Kantor. Interviewer: Łukasz Wojtusik

ŁUKASZ WOJTUSIK: The year 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Tadeusz Kantor, which in Poland is celebrated as "the year of Kantor". What kind of experience is it to you, as the artist's daughter? Difficult? Inspiring?

DOROTA KRAKOWSKA: It is definitely difficult and interesting at the same time. But I wish it lasted longer than just one year. Then it could become an intellectually fascinating adventure. For me it is a time for assignments, duties and questions.

What is the hardest part of this experience?

Numerous artists find Kantor's legacy inspiring. There are theatre plays and operas. I keep getting enquires about the use of his theatre scores. I am not certain whether Kantor would like that, to be honest. I need to make a decision for each request and reflect whether such actions are not an abuse of him as a person and his work. Is it really about getting to know Kantor more closely by those who have not had this opportunity yet? Or perhaps it is about something else, not necessarily in line with his way of thinking about art.

Once a reformer, Kantor is now regarded as a classic…

My professors from the Kraków Academy of Arts tried to convince me once that it is possible to separate classical art from the contemporary one. However, primitivism also made an important contribution to contemporary art. I'm not keen on such divisions.

For Kantor the present and the past mingled on one stage. A journey into one's own self was for him an attempt to bring back memories, something which, nonetheless, was subject to constant changes and negotiation.

The point was a peculiar return to one's own past; to the past of the place, but also to the manifestos created by

his predecessors. In the 20th century Marcel Duchamp gave us artistic freedom. With one single act he changed the way of thinking about art and its space. Artists have been faithful to these objectives.

But space also played an important role in Kantor's works…

A characteristic feature of theatrical art is the limiting of the space and time continuum. Kantor approached this issue differently at different stages in his life. During the Second World War his theatre would touch upon social and political threats. And there was a time when Kantor was involved in a repertoire theatre, but the real breakthrough came with the establishment of Cricot 2*. However, it was the year 1975 that marked the beginning of the most important thing, namely the theatre of death, which was followed by the theatre of love and death.

It was already then that Kantor focused on memory and demonstrating how it works…

Indeed, Kantor would build on his personal memory. He made use of the so-called "small room of imagination". His experience of life and its surroundings were the most important. Out of these experiences he would build his own space on the stage. The play *Today is my Birthday*, the one he never finished, was supposed to point to a new phase in his artistic life.

What do you think was special about your father's artistic work?

This question cannot possibly be answered with just one sentence. Why did *Dead Class* become world famous? Why were his subsequent theatre proposals so well received? Kantor was able to create a theatre in which the audience knew how to read the emotions he was using. He would talk about the history and tragedy of Poland and he would talk about the non-existent Galicia, a world which was destroyed during the Second World War. He focused on the people who passed away and the generation of witnesses and those crying for the loss. He explicitly referred to the already non-existent world of memory. After the Second World War in Poland the time came for an erasure and the denial of history. In his work Kantor kept returning to this world and analysed this story. He would deliberately end the taboo code while not telling the story literally because he used metaphors with which his audience was familiar. Today his art is perceived in a totally different way.

Where does this difference come from?

One of the contemporary interpretations proposed by Marta Kufel, a theatre critic, states that Kantor created his theatre to fill the void that was left by

* Cricot 2 was a Polish experimental theatre company based in Kraków founded in 1955 by Tadeusz Kantor. Productions were initially based on dramas by Stanisław Witkiewicz (Witkacy) but later plays were genuine creations of Tadeusz Kantor himself.

Photo: Grażyna Makara / Tygodnik Powszechny

Dorota Krakowska: "I do not need any memories. I simply have an impression that I still live in the pre-war Galicia."

the Jews and Jesus, the two empty places that remained after the Second World War. And indeed, Kantor was a witness of history in a multi-national country. Yet he was destined to live in a single-national and single-minded People's Republic of Poland.

And what is your memory in this regard?

I do not need any memories at all. I simply have an impression that I still live in the pre-war Galicia. I'm still in a *shtetl*. Even physically I miss what I was not able to even know. I have an unspoken sentiment towards small Galician towns. It might be genetic memory or secondary memory. I cannot explain this.

And you cannot possibly remember those places…

It is quite bizarre that one can go back to memories of a period when one was not even alive. I should rather remember Warsaw where I lived as a child. However, I do not remember the communist times. Neither do I miss Warsaw. I am unable to dwell on the communist period when my father was artistically active and when I was young. I hate those times but I miss the pre-war Galicia.

Not long ago, the International Cultural Centre in Kraków staged an exhibition, both in Kraków and in Vienna, which was titled *The Myth of Galicia*. It presented the remnants of the non-existent land in the mentality of the region's inhabitants. Is this how you see Galicia?

That is exactly the way I see it. Galicia is a state of mind. Sometimes it even

drives me crazy. A good psychologist might explain this puzzle to me. What is the origin of my longing for a place that is not based on a real experience?

What would Kantor say looking at you today?

I believe he would reprimand both me and others who are responsible for preserving his legacy.

Are we doing too little?

A far better space for the understanding and contemplating his artistic work could have been created. I feel guilty in this regard although I do not have access to everything that is related to his legacy. Neither do I have the time to control it all. Kantor himself was not only an artistic genius beyond any comparison but also a great manager. He was great at organising the space for his artistic work and finding a way to have it funded. Today, young people learn these skills at universities, whereas Kantor was a manager who was using his intuition and instinct.

During his plays Kantor would often reorganise and change the surroundings. Was his behaviour similar off the stage?

I lived with him only for a short time when I was very little. I think he felt life needed theatricalisation. The private sphere would overlap with the aesthetic one. Ordinary events were treated with the same importance as extraordinary ones. Even having a cup of coffee was a ritual. Breakfast was an event too, while silence was a staged silence.

Was it possible to have a normal conversation with Kantor?

It was but it was always an unusual experience. Every meeting with him was some kind of celebration.

Was it possible not to give in to it? In his plays the actors seem to live with him in a bizarre symbiosis as if together they were celebrating the theatrical journey.

It was difficult not to give in. It was an absolute symbiosis preceded by many months of preparations. Was it possible not to give in to Kantor? This man had an amazing charm and some magic around him. I loved meeting him even in the street. What I disliked though was coming to Cricoteka.

Why?

There was a specific atmosphere. Everyone was important.

So meetings on the street were safer forthe relationship you had with your father?

Even on the street I could not help but notice his charisma. He was full of positive energy. I could be a hundred metres away from him and I would still sense it. He was a man who stood out.

I can sense some passion in this story about your father…

Because he was a great man. Now I have been watching a great number of his plays and rehearsal footage. I have been reading about him and for the first time since his death I have felt overcome with grief.

You can feel his absence.

After his death mum would often tell stories about Tadeusz. She would watch his plays. It was because of him that she wrote the book which I helped put together. And then mum passed away. When celebrating the year of Kantor in Poland I have felt his absence to the core for the very first time. And it makes me sad.

What have you gained by being his daughter?

I have gained a great love for the arts and artists, not the ones seeking a successful career, but the uncompromising artists. I also found a great love for theatre and the visual arts. It is because of him that I have that infinite love for Galicia which ceased to exist so long ago.

And what have you lost as Kantor's daughter?

The opportunity to work in the theatre. I studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Kraków even though I kind of felt held back, being aware of the fact that I will not be as good as Kantor or my stepfather, the great stage designer Wojciech Krakowski.

Were you held back from the inside or the outside?

It was from the inside. However, I would also hear things like: "Give up on theatre; you will not succeed." I reflected on these opinions and accepted them. But I kept doing my job.

It seems to be a problem that many children of famous artists have to face. They choose a career path similar to the one their parents walked through.

And most of them are affected by something we could call an artistic or environmental block. It has nothing to do with their abilities or skills.

Did Tadeusz Kantor devote himself to anything else other than the arts?

When Tadeusz was given a choice between taking care of me or his art, he chose the latter. When I have things to do and get some questions about Kantor I always end up dealing with Kantor, it is a bizarre kind of loyalty.

Translated by Justyna Chada

Dorota Krakowska is a daughter of the late Taduesz Kantor and a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. Her works were presented in Kraków, Warsaw, Poznań and Stockholm. She focuses on graphic and performative arts. She currently works for the Goethe Institute in Kraków.

Łukasz Wojtusik is a Polish journalist and radio reporter. He is the head of the Kraków office of the radio programme TOK FM.

A Bridge to Understanding Kantor's Theatre

ANNA KRÓLICA

One of the ways to choreographically read Kantor's plays refers to his first constructivist performances. It is also a reference to the abstract and formal dance that were started by Oskar Schlemmer with his mechanical ballets.

"In art there is nothing autonomous, nothing individual. The space, the space for art, the space for painting can be created everywhere: on linen, on stage, on the street or at the post office. It can be created with the use of paint or actors, or even oneself" – these words are how Polish art critic Mieczysław Porębski described the artistic work of Tadeusz Kantor. Until today Kantor remains an inspiration for visual artists, painters, stage designers, directors, historians, literary experts and musicians. Even in the jungle of his different forms and themes there is some room for understanding contemporary choreography.

What links Kantor and dance together is the interest in the body of an actor/performer and its classification as a peculiar object which, despite being real, physical and seemingly limited, can be modified. Kantor believed that the body's parameters can be changed with the use of a costume and in installations. This approach to corporeality is in line with visual arts. Hence, it is not surprising that Kantor, who was not only engaged in stage performances but also created paintings and scenography, utilised the body as such. What is more, this approach to the human body, in Kantor's time (his first play was created in 1938–39 while the last one in 1990), introduced to Polish theatre a completely new understanding on the role of the actor's body and the performer.

Influence of Oskar Schlemmer

It was in the 1980s and 90s when this approach to the human body became a popular attribute of Flemish dance productions and, actually, performing arts in general. At that time in Belgium and the Netherlands, through some systematic political and institutional changes, dance, visual arts and theatre (the fields that previously existed independently of one another) began to co-exist in the sphere of performing arts. Thanks to the combination of these forms and languages, the range of possibility for body visualisations on the stage increased. As a result, the human body would no longer function as a whole. Instead, as a semantic sign, it became one of the many materials used by artists in their creations. Paintings, film and theatre techniques used for body presentation, social, as well as social and affective body construction – became available for choreographers, directors and visual artists. In the 1990s this process took a significant step forward. Considering again the timing of Kantor's professional life it seems that Kantor anticipated this process, as in his work we can see elements that go beyond the narrowly understood genres and disciplines of his time.

There is no secret that Kantor came across contemporary choreography where it took on the avant-garde, unconventional and boundary forms which do not directly result from dance traditions but are nevertheless included in its process of transformations and historical development. Such was the case of Kantor's fascination with Oskar Schlemmer's "Triadisches Ballet" where actors are transfigured from normal to geometrical shapes or the "Bauhaus Dances". Schlemmer was a sculptor and a painter who became widely known for creating mechanical ballet during the interwar period. Even though Kantor had no interest in traditional ballet (due to its artificiality and glitz), he became fascinated with Schlemmer's avant-garde performances.

Kantor became fascinated with Oskar Schlemmer's avant-garde dance performances.

Kantor's interest in the Bauhaus school and constructivism was characteristic for the early phase of his artistic work. Strikingly, this fascination came back at the end of his career when Kantor was working on "The Machine of Love and Death" which premiered during the 1987 *Documenta 8* exhibition in Kassel. The traces of Kantor's fascination with Schlemmer can be also found in his works like "The Death of Tintagiles" (1938), "Balladyna" (1943) and "The Return of Odysseus" (1944) as well as, I believe, in the idea of the bio-object, that is a connection between a living organism and an everyday object.

Fascination with constructivism

In the above-mentioned earlier period of Kantor's theatre the thinking about the performer's body as abstract material is evident. In "The Death of Tintagiles", a production based on Maurice Maeterlinck's drama about a kidnapped boy, the characters became very symbolic thanks to their formal and abstract costumes, which were simplified geometrical shapes of black, grey and gold. Kantor made use of the form of the marionette theatre that he named the Ephemeral (and Mechanical) Puppet Theatre. It was clear that he was not interested in a mannequin as such; he drew from Maeterlinck's drama because of his fascination with constructivism, Bauhaus and Schlemmer.

In the early period of Kantor's theatre the thinking about the performer's body as abstract material is evident.

This fascination lasted for several years. Polish painter, Janina Kraupe-Świderska, while reminiscing about "Balladyna" staged by Kantor three years later, described it as a "constructivist ballet". She wrote: "the fact that this was a dance of geometrical forms was an extraordinary discovery for me. The costumes consisted of rectangles; actors were dressed in very stiff, rectangular sacks. The only contrast was that of Jerzy Turowicz, who played the role of the prince and wore a costume in the shape of a circle but placed horizontally. There were also two costumes in the form of a semi-circle; everything was of a bit curved, and moon-like form."

When reading the recollections of Kantor's productions we may notice that his contemporaries had also some fascination with the Schlemmer costume. For painters (such as Porębski or Kraupe-Świderska) it was an obvious reference. Schlemmer gave high priority to the theatre costume as he believed that, thanks to it, a metamorphosis of a human into *Tänzermensch* (man-dancer) might occur with no direct interference into the body. He was very fond of *Commedia dell'arte* because of the way it paid attention to the costume and the adjusting of each costume to every character type. In his view costumes brought a new dimension to the play. The audience's attention was drawn not only to their form and colour but also the materials. Stiff costumes would often stick out from the performers' or dancers' body, making them move differently.

Materialisation and automatisation

Similarly to Schlemmer, Kantor stressed how much the human being mattered to him although since "The Death of Tintagiles" and "Balladyna" he was hiding

The Return of Odysseus staged by the Independent Underground Theatre. Kraków 1944.

humans in machines and obelisks. This materialisation and automation of the actor derived from different thinking than was in the case of the avant-garde (typical for Schlemmer and the Bauhaus school) fascination with technology. In the underground theatre and the Kraków of the Second World War the automatism that was hidden in machines or actor-figures was associated with the lack of life.

When writing about Schlemmer and his workshop in the Bauhaus many people miss the fact that Schlemmer was first and foremost engaged in dance and stage-related projects. Schlemmer was not educated in the field of choreography; neither was he a professional dancer. Nevertheless, in his projects he often drew from classical ballet. In his writings he gave credit to ballet for its simplicity and clarity of form. In the "Triadisches Ballet" and "Bauhaus Dances" there is no unnecessary virtuosity. Performers walk rather than dance. And they make some specific gestures. In "Triadisches Ballet" there are elements of pointe shoes dance, pirouettes and also rococo pas de duex. However, in terms of the acrobatic abilities that are typical of ballet dances this is a very simplified kind of dance.

It is also worth stating that dance has changed its aesthetics in the contemporary experimental performance and it often makes use of stillness, static poses and walking. This might be treated as a promise of some tendencies in the avant-garde dance. Schlemmer's aim in "Triadisches Ballet", and later in "Bauhaus Dances", was to draw attention to space and widen the audience's experience.

Space is never empty. It can be experienced through sight and touch. Today "Triadisches Ballet" is treated as the beginning of a new line of abstract dance. "Bauhaus Dances", in turn, present dancers with hoops and sticks. Those dancers perform in a certain space, demonstrating how abstract concepts can be close to the human condition. It is the form, colour, space and sound that are key in the composition of such performances.

The situation is not much different in the case of Kantor's first two plays which are so popular thanks to their formal and vivid character that perfectly captures the atmosphere of the time of war. This realistic aspect in Kantor's art suggests a significant departure from Schlemmer's works. For Schlemmer's the project idea and artistic searching dominate while Kantor provides an answer to reality. The pantomime ballet moves become elements of the world of an unusual construction which, ironically, says more about threat than a traditional realistic production.

At a later stage of Kantor's performances it was again movement and the processions of actors crossing "The Dead Class" with bizarre jumps that were a sign of the breaking of reality. As a result, Kantor will no longer use abstract costumes. Instead, he chose to apply grotesque aesthetics. Yet, the idea of a costume which transforms not only the actor's body but also the reality was also seen also in his "Theatre of Death".

A social body

As mentioned above, one of the ways to choreographically read Kantor's theatre plays refers to his first constructivist performances. It is also a reference to the line of abstract and formal dance that were started by Schlemmer's mechanical ballets. Choreographic elements are to be found at a later stage, in a different context, namely during the period of the "Theatre of Death". Here they might be linked with Kantor's exploration of the notion of a social body, which is perceived as an archive where individual and cultural memory is "stored". In the history of dance this type of somatic narrative is connected with dance theatre *(Tanztheater)* based on the ideas of a German expressive dance.

There are two likely (or three if we take into account the way the body functions in Kantor's Theatre of Happening) but completely different ways of historical readings of choreographic threads in Kantor's work. Their historical overview, however, would not exhaust the subject. It was the corporeality of the Cricot 2 actors, the performative character of their actions, performance, as well as the elimination of the radical difference between a rehearsal and a play that made Kantor an extremely attractive creator for contemporary choreographers.

More and more often, the new generation of choreographers draws from Kantor while searching for creative inspiration in his legacy. Despite the lack of a physical training manual, which could be of great use for dancers to practice moves, Kantor's theatre remains a very attractive source. One of the reasons behind this attractiveness was Kantor's belief that actors cannot forget that they speak with their hands, feet, and the whole body much more than they do with their face or voice.

In 2013 driving from a research project where I focused on searching for similarities between Kantor and Pina Bausch's work, I started (together with Natalia Zarzecka, director of Cricoteka) a new project called "The Choreographic Machine". I also became the curator of this project. It aims to undertake a discussion and search for common denominators between Kantor's work and contemporary choreography. Artists who use similar means, aim at being authentic and focus on processed biographism and who create a particular intimate theatre of feelings and subjective memories are welcome to participate and present their productions.

This year, for the first time, we have decided to invite artists for artistic residence to give them an opportunity to consciously prepare their plays that, from the very first moment of the creative process, will enter into a dialogue with the artistic creation of Oskar Schlemmer who provided a bridge for understanding one of the mysteries of Kantor's theatre.

Translated by Justyna Chada

Anna Królica is a critic, a theorist and a curator of dance projects. She is currently working on her doctorate thesis on the subject of memory and body in the Kantor's Theatre of Death and Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal.

Of Mannequins and Men

ANNA KASZUBA-DĘBSKA

Dolls and mannequins were a significant inspiration for artists of the interwar period. This motif was also used by Taduesz Kantor, especially in his play "The Dead Class". The influence of the pre-war tradition as well as Kantor's work can be seen in a new project called *The Retired Men*.

The interwar period in Europe was a period characterised by mass produced clothing followed by the development of advertisement and marketing of these goods. As a result of the industrial revolution and the increased demand for clothing, new display mannequins were created which were confusingly similar to humans. Throughout Europe, shop, trading warehouses and fashion house windows began to fill up with mannequins presenting the latest trends in fashion. In Paris, Vienna and Berlin factories and mannequin foundries, where these human-like dolls were produced, mushroomed. In terms of their beauty and perfection the mannequins outscored their human prototypes.

Trade demands are often followed by art. Thanks to the latter, shop windows and interiors of shopping centres improved their aesthetics and started to look more pleasant to the customer. Before this change it was actually quite scary to look at the shop windows where wax figures with distorted faces and inhuman gestures had dwelled.

Dollyism

The subject of dolls was a significant inspiration for artists of the interwar period. For centuries dolls had been known differently to different cultures; as a child's toy, a magical Voodoo doll or a sacred idiolect. Since the 20th century, however,

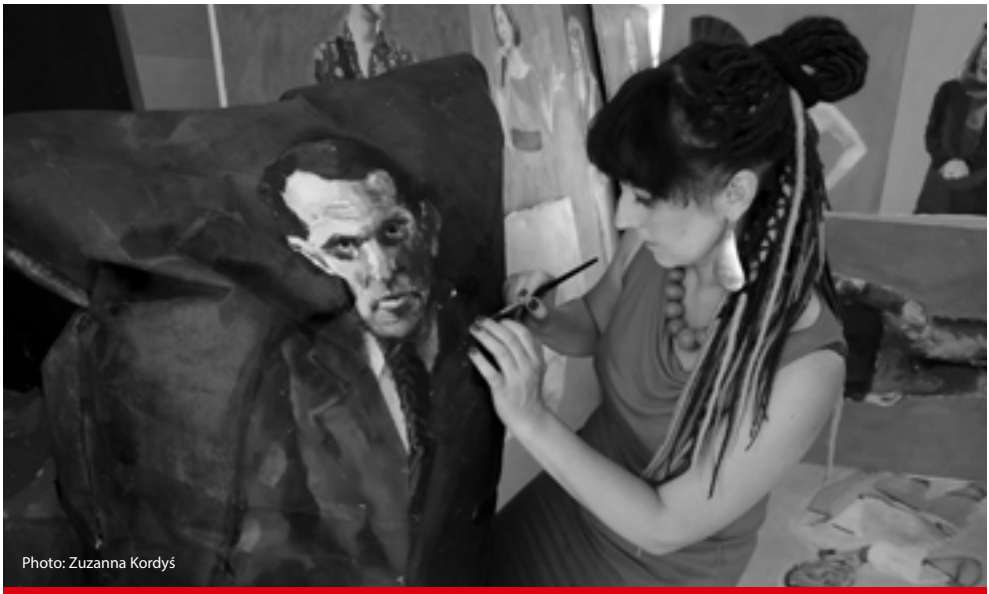

Photo: Zuzanna Kordyś

Anna Kaszuba-Dębska: "As an artist, I find inspiration in the legacy of Schulz, Witkacy and Kantor."

a doll has taken on a totally different meaning. Ever since the French impressionist painter, Edgar Degas, dressed a self-made sculpture of a girl in a ballet suit the thinking about sculpture has never been the same. Soon after, the surrealist and dadaist movements opened the door to such artists as Oskar Kokoschka who created a doll as a substitute of his ex-lover that he would carry around. Another example was Hans Bellmer who perversely used doll elements to create new degenerate beings; barely mature doll models for his artistic photographs.

Dollyism became a theme that was sneaking into pop culture everywhere. In 1931 people were flocking to the cinemas to see *Frankenstein* – the story of a young scholar who brought to life a monster created from wasted human bodies. In Poland annual political farce shows became quite popular. In these shows dolls personified celebrities from the world of politics, culture and art. It comes hardly as a surprise that many artists were also inspired by and created works of art that reflected the trends of the times.

Debora Vogel was one of such artists. This Lviv-born poet and philosopher, fascinated by modernism, created a new reality in which she gave life to store mannequins. At the very same time Bruno Schulz, another Polish writer and a close friend of Vogel, also became interested in the topic of store mannequins and dolls. Schulz came from the industrial region of Drohobycz-Borysław (popularly known as the "Polish Pennsylvania"). In his 1934 collection of short essays titled *Street of Crocodiles* Schulz wrote: "Of all essences in the cosmos, matter is the most

passive and defenceless. Anyone may knead and shape it; it submits to all. … The demiurgus was enamoured of refined, perfect and sophisticated materials, but we give precedence to junk. We are simply rapt by it, entranced by the cheapness, the paltriness and the tawdriness of the material. Do you understand … the profound meaning of that weakness, that passion for gaudy tissue paper, papier-mâché, coloured lacquer, straw and sawdust? … We want to create mankind a second time, in the image and semblance of a mannequin."

In a different work, namely a short story titled *The Retired Man*, Schulz created a new surreal reality where the main character is an old retired man; a man who has passed through his life phases: childhood, adolescence, youth and maturity. This is a man who is aware of the passage of time; a man at the dusk of his lifetime, wasted away. However, despite the hopelessness of his existence and the decay of his body, he still has his own deeply hidden wishes and bizarre dreams. In the pointlessness of the old life, the man suddenly moves into a new reality. He is once again sitting at his school desk in a large wooden school building resembling a theatre hall. His schoolmates take him for a peer. Hence, the retired man mentally becomes a boy. His pockets are full of colourful treasures, he reports to the teacher, has a lisp and is mischievous.

Forty years after the publishing of Bruno Schulz's *The Retired Man* Tadeusz Kantor prepared a theatre play that was inspired by Schulz's vision.

This old man from Schultz's novel, similarly to the mannequin from the store display window in Vogel's prose, is given a new life, a new, surreal reality. Forty years after publishing *The Retired Man* another Polish artist and painter – Tadeusz Kantor – reaches for this theme one more time and prepares a theatre play, inspired by Schulz's vision.

The great trio: Schulz, Witkacy, Kantor

The first night of the theatre play "The Dead Class", prepared and directed by Tadeusz Kantor, took place in Kraków on November 15th 1975. Since then the play was shown in numerous countries over 1,500 times and in 1976 it was recognised as the best theatre play in the world by *Newsweek*. Similarly to Schulz's short story, in Kantor's play old men dressed in black sit at school desks in a classroom. Kantor describes them as: "near death, some of them already dead". In this surreal situation actors with dead eyes curiously peek out of the desks trying to get a glance at some moment from the past, from the times of their own immaturity. There are nursery rhymes, childish jokes and silly words. When preparing the play

20 years after the experience of the war and the Holocaust, which was especially tragic for Poland, Kantor seeks the legacies of Schulz, who was murdered by the Nazis, and Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy) who committed suicide as a result of the Soviet aggression in Poland in 1939. Witkacy was the author of *Tumor Mózgowicz (Tumor Brainiowicz)*, a drama also used by Kantor. For me, as a painter, this compilation of three personalities and three painters (Schulz, Witkacy, Kantor) out of whom two lost their lives in the war is of particular interest. Characteristically, for all three of them the picture was the primeval beginning of creation, followed by the word.

One of the leading motifs of Kantor's "The Dead Class" is a longing for the past and an inability to move back to childhood. Despite the title, the topic is not death, whose self-consciousness raises fear, but the passage of time and an inability to hold a moment still. The mannequins that Kantor uses in the performance also play an important role. Resembling museum wax figures, these human-like dolls might invoke fear and shock caused by an association with death. They are neither an object that imitates a human being, nor an actor. Yet they are on the stage and act as figures from the actors' childhood. In "The Dead Class" they are also tragically involved in the fate of the Jewish nation during the Second World War.

One of the leading motifs of the "The Dead Class" is a longing for the past and the inability to move back to childhood.

A new society of mannequins

As an artist, I find inspiration in the legacy of the above-mentioned painters: Schulz, Witkacy and Kantor. My project *The Retired Men* is an interdisciplinary project which is a follow-up to my earlier work – *High Heels*. In *Heels*, I spent several years collecting and painting female shoes that had interesting stories. The inspiration for a collection of painted shoes came from Schulz's sketches, as he would passionately draw women. It was with an obsessive fascination that he paid special attention to women's feet and their footwear. As I gathered footwear for my project, I received several hundreds of pairs belonging to women from all over the world. I painted all of them and decorated them with special pictograms and QR codes. This allowed the recipient of the art to interact with the shoes and independently decipher the codes and read the stories of the women through the use of traditional painting techniques and modern media (smartphones and tablets). It is an artistic game between the work of art and the viewer who during the presentation of the collection on green grass creates an installation in a public

space. Similar objectives have been proposed in *The Retired Men* project which has also been inspired by Schulz's writing. It also aims at generating an interaction between the viewer and the work of art.

But first things first; the collection of objects for the project titled *The Retired Men* creates an artistic installation which draws from Kantor's *Informel Theatre* where the actor is equal to an object. For Kantor actors were "sacks, people in wardrobes likened to the clothes hung there, deprived of free will, talking their own nonsense". In my project the retired man is an object-actor with specific characteristics, his own clumsy form, sounds, and stories written down and recorded with the use of video. Every retired man is a mannequin made of linen in the shape of a sack, wrapped in a shroud in the shape of the human body. This is another inspiration I derived from Kantor. It contains elements that show the lapse and passage of time.

Every retired man from the collection has an alter ego of a specific individual, either related to Kantor's close circle, artists linked with the Kraków Group, or an individual living today. In this way a new society of mannequins is created. This new society becomes an installation in an urban space. With the use of new media and thanks to QR codes placed on the tags sewn in the mannequins, viewers have access not only to a work of art but also to a video where they can discover the true alter ego of each mannequin. If they want to, viewers can also go deeper in this interaction and read the literary part containing dreams and memories from the past.

Human mannequins

The Retired Men also draws from one of Kantor's work that the artist dedicated to his mother, namely her images from different periods of life that Kantor printed on sacks. In this work the sack became a sign of time and its passing. It is a symbol of the load that a human must bear. In this sense the retired man, through his shapelessness and softness, becomes a matter which can be easily modified. It has two images. The reverse is a patinated linen with an imprinted old photograph from the childhood of a particular person participating in the project. The obverse is a painted contemporary figure, a portrait of the individual. The mannequin, similarly to every object for sale, has a tag on which the QR codes are printed. Once they are scanned with a smartphone, the viewer can read an article with a childhood story or a video presenting the real alter ego of the mannequin.

In its duality *The Retired Men* contains a mystery of passing and incessant striving to finality. In "The Dead Class" Kantor chose the notion of death as a rebirth of feelings in the reception of art. Thinking about one's own death and every hu-

man's passing brings about very strong emotions relating from the awareness of life, which can be very purifying. A collection of a few dozen objects in *The Retired Men* creates mannequins of human beings as expressed by Kantor.

Similar to Kantor's Happening Theatre, the installation is planned to appear in unexpected places in public areas and amaze passers-by. The objects of *The Retired Men*, similarly to Kantor's actors, will engage in an interaction with the audience. This aims at drawing our attention to the versatility of theatre and Kantor's artistic achievements. It also aims at popularising awareness about Kantor's work among those who are not necessarily involved in culture and art. Thus the project is meant to be open to everyone. Also, anyone who provides their childhood photo and their own story might receive their alter ego and become a "retired man". This activity encourages people from different groups to become involved in artistic work.

Thinking about one's own death and every human's passing brings about very strong emotions which can also be very purifying.

Through its social activities, multi-dimensions and multilayers as well as its inter-disciplinarity, *The Retired Men* is meant to point at the phenomenon of the passage of time and the eternal necessity and human longing to leave behind a trace for next generations.

Translated by Justyna Chada

Anna Kaszuba-Dębska is a Polish painter and director of animated films. She is also a children's book illustrator. She is currently preparing her PhD dissertation at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Her works have been presented at numerous festivals in Poland and abroad.

The Provincial Universality of Kantor's Art

KRZYSZTOF MIKLASZEWSKI

I had an opportunity to experience first-hand the perception and memory of Kantor's art. I travelled around Europe and visited the places where he had staged his performances. And yet I still cannot fully comprehend as how it is possible that our theatre message was so accurately and correctly understood by the audiences in the world's leading art centres and those in the more provincial cities which Kantor visited with his performances.

"A prophet has no honour in his own country" a wise folk proverb goes. These words hold very true in regard to Tadeusz Kantor. Kantor, who probably can be seen as one of the last Polish avant-garde artists, was a revolutionary of contemporary European theatre. In 2015 we are witnessing numerous celebrations held as part of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of his birth worldwide since this year was announced by UNESCO the "year of Tadeusz Kantor".

As the author of a documentary (entitled: "tadeusz.kantor@europa.pl") that is now touring the whole world except for Poland (not even one screening has been purchased by Polish Television), I had an opportunity to experience first-hand the perception and memory of Kantor's works. While making my film, I travelled around Europe and visited the numerous places where Kantor staged his performances. They included cities such as Paris, Florence, Milan, London, Edinburgh and Nuremberg. There the memory of the Polish artist, unlike in Poland, is not only cultivated by specialists but also well known to the young who naturally could not have possibly seen Kantor's art when the artist was alive but who, in contrast to their Polish counterparts, do not need to have explained to them who Kantor was or why he should be remembered.

Must be universal!

I keep asking myself, "How is it possible that after a quarter of a century I encounter the same reactions in these same places which I visited as an actor of Kantor's troupe?" I still cannot fully comprehend how it is possible that our theatre message was so accurately and correctly understood by both the audiences in the world's leading art centres, such as Paris, London, Berlin, Rome, New York, Tokyo, as well as those in the more provincial, cities such as Nancy, Edinburgh, Nuremberg, Florence, Baltimore, or Togamura, which Kantor also visited with his performances. Today I realise it even more that this European and global village and its audience had a very important meaning for Kantor. In fact, these "average" spectators were more important for him than the snobbish elite of the worldly connoisseurs who were doing nothing more than eyeing up the doings of that avant-garde "rebel from Eastern Europe" with their sophisticated experience of being "hunters of unique species".

In order to present this matter more accurately and in depth, let me return to the conversation I had with Kantor in 1986 at the TV studio in Kraków, when I asked him bluntly to elaborate on the issue of the universality of his art as well as its national character. Kantor, who was then carelessly frolicking around the spacious studio, suddenly stopped. He looked at me with understanding and began to talk: "From the beginning of my artistic career I have been constantly thinking about universality as it exists, for instance, in paintings. Overall, paintings are universal in their nature and can be understood by everybody, regardless of their language and place of residence. But even that is not always the case. I am thinking about such Polish painters as Jan Matejko* or Artur Grottger**. They belong to the Polish national pantheon of artists, but not to the museum of art. They were genius artists but the reception of their art was very narrow. In the case of theatre it is even worse. Theatre can be incomprehensible for the world, incomprehensible for foreigners, as it can become closed within its ethnic borders. This is unfortunately happening to Polish theatre. In my opinion, our greatest romantic theatre is incomprehensible to foreigners. Take the plays by Stanisław Wyspiański***. No

* Jan Matejko (1838–1893) – one of the best known Polish painters. Fascinated with Poland's history Matejko was an author of many superrealistic historical paintings.

** Artur Grottger (1837–1867) – Polish romantic painter, author of a few series commemorating the Polish insurgence against the Russian occupants during the 1863 January Uprising.

*** Stanisław Wyspiański (1869–1907) – Polish poet, playwright and painter. One of the most original artists of Polish modernism. Inspired by the tradition of Polish romanticism, Wyspiański's works had strong national and freedom motifs. This characteristic of Wyspiański can be seen in his two greatest plays: "Wesele" ("Wedding") and "Wyzwolenie" ("Liberation").

foreigner will ever understand his play titled 'Liberation'. What I am saying is not a matter of snobbery on my part; I am just convinced that art must be international, especially theatre."

Kantor: "Art must be international, especially the theatre."

I remember very well that during that moment of his "Forefathers' Eve" Kantor jumped to me and yelled straight into my ear: "To be national, theatre must be universal!" Then he jumped away and calmly continued into the camera: "Let me give you an example of one of my performances – 'Wielopole, Wielopole'. After its first night the critics stated that I was the most national of Poles, even though they mainly compared this performance with Federico Fellini's 'Amarcord'." He continued: "In a similar way we can talk about Adam Mickiewicz's 'Forefathers' Eve' ('Dziady')."

Mickiewicz – our fault

The title of this romantic drama, so magical for us Poles, unleashed another monologue of Kantor's confession: "I devoted a lot time to 'Forefathers' Eve'. In 1937 I even prepared a staging knowing that the celebration of the 'Forefathers' Eve' was well understood around the world. We also know that in the 1860s the French poet Comte de Lautremont*, who is regarded as a founder of surrealism, wrote that he would never have created his blasphemous poetry had it not been for Mickiewicz's 'Great Improvisation**'. It was in Mickiewicz that the French poet found a great blasphemer against God and against the widely recognised and sanctioned social, religious and national values."

"To me romanticism is an avant-garde," Kantor continued. "It is one of the greatest avant-gardes, definitely greater than surrealism or dadaism." He then turned again to me, as if looking for understanding. Hence, when I nodded, he carried on: "Romanticism, when it emerged, demolished the whole shell of the existing culture. And Mickiewicz was one of those who contributed to this destruction a lot."

While listening to his words I repeated, without much thinking the word "contributed" and at once I added "with the 'Forefathers' Eve'". Kantor brightened up

* Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) – a well-known Polish romantic poet, regarded as a "national bard" and a "Slavic bard". His drama "Forefathers' Eve" is regarded as a typical "romantic drama"; parts II and IV (written in 1823) present a Slavic custom of commemorating the dead (the "forefathers").

** The monologue included in part III of Mickiewicz's drama by the self-proclaimed protagonist, Konrad, who is talking here to God about his patriotic feelings and personal misfortune.

and said: "Think about Victor Hugo's 'Hernani'. It was very quickly brought up on-stage (and not only in Paris), while 'Forefathers' Eve' was only shown to the Polish audience and much later too. It has never been presented to an international audience." With these words Kantor suddenly sulked and, as if lost in thought, said: "This shows the weakness of our interpretation of art: we interpreted 'Forefathers' Eve' in a clearly national way."

"Everybody," he continued, "everybody (he stressed the word again) failed to see it as great European avant-garde art. This is unfortunately our fault and we are to be blamed for the fact that on the list of avant-garde artists, Mickiewicz is placed on the very bottom. It is our fault that 'Hernani', which is a very dull piece of literature, is regarded as the key reading of romanticism while the 'Forefathers' Eve' is not. This is not Mickiewicz's fault but ours – the Poles. This is the fault of the Polish history that has always stewed it in 'that national sauce'. This is the fault of the contemporary times that perceive it in a similarly narrow-minded way."

After these words we touched upon the gloomy mood of the 1980s, the years of Wojciech Jaruzelski's rule that Poles found extremely depressing. Kantor yet

returned to the topic and the issue of spiritualism was brought up. This part of the conversation, however, is missing in the recorded interview as it was deleted by the communist censors. The issue, however, is interesting and worth bringing up. It sheds some new light on the question of the "universality" of art. Importantly, this part of the conversation might still be reconstructed, once the original tapes which contain the whole "censored" material from 1986 are accessed.

Universal spirituality

To present some of Kantor's opinions that are not commonly known even today, let me recall his extremely unique concept of "universal spirituality" – formulated in the second half of the 1980s – which "permeates the 'provinciality' that is so natural to every creator". I covered this topic in my earlier book on Tadeusz Kantor, but here let me add a few pieces of information which have not been presented to the public before and which luckily survived the censors as they were recorded on my private tapes. Let me begin with Kantor's exclamation which I heard after the artist returned from the tour of the United States in 1984. He then exclaimed: "If America is so fascinated by Wielopole*, this remote village in the Bieszczady mountains, then I must be very provincial."

This exclamation was later touched on again in 1986 when he wrote: "Both 'The Dead Class' and 'Wielopole, Wielopole' were shown to people of different cultures. They were staged in Iran, Italy, England, New York, Venezuela, and recently in Spain. Obviously, they were also staged in Poland – Warsaw, Kraków and Wrocław. I cannot see any significant difference between these cultures. Honestly, I cannot see any. What I can see, however, are differences not between cultures but, let me put it this way, between the specific characters of the audiences. For instance, in Paris the audience's reaction was very spontaneous – even instantaneous. In Latin American, which also includes those from Spain, viewers who saw 'Wielopole, Wielopole' had a different reaction. The Spanish culture is characterised by a tradition in which the notion of death, and also some kind of 'apocalyptic circus', is related to romance. Thus, in this tradition death is not understood in a theological way, as it is the case in Italy. Instead, it is associated with a festival, fun, or a

* Wielopole Skrzyńskie – is the name of a locality and Kantor's birthplace, whose reduplicated name was used in Kantor's Crico 2 performance "Wielopole, Wielopole" (1980). Wielopole is a small village (today inhabited by around 900 residents) in southeast Poland. This typical locality in the Polish borderland, with three ethnic populations (Polish-German-Jewish) shared the experience of many multi-cultural Polish-Jewish towns, while after 1989 it was pushed on the edge of hopeless existence by the Polish system transformation.

circus. This is also associated with the Cricot Theatre whose pre-war name was an anagram of the Polish sentence *to circ* (it's a circus)."

Theatre of Death

Bitterness, sadness, suffering, horror but also original sort of beauty and wealth of humour – these statements from the review of the "Dead Class" were published by one of the largest Japanese dailies, *Asahi Shimbun*, in August 1982. But what is remarkable is that they could have been easily found between the lines of an essay published by the biweekly *Other Stages* that was encouraging readers to see Kantor's performance in New York in the winter of 1979: "Actors … have to hump about this material baggage of death which real life has given shape to", read the review.

In a similar way, the definition of "The Dead Class" as a "contemporary dance of death we can make use of", which was penned by Pierre Marcabru in the Parisian *Le Figaro* on October 19th 1977, could be very much to the liking of a spectator from London where Michael Billington wrote in *The Guardian* on August 30th 1976 that "the greatness of this performance lies in the universal meaning of this image: every one of us was once seated in a classroom and we all carry through our lives the emotional baggage of our childhood" as well as to the spectators in Tehran as we see from the 1977 review in *Kayhan International* written by Soumaya Satkali who wrote: "Death, shame, sex, degradation and disintegration … of all of this, together with its pathos and premonition of the absolute are so organically intertwined that the swirl of the lovely loud waltz from this fairground roundabout can show us that all this would happen equally in pre-war Poland and anywhere and anytime."

There is one more key aspect of this phenomenon of the almost global impact of Kantor's art. This is his concept of the theatre of death which was explained in the manifesto of the very same name. Kantor's words and understanding of this concept is here presented based on my conversations with the artist which took place before the first night of "The Dead Class" in October 1975 and which are also presented in two editions of one of my earlier books. In this unforgettable conversation Kantor, when questioned about the start of theatre as art, would very explicitly and precisely formulate his polemic theory against Gordon Craig's concept of the über-marionette.

It was a theory of the birth of the actor who, after running away from his family, returns to it – dead. This was Kantor's vision from 1975 which I wrote down during a series of our talks and which he presented as follows: "Opposite [the viewers from a tribal community] stands a man, who pretends to be the same as

they are, and yet, due to some mysterious and genius operation, infinitely distant, as if he is dead, cut off with an invisible, and no less terrifying barrier beyond our imagination, a barrier whose true sense and horror we see only in night dreams. Like in the blinding lightning they [those first theatre viewers] suddenly saw a bright, circus-like picture of the man, as if they saw him for the first time and as if they [for the first time] saw themselves in this way. It must have been a shock. One may say: a metaphysical shock. This living picture of the man emerging from the dark, as if he was continuously walking straight ahead, was a moving meaning of Kantor's new human condition, exclusively human, with its responsibility and its tragic awareness that measures his fate with the implacable and absolute scale, the scale of death."

The concept of theatre returning to the incessant contact between the living (the spectator) and the dead (the actor) is where the mystery of Kantor's universal provinciality lies.

It is precisely in this very concept of the theatre returning to the incessant contact between the living (the spectator) and the dead (the actor) where the mystery of Kantor's universal provinciality lies. This is the highest value shared by different (even remotely distant from each other) cultures and the value which enables their representatives, with no difference, to understand, receive and accept the Polish (after all) meaning of "The Dead Class". This is also the most important mystery of the global life of Kantor's art, today disregarded (similarly to Mickiewicz's works ages ago) by the Poles.

Translated by Justyna Chada

Krzysztof Miklaszewski knew Tadeusz Kantor like no other. For almost 15 years (1973–1987) he documented his artistic activity; acted as a trustee of ideas and thoughts; and played in the greatest productions of Cricot 2. His meetings with Kantor resulted in notes, photographs, films, a TV cycle, recordings of the conversations and lectures of this director and journalist, an art critic and an actor who grew up and studied in Kraków. He is the author of 20 television programmes and 10 documentary films (including the first Polish documentary about Kantor's theatre – "Tadeusz Kantor's Cloakroom" in 1974) and 9 books (published in Poland and abroad [in English, French, Spanish and Chinese]) on Kantor and his art. The most important book *Encounters with Tadeusz Kantor* was published twice by Routlege (London and New York): in 2002 (hardback) and 2005 (paperback).

The new building of Cricoteka, the Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor, that was originally founded in 1980 by Kantor himself.

Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland / Mariusz Cieszewski (CC) www.flickr.com

The first night of the theatre play "The Dead Class", prepared and directed by Tadeusz Kantor, took place in Kraków on November 15th 1975. Since then the play was shown in numerous countries over 1,500 times.

Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland / Mariusz Cieszewski (CC) www.flickr.com

The exhibit "Makom. Dani Karavan. The Essence of Place" at the International Cultural Centre in Kraków held from June 27th 2015 until September 20th 2015. In this exhibit Karavan pays tribute to Kantor with an installation titled "Hommage à Tadeusz Kantor".

Photo: courtesy of the International Cultural Centre in Kraków

Two Masters from Galicia

EDYTA GAJEWSKA

Tadeusz Kantor and Dani Karavan's paths were astonishingly similar before fate brought them together in Italy in the late 1970s. Both artists had given up their painting careers for scenography so that they could create their own artistic worlds. Thus, in June 2015 while looking at his work dedicated to the Polish artist, Karavan said: "Knowing Kantor was one of the greatest gifts that life has given me."

It was the year 1978. Tadeusz Kantor was at the peak of his career. His theatrical play "Dead Class" brought him international success. In Florence's Cricoteca (the name given to the secularised Roman basilica at Via Santa Maria) Kantor began work on another great masterpiece: "Wielopole, Wielopole". During his time in Florence, Kantor was looking for an assistant who was fluent in several languages. His friends recommended a journalist, Hava Karavan, who was then working alongside her husband Dani on an exhibition in Florence.

Tadeusz Kantor and Dani Karavan's paths were astonishingly similar before fate brought them together in Italy. They both had given up painting for scenography so that they could create their own artistic worlds. Kantor recalled that he managed to survive the difficult Stalinist period of 1949 to 1955 only because of being a stage designer in Kraków theatres. Since the 1960s Karavan co-operated with Martha Graham, an American dancer and choreographer. When working on theatre plays they fully dedicated themselves to the theatre reality, while creating extremely novel and outstanding projects.

On the stage they built a space in a space. In his projects Karavan used soft, organic shapes, streamlined lines of the horizon and greenery that would eventually become abstract in form whereas Kantor created closed spaces filled to the brim with objects, dense with emotion and meaning. Karavan was interested in space

and the relationship between spatial design and man, while Kantor perceived scenography as a place for positioning "emotions, conflicts and action".

Full of expression and charisma

Both Kantor and Karavan had a feeling that the vision they created must be executed in its most ideal form. Hagai Segev (the co-curator of a recent Karavan exhibition at the International Culture Centre in Kraków) put it this way: "Both artists, Karavan and Kantor, in their own way were trying to present life and analyse it. They felt life on a deep emotional level. Kantor chose to express it with the use of death whereas Karavan uses life."

"It started very strangely," recalled Hava Karavan, Dani's wife and candidate for Kantor's assistant in Florence. "What struck me right away were his large eyes and the tone of his voice, full of expression and charisma. Kantor explained to me his expectations for the assistant position. I thought the job was extremely interesting and really wanted to work with him. At the end of our conversation I asked about the working hours. Kantor said 'with me you work 24 hours!' I cannot possibly determine when I am going to work and when to have breaks'. I stated with regret that I could not accept the job because of my family. I had small children at home and a husband who was also an artist. I was very frustrated but my refusal didn't make him angry and he invited me to his rehearsals."

"When he wasn't fully satisfied with what was happening on the stage, Kantor would order a break and for a long time would sit silently with a hand covering his mouth. It was completely quiet."

"I would show up nearly every day to watch the rehearsals. While being there I could witness the theatre play in the making. It was an unforgettable experience. Normally rehearsals began with a common reading but that was not the case of Kantor's rehearsals. He was the only person who knew what the play was supposed to be like. He worked on different scenes while ignoring chronology; sometimes a piece lasting several minutes would take a few days to master. His actors were completely devoted. During rehearsals Kantor was always on the stage with them; not once did I see him sitting in the audience seat."

Hava Karavan continued: "When he wasn't fully satisfied with what was happening on the stage, he would order a pause and for a long time would sit silently with a hand covering his mouth. It was completely quiet. Everybody was just waiting. In other theatres actors in a similar situation would come up with ideas; but not

in Kantor's case. No actor would interfere with the creative process taking place. As an observer I had a feeling it was an extraordinary situation: it showed actors' respect to Kantor's genius. Sometimes they couldn't understand Kantor's expectations and then some tears of powerless grief rolled down their cheeks. Then they seemed miserable. In such situations Kantor would communicate with them using signals and gestures rather than words. I don't know whether this method of work is used in any other theatre, whether Kantor has any successors or not. It was an exclusive one-man show with many actors present on the stage."

Bizarre and unreal

Kantor told Hava Karavan that the play "Wielopole, Wielopole" was very painful for him as it was the only project which was so personal. He said that, when recalling childhood people usually describe it as beautiful and sunny; happy times. Kantor, on the other hand, remembered his home as dark, with his father swearing and his mother crying.

In the end "Wielopole, Wielopole" was ready for stage and it opened on June 23rd 1980. "I have seen this play many times since and it has always been a moving experience," Hava recalled. "In this play Kantor was in full control – an unquestionable centre. When talking about this play he told me that his memory stored everything in a totally different way, with no rules at all. Pictures overlapped with each other, events from different years were mixed up. In his memories people behaved as if they were half dead and half alive. Kantor also told me his childhood took place in between a church and a synagogue. His family lived in a peaceful symbiosis celebrating rituals they perceived as bizarre and unreal. This is the reason why his hometown might have been 'directed towards eternity'. When I asked Kantor once why he repeated the town's name (Wielopole) in the play's title he said that it was such a personal and nostalgic place for him that every time he uttered that name of the place he also wanted to relive it." It was a cry of nostalgia.

"When I first saw 'The Dead Class' I had a feeling that I understand the way Kantor perceives the world. We both went through a similar artistic path," recalled Dani Karavan, Hava's husband and the Israeli artist born to Galician parents. "We studied painting. Then we began creating theatre scenography but it was clear that we had to have a full control over our own work. We were interested only in our creation of which we were the only authors. There was no compromise here. Kantor was very stubborn; he knew exactly what he wanted and he had to get it. I feel the same, not towards people, but sculptures though."

Playing with nature

Karavan would have possibly loved Kantor's work called the "Panoramic Sea Happening" which was staged long before their meeting in August 1967 outdoors, in the Polish seaside town of Łazy. While documenting this event, art critic Joanna Mytkowska wrote that "it was devised as a total action encompassing huge fragments of a landscape and engaging hundreds of people".

This experiment with nature proved unpredictable for Kantor. It seemed that he had planned to assign the sea with an appropriate role. However, it was the sea that took over the scene. The waves kept pushing the raft ashore forcing people to direct it back towards the sea again and again. The studied dramatic poses of the participants (which from the very beginning had been written in the plan of the event) were simply forced by the power of the wind. This might be the reason why he kept his most famous theatre plays on the stage avoiding the disobedient elements of nature.

Dani Karavan, also known as the "Wizard of the Elements", chose a different path. As time passed he started to appreciate nature; he learnt how to listen to it. He patiently and endlessly observed the place which he used to create his work. He would not interfere with the space but use it for his own purposes in order to give it back to the audience at a later stage. He invites them to the new self-created space dedicated to an idea or an event. Karavan admits that his works do not exist without people; that is why he encourages them to enter the objects he created. In this way he simply prepares the stage for them whereas they, shall they accept the invitation, will become actors of Karavan's "theatre play".

At the end of June 2015 when standing in the International Culture Centre in Kraków and looking at his work dedicated to Tadeusz Kantor, Dani Karavan said: "Knowing Kantor was one of the greatest gifts that life has given me. It was like meeting someone who is both very close and very distant."

Translated by Justyna Chada

Edyta Gajewska is a graduate of theatre studies at the Jagiellonian University where she studied under Tadeusz Kantor. She was a correspondent with *The Warsaw Voice* and worked in numerous Kraków-based cultural institutions. She currently works for the International Cultural Centre in Kraków.

Dani Karavan is an Israeli artist born in 1930 in Tel Aviv to a family of Galician pioneers. He is famous for site-specific works which fully co-exist with the space in which they are created. His most well-known works include: Monument to the Negev Brigade (Beersheba), Holocaust Monument (Rehowot), Kikar Levana (Tel Aviv), Way of Human Rights (Nuremberg) and The Sinti and Roma Memorial (Berlin).

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An Evolution of Genocide

Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the shadow of genocide. By: Thomas de Waal. Publisher: Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom 2015.

Aside from the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide – the mass and systematic deportation and extermination of the Armenian minority by the Ottoman government – is the most widely-known crime of this kind in the world and is still a prevailing issue in international relations today. This is the case not only since 2015 marks its 100th anniversary, but also because no other genocide is so politicised. Turkey refuses to accept the term "genocide" when referring to these events, while the Armenian state, the Armenian diaspora as well as many politicians, historians, lawyers and human rights defenders have been pursuing an effective campaign for years seeking official recognition of the Armenian genocide as a legal fact. While there are many books dealing with this issue, Thomas de Waal's *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* is truly the first to examine how the Armenian Genocide has affected Turkish and Armenian national identities, Turkish-Armenian relations and their relations with the outside world. In spite of a few weaknesses, it is a must-read for all interested in this topic.

The author, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace specialising primarily in the South Caucasus region, presents the genesis of the genocide, describes how it unfolded and shows how the genocide was to a large degree forgotten by the Armenians themselves only to return on the 50th anniversary to become a key element in Armenian identity building (similarly, an analogous process can be seen in the case of the Holocaust, which became the core of the modern Jewish identity). De Waal looks at various aspects of the Armenian genocide in Turkish-Armenian relations. He points out that it once became an inspiration for anti-Turkish terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s and how it contributed to Sèvres Syndrome, a popular belief in Turkey that outside forces are conspiring to carve up Turkey through a fifth column. *Great Catastrophe* also reviews unsuccessful attempts to normalise Turkish-Armenian relations and the evolution of the Turkish view on the genocide. Finally, De Waal tells a parallel story about the Turks and Armenians which highlights how the historical memories of these two nations are interconnected, creating a schizophrenic Gordian knot.

One thing that makes *Great Catastrophe* stand out is its portrayal of the Armenian Genocide in a broader historical and international context. De Waal discusses how the expansion of superpowers at that time, especially Russia, endangered the existence of the Ottoman Empire. Russia backed the separatism of non-Muslim minorities which, in spite of enjoying better treatment than minorities in many other countries, were still "second-class citizens". In the 19th century many Muslims were expelled or chased out of the Balkans, Crimea or the Caucasus and suffered persecution, massacre or even genocide as in the case of the Circassians – at the hands of Russians and their allies – as De Waal rightly points out.

Many of them found shelter in Anatolia and were later among the primary perpetrators during the Armenian Genocide. For them, Turkey was a safe haven and the Armenians were seen as Russian collaborators.

The author also presents the process of the Armenian Genocide in one of the most balanced ways that can be found in the literature today, showing, among others, the great differences existing between the former and the Holocaust. This unbiased approach should be appreciated, taking into consideration that any attempt to criticise the orthodox Armenian narrative is very often treated unjustly by its supporters as an outright denial of the genocide. However, De Waal could have been more courageous in challenging some Armenian dogmas. For instance, he uncritically accepts statistics on the Armenian population provided by the Armenian Church before the First World War and does not provide full picture of Armenian military co-operation with the Russian Empire during the war.

Another reason *Great Catastrophe* should be praised is for its presentation of the changing attitudes of the Turks to the genocide. De Waal emphasises that Turkish historiography is much more open today to taking a critical look at national historical myths. In Turkey there are numerous books and papers being published on the issue and, importantly, they contain the taboo "g-word" as well. In fact, Ankara has been recently taking better care of the Armenian heritage on its soil and significantly softened its tone regarding the Genocide. Ahmet Davutoğlu, the current prime minister of Turkey, when he was foreign minister claimed that the deportations of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire were "totally wrong and inhumane". Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, stated last year that: "We [the Turks] wish for the Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early twentieth century to rest in peace and we convey our condolences to their grand-children." Such declarations undermine the very foundation of Turkish nationalistic discourse presenting Armenians as traitors. In theory, the traitors never deserve the condolences.

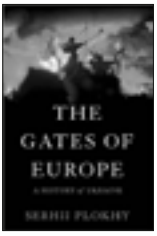
Paradoxically, the weakest point of the book concerns the Azeri dimension of Turkish-Armenian relations. According to the author, the Turkey-Armenia protocols on normalisation signed in 2009 separated Turkish-Armenian relations from relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the protocols leave no doubt that these issues were in fact connected by statements such as "reconfirming their commitment, in their bilateral and international relations, to respect and ensure respect for the principles of equality, sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers" and "reiterating their commitment to the peaceful settlement of regional and international disputes and conflicts on the basis of the norms and principles of international law". De Waal notes the differences between the Turks and Azeris (Sunnis vs. Shias) but he does not estimate properly the strong historical links connecting these nations. His book does not provide the reader with a clue as to why Azerbaijan was so effective in convincing Turkish public opinion of its point of view that it nearly jeopardised Turkish-Armenian normalisation.

Unfortunately, De Waal does not mention the significant role Azeris played in the process

of the development of modern Turkish nationalism at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Neither does he mention the great influence of the Young Turks on Azerbaijani nationalists. The author also neglects the strong linguistic links between Turkish and Azerbaijani, not to mention religious issues (a large Shia-Alevi minority in Turkey and Sunni in Azerbaijan) and the expulsion or migration of many Sunni Azeris to Eastern Anatolia in the 19th century, which was a bone of contention between Turks and Armenians. These elements built a strong sympathy between the Turks and Azeris and led to the slogan "one nation with two states" which expresses the strength of these bonds. In fact, this is why it is so difficult to imagine the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia without at least partial progress in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Adam Balcer
Translated by Bartosz Marcinkowski

To and For Europe



The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine. By: Serhii Plohky. Publisher: Basic Books, New York, NY USA, 2015.

Ukraine is not Russia was the title of a book written by the former President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, and published in 2004 just before the Orange Revolution. Today, a decade after this political change, these words are even more indicative of the political and social landscape that characterises Kyiv today, despite the fact that the situation in 2015 is quite different from when Kuchma penned those words. The physical struggle against the Viktor Yanukovych regime and then the pro-Russian separatists trying to form a Kremlin-backed project called *Novorossiya* raises even more significant questions on Ukrainian unity, common history and identity; all of which are notably different to that which is found in Russia. These are the issues that are addressed in the book by Ukrainian historian Serhii Plohky, which will be published in late 2015.

Plohky is a world-renowned academic who has worked for many years at Harvard University. His specialisation, mainly the history of the former Soviet Union and Ukraine, together with his Ukrainian background has helped him draw a fascinating picture of the thousand-year-existence of the Ukrainian territory and people. Characteristically, Plohky's publication is not solely an academic work as it seeks to tackle some of the questions that are currently being raised in the geopolitical debate, including whether Ukraine belongs to the so-called *Russkiy Mir* ("Russian world"). Plokhy obviously takes his role as author seriously and offers the reader a disclaimer: "the history offered to you here is written with a sense of responsibility not only for the past but also for the present and future".

Plohky starts his history from the very beginning with the arrival of the Vikings (Norsemen) from today's Ukrainian territory and their quick and peaceful assimilation with the Slavic tribes inhabiting the area between the Dniester and Dnieper Rivers. The author then moves on to tackle one of the first significant

issues to be resolved, namely the legacy of the Kyivan Rus', symbolised by the rule of Yaroslav the Wise (1016–1054). The question as to "who hold the keys to Kyiv" is, as Plokhy points out, still pending today. Ukrainians who are now opposing the Kremlin's policy of aggression often show that Muscovy is the younger sister of the Kyivan Rus' – the real and spiritual base of modern Ukraine. Plokhy does not exclude the possibility of searching for bonds between today's Moscow and medieval Kyiv since, as he explains, the link between those two political spots was a consequence of a particular ruler's strategy. Nevertheless, the scholar is strongly convinced that historical sources confirm one undisputed thesis: the roots of Ukrainian history can be found directly in their own modern capital – Kyiv.

As a result of the dominance of the Russian narrative, the stereotype of Ukraine divided between its east and west – with a clear demarcation line somewhere near Kyiv which is reinforced by religious and linguistic differences – has re-emerged today in the public discourse. Trying to properly approach this issue, Plohky takes us back to the time of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the unsuccessful battle undertaken by the emerging Ukrainian elite in the mid-16th century to establish itself as a political nation and community equal to the Polish and Lithuanian nobles. Plohky regards the 1569 Union of Lublin (which established the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) as a dramatic loss on the Ukrainian side. From the Polish perspective the Ukrainians then became a second-class category of inhabitants in the Commonwealth. Further, the Union led to the consolidation of the Cossack movement and its subsequent alliance with the Orthodox Church, standing naturally in opposition to the Polish Roman-Catholic majority. Thus, the "Great Revolt" of 1648, which was the Cossack uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky against the Commonwealth, was a crucial step in cutting ties from Warsaw and commencing a flirtatious political game with Moscow.

The 1654 Treaty of Pereyaslav concluded, upon Khmelnytsky's initiative, with the Russian Tsar Alexey I. The aim of the treaty was to guarantee Russian political and military protection. This eventually led to the practical subordination of the Cossack Hetmanate to the Tsardom. Plohky emphasises that these events were also exploited by Soviet propaganda to underline the "brotherhood" between the Ukrainian and Russian nations. Here it is sufficient to mention Nikita Khrushchev's "gift" to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the transfer of Crimea from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954 on the 300th anniversary of the Pereyaslav agreement.

Khmelnytsky's efforts to seek stronger political support in fact froze the division of Ukrainian territory for more than 300 years. The country's west – under Polish, Habsburg and again (after 1918) Polish rule – and its east, which belonged to the Russian world, met again in the Soviet Union after the Second World War. At that time, however, there was no will to differentiate Ukrainians from other "Soviet nations". Thus, to uncover the "Ukrainian element" Plohky tries to shed more light on the main characters that contributed to crafting the Ukrainian spirit throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. He points to such notable figures as Taras Shevchenko or Mykhailo Hrushevskyi who played important roles in the na-

tional revival of Ukrainians. Plohky ends his book with a description of the EuroMaidan revolution, which might be seen as the last step of the Ukrainian national revival. This uprising, however, has led to the formation not only of an ethnic but also a political nation. National heroes from the past – such as Shevchenko – were reborn in people's hearts during the cold winter of 2013 and 2014. Thus the ouster of Yanukovych, Plohky believes, shall be seen as a new beginning on the banks of the Dnieper River as well as the erosion of the idea of Ukraine as a key to the *Russkiy Mir*. The question remains however whether the loss of Crimea and the ongoing armed conflict in Donbas is the "price of freedom"? Plohky does not answer this question. Instead he emphasises the value of the Revolution of Dignity as a significant step on the path to disclose the truth and seek justice for historical abuses and atrocities.

Plohky's *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine* can be read and understood in two different ways. First, it can be taken in as a classic textbook of Ukrainian history which offers a unique possibility of getting acquainted with over a thousand years of the Ukrainian nation. Today, however, I would suggest reading this book somewhat differently. Plohky's book allows us to understand the contemporary challenges and dilemmas that Ukrainians face in the light of their largely complicated history; torn between the east and the west, between freedom and subordination. As a result, Ukraine has become a real and spiritual gate to and for Europe. It is necessary not to close this gate for Ukrainians today who are still in the process of searching for their own roots and formulating a shared national identity.

Plohky makes it clear: "[the] historical contextualisation of the current crisis suggests that Ukraine's desperate attempts to free itself from the suffocating embrace of its former master have a much greater chance of success with strong international support". If Europe cannot manage to find a way to effectively help Ukrainians, the first step should be at least to not hinder their expectations and aspirations.

Tomasz Lachowski

Belarusian National Identity: A short story

The Rise and Fall of Belarusian Nationalism 1906–1931. By: Per Anders Rudling. Publisher: University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA USA, 2015.

The story and history of Belarus is one that is often lost within the greater surveys of its neighbours, Lithuania, Poland and more so Russia or the Soviet Union. In this thorough and detailed work, Swedish historian Per Anders Rudling has taken it upon himself to present, as his title indicates, the rise and fall of Belarusian nationalism in the early part of the 20th century. To some, his goal may seem simple – "to place the Belarusian nationalist tradition in a larger, regional historical context". In order to achieve this, Rudling examined the circumstances which led to and fought against this nationalism through varying prisms and influences, national traditions,

culture and institutions. However, when one begins to read his work, it becomes evident that the processes behind the formation and eventual suppression of nationalism in Belarus in 1931 were varying and detailed.

Rudling undertook the task of presenting an analysis of Belarusian nationalism following research that he completed in archives in Poland, Sweden, Lithuanian, Ukraine, the United States and Belarus. The success of his work is thanks in large part to previously-unknown archival documents which Rudling found in the Lithuanian archives and which he exploited throughout his work. What the author has successfully presented is a complex period in which many larger national groups sought to either exploit for their own aims the expansion of nationalist movements in Belarus, or to completely eliminate any nationalist aspirations in this region so as to avoid an "uncontrolled" nationalism which could grow without the eventual patronage of neighbouring state ideologies and goals. During this period, Lithuanians, Germans, Jews, Poles and Russians all played some kind of role in the Belarusian nationalist movement with the latter two being the most active throughout the twenty-five year period and truly becoming an "instrument of political rivalry in the contested borderland". To substantively present this period, Rudling uses Czech historian Miroslav Hroch's three-stage periodisation of national activity: heightened awareness of cultural and national distinctiveness among an intelligentsia, nationalism introduced as a political programme and the mobilisation of the masses into a national movement. As the author noted, his work focused on the first two of Hroch's stages; the third failed to materialise during this period.

Historically, the territory of Belarus was traditionally regarded as western Russia by the Russians and eastern Poland by the Poles. Here, language and religious denomination defined who the Belarusians identified themselves as. According to Rudling, the period of the First World War and immediately after was a key timeframe during which Belarusian nationality was initially "discovered". In fact, it was the German armies which occupied those regions who sought to define the Belarusians as a national group distinct from that of the Russians. As the author noted, this was also the first example of political exploitation of the Belarusian identity, with the goals of stabilising the German *ost* policies and undermining Russia.

The Lithuanians of the post-First World War period also sought to harness the exiled Belarusian community in Vilnius to undermine Polish aspirations of regaining lost historical territory. However, this is not to say that there was no Belarusian national or linguistic movement. While the Ukrainian national movement of the 20th century contained established claims of distinction from the Russian culture, language and faith, the Belarusian national movement bloomed late. Rudling presented and described the movement to promulgate a written and spoken Belarusian language – a difficult task particularly because of the lack of a historical precedent of Belarus itself. The goal was to educate the inhabitants to such a degree that they identified themselves and their language distinctly as Belarusian and not Polish or Russian.

Ultimately, as Rudling shows, the political future of the Belarusian lands would be determined by decisions made in Warsaw and Moscow. The latter sought to develop and build a

viable and loyal Belarusian republic through a process of *korenizatsiya*: the growth of Soviet rule rooted in policies of standardisation, homogenisation and education, in conjunction with policies of Belarusianisation, Polonisation and Yiddishisation. As a result Rudling shows the maturity of a quadrilingual state policy in which four languages functioned in respect of the four ethnic groups inhabiting the territories. While these policies seemed very open and liberal, the Soviet authorities used heavy-handed methods to implement and ultimately create pro-Soviet nationalists. While Belarusian was propagated by the authorities, many, including the Jewish inhabitants of the republic, often clung to the Russian language as it was equated with social mobility, modernisation and progress. While the Soviet authorities did succeed in developing a Belarusian national identity, Rudling underscores that it resulted in the development of a weak national identity and a bureaucratic category of classification.

The Polish handling of the Belarusian nationalist movement is analysed by Rudling through the interwar government's policy of state assimilation, something which up to 1926 was not entirely successful due in large part to weak and short-lived Polish coalition governments. Two facets of the Belarusian movement are highlighted by the author. First, Rudling discusses the roles of the Soviets and Lithuanians in sponsoring and supporting internal instability in the western Belarusian region of interwar Poland. Second, he describes the Belarusians' attempts to work within the structures of the Polish political system (through the formation of minorities parties) to gain concessions for their constituents and the Belarusian region itself. Following 1926, the Polish government's minority's policies shifted, which resulted in the suppression of Belarusian political and cultural life in Poland. With regard to this period, Rudling stated that the destruction of Belarusian nationalism became a "test case" for the policies of assimilation and Polonisation in interwar Poland.

As the back cover states, this work is required reading if one is to understand how the Belarus of today became "Europe's last dictatorship". Per Anders Rudling's erudite work allows those who are interested in Belarus and the nationality movements which emerged in eastern and east-central Europe during the early 20th century to understand the complicated growth of Belarusianness and its eventual demise. Equally, this work is essential reading for comparing and understanding the nationalist movements of the region during following the First World War. Rudling's work highlights the role of Belarus's larger neighbours during this period and how they promoted and later opposed Belarusian nationalism while also describing and analysing how the Jewish population, particularly in Soviet Belarus, handled this period. The success of Rudling's work certainly adds to the historiography of Belarus. Moreover, this work showes the existence of two distinct and different narratives of national identity which exist in Belarus to this day and which narratives and identities are currently embraced.

Paweł Markiewicz

A Pragmatic Alliance

Islam and Nazi Germany's War. By: David Motadel. Publisher: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA USA, 2014.

The study of Nazi Germany is quite a crowded subject. It is one of the most well-researched subjects with dozens, if not hundreds, of books published annually. Such books could easily fall in the trap of "political correctness" when well-known facts are replayed in different contexts, not so much to provide new aspects of events or factual data but to uphold this or that political agenda. Timothy Snyder's book *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* published in 2012 might be an example of such a publication. The book presents both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union as brutal states. The statement is undoubtedly true and became axiomatic a long time ago. The book's major goal, thus, was not so much to provide new ideas of fact but to uphold the current political agenda which places Eastern Europe as the victim of stronger neighbours, Russia most of all. David Motadel's *Islam and Nazi Germany's War*, on the other hand, is free from these stereotypes and is meticulously researched. Indeed, the author uses a large number of secondary sources and research archives in several countries. The endnotes constitute around a third of the entire book.

What is the implication of Motadel's monograph? As any other good scholarly work, it elucidates not just a comparatively small segment of human history but provides important insight which facilitates the understanding of other similar periods. Historians and political scientists had discussed the reason for the rise of totalitarian regimes for a long time. The assumption that ideology is the culprit became one of the most popular explanations. This became especially important due to the popularity of post-modernism and later the spread of Islamism.

In this interpretation, the rise of National Socialism was the result of the peculiar interpretation of social Darwinism. In the context of this philosophy, humanity was divided along ethnic lines where each ethnicity was a peculiar race/biological species with "Aryans" on top. As members of the "master race," Aryans – mostly people of Germanic origin, should rule over the "untermensh" the lower and less developed human species. In this Nazi taxonomy, Jews played a special role. On one hand, they were on the bottom of the species/race hierarchy. On the other hand, they seemed to be equal, in a sort of twisted way with "Aryans" for they emerged in the Nazi narrative as the major and most dangerous enemies of the Aryans. Thus, the destruction of the Jews became the major, or at least one of the major, enterprises of the Nazi regime. The source of the Holocaust was truly ideologically framed. There was no raison d'état that could benefit the Nazi state. The Holocaust actually helped to create Germany's image as absolutely evil and mobilised people to fight on the Allies' side.

However, the story was not as simple as one could assume, at least after a reading of Motadel's book. While in their anti-Jewish policy the leaders of Nazi Germany were ideologically obsessive. Yet, it was a different story in the case of the Nazis dealing with Muslims, re-

gardless of their ethnicity. What was the reason for such benign treatment of Muslims? One could assume that this was due to ideology. The author notes that members of Nazi top brass, Hitler included, had experienced a strong gravitation to Islam. The reason was their assumption that Islam, quite differently to Christianity, was a great religion for war. It made war the most glorious enterprise and encouraged martial spirits and absolute obedience to the leader.

Nazi ideologists also believed that Islam provided an appropriate afterlife reward for the courageous soldiers – a harem of beautiful concubines. While Islam might indeed appeal to Nazi leaders the reason for good treatment of Islam was quite different. In dealing with Muslims Berlin displayed the true pragmatic acumen. The point here is that Germany's major enemy, United Kingdom, or actually the British Empire and the Soviet Union, had a huge Muslim population. Berlin also eyed some Muslim countries – most notably Turkey and Iran – as potential allies. Consequently, the ideological stand was adjusted accordingly. Joseph Goebbels's propaganda machine immediately discovered that both the Turks and Iranians, while not exactly "Aryans", were still a wholesome ethnic/racial nationality. Goebbels made special effort to eliminate the notion of "anti-Semitism" from German propaganda. The point is that Arabs were also Semites and Germany was engaged in fighting the UK in North Africa. Berlin folks were anxious to win if not the support at least neutrality among the local Arab population. And while the final solution of the "Jewish question" was in full swing, people in Berlin were anxious to deal with Arabs in a most courteous way. The word "anti-Semitism" was expelled from propaganda. It was understood that Germany fought not against "Semites" but just Jews, and soldiers were entrusted to be extremely sensitive to local Arab population cultures. They were prohibited from taking pictures of praying Muslims and did not even respond to the friendly smiles of local womenfolk so as not to irritate their fathers and husbands.

The same pragmatic policy was applied in dealing with Muslims of different backgrounds in Europe. While in North Africa, Germany was not able to utilise native manpower for the needs of the Wehrmacht, the story was different in the Soviet Union. The German administration created a large army, composed of former Soviet citizens of various ethnic and religious backgrounds. Germany was especially successful in recruiting Soviet Muslims, especially those from the northern Caucasus. The German administration's benevolence to Islam was the major selling point and enjoyed similar success in the Balkans where the German army created several Bosnian detachments. As German losses mounted, Muslims would be enlisted in the elite SS force regardless of ethnicity.

The importance of Motadel's book is manifold. First, it shows that totalitarian governments are not just driven by ideology/"discourse" as post-modernists of all stripes would assert, but could well combine ideological obsessions, themselves rooted in social-political realities, with political and geopolitical pragmatism. Secondly, the present narrative provides an explanation and shows the historical roots of the post-war realities. For example, critics of Stalin's regime stated that Stalin's deportation of Muslims from the Soviet Union – notably

Chechens and Tatars – on the grounds of their disloyalty to the state was nothing but the result of paranoia. Motadel demonstrates that Stalin's action had a clearer explanation: quite a few Soviet Muslims collaborated with the Nazis. Secondly, the book explains a lot about the Yugoslavian disintegration/civil war. The brutishness of Serbian troops against Muslim Bosnians was rooted in, or at least explained by, Serbian nationalists as retribution for active participation of Bosnian Muslims in dealing with the Serbs during the Second World War.

In any case, regardless of opinions of the reader, the book is indeed a strong work, providing anyone interested in the Nazi period and the role of Islam with a wealth of information and insight.

Dmitry Shlapentokh

Rediscovering the Value of a National and Religious Identity

A Future and a Hope: Mission, Theological Education, and the Transformation of Post-Soviet Society. By: Joshua T. Searle and Mykhailo Cherenkov. Publisher: Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR, USA, 2015.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the beginning of a profound and broad transformation process. For the post-communist states it meant a chance to free themselves from the iron grip of the imperial centre and to recover their national identities and socio-economic abilities, while for the outer world it was a wake-up call to the possibility of establishing a new and more much complex set of economic, political and social relationships with the former Soviet states. The contemporary language of Europe's interests towards the post-Soviet countries shifted to become predominantly (if not exclusively) a discourse on business, economics, national policy and geopolitics. The case of contemporary Ukraine, however, testified that there should be much more to this agenda than just geopolitical and economic interests. As recent events have clearly demonstrated, there is a language of values and personal and civic dignity which remains central to the democratic transformation of this country and sets a tone for its relationships with other states.

For Europe though, as the British scholar of Ukrainian studies Rory Finnin argues, Ukraine remains largely a *terra malecognita*: a diverse, complex, understudied and often badly understood country. In contemporary research, this state finds itself at the crossroads of the general decline of humanities and the deterioration of Eastern Slavic Studies. The richness of Ukrainian culture and ethnic and religious diversity, so masterly expressed and developed through numerous literature genres, cinematography, arts and iconography to name a few, is being harshly overridden by the hard power of political and economic discourse.

Characteristically for Ukrainian society, Christian churches and other religious communities played a pivotal role in the rediscovery of the value of national and religious identity. Ukrainians relearned the nature of the church itself as a particular form of social

life and the role it plays in a solid and healthy social formation. The question of what role, if any, churches should play in the international political conflict between Ukraine and Russia, seems to capture the attention of intellectuals, yet still remains a marginal area in comparison to other research interests.

One of the few valuable and timely contributions that fills this gap is the collaboration between two emerging theology scholars, Joshua T. Searle and Mykhailo N. Cherenkov, titled *A Future and a Hope: Mission, Theological Education, and the Transformation of Post-Soviet Society*. While representing two different cultures and perspectives, the authors offer a balanced inner and outer view of the present situation of Ukraine's political, economic, social, ecclesial and theological transition, and argue for a broader and more complex understanding of these processes. With an excellent sense of contemporary "church-fatigue" in most western countries and the lack of ecclesial self-criticism in Eastern European countries, Searle and Cherenkov develop an objective evaluation of current developments and offer a number of suggestions on how the Evangelical churches in particular, but also other Christian ecclesial communities, can rediscover their prophetic presence and mission in the society.

The book is designed around seven chapters, each of which focuses on a particular aspect of the transformation of Evangelical church traditions, practices and theology in the former Soviet countries. The chapters are far from being self-contained; they naturally blend into one another, touching upon different aspects of this evolution. The opening two chapters provide an overall analysis of the stages of transition of Evangelical missiology and identify a few patterns in paradigm shifts in the genuine maturation of the church. The authors identify four main dimensions of this evolution, which, in their opinion, dictate changes in the life and ministry of the church: the shift a) from an ecclesiocentric missiology to a "mission of the kingdom"; b) from a mission of a few to a holistic mission and a priesthood of all believers; c) a call to revive, awaken and reform the church structures for an effective ministry in a changing world; and d) a shift from the usual short-project thinking and naïve exclusivity to a meaningful partnership between churches and religions. Based upon these observations, Searle and Cherenkov argue for the necessity of incarnational, person-oriented theology and ministry, which necessarily results in social and ecclesial transformation. While offering a well-learned analysis of the post-communist legacy, a thread of consumerism, economic, political, social, religious and spiritual challenges the authors' search for new and creative ways of knowledge transmission. They challenge the methods of religious and theological education in the post-Soviet countries and create an argument for the necessity of a contextual theology.

The chapters that follow bring the focus to one of the most urgent, yet arguably overlooked areas in both theological discourse and practical ministry of the Evangelical churches, namely socio-political theology. Building upon their understanding of the universality and urgency of the call for transformation, with a particular emphasis on the attitude of active co-responsibility, Searle and Cherenkov make a serious attempt to push behind the Soviet legacy of blind obedience and conformism. Based upon a genuine sense of dignity, equal-

ity, fundamental rights and freedom of all, they oppose any kind of oppression and argue for a new focus on social justice in Ukraine. Resembling many liberation theologians, yet without a clear reference to them, Searle and Cherenkov insist on the significance of the practical effectiveness of contemporary theology: it is not enough to proclaim the good; the church is called to manifest and achieve it and do it with a conscious preference for the common good. Echoing the Vice Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University, Myroslav Marynovych, they call for the inculturated Christianity embedded in human relationships.

The efficaciousness of the structural transformation of the church, as argued in *A Future and a Hope*, is ultimately bound up with the renewal of the church's self-understanding and the rediscovery of the church's genuine mission – to be the intelligible sign of unity, by testifying a loving God and maintaining an openness to the signs of the times. Searle and Cherenkov rightly point out that there is a close interdependence between the church's perception of itself as being an embodiment of the union of God and openness to unity with other ecclesial communities which manifests this profession of faith. Exploring the challenges for honest, respectful and receptive ecumenical discourse – a church without walls – is, in my opinion, one of the most valuable parts of this contribution.

The discussion on the church during the EuroMaidan, offered in chapter five, builds an argument for the rediscovery of the church's role as the epicenter of the social process. Especially now, when the post-EuroMaidan Ukraine is experiencing the dramatic anthropological metamorphosis from *homo Sovieticus* to *homo Maidanus*, the church's role is indispensable. The authors argue that as an inseparable part of the human environment, the church should and must become involved in social transformation by its prophetic presence, remaining vigilant to the signs of the times, witnessing the good and criticising the evil; by teaching God's word, and more importantly by learning its manifestation from people within and around it; as well as by taking concrete action in reaction to social injustice.

The conclusion offers a critical evaluation of leadership, governance structures, training programs for senior ministers and theological education in the post-Soviet context. Focused primarily on the Evangelical Christian Baptists, these parts of the contribution emphasise the priority of the church's self-understanding as the Body of Christ over an institutionalised form of community, and develop a set of concrete, and at times bold, recommendations for a Christ-centred, values-based transformative missiology, fully embedded in the present context with a greater lay participation.

A Future and a Hope is a successful attempt to bring back the good news – the Gospel – to the scholarly discourse on the social and political transformation of the post-Soviet societies. It is clearly one of the first attempts to design a genuinely contextual theology and missiology for the post-Soviet societies. Honest, brave, and intelligent, enriched with personal experiences, at times pessimistic and harsh, yet justified, this contribution is written with a great compassion and an unpretentious concern for the people of Ukraine. It embraces the past and tries to conceive the present in order to look to the future of Ukraine with hope. It is highly recommended reading not

only for professional theologians, academics and missiologists, but for anyone interested in social and ecclesial transformation as well as in the role and future of churches with openness to an ecumenical union in Ukraine.

Maryana Hnyp

Divisions *à la* North

Die Systemkrise des Kommunismus und die Entwicklung der Parteiensysteme in Estland, Lettland und Litauen 1988–2011 (*The System Crisis of Communism and Development of Party System in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania from 1988 to 2011*). By: Magdalena Solska. Publisher: Band 7, LIT Verlag, Berlin Germany 2013.

In 2013 the German-based LTL publishing house released a book authored by Magdalena Solska titled *Die Systemkrise des Kommunismus und die Entwicklung der Parteiensysteme in Estland, Lettland und Litauen 1988–2011. Nationale Identität, Cleavage-Politik und Parteienwettbewerb in Nordosteuropa*" (*The System Crisis of Communism and Development of Party System in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania from 1988 to 2011. National Identity, Politics of Social Divisions and Competition Among Parties in North-Eastern Europe*). The book is an important voice on the shaping of the party systems in the Baltic states since the beginning of their fight for independence (1988 is the year of establishing the national fronts in Latvia and Estonia and the Sąjūdis movement in Lithuania) until 2011 – that is the year of parliamentary elections in Latvia and Estonia and local government elections in Lithuania.

Before moving on to the analysis of the book it is worth presenting a brief introduction to "cleavage" theory. This concept of social divisions was introduced by two scholars Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan in their 1967 article titled "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction" as a theory describing the mechanisms of creating and further functioning of political parties in Western Europe. At the time of its introduction the theory was, for understandable reasons, applicable to Western democracies. Thus, it is interesting that Solska applied it to the party systems in the post-communist states. In their paper Lipset and Rokkan pointed to some events in history that have led to the shaping of modern political divisions in Europe. They included: the reformation, national revolutions and the industrial revolution. As a result of these events, a division between conservatives and liberals (and the still dominating dichotomy between left and right) emerged. A similar question may be posed in regards to the Baltic states, namely which historical events and which divisions played a similar role in shaping today's party systems in these states?

In the introduction to the book Solska argues that the cleavage that emerged at the time of the crisis of the communist system, in other words the years 1988–1991, was different in all three countries. In the case of Lithuania the primary role was played by ideological differences, while in Latvia and Estonia it was the "ethnic" factor, namely the Russian popula-

tion. The author then asks the question as to why there were three different party systems that emerged in the Baltic states, a bloc of states which both academia and the media treat as one entity. And while a classical cleavage between the post-communists (left) and the nationalists (right) has been observed in Lithuania, no left wing party emerged in Latvia until today. In Estonia, where since March 2014 the Social-Democrats have been part of the government, the ethnic division remains the key importance.

When it comes to structure the book consists of ten chapters. Interestingly, chapter three covers the independence period (1918–1940), the time when the Baltic nations established their future understanding of statehood. On the pages of this chapter we read about party life in all three countries at the time of parliamentary democracy (in Latvia and Estonia until 1934, in Lithuania until 1926) and dictatorship, the position of old and new social strata and learn how the independence movement in the 1980s and 1990s was strongly rooted the 20th century traditions. Chapter three also includes information about the political organisations that played a crucial role in the process of regaining independence by all three states which included the national fronts in Latvia and Estonia and the Sąjūdis movement in Lithuania. Today not many people remember that the regaining of independence would not have been possible without changes that took place at the top of their respective communist parties, especially in Estonia and Lithuania where the old party hard-liners were replaced by more liberal activists. The only outlier was Latvia where the communist party was, starting in 1990, led by Alfrēds Rubiks, a well-known opponent of Latvia's independence. Not many people also remember that the declarations of sovereignty of the Baltic states had been made before the new anti-communist elite came to power, nor that some national holidays and state symbols were brought back when the "old" leaders were still active in the Supreme Councils in 1989.

Another important question that still remains unanswered is what factors were interrupting the Baltic states the most in their processes of regaining independence? To answer this question it is important to point that in addition to Moscow's position towards these states, there were changes in their demographic structures that took place since 1945, an issue which is discussed in chapter four. Solska also presents an interesting analysis of the "legitimisation crisis" which could be observed within the communist parties. She estimates that in 1980 ethnic Estonians constituted a mere 50.8 per cent of the members of the communist party, which was 20 per cent less than the number of Estonians recorded for the whole population. Latvians were in an even worse situation with only 39 per cent of the members of the Latvian Communist Party being Latvian, as compared to 55 per cent of Latvians for the entire population. Again, Lithuania presented a different picture as the communist party in the republic managed to maintain its national character and, after 1990, it created a new structure with relative ease – the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (since 2001 the Lithuanian Social-Democrat Party), a political group that was in power from 1992 to 1996, from 2001 to 2008 and since 2012 until today.

Also in chapter four Solska analyses the new political forces which emerged in Baltic

states in 1988. They included the earlier mentioned national fronts which first were merely aspiring to support Moscow's *perestroika* but later supported independence of the Baltic states. In Latvia and Estonia there were also citizens movements which were actually competition not only to the reformist communists but also to centrist groups. Characteristically, Estonia had quite a strong "Civic Committee" as it was thanks to its initiatives that around 790,000 ethnic Estonians were seen as "rightful citizens" of the future independent state. Similarly, the Christian-Democratic party led by the country's future prime minister – Mart Laar – was quite an active organisation. The civil movement in Latvia was much weaker.

Hence, chapter four is the most interesting part of the book as it discusses the development of the party system of the three states which was one of the main factors that contributed to today's difference between all three Baltic states. But Solska also offers an interesting interpretation of the "consolidation" process that took place between Latvia's political parties as well as the strong position of centre-left groups in Latvia and Estonia. This is another feature that distinguishes these two countries from Lithuania, who was quite willing to hand over the steering wheel of their state to the post-communists. While answering the question as to what has strengthened the "historical" bipolar cleavage in Lithuania Solska points to the ethnic homogeneity of the Lithuanian society, Sąjūdis and charismatic leaders. Unlike in Latvia and Estonia, in Lithuania the post-communists could stay in politics for a long period because nobody could accuse them of being anti-patriotic before 1990. Also, as Solska points out, while Sąjūdis drew its strength from values such as patriotism, freedom, moral purity and being an opponent to the Soviets, the power of the Social Democrats came from their pragmatism, good relations with Russia and moderate rhetoric. The post-communist/right-wing cleavage started to break down in 2000 when the political scene began to fragment. However, the recent (2008 and 2012) elections show that in Lithuania the historical cleavage still plays an important role.

Quite interesting is also Solska's analysis of the party system. Here, the scholar points out that a few contradictory processes took place in this regard. For example, while in Estonia the number of political parties has decreased overtime (there are only four parties in the Riigikog at the moment, while in 2011 there were as many as six), the party system in Latvia is undergoing such changes like moving from "consolidation" in 2010 to budding in 2014. In Lithuania, on the other hand, the system is bipolar, more fragmented and complemented by some "second stage" parties which play an important role in forming government coalitions. Solska also notes that while in Estonia the number of parties has decreased between 1992 and 2011, Lithuania has recorded an increase.

Chapter seven is devoted to the issue of "freezing" of the socio-political divisions in all three states. As a rule, political parties aim at maintaining "cleavage", which brings them profits. Characteristically, the main actors of the historical cleavage in Lithuania were party members and strong organisations. Referring to Ainė Ramonaitė, a Lithuanian researcher, Solska writes that in Lithuania the socio-economic division between parties was not as important to the voters as was their position towards the

past. Thus, unlike in Western Europe it is not the economic policy that differentiates between right and left, but rather slogans such as "independence", "de-Sovietisation", "geopolitical orientation" or the "size of the defence budget".

Ethnic cleavage in Estonia and Latvia emerged as a result of the introduction of restrictive citizenship policy which has led to an exclusion of Russian speakers from the right to vote if they did not pass a language test. According to Solska Latvian and Estonian parties were trying to gain "political control" over the Russian-speaking minority. In looking at this issue Solska constructs an interesting chapter devoted to "history as an instrument of a political fight and source of collective identity". She confirms that history, the attitude to events that took place in the 20th century, the Second World War and the occupation of the Baltic states still contribute to a very strong social division in both Latvia and Estonia.

Along these lines, Solska's sub-chapter titled "Collective Memory or Ethnic Exclusion?" is worth close attention. When discussing Latvia Solska talks about "control by exclusion" while when analysing Estonia she mentions "control by privatisation of a greater conflict". In this context she argues the consequences of the exclusion of Russian speakers in Latvia underlying the role of the radical discourse of the VL!-TB/LNNK party and the media which are responsible for creating their picture as the "enemy". As a result of the stigmatisation of the Russian minority, every Latvian government (to form a majority) has had to bring in the nationalists. In Estonia the ethnic conflict, different than in Latvia, has been pushed to the shadows of the economy. Thus, Solska writes that in Estonia economic reforms have created a "value system which is based on consumption". This thesis is confirmed by data which indicate that the Estonians give priority to values such as "prosperity" or "an interesting life". The same research also suggests that in the view of Estonian youth there is "a homogenisation of mental structure" between both ethnic groups. The Russian respondents, however, state that ethnic Estonians have better chances for employment and education than the Russian-speaking youth.

Ethnic division, however, is not the only stable socio-political division that can be observed in the Baltic states. We can talk, for example, about "two Estonians". The first group consisting of urban dwellers primarily residing in the capital, while the second group of Estonians is more rural, working and Russian. Solska also points out to the importance of age stating that in Estonia young voters prefer right-wing parties while the older voters opt for centre or socially-oriented parties. A division between rural and urban voters also applies to Lithuania where the former tend to vote for the left-wing parties while the latter opt for the right-wing.

However, among other divisions that can be observed in Lithuania, in addition to the historical and social differences, are for sure the "ethnic" and "religious" divisions. In fact, in today's Lithuania, nation-related issues are, as Solska confirms, much more politicised than they were before, even though the "ethnic" cleavage in this country is incomparable to Latvia or Estonia. Overall, in Lithuania ethnic minorities are more eager to vote for left-wing parties despite a permanent mobilisation of Polish voters since 2010. Solska writes that "Lithuania is an interesting example of a

country where liberal citizenship policy does not bring good inter-ethnic relations in the country". She also points to the fact that despite the tensions between Poland and Lithuania, representatives of the Polish minority see themselves as "Lithuanian Poles" and identify themselves with the Lithuanian state. In Latvia, on the other hand, Russians admit that first and foremost they are Russians and then they will say that they "come from Latvia".

It is always the role of the reviewer to point to some weaknesses of the book. In the case of Solska's work, the one weakness that can be noticed is that a few facts are presented erroneously. This does not, however, translate into a lower quality of the overall work. Just the opposite, Solska's book should be recommended not only to those who are interested in the Baltic states or applying "cleavage" and "freezing" theories to post-communist countries. It is also an interesting guide for those who are focusing on the contemporary political history of the region as well as specialists in the Baltic states who want to better understand the mechanisms of the party system in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Last but not least, those who are interested in minority issues in the Baltic states will find this book of a great interest as well.

Tomasz Otocki
Translated by Iwona Reichardt

FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

THE FOLKE BERNADOTTE ACADEMY (FBA) is the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, and has the overall mission to support international peace and crisis management operations. The FBA is part of Sweden's contribution to international peace and security, and its efforts to improve the lives of people living in conditions of poverty and repression.

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