The Ukraine List #482

compiled by Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca)
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, U of Ottawa
www.danyliwseminar.com
http://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/ukraine/

6 June 2017

For regular postings on Ukraine and Ukrainian Studies, follow me on Twitter at @darelasn

#1
New Website for the Chair of Ukrainian Studies

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies is inaugurating a new web site with a simple URL: www.chairukr.com. The site currently contains basic current information and will be gradually developed in the coming months. Have a look!

#2
13th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine

Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, 16-18 November 2017
http://bit.ly/2rz3lLl

CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies, with the support of the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation, will be holding its 13th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine at the University of Ottawa on 16-18 November 2017. Since 2005, the Danyliw Seminar has provided an annual platform for the presentation of some of the most influential academic research on Ukraine.

The Seminar invites proposals from scholars and doctoral students —in political science, anthropology, sociology, history, law, economics and related disciplines in the social sciences and humanities— on a broad variety of topics falling under thematic clusters, such as those suggested below:

Conflict
- war/violence (combatants, civilians in wartime, DNR/LNR, Maidan)
- security (conflict resolution, Minsk Accords, OSCE, NATO, Crimea)
- nationalism (Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet, historical, far right)

Reform
- economic change (energy, corruption, oligarchies, EU free trade, foreign aid)
- governance (rule of law, elections, regionalism)
- media (TV/digital, social media, information warfare, fake news)

Identity
- history/memory (World War II, Holodomor, Soviet period, interwar, imperial)
- language, ethnicity, nation (policies and practices)
- culture and politics (cinema, literature, music, performing arts, popular culture)

Society

- migration (IDPs, refugees, migrant workers, diasporas)
- social problems (reintegration of combatants, protests, welfare, gender, education)
- state/society (citizenship, civil society, collective action/protests, human rights)

The Seminar will also be featuring panels devoted to recent/new books touching on Ukraine, as well as the screening of new documentaries followed by a discussion with filmmakers. In 2016, four book panels (Lawrence Douglas/*The Right Wrong Man*, Catherine Gousseff/Échanger les peuples, Serhii Plokhy/*The Gates of Europe*, and Ioulia Shukan/*Génération Maidan*) were on the program and two films were screened (Elena Volochine/*Oleg's Choice*, Antony Butts/*DIY Country*). Information on the 2016 book panels and films can easily be accessed from the top menu of the web site. The 2017 Seminar is welcoming book panel proposals, as well as documentary proposals.

Presentations at the Seminar will be based on research papers (6,000-8,000 words) and will be made available, within hours after the panel discussions, in written and video format on the Seminar website and on social media. The Seminar will privilege intensive discussion, with relatively short presentations (12 minutes), comments by the moderator and an extensive Q&A with Seminar participants and assembled public.

People interested in presenting at the 2017 Danyliw Seminar are invited to submit a 500 word paper proposal and a 150 word biographical statement, by email attachment, to Dominique Arel, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, at darel@uottawa.ca AND chairukr@gmail.com. Please also include your full coordinates (institutional affiliation, preferred postal address, email, phone, and Twitter account [if you have one]). If applicable, indicate your latest publication or, in the case of doctoral or post-doctoral applicants, the year when you entered a doctoral program, the title of your dissertation and year of (expected) completion.

Books published between 2016 and 2018 (as long as near-final proofs are available prior to the Seminar) are eligible for consideration as a book panel proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the book, as well as the 150 word bio and full coordinates.

Films produced between 2015 and 2017 are eligible for consideration as a documentary proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the film, as well as the 150 word bio, full coordinates, and a secure web link to the film.

In addition to scholars and doctoral students, policy analysts, practitioners from non-governmental and international organizations, journalists, and artists are also welcome to send a proposal.

The proposal deadline is 28 June 2017. The Chair will cover the travel and accommodation expenses of applicants whose proposal is accepted by the Seminar. The proposals will be reviewed by an international selection committee and applicants will be notified in the course of the summer.

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Danyliw Seminar in 2014, a special website was created at www.danyliwseminar.com. The site contains the programs, papers, videos of presentations and photographs of the last three seminars (2014-2016). To access the abstracts, papers and videos of the 2016 presenters, click on "Participants" in the menu and then click on the individual names of participants. The 2016 Program can be accessed at https://www.danyliwseminar.com/program-2016.

Check the "Danyliw Seminar" Facebook page at http://bit.ly/2rssSHk.
For information on the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, go to http://bit.ly/2r7Hl8L

The Seminar is made possible by the generous commitment of the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation to the pursuit of excellence in the study of contemporary Ukraine.

#3
Quentin Corbel New Recipient of the Kule Doctoral Scholarship

http://bit.ly/2sehdMx

Quentin Corbel has been awarded a Kule Doctoral Scholarships for the years 2017-2020. He becomes the third recipient of the bursary, after Natalia Stepaniuk (2012-2017) and Klavdia Tatar (2014-2018). Corbel graduated in 2016 with a MA at the French Institute of Geopolitics, Université Paris 8, and will begin a doctoral program in Fall 2017 at the University of Ottawa.

* * *

Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa
Application Deadline: 1 February 2018 (International & Canadian Students)
http://bit.ly/2rT6XIV

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa, the only research unit outside of Ukraine predominantly devoted to the study of contemporary Ukraine, is announcing a new competition of the Drs. Peter and Doris Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Contemporary Ukraine. The Scholarships will consist of an annual award of $22,000, with all tuition waived, for four years (with the possibility of adding a fifth year).

The Scholarships were made possible by a generous donation of $500,000 by the Kule family, matched by the University of Ottawa. Drs. Peter and Doris Kule, from Edmonton, have endowed several chairs and research centres in Canada, and their exceptional contributions to education, predominantly in Ukrainian Studies, has recently been

celebrated in the book Champions of Philanthrophy: Peter and Doris Kule and their Endowments.

Students with a primary interest in contemporary Ukraine applying to, or enrolled in, a doctoral program at the University of Ottawa in political science, sociology and anthropology, or in fields related with the research interests of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, can apply for a Scholarship. The competition is open to international and Canadian students.

The application for the Kule Scholarship must include a 1000 word research proposal, two letters of recommendation (sent separately by the referees), and a CV and be mailed to Dominique Arel, School of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, Room, 7067, University of Ottawa, 120 University St., Ottawa ON K1N 6N5, Canada.
Applications will be considered only after the applicant has completed an application to the relevant doctoral program at the University of Ottawa. Consideration of applications will begin on **1 February 2018** and will continue until the award is announced.
The University of Ottawa is a bilingual university and applicants must have a certain oral and reading command of French. Specific requirements vary across departments.

Students interested in applying for the Scholarships beginning in the academic year 2017-2018 are invited to contact Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca), Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, and visit our web site (http://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/ukraine).

#4

The Battle for Ukrainian: A New Book from HURI Publications

http://bit.ly/2rSJUxG

HURI is pleased to announce the publication of its latest volume, The Battle for Ukrainian: A Comparative Perspective. Edited by Michael S. Flier and Andrea Graziosi, this collection of 24 articles is a monumental study of the Ukrainian language and its place in Ukraine over the course of 150 years. To put the study and Ukrainian's path into perspective, the volume includes case studies of other multilingual nations that have had to negotiate language policy.

The Battle for Ukrainian: A Comparative Perspective
Edited by Michael S. Flier and Andrea Graziosi
May 2017
paperback, 636 pages, $29.95
ISBN 9781932650174

View the table of contents here.

[The chapters in the first section, "The Ukrainian Language Question: Linguistics, History, Politics" were written by Michael S. Flier, Johannes Remy, Andrii Danylenko, Michael A. Moser, Jan Fellerer, Michael G. Smith, Hennadii Yefimenko, Patrick Sériot, Yurii Shapoval, Simone A. Bellezza, Dominique Arel, Volodymyr Kulyk, Laada Bilaniuk, and Bohdan Azhniuk –UKL]

In 1863 the Valuev Circular restricted the use of the Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire. In the 150 years since, Ukrainian has followed a tortuous path, reflecting or anticipating tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet history. This volume documents that path through studies that tell of the language's emergence in southern Rus´, its shifting fortunes in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, and its variable status after 1991. The Ukrainian-Russian relationship and the Moscow-based political power promoting the latter loom large. Nonetheless, Ukrainian can usefully serve as a prism for assessing 150 years of imperial disintegration and reformation, and worldwide state and nation building—a period in which languages have been created, promoted, and repressed, or have come to coexist in multilingual nations. Case studies of Gaelic, Finnish, Yiddish, the Baltic group, and of language policy in Canada, India, and the former Yugoslavia illuminate similarities and differences in a dialogue construed broadly in chronological, comparative, international, and transnational terms. The result is an interdisciplinary study that is essential for understanding language, history, and politics in Ukraine and in the postimperial world.

This book will be available on June 12, 2017, but can be pre-ordered now. See Harvard University Press.

#5
Ukraine Beats Russia in Epic Gas Battle

by Anders Åslund
Atlantic Council, 1 June 2017
http://bit.ly/2sNH6iO

Anders Åslund is a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington and a former economic adviser to the Ukrainian government.

On May 31, Ukraine's Naftogaz won an extraordinary victory over Russia's Gazprom in the international arbitration court in Stockholm. This was the possibly biggest international arbitration verdict ever. Gazprom had claimed$47.1 billion from Naftogaz, half of Ukraine's GDP, and Naftogaz $30.3 billion from Gazprom.

Naftogaz won on all three counts the court considered. First, Ukraine does not have to pay for gas that it has not purchased, revoking the «take or pay» requirement. Second, the court revised the price formula, tying it to market prices at European gas hubs. Finally,

the court decided to completely abolish the ban on gas re-export. Whether Gazprom will have to pay damages will be decided later, and Ukraine's claims to receive more pay for Gazprom's transit through Ukraine also will be decided at a later date.

The case was based on the ten-year gas supply and transit agreement the two countries concluded on January 19, 2009. This was a shotgun agreement forged between then Prime Ministers Vladimir Putin and Yulia Tymoshenko after the Kremlin had cut all gas supplies for two weeks to Ukraine and sixteen European countries in the midst of a cold winter.

This agreement was flawed from the outset, demanding more from Ukraine than Russia. Naftogaz committed itself to buy far more gas than it needed. The unpublished price formula obliged Ukraine to pay higher gas prices than any other country.

President Viktor Yanukovych claimed that this agreement amounted to abuse of power and had Tymoshenko sentenced to seven years in prison in a kangaroo court, but he never canceled the agreement.

Russia's gas trade with Ukraine is no ordinary trade. It is an important part of Russia's hybrid warfare against Ukraine and the European Energy Union. One of Yanukovych's main supporters was the gas trader Dmytro Firtash, wanted by the US Department of Justice for gross corruption. Reuters recently reported that Russia's Gazprombank gave Firtash a credit line of $11 billion in 2011. In addition, Gazprom sold gas to him at such a steep discount that his companies made $3.7 billion in two years. The key insight is that Gazprom's aim in Ukraine is not to make money, but to control the government through devious payments.

Since 2010, Ukraine has consistently bought less gas than the agreement dictated, but Gazprom raised no major objections as long as Yanukovych was president. In practice, the Russian government set the price in a whimsical fashion with purported tax discounts. In early April 2014, one month after Yanukovych had fled the country, Russia hiked Gazprom's gas price to Ukraine by 80 percent from $268.50 per one billion cubic meters (bcm) to $485 per bcm. Naturally, Naftogaz objected, and stopped accepting Russian gas, for which Gazprom sued it.

In June 2014, Gazprom filed a lawsuit against Naftogaz at the Stockholm International Arbitration Court for significant accumulated gas debt and claimed that Naftogaz should pay for all the gas it was obliged to purchase since 2011. The move was obviously political. The same day, Naftogaz filed a countersuit demanding Gazprom set fair market prices for its gas supplies and recover overpayments for gas since 2010. In addition, Naftogaz claims that Gazprom had underpaid for gas transit through Ukraine for the same period.

Since November 2015, Ukraine has not bought any gas from Gazprom. Last year, its total imports were 13 bcm, mostly imported from Slovakia, while the 2009 agreement obliged Naftogaz to purchase 41.6 bcm per year from Gazprom. This was mainly Russian reverse gas, but importantly it was traded at normal market conditions. Gazprom is currently

about to build two large gas pipelines, Nord Stream 2 and Turkish Stream, to avoid Ukraine altogether.

Several big European energy companies have sued Gazprom in Stockholm and obtained substantial price and volume reductions usually in amicable settlements out of court, but Gazprom wanted to beat Naftogaz in court, because this is judicial warfare. This appears have been a foolhardy act, but one that is all too common with Gazprom, a company whose market capitalization has fallen from $369 billion in May 2008 to $50 billion currently, without its chief executive being replaced. One worry of the Naftogaz management is that the Russian government will bankrupt Gazprom, so that they cannot collect their award. While the majority of Gazprom is state-owned, it is not covered by state guarantees.

This case needs to be seen in a broader European context. Since February 2011, Ukraine has a member of the European Energy Community, which incorporates the principles of the EU Third Energy Package of 2009 and the European Energy Union of free trade in energy. European energy law applies. The principles of the European energy market and security are at play in Stockholm, and the arbitration tribunal appears to have recognized that.

The victors are Naftogaz's young CEO Andriy Kobolyev and his first deputy Yuriy Vitrenko. They deserve a round of applause and then some.

#6
Long-Term Implications of Ukraine's Victory in Stockholm Ruling

by Timothy Ash
Kyiv Post, 1 June 2017
http://bit.ly/2rqbCQ3

Just thinking through the importance of the Stockholm Arbitration ruling on May 31 for Ukraine, and herein are a few important points from my perspective:

First, let's be honest, this decision came as a totally unexpected but positive surprise (for Ukraine), as I think few people were expecting a Ukrainian victory in the "take or pay claim."

And I guess we have to acknowledge that Gazprom likely will appeal; albeit on balance Ukraine seems now to be on the front foot in that process.

Second, the first victory for Ukraine is not having to pay the $40 billion-odd counter-claim by Gazprom in the first "take or pay" gas supply case. This would have likely been terminal

for the Naftogas company, given that this amounted to the equivalent of over 50 percent of Ukraine's gross domestic product It would have caused great flux at Naftogaz. There was talk of bankruptcy in such a case, which would likely have set back reform efforts at the company, and also likely caused significant political flux.

Third, in theory, Naftogaz could now secure an award of damages on the first supply case of over $17 billion.

This award is set to be determined by the end of June, perhaps a little later if Gazprom appeals, as expected. The second transit case, where Ukraine is also claiming damages of over $17 billion, is expected to be determined by the autumn.

In a best case (for Ukraine), Naftogaz and Ukraine, by effect through the state ownership of Naftogaz, could secure an award for damages now of anywhere from zero to $35 billion.

A figure of $35 billion is equivalent to around 40 percent of GDP – close to half the country's public debt, and twice its foreign currency reserves.

It is also close to equivalent to the Western financial support package for Ukraine agreed in 2015. Many Ukrainians have called for a Ukrainian Marshall Plan, for a similar amount to this number; so ironic that in effect Russia, via Gazprom, could now be footing that particular bill – maybe they should call it the Medvedev Plan for Ukraine (after Russian Prime Ministry Dmitry Medvedev). The award could (likely) be significantly less than $35 billion, but even if it ends up being in single digits, for cash-starved Ukraine any amount (say above $2-3 billion) is still materially significant – $2-3 billion would cover one year's annual budget deficit at the current time. And, importantly, Ukraine does not have to pay the counter suit of over $40 billion, which would have been impossible to pay.

Fourth, this is a huge victory for the current management of Naftogaz (Andriy Kobolyev, CEO of Naftogaz/Yuriy Vitrenko, Naftogaz director of business development), who have done a remarkable join in transforming the fortunes of Naftogaz over the past 2-3 years – through domestic price liberalization, efficiency savings, they have cut its deficit from 4-5 percent of GDP 3-4 years back to a surplus now, and importantly cut reliance on imported Russian gas, from 15-20 billion cubic meters a few years back to zero today. The latter has seen the deficit on imported gas being reduced from $10-12 billion a year during the Viktor Yanukovych era, to perhaps $2-3 billion today, making for a marked improvement in the current account position of Ukraine. But recently the reformers at Naftogaz have faced a political assault – with claims again of attempts at state capture by less reform-minded forces in the administration. There have been concerns that the management would be forced out – which would have been a huge loss for Ukraine's reform momentum, as Naftogaz, alongside the NBU, are currently beacons of reform. As Kobolyev said on May 31 in the FT interview: "We won, we are the champions"! I think that says it all, in terms of their own political position now.

Fifth, I think through this ruling, Ukraine's disengagement from Russia continues, and Russia's leverage over Ukraine further reduces/erodes. Over the past 3—4 years Russia has already seen its trade turnover with Ukraine drop from around 40 percent (of Ukraine's turnover) to around 10 percent, remaining state-owned Russian banks are heading to the exits, energy dependency has been radically reduced, and Russian TV/social media influence is also fading fast – the latter recent helped by Security Service of Ukraine actions over Yandex, et al. There is talk/fear of some Donald J. Trump – Vladimir Putin deal to put Ukraine back in Russia's sphere of influence, but irrespective of that, Russia's de facto influence over Ukraine has collapsed since the annexation of Crimea and the failed military intervention in Donbas. So even if Trump agreed to put Ukraine back in Russia's sphere of influence, I don't see how Putin can actually deliver on that. Ukraine seems to be lost to Russia for a very long time now, and at least under the rule of Putin.

Sixth, interestingly, and I know many Ukrainians would not like me saying this, but this ruling is a victory also for Yulia Tymoshenko, the ex-prime minister.

She signed the original contract, and ended up going to jail as a result (one of the few Ukrainian politicians to go to jail, and actually for something she did not do).
In the end, with hindsight, the agreement was not as bad some had implied – and as affirmed surely now by the Stockholm Arbitration Court. A defeat would likely have been a terminal blow to Tymoshenko's political aspirations, as surely she would have taken flak for any large bill put at Naftogaz' doorstep. But with this ruling, she remains in the game (of thrones), and she is currently running neck and neck with President Petro Poroshenko in opinion poll ratings as the country begins to focus on the 2019 presidential elections. Tymoshenko seems to be a cat with nine or more lives – and a politician who can never be ruled out.

Seventh, one caveat in all this is the question of Russia's reaction. The reaction yesterday from Moscow was muted, and partly this was sheer shock at losing a case which they thought was cast iron in their favor. I tend to think that while Gazprom will likely challenge the Stockholm ruling, this challenge could be relatively short lived. And I do think that Gazprom will eventually be forced to pay up – largely as it has the cash means to pay, it has plenty of offshore assets to be attached, and I think would not want to risk reputational damage by not paying in a ruling over a pricing/supply contract. I think this is quite different say for example over the Yukos case in this respect which had quite different origins.

The bigger question for me is the politics of all this from Russia's perspective. Clearly, this was a huge political blow to the Kremlin – which I don't think they were expecting. For those questioning whether this was a political case from the Russian side, the question to be asked is would Russia have lodged the case if Yanukovych had still been president? I will leave you to make that determination. But will Moscow sit back and allow this to roll over them without some counter-reaction in the political or security field?

As noted above, Russian leverage now over Ukraine in the economy/banks/energy sector is very limited.

Likely Moscow will further move to cut Ukraine out of the gas transit business, with plans to cut gas transit through Ukraine from 50-80 billion cubic meters in recent years (120+ billion cubic meters at the peak) to 15 billion cubic meters from 2019, when the current gas price agreement ends. That said, Moscow's options therein are still limited by Ukraine's assets in terms of gas storage facilities in the West (28 billion cubic meters) which enables Gazprom to ensure constant supply to European consumers through the peak winter months – north and Turkish stream projects just don't allow that. And Ukraine is learning to live without Russian gas and gas transit – buying gas from Europe — and thinking of options of routing gas from the Black Sea, up through Europe.

#7

Ukraine's Top Bank Lent Owner's Lieutenants $1 Billion Before Nationalization

by Graham Stack
Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)
5 June 2017
http://bit.ly/2rSjiNw

Between mid-2015 and mid-2016, Privatbank, the largest bank in Ukraine, handed out over US$ 1 billion in loans to firms owned by seven top managers and two subordinates of its owner at the time, Ihor Kolomoisky, according to a copy of its 2016 loan book reviewed by a reporter for OCCRP. Subsequently, in December 2016, the bank was nationalized after the government found that it was severely undercapitalized, threatening the country's financial system.

At least $185 million of the $1 billion in insider loans -- and possibly the entire amount -- was not backed by collateral, a serious violation of banking practices.
To receive the money, the nine recipients created 28 companies in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city. Almost all were founded in 2015, all except one with equity of just 1,000 Ukrainian hryvnia ($38) each -- a sign that they were paper companies. Privatbank then approved loans to the firms totaling 28 billion hryvnia (over $1 billion).

Privatbank holds 35 percent of all individual deposits in Ukraine, meaning the savings of ordinary people. It was founded and owned by Kolomoisky, a wealthy Ukrainian businessman, and his partner, Hennadiy Boholiubov. Kolomoisky and Boholiubov are believed to have additional business interests in energy, media, aviation, metallurgy, and agriculture, which place them second and third, respectively, among the top 100 richest Ukrainians in a 2016 ranking by Forbes Ukraine. Each man is estimated to be worth $1.3 billion.

Following his support of the Euromaidan revolution, in March 2014 Kolomoisky was appointed governor of the east-central Ukrainian region of Dnipropetrovsk, where Privatbank is headquartered. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko fired Kolomoisky one year later, in March 2015, after a political falling-out over Kolomoisky's influence over Ukrnafta, Ukraine's largest and state-owned oil company. Later that year, in October 2015, a close ally of Kolomoisky, Hennadiy Korban, was arrested and charged with heading an organized crime group, taking hostages, and embezzlement, according to Interfax Ukraine.

Government Takeover

On Dec. 19, 2016, Ukraine's government nationalized Privatbank after the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) found it insolvent. "The alternative would have looked irresponsible, as it would have meant to close our eyes, bury our heads in the sand and wait for the bank to fall," Poroshenko said in a statement, adding that the bank was so undercapitalized that it threatened the entire financial system.

Following the takeover, the NBU announced that as much as 100 percent of Privatbank's loans had gone to its own shareholders, indicating that the owners were enriching themselves while endangering the savings of millions of Ukrainians. Prior to its nationalization, Privatbank had claimed that only 4.71 percent of its loans had been made to insiders and argued that it had been financially stable.

The over $1 billion in loans Privatbank made to Kolomoisky's lieutenants accounted for 13.8 percent of its total portfolio of loans larger than $400,000 as of July 2016.

Missing Money

Privatbank is now under new management appointed by the government. On March 6, the deputy head of the NBU, Kateryna Rozhkova, told OCCRP that the Privatbank shareholders "have undertaken to restructure all related party loans by 1 July." However, records show that a month previously, the new Kharkiv-registered companies had all started liquidation proceedings on the same day and all named the same person as liquidator, indicating coordinated action -- and suggesting a lack of intention to return the loans. Since then, the NBU's governor, Valeriya Gontareva, has resigned, and the central bank is under investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Bureau.

A Privatbank spokesperson confirmed to OCCRP that international auditors had found that three of the Kharkiv borrowers had provided no real collateral for their loans, apart from worthless shares in no-name companies. These three firms hold a total of $185 million in loans, about 18 percent of the total loans to the Kharkiv firms.

Investigations into the other loans are continuing. The coordinated pattern of borrowing suggests that more of the $1 billion in Kharkiv loans likely also lacked collateral.

[See graphic “Kolomoisky’s Billion Dollar Friends” in web version]

Managers United

The people who own the Kharkiv firms are mostly top managers in businesses controlled by Kolomoisky. Most are also interlinked on Facebook.

Viktor Shkindel, Ihor Malanchak and Ivan Makoviichuk own the three Kharkiv firms known to hold $185 million in unsecured loans. The three men own five additional Kharkiv-registered companies that also got Privatbank loans; in all, their firms hold a total of $458 million in loans from the bank.

Shkindel is a former chief executive officer of Dnipropetrovsk airport, which is also controlled by Kolomoisky.

Ivan Makoviichuk is director of Skorzonera-Zakarpattya, a tourism company owned by Kolomoisky and Boholiubov.

Ihor Malanchak is the CEO of Kolumbini, a company affiliated with Kolomoisky, according to the company register.
Besides Shkindel, Malanchak and Makoviichuk, the other owners of the Kharkiv businesses that received Privatbank loans are Viacheslav Plakasov, Volodymyr Golovko, Serhiy Kazarov, Vitaly Nemov, Vadim Andreyuk and Anatoliy Derkach.

Viacheslav Plakasov is the CEO of Optima 770, which is related to Privat Group, an unconsolidated business group with holdings in oil, ferrous metal, and agriculture which is widely attributed to Kolomoisky and Boholiyubov.

Zaporizhzhya-based Volodymyr Golovko is a former top manager in Kolomoisky’s refinery business. Serhiy Kazarov is former head of Tsyurupinskiy Agropostach, a fuel supplier which is connected to Privat offshores.

Five of the above-named, who are on Facebook, did not respond when contacted via the social networking website.

Vitaly Nemov, owner of Olymp Oil, which received 715 million hryvnia (about $27 million) in loans, is manager of a gas station for Avias, under Shkindel’s command. His CV shows him looking for a job as a gas station manager with a monthly salary expectation of 6,000 hryvnia ($226).

Nemov confirmed his ownership of Olymp Oil but denied borrowing $27 million. “There is no loan,” he said when contacted by phone, “and they have already closed the firm,” he said about Olymp Oil. He declined to specify who he meant by “they,” but acknowledged being acquainted with Shkindel.

Vadim Andreyuk, owner of three Kharkiv firms holding 2.7 billion hryvnia (about $115.3 million) in Privatbank loans, is head of the sales department of the state oil firm Ukrnafta in the Khmelnytskyi region, according to an online resume.

Khmelnytskyi-based Anatoliy Derkach, the owner of Avaris, previously worked as a taxi driver, according to filings he made in a state register of entrepreneurs. The Avaris phone number matched the number of a number of firms run by Andreyuk. When an OCCRP reporter phoned Andreyuk's office and asked to speak to Derkach, and was put through to him. When asked whether the loan Avaris received had been repaid, Derkach said "apparently," but hung up when asked whether Andreyuk was his boss. Privatbank did not confirm this information.

Kolomoisky did not respond to requests for comment and Boholiubov could not be located.

#8
Economic Effects of Donbas Trade Blockade

by Vasily Astrov
Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, 1 June 2017
http://bit.ly/2sBBc51

In the latest wiiw Forecast Report (Spring 2017), I speculated whether the new geopolitical landscape – in particular the supposedly more business-like and Russia-friendly stance of the newly elected US President Donald Trump – may result in the United States partly losing its interest in Ukraine and, consequently, its leverage over the developments there. I argued that this may lead to a shift in Ukraine's policies to the political 'right', with radical nationalistic forces likely to gain more ground at the expense of the 'pragmatists', a group including President Poroshenko, which may have potentially negative consequences for the situation in Donbas.

During the recent months, this scenario has indeed partly materialised, albeit not necessarily completely for the reasons we expected: a real 'rapprochement' between Mr Trump and Mr Putin is yet to be seen. Instead, the developments in Ukraine have been driven by the logic of domestic politics rather than anything else. Starting from late January 2017, the veterans of the so-called 'anti-terrorist operation' (the official term for the military campaign against pro-Russian separatists), supported by several right-wing opposition parties, were blockading railway trade between Ukraine and the non-government controlled area (NGCA) of Donbas. Despite calling it (correctly) an act of sabotage which only hurts Ukraine's economy, the Kyiv authorities were unable to remove the blockade which was widely popular, and ultimately legitimised and even expanded it (by imposing a ban on the movement of goods across the separation line by roads) on

15 March. In the official wording, the trade ban will stay in place until a full ceasefire is implemented and enterprises located on the territory of the NGCA are returned to their Ukrainian owners. (Large industrial assets were effectively nationalised by the self-proclaimed 'people's republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk in response to the earlier unofficial trade blockade.) In another move, on 25 April Ukraine cut off electricity supplies to the 'Luhansk People's Republic' (officially, because of the accumulated payment arrears), further adding to the disruptions of economic links between the NGCA and the rest of Ukraine.

Clearly, the disruptions in cross-border trade will be costly for both sides at least in the short term. The stalled shipments of coal from the NGCA have already resulted in electricity shortages and have hit metals production in the rest of Ukraine. As a result, the country's industrial production contracted by 4.6% in February and by 2.7% in March, after having surged by 5.6% in January (year-on-year). Although Ukraine started importing coal from elsewhere (such as South Africa and the United States), it is reportedly more expensive and of different quality, resulting in a higher import bill and some technical problems. At the same time, Ukraine's exports of metals have suffered. All in all, the National Bank of Ukraine projects that the trade blockade will result in a current account deterioration by USD 1.8 billion this year and USD 1.1 billion in 2018, and in a lower GDP growth by 1.3 pp and 0.9 pp, respectively. For purely logistical, economic and social reasons, it would be more rational for Ukraine to trade with the NGCA (even if the latter is not under Ukraine's direct control) rather than with countries in other corners of the world. As Ukraine's own recent experience with trade reorientation from Russia to the EU strongly suggests, such reorientation can prove very costly in the short run, while long-run benefits are far from certain as well, unless it is accompanied by adequate investment inflows.

In the so-called 'people's republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk, there will be short-term losses as well, although less information is available on that. These losses, however, should be at least partly offset by the redirection of tax payments from the newly 'nationalised' industrial enterprises to the 'people's republics' budgets, making them somewhat less dependent on Russian subsidies. Nevertheless, the reorientation of trade flows (mainly coal and steel) to or via Russia – though obviously enjoying Russia's political support – may take time and certainly involve additional logistical costs.

More dangerous, however, is that the new status quo may be associated with much higher costs in the medium and long run, potentially resulting in a 'lose-lose' situation for both Russia and Ukraine. For Ukraine, disrupting the remaining economic links with the NGCA will not make the task of its economic reintegration any easier, while politically it is certainly counter-productive. Blackmailing the 'people's republics' will hardly work, since they can turn to Russia for help instead (and have indeed already done so). Quite on the contrary, it provides them with another excellent pretext for anti-Ukrainian rhetoric. All in all, the trade ban makes the chances of any future reintegration (which is the cornerstone of the Minsk-II agreement) even lower, implying that the legal status of

Donbas will most probably not be settled in the foreseeable future and military escalation will remain a risk factor. This, in turn, will negatively affect Ukraine's investment climate for the years to come, diminishing its hopes for economic restructuring and modernisation and complicating the implementation of its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the EU.

For Russia, in turn, the costs of supporting Donbas will only go up (Russia has, for instance, promptly made up for the electricity shortages in Luhansk following the cut-off from the Ukrainian side). The pro-Russian sentiment in Donbas will almost certainly strengthen further. However, Russia will hardly benefit from that, as long as it remains reluctant to formally incorporate Donbas into its own territory (as it has done with Crimea), even though it has recognised the documents issued by the self-proclaimed 'people's republics'. In these circumstances, it may prove difficult for the 'people's republics' to attract even Russian investment, making the region a constant recipient of aid from the Russian government and a burden on the Russian budget.

In my view, the optimal solution for both Russia and Ukraine would be to recognise the reality, i.e. the apparent willingness of the people of Donbas to live with Russia rather than Ukraine (there is little doubt that any pro-Kyiv sentiment, to the extent that it still existed in Donbas, has largely evaporated by now). A legal settlement, however controversial, would be preferable to the current status quo and would ultimately have a positive impact on the investment climate and economic prospects of the region. I realise, however, that at the current stage this solution is a sheer utopia, as it would impose huge image costs on both sides. Acknowledging the formal independence of the NGCA would be political suicide for any Ukrainian president, while for Russia annexing the separatist areas of Donbas would certainly trigger another wave of international sanctions, ultimately burying its hopes (sincere, in my view) of any improved relations with the United States under President Trump. Without a legal settlement, however, the 'lose-lose' situation may well become a reality for both Ukraine and Russia for the years to come.

#9
Challenge Putin's Lies about Imprisoned Ukrainian Filmmaker Oleg Sentsov

By Halya Coynash
Human Rights in Ukraine, 10 May 2017
http://bit.ly/2ryCDCw

It is exactly three years since Oleg Sentsov, Ukrainian filmmaker and single father, was arrested in Simferopol, shortly after Russia invaded and annexed Crimea. His trial and 20-year-sentence have been condemned by the entire international community, yet Russian President Vladimir Putin keeps repeating the same narrative, that Sentsov was tried and convicted of 'terrorism'. It is the magic word that Moscow has used to impose

a sentence far longer than those in Soviet times passed against dissidents. Terrorism, however, has a clear meaning, and Putin should be challenged to justify the claim or #FreeSentsov.

Where is the terrorism?

Four opponents of Russian annexation were arrested in May 2014: Oleg Sentsov, civic activist Oleksandr Kolchenko; Gennady Afanasyev and Oleksiy Chirniy.

The other men had all taken part in one or two Molotov cocktail attacks during the night on the empty offices of two pro-Russian political organizations which had played a major role in Russia's invasion. Chirniy also had plans to blow up a statue of Vladimir Lenin.

These are certainly treated as offences in Russia, but are punished as vandalism or hooliganism, with the person getting a suspended sentence.

Here they were called 'terrorism', which carries a minimum 7-year sentence.

There was quite literally nothing against Sentsov at all, yet he was tried as the 'mastermind of a terrorist plot'.

In just over three years under Russian occupation, there has not been a single terrorist attack in Crimea, yet Russia has either convicted or is holding 23 men in indefinite detention on 'terrorism' charges. Fictitious 'terrorist plots' and supposed enemies are used to try to justify the armed invasion of Ukrainian Crimea. Moscow had, after all, claimed that its intervention was needed to 'protect' Russians and Russian-speakers.

Why Sentsov?

The four men were linked only by their shared opposition to the invasion. Sentsov, who had played an active role in Euromaidan, coordinated efforts by Maidan car owners to take food, water and medical supplies to the Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea besieged by Russian forces. When the Ukrainian soldiers were given just a couple of hours to leave Crimea, it was Sentsov who organized their evacuation.

As well as his work as a filmmaker, which had already gained him renown beyond Ukraine, Sentsov was bringing up his two children, Alina then 11, and Vlad, who is two years younger, and has autism.

Alina was at home with her father when FSB (Russian Security Service) officers turned up on May 10, 2014. The search produced nothing, but Sentsov was taken away and has not seen his family since then. Russia continues to claim that he was arrested on May 11, to conceal the first hours when he was subjected to savage torture.

He and the other three men were all held incommunicado and without access to lawyers, first in Simferopol, then in Moscow. It is likely that secrecy was to ensure that the most obvious signs of torture had faded.

On May 30, the FSB issued a public statement claiming that the four men were members of a Right Sector 'sabotage and terrorist group'. In the style of the Stalinist show trials, no consideration was given to plausibility or even accuracy. The men were alleged to have been planning terrorist attacks in Simferopol; Yalta and Sevastopol, with the aim being, for example, to destroy non-existent railway bridges. Other than those grandiose claims, there were the above-mentioned Molotov cocktail incidents which had been thrown in the night into offices occupied only during the day.

Virtually everything about this case is reminiscent of the worst repressive Soviet methods, and it is no accident that the trial of Sentsov and Kolchenko was called 'absolutely Stalinist'.

The 'evidence'

The FSB statement was accompanied by videos of 'confessions' by Afanasyev and Chirniy. The two men were tried separately and received the minimum 7-year sentences.

Sentsov and Kolchenko continued to reject all the charges and Sentsov gave details of the torture applied to force him to 'confess'. He was openly warned that if he didn't give the testimony demanded, he would get 20 years and rot in a Russian prison.

Russia prohibited the men's lawyers from divulging any information, and it was only after the trial began in July 2015 that it became entirely clear that there was nothing to substantiate the charges. The renowned Memorial Human Rights Centre almost immediately declared both Sentsov and Kolchenko political prisoners.

Since the only 'evidence' came from confessions, it is of critical importance that Chirniy refused to testify in court, and then Afanasyev took the stand. He retracted all testimony as having been extracted through torture, and said that every word he had said about Sentsov had been false. He was shortly afterwards also recognized by Memorial as a political prisoner.

There was thus no evidence against Sentsov and Kolchenko, and Afanasyev gave details of torture that corresponded closely to those repeated from the outset by Sentsov.

All of this was ignored by the prosecutor and judges and on August 25, 2015, Sentsov was – as predicted by the FSB, given a 20-year sentence, Kolchenko – 10 years.

Both men are being held in maximum security prisoners thousands of kilometres from their homes.

Russia has also taken the lawless step of claiming that both men 'automatically' became Russian citizens, and is denying them access to the Ukrainian consul and their rights under international law.

Putin is hoping that the international community will gradually forget about the men, and that Russians have been so duped by the state-controlled media that they will believe that the men are imprisoned for 'terrorism'.

Not a chance, and it is important that he understands this now. He and all those judges, prosecutors and others implicated in the monstrous sentences knowingly passed on innocent men.

We are therefore seeking sanctions against all those who have taken part in what has rightly been termed 'ideologically motivated state terror'. With Russia's repressive measures against Ukrainians, especially in occupied Crimea, on the increase, it is important to send a clear message that there can be no impunity for those who obey criminal orders.

Please help #FreeSentsov and other Ukrainian political prisoners by asking politicians and journalists in your country to support targeted sanctions and to demand answers from Moscow. Why, 150 years after Russia abolished serfdom, is it treating Ukrainians as serfs to be seized together with its Crimean land-grab? How, over a quarter of a century after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has Russia descended to sentencing those who oppose its invasion for 20 years?

A model letter and some other ideas can be found here:

20 years for opposing Russian occupation of Crimea is worse than Soviet –Help #FreeSentsov!

#10
The Case Against Russia's "Extremist Librarian"

by Sasha Sulim
Meduza, 30 May 2017
http://bit.ly/2qC9uHO

[On June 5, Ms Sharina was convicted of "inciting hatred against Russians" and given a suspended four-year sentence, http://reut.rs/2sPUi6D --UKL]

On Monday, May 29, a Moscow court heard closing arguments in the case against the former director of the Library of Ukrainian Literature, Natalia Sharina, who stands

accused of distributing extremist materials and embezzling government funds. State prosecutors asked the judge to give her a five-year suspended sentence — an act of "mercy" that elicited facetious thanks from Sharina's lawyers, who argue that their client should be acquitted. Meduza examines the case and reviews the history of this supposedly criminal librarian.

The oral arguments in Russia's "Librarian's Case" lasted about three hours on Monday. Prosecutor Lyudmila Baladina began with remarks about the embezzlement charges against Sharina, but she prefaced her speech with her own assessment of the political situation in Ukraine, where she says two powerful forces are now duking it out: "the pro-Russian side and the pro-Western side." People in the latter camp, Baladina explained, advocate a close alliance with NATO members and blame the Russian leadership and Russian people for Ukraine's underdevelopment.

The prosecutor told the court that Sharina was appointed as the director of the Library of Ukrainian Literature in 2007 "to ensure that the institution's activities correspond to the interests of Russia." In December 2010, however, police raided the library and discovered a copy of the book "War in the Crowd" by Dmytro Korchynsky, leading to charges of extremism, despite the fact that Korchynsky's book wasn't banned in Russia until 2013. A lawyer named Alexander Yekim was hired to defend the library, but he ultimately represented Sharina exclusively, prosecutors say, and the government paid him 297,000 rubles ($5,250) for his services. This is how the embezzlement allegations against Sharina got started.

Prosecutors say Sharina also embezzled money to pay for legal services a second time, claiming that she hired two attorneys the library didn't need, paying them more than 1 million rubles ($17,600), though investigators could find no documents showing that either lawyer performed any work. Baladina told the court on Monday that the attorneys' phone numbers weren't even listed in Sharina's contacts on her mobile phone.

In October 2015, the police returned to the Library of Ukrainian Literature in a new search for extremist materials, this time seizing 275 books and two compact discs. According to Baladina, these materials "contained derogatory qualities and negative emotional assessments inciting ethnic hatred against Russians," including some open calls for armed violence. At least in part, prosecutors were referring again to books by Dmytro Korchynsky.

Speaking to Meduza, Sharina's colleagues accused the police of planting these books. "According to the library's staff, several of the seized books were in special storage, where visitors couldn't enter. But it was never specified if the books could be removed by special request," Baladina told the court, citing witness testimony claiming that visitors could in fact get permission to see these books.

Baladina also denied allegations that the police planted extremist literature in the library, attributing the claim to Sharina's defense team, and insisting that there are no grounds to doubt what investigators discovered.

The prosecutor concluded her remarks with another allusion to world politics: "Ukrainian nationalism went hand in hand with German fascism, and it has again reared its head today, when those who usurped power openly talk about seizing Russian regions. They are actually destroying the Russian population. And the defendant is one of the mechanisms for disseminating their ideas," Baladina said.

In response, Ivan Pavlov, Sharina's lawyer, told the court that the prosecution's extremism charges are vague at best, saying the state has failed to prove that a criminal act in fact took place. "The prosecution's case doesn't allow us to understand what crimes exactly Sharina is accused of committing," Pavlov argued, saying the defendant did nothing to disseminate extremist materials, and telling the court that it can't treat her inaction as an act of extremism.

"The mere presence of such materials isn't enough to accuse someone of a crime and find them guilty. There must be direct intent, and there's not a shred of evidence in this case that Sharina was fixated on this goal," Pavlov said.

The attorney also pointed out that Sharina's duties as library director didn't include book selection. "My client does not speak Ukrainian, and therefore she couldn't have spread Ukrainian-language literature in order to incite hatred," Pavlov said, asking the court for an acquittal on the grounds that no crime was committed.

Sharina's lawyer called the embezzlement charges against her "absurd and cynical," as well as an "attempt to punish her for exercising her right to legal assistance by hiring a professional lawyer to defend her." "The defense of a legal entity encompasses the defense of its management, including its director," he argued.

Evgeny Smirnov, Sharina's second lawyer, presented the court with evidence of a large number of procedural violations committed by state investigators during their raid on the library in October 2015. "Sharina's right to defense was violated, and she was also denied hospitalization, over the urging of paramedics," Smirnov said.

Earlier in Sharina's trial, on May 25, her legal team revealed that she sustained a spinal compression fracture in October 2015, after her detention, while being transported in a police car.

Smirnov also addressed the case's political subtext: the police raid on the library in 2010 immediately followed the Ukrainian Attorney General's announcement that it was opening a criminal case against the Soviet authorities for the Holodomor famine in 1932 and 1933; and the 2015 raid came as tensions heated up again in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

"You're ascribing functions to the library that it simply doesn't have. The library doesn't have the authority to censor legally published books, and yet you attribute this responsibility to me," Sharina told the court, adding that anyone with an Internet connection can find Korchynsky's book in an instant.

Responding to the embezzlement charges, Sharina said she was ordered to hire new lawyers by Moscow's Culture Department (which incidentally transferred the library to the city's Interethnic Affairs Department, after the police raid in 2015).

Defending her organization, Sharina also said the Library of Ukrainian Literature was for almost 15 years one of the only cultural centers in Moscow that "played a big role in Russian-Ukrainian relations." "I am ashamed," Sharina told the court, "that a cultural institution created [in the 1980s] and inspired by Soviet culture has been destroyed for the interests of a small handful of people. I request that I be acquitted, and I'm not even asking for apologies or restitution."

Sharina's verdict and sentence will be announced on Thursday, June 1.

#11

TV in Breakaway Ukraine Has a Distinct Soviet Tint to It

by Jack Losh
Washington Post, 5 June 2017
http://wapo.st/2r3sOJG

Carrying plastic bags stuffed with cuddly toys, the rebel leader enters an apartment to greet its new occupants — a young family whose former home had supposedly fallen into disrepair. Aleksandr Zakharchenko, who governs the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" in eastern Ukraine, hands over the gifts, plus keys and deeds to the simple apartment. He walks around, nodding in approval at the pristine appliances and furnishings.

While a news crew films the choreographed event, mother of four Elena Korkunova says she had written a letter to Zakharchenko requesting help. Her husband, Alexei, hastily adds: "We're very thankful to receive the apartment so quickly. … Now it'll be our family nest."

Ending the piece, a correspondent for the local Pervy Respublikansky channel describes how Zakharchenko "personally assessed the apartment's layout and quality of renovation … and wished them health and happiness."

This unsubtle report is not a one-time thing. Ukrainian separatists are taking the media back to a Soviet-era standard as their breakaway statelets recycle old propaganda, resort to stereotypes and resuscitate the cult of Joseph Stalin.

Such broadcasts hold clues about Moscow's strategy in Donbass, a volatile region where Ukrainian government troops have been fighting Russian-backed separatists since 2014. State-sanctioned portrayals of militant rebel rulers as responsible civilian officials suggest the Kremlin wants these hard-line proxies to be in charge for some time.

As the forgotten conflict enters its fourth year, this does not bode well for peace.

"Russia wants to look as if it's a constructive player in negotiations but has not decisively shown which option it wants to take," says Donald Jensen, an expert on Russia and resident fellow at the Johns Hopkins University. "Messaging is key, and changes depending on circumstances."

By the 1980s, TV had become a key component of Soviet mass-media culture and today remains the main news source for Russians and Ukrainians. In 2014, when Moscow began installing new governing structures in Ukraine's rebel strongholds of Donetsk and Luhansk, local media operations were also overhauled.

Eastern Ukraine's war-racked landscape of coal mines, factories and steel mills is a Soviet time warp in which communist nostalgia and heavy industry have a bearing on the identity of many. The legacy of the former Soviet Union looms large in the collective subconscious.

So news here is staged to highlight the state's wisdom and generosity — as it was under Soviet control. Core political messages, reinforcing a narrative favorable to ruling elites, are worked out ahead of transmission.

Novorossiya TV, another separatist outlet, recently aired a documentary about the origins of the war. Replete with Soviet imagery and dogma, it pits the united, hard-working Slavic citizens of Russkiy Mir ("Russian World") against degenerate individualism and the imperialist West.

"Today, Donbass has become the flash point of the geopolitical dispute between the West and the East," the presenter says. "Our city is practically on the front line. We are being murdered so that Russian people … remain in the chains of consumer society."

Lambasting Western influences, the film splices McDonald's ads with Soviet military parades; footage of Wall Street with productive factory lines. Hackneyed, perhaps, but aimed at harnessing disenchantment in a region once held high by Soviet authorities, now war-damaged and economically stagnant. Although it refers to recent Hollywood movies and is promoted through social media, the message of the film is as old as the hammer and sickle.

Low-budget history programs are a mainstay of these separatist outlets. One presenter, Yakov Dzhugashvili, is Stalin's great-grandson. He venerates the late dictator and espouses his "duty to expose anti-Stalinist, anti-Soviet lies." Dzhugashvili mentions neither the Great Terror nor the gulags, instead hailing Stalin as "an example of those who serve others."

A local history buff hosts another slow-paced show, using model tanks and soldiers to demonstrate the World War II heroics of a unit known as Panfilov's 28 Guardsmen, whose story became a cherished Soviet legend — though one that was debunked by the publication of a secret memo in 2015.

These productions are lo-fi and indulge in questionable readings of history. But their message is potent: Your ancestors fought the fascists, you must continue that struggle today. They are, in a sense, weaponizing the past.

"Propaganda about fascists is a very effective trope and has had an effect on Russian public opinion," says Kristin Roth-Ey, a lecturer in Russian history at University College London who specializes in Soviet culture and media. "This is not mindless atavism — they know it works."

Likewise, limited content and frequent reruns echo the Soviet Union's restricted TV schedules. Such repetition creates "dominant symbols" that help construct — or exploit — a population's "cultural memory," says Kateryna Khinkulova, a specialist on the region's media.

The presentation of Ukraine's separatist leaders is far more "Soviet" than that of Russia's president, Vladimir Putin. Luhansk's ruler, Igor Plotnitsky, is regularly filmed presiding over his ministerial council, publicly berating them while flanked by his "people's republic" flag, with its sun rays, wheat sheaves and red star.

Russian television has its share of Putin scolding his aides, but he also projects a personality with which Russians can more easily associate.

"Putin himself is a form of entertainment, a consumable product," Roth-Ey says. "Think of pictures showing Putin bare-chested. Making [Leonid] Brezhnev or [Nikita] Khrushchev sex symbols would have been unthinkable in a Soviet context."

The Soviet Union was renowned for its sports parades and elaborate gymnastic displays. Socialist realism promoted heroic images of the human body — from the vitality of the Komsomol youth movement to the team spirit of athletes. Though smaller in scale, Donetsk separatists are drawn to similar ideals.

A news report in March featured a gathering of youngsters jogging through the city, urging sobriety and waving separatist and communist flags — a time-honored tactic of reinforcing patriotism with physical purity.

Back in vogue, too, is the shock worker — an uber-productive laborer of the Soviet Union. War has ravaged eastern Ukraine's economy, but separatist-controlled farms and industrial plants regularly trumpet their efficiency and ability to surpass quotas. If local news outlets are to be believed, rebel authorities are providing pensioners with thousands of tons of free coal and farming vast quantities of food — even to the extent of producing Donetsk mozzarella.

These stories are designed to boost morale by creating the illusions of self-sufficiency and resurgent industry. In reality, the breakaway east could not function without Moscow's support. (Russia has even pledged to supply this region with electricity after Kiev cut off power due to unpaid bills).

Nostalgia for Russia's lost era borders on self-caricature. In Donbass, it has become a "weird pastiche of historical memory," says Alexander Clarkson, a lecturer in European studies at King's College London. "The Putin media machine picks out bits of Soviet or czarist memory that it finds useful to its agenda at any one moment, then amplifies it using modern media techniques to overwhelm the audience.

#12
Warfare in a Post-Truth World: Lessons from Ukraine

by Yuri M. Zhukov
PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo 471, April 2017
http://bit.ly/2rJDP4s

[A paper-length version of this memo was presented at the Danyliw Seminar in November 2016, http://bit.ly/2ryXFRu. A video of Zhukov's Danyliw presentation can be accessed at http://bit.ly/2qUENtI --UKL]

Yuri M. Zhukov is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan.

The U.S. intelligence community's January 6 report about Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election highlighted the role of Russian media organizations in spreading fake news and amplifying leaked materials in an attempt to manipulate public opinion. While few Americans receive their news directly from Russian sources, it is hard to dispute that a major consequence is that U.S. journalists and policymakers now face the challenge of restoring public trust in the media. This would not be the first case of a society trying counter biased and false information in the press.

Ukraine has been engaged in full-fledged information warfare against Russian propaganda since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and vitalized rebellions in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's information war is not going very well. Rather than helping to establish

"ground truths," Ukraine's response to Russian propaganda has actually made truth more elusive, particularly with respect to the conflict in the Donbas. It has potentially made the conflict more difficult to resolve.

Harvard political scientist Matthew Baum and I performed a parallel analysis of thousands of incident reports from Ukrainian, Russian, rebel, and third party sources. We investigated the extent to which different sources suggested different patterns of strategic interaction between warring sides, and advanced different conclusions about the causes, location, and timing of violence.

We found that information warfare profoundly affects inferences about armed conflict, particularly about which actors are most responsible for violence. According to Ukrainian sources, rebels are more likely than the government to use force, kill civilians, and violate ceasefires. According to Russian and rebel sources, the opposite is true. Both Ukrainian and rebel sources report more violence than do outside, third-party sources such as the OSCE.

Each perspective has its own implications for how different actors behave in war, the sustainability of ceasefire agreements, the need for sanctions or third-party intervention, and whether intervention should be neutral or one-sided.

Before the Euromaidan movement swept President Viktor Yanukovych from power in February 2014, the Russian media had a heavy presence in Ukraine, particularly in Crimea and in the south-east. In contrast to Western media portrayals of the Euromaidan as a largely peaceful protest movement confronting riot police and hired thugs, the mainstream Russian media devoted coverage to nationalist militants storming the Ukrainian parliament and hurling Molotov cocktails. Both images were in a narrow sense true, but neither represented the complete picture. The Russian perspective on events generated impressions on those rallying in Crimea and in the south-east, who then condemned the Euromaidan movement as a "Western-backed coup" and "fascist junta."

Concerned about the Russian media's potential for mobilization, Ukraine's new authorities took a series of steps to counter it. In March 2014, before the first shots were fired in the east, Kyiv banned Russian federal broadcasters from Ukrainian television. Several months later, Kyiv banned some Russian films and television programs and placed travel bans on Russian journalists. In December 2014, Ukraine established the Ministry of Information Policy to protect Ukrainians from "unreliable information," register media outlets, and define professional journalism standards. To spread government-approved content in social media, the Ministry launched an "Information Army" of patriotic volunteers.

Ukrainian authorities also exerted direct pressure on some information providers. In September 2014, Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) raided the offices of the newspaper Vesti, accusing it of violating Ukraine's territorial integrity through its coverage of the Donbas conflict. In February 2015, Ukrainian authorities arrested a

blogger on charges of treason for posting a YouTube video criticizing the government's military mobilization campaign. The same month, Ukraine's Television and Radio Council accused popular television host Savik Shuster of violating the law on "incitement of hatred" after a Russian journalist criticized the government's military operations on his show. Multiple similar incidents ensued.

In the rebel-held territories of the Donbas, separatists moved to create a similar closed information environment. After seizing the Donetsk regional administration building in April 2014, one of their next steps was to take control of the television towers in the region. Their aim was to take Ukrainian channels off the air and broadcast Russian programs. Later that year, the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic established an official News Agency (DAN), while multiple privately-owned pro-rebel outlets emerged to fill the regional media vacuum. Wary of journalists from outside Russia and the region, rebels detained several reporters on suspicions of espionage, including an American journalist with Vice News.

In 2014, across Ukraine (including rebel areas) there were: 7 documented killings of journalists, 286 physical assaults, 78 abductions, multiple physical attacks on offices, and cyber attacks on websites, according to Freedom House. Predictably, these developments raised concerns over freedom of speech, including that an informational firewall between dueling and contradictory media narratives would only deepen existing divisions.

A Post-Truth Armed Conflict

How has Ukraine's information war affected public attitudes toward the conflict? Survey evidence suggests that very few Ukrainians outside of the Donbas see Russian state media as a reliable or truthful source, which may be evidence either of the success of Ukraine's counter-propaganda efforts or the ineffectiveness of Russia's. Residents of rebel-held areas appear to have a similarly skeptical view of Ukrainian media, particularly due to its unwillingness to report on civilians killed by pro-government troops—incidents which Kyiv routinely denies.

To take stock of reporting biases in the Ukrainian conflict, we collected data on 72,010 violent events, as reported by 17 information providers, between February 23, 2014, and May 2, 2016. Our sources included official newswires, television channels, Internet news sites, and blogs from Ukrainian, rebel, Russian, and external, third-party outlets. We also included the Russian-language edition of Wikipedia, and daily briefings from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. We used natural language processing and supervised machine learning to classify each event into a series of pre-defined categories, by event type, initiator, target, tactic, and casualties.

How do Russian and Ukrainian sources differ in their coverage of the Donbas conflict? To answer this question, we estimated the relative bias of each information provider in covering rebel versus government violence. We did so using methods developed by scholars of American electoral politics to estimate "house effects" (Jackman, 2005; Pickup

and Johnston, 2008) of individual survey firms (for example, which pollsters have a "pro-Trump" bias and which have a "pro-Clinton" bias).

Figure 1 shows these estimates, with event reports published by the OSCE as the reference category (vertical line at zero). Positive values indicate that a source is more likely to cover rebel than government violence, and negative values indicate greater relative coverage of government violence. Where the margin of error covers zero, relative levels of coverage were similar to reports by the OSCE.

[See Figure 1 in web version]

The data reveal large systematic differences in the armed actors who receive coverage in Ukrainian, rebel, Russian, and international sources. Overall, Ukrainian information providers (blue circles) devote more news coverage to rebel violence and less to government operations than any other group of sources. Four out of the five sources that systematically "over-report" rebel attacks are Ukrainian: the military blog Information Resistance (Sprotyv), and the television channels 112, Espreso, and Channel 5 (the latter is owned by President Petro Poroshenko).

Most sources that "over-report" government violence are based within Russia (red circles) or the self-proclaimed Peoples' Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk (DNR, LNR) (orange circles). DNR-based media outlets NewsFront and Donetsk News Agency (DAN), in particular, have the most acute actor-specific bias in the data, reporting almost exclusively on violence by the Ukrainian government.
Russian sources have the same general direction of bias as rebel sources, but with somewhat lower magnitude. With a single exception—the independent, opposition-oriented Dozhdtelevision channel, which is closer to the median Ukrainian source—Russian media report disproportionately on government violence. The only Ukrainian outlet with a comparable bias in the opposite direction is Interfax-Ukraine, a Russian-owned wire service. Between rebel and Ukrainian media, there is a much clearer separation—the "left-most" Ukrainian outlet is still to the right of the "right-most" rebel outlet.

A very different picture appears in third-party sources, like OSCE reports and Wikipedia. These sources are more "neutral," in the sense that they are unlikely to attribute violence to any armed group at all. The language in these reports tends to be more passive and non-specific ("shelling was reported near village X") than language in local media.
For the OSCE, this finding is consistent with anecdotal reports that—because it must maintain working relations with all sides—the monitoring organization is cautious about attributing violence to specific initiators. For Wikipedia (green circles), this pattern may reflect the crowd-sourced nature of the data: users flag entries as biased, remove offending information, and eventually reach a "neutral" compromise.

Not only have Ukrainian and rebel media reported disproportionately on violence by the "other" side, they report mainly on indiscriminate violence (e.g., artillery shelling,

rockets, heavy armor) by the "other" side. Ukrainian news coverage of rebel violence cites indiscriminate tactics 66 percent of the time, compared to 45 percent in rebel media. Coverage of government violence is a near-mirror image: 32 percent of the government violence reported by Ukrainian sources is indiscriminate, compared to 57 percent for rebel sources. Russian and international sources, again, fall somewhere in between.

Beyond simply making the opponent "look bad," these biases have implications for conflict resolution. We looked specifically at coverage of ceasefire violations after the Minsk I and Minsk II agreements, and ran a series of simulations to see which actor is most likely to break the peace, according to each set of sources. Unsurprisingly, the greatest disparity here was between Ukrainian and rebel sources. Ukrainian sources predicted that rebels are more than twice as likely to unilaterally violate the ceasefire as are government troops. Rebel sources predicted an even stronger pattern in the opposite direction, with government troops almost ten times more likely to unilaterally escalate than the rebels. According to Russian and outside sources (OSCE, Wikipedia), however, ceasefire violations should be relatively rare overall, and both sides are about equally likely to violate.

These predictions have divergent implications for conflict resolution. In the case of outside sources like the OSCE, a news consumer or policymaker may conclude that sanctions or intervention are not necessary to reduce violence. Here, violence diminishes organically over time, and neither side appears likely to unilaterally escalate—a situation in which a negotiated settlement may become self-sustaining. Local sources yield very different lessons: here, transgressions appear to be more common, and a negotiated settlement less likely to hold. For violence to decline, enforcement efforts and sanctions should target whichever side is more prone to unilaterally escalate. According to Ukrainian sources, this intervention should seek to restrain rebels; according to rebel sources, it should target the government.

Conclusion

The relative direction and magnitude of actor-specific reporting biases in Ukraine represent the exact opposite of what would be needed to quickly resolve the conflict. The net effect is that domestic audiences (in government-controlled vs. rebel-controlled territories) may become less interested in striking a bargain with the opposing side, reasoning that an actor inclined to use unilateral violence is unlikely to stick to the terms of a negotiated agreement. Meanwhile, outside audiences (in Russia vs. the West) may develop contradictory perceptions of how intractable the conflict is likely to be, whether sanctions or third-party enforcement is necessary to stop it, and whether that response should be impartial or directed at one side.

Reversing these biases is, of course, easier said than done. Absent attributions of responsibility for violence, leaders and activists interested in conflict resolution will need to better inform journalists about the details of specific incidents. Where attribution

exists, governments and NGOs will need to expand audiences' access to multiple sources of information.

As the United States adapts to a more polarized and uncertain media landscape in 2017, the main lesson of Ukraine's information war is that efforts to respond to propaganda through counter-propaganda are unlikely to bring us closer to the truth.

#13
The Arithmetic of Otherness

'Donbas' in Ukrainian Intellectual Discourse
by Andrii Portnov
Eurozine, 1 June 2017
http://bit.ly/2rewr2t

[The footnotes appear in the web version –UKL]

Western Ukrainian intellectuals' tendency to blame the Donbas for the war is based on a longstanding orientalization of the "Soviet" Other. Reminiscences about erstwhile cultural diversity sit awkwardly alongside hostility to the East.

The Maidan protests in 2013–2014, Russia's annexation of Crimea and the war in parts of the regions of Luhansk and Donetsk have become the litmus test for ideological preferences in Ukraine. Reactions to these events and the language used to describe them is seen as a marker of political affiliation. Emotional and ideological tensions have also been evident in academic publications: Ukrainian writers often select facts to suit their conclusions, sources of information are regularly quoted without verification, pronouncements on social media are not contextualized or questioned, descriptions of the dynamic socio-political situation are often static and rest on essentialized categories of "identity", and serious transnational and transregional comparisons are still a rarity.

The Maidan protests, together with the changes to national borders and the war that ensued, have revived many old stereotypes, including the images of "our people" and the "Other". The following analysis is centred on intellectual discourse rather than on public opinion or, for instance, attitudes towards "temporarily displaced persons" (the bureaucratic term for residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions who have relocated to other parts of Ukraine). The purpose is not to systematically study whether one stereotype or other matches social reality but to contextualize statements by intellectuals. I do not address the history of the war or the sociological or anthropological aspects of "the Donbas identity"; nor do I discuss the dynamics of Ukraine's national and linguistic self-identification post-Maidan.

L'viv–Donetsk: The two poles of Ukraine

The binary opposition 'L'viv-Donetsk', referring to two supposedly opposite poles of politics and culture, took hold in Ukrainian intellectual debates during the 1990s. In this pairing, L'viv usually represented 'Europeanness' and 'Ukrainianness' and Donetsk 'Sovietness' and 'pro-Russian sentiment'. This simplified antinomy was reinforced by the fact that post-Soviet L'viv was primarily a Ukrainian-speaking city, while post-Soviet Donetsk was primarily Russian-speaking. Voters' preferences became an additional (and by the 2000s – dominant) argument for the cities' 'distinctiveness'. For instance, in the second round of the presidential race in 2010, the 'Donetsk' contender Viktor Yanukovych got 8.6 per cent of votes in the L'viv region while in the Donetsk region the figure was over 90 per cent.

The first time that L'viv and Donetsk found themselves part of the same country was in 1939, as the result of Germany's and the Soviet Union's joint aggression against Poland, the act that signalled the start of World War II. Before the provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact were put into practice, L'viv (and, more broadly, eastern Galicia) was a part of Poland (1918–1939). Previously it had belonged to the Austrian Empire (1772–1918) and the Kingdom of Poland (1387–1772). Until the end of the eighteenth century, the territory of present-day, south-eastern Ukraine was a 'wild steppe' – a place where nomadic and settled civilizations met, the border region between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman and Russian Empires. In the second half of the nineteenth century, after it became a part of the Russian Empire, its coal and steel industry began to develop. At that time, most of the territories now referred to as 'Donbas', including settlements such as Yuzovka (today Donetsk), Luhansk and Mariupol, were a part of the huge Yekaterinoslav governorate. The Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as defined by their present-day administrative boundaries, are a product of the Soviet policies of the 1920s and 1930s. Meanwhile, one part of the Donetsk coal basin (deriving its name from the Donets River), the so-called 'western Donbas' with its centre in Pavlograd, remained part of the Dnipropetrovsk region (Yekaterinoslav was renamed Dnipropetrovsk in 1926, in honour of the Bolshevik Grigory Petrovsky). Beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing throughout the twentieth, the Donetsk coal basin attracted migrants of different ethnic and religious affiliations. In addition to Russians and Ukrainians, new settlers included Bulgarians, Jews, Tatars and Greeks, and the dominant Orthodox Church existed side by side with Jewish, Old Believer, Protestant and Muslim communities.

In the nineteenth century, the idea of *sobornist'* – the cultural and political unity of the 'Ukrainian lands' – united most supporters of the Ukrainian national movement in both the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The main criterion of the 'Ukrainianess' of the lands that were to form a future Ukraine (as an autonomous region or independent state) was a command of the Ukrainian language among peasants in a given area. Meanwhile, in both the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires, cities were mostly non-Ukrainian speaking – although Habsburg language policies were much more tolerant towards the Ukrainian language than the restrictive policies pursued in the Romanov

empire. Soviet nationality policies strengthened the presence of the Ukrainian language in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Odessa and Stalino (as Donetsk was called from 1924–1961), but did not enhance the language's status in the cities of eastern Ukraine. The Sovietization of L'viv included its 'Ukrainization', although within a very rigid Soviet ideological framework.

The Soviet Union split up in 1991 along the borders of its fifteen constituent republics. In the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions (as well as in Pavlograd – the Dnipropetrovsk region), miners organized massive strikes in the summer of 1989 (strikes also took place in Russia, in the Kuznetsk coal basin, or Kuzbass). Their initial economic demands quickly extended into the realm of politics. By spring 1991, before the August coup in Moscow and the Ukrainian independence referendum in December, the miners were demanding Gorbachev's resignation and the transfer of the ownership of the mines from Moscow to Kyiv. Within the first few years of Ukraine's independence, however, Kyiv clearly demonstrated its ineptitude at handling the region's complex socio-economic problems and at modernizing the coal industry. Post-Soviet privatization and gang warfare created a small ruling class in Donetsk and Luhansk – Ukraine's most urbanized and industrialized areas – that controlled the region's industry, shaped its political preferences and sought to take advantage of anti-Kyiv stereotypes and ideas about the special role of 'Donbas, which feeds all Ukraine'.

Where does 'eastern Ukraine' end?

In the geography of post-Soviet Ukraine, it is impossible to demarcate clearly between Ukrainian-speaking and Russophone areas, or between the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and Orthodoxy (the latter has three different churches in Ukraine, plus communities of Old Believers). And yet, intellectuals have contributed a great deal to the popularization of the image of 'two Ukraines' divided by language (Russian versus Ukrainian) and history ('Europe', which is to say Poland and Austria, versus Russia and the USSR). The 'two Ukraines', postmodern irony notwithstanding, figure in these texts as geographically demarcated and internally homogenous communities (which were often associated with specific electoral preferences). Moreover, one of the Ukraines ('eastern Ukraine') was described not only as different but also as worse, 'less European' and 'more Sovietized'.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many in Ukrainian intellectual circles believed it was necessary to 'de-Russify' Ukraine and expose the lies of Soviet propaganda – this would open the eyes and 'purify' the minds of the people of eastern Ukraine, who had been 'corrupted' by external influences. By the mid-1990s, however, it became obvious that the Russian language not only continued to be widely used, but also that it predominated in various spheres of Ukrainian public life, while political power continued to rest in the hands of the members of the same post-communist elite (many of them natives of the country's industrialized eastern regions).

In the reasoning of a number of influential writers and commentators, 'the East' was to blame for the failure of 'the Ukrainian dream'. The borders of this 'East' changed,

depending on the political situation. At the end of the 1990s, the novelist Yurii Andrukhovych, from Ivano-Frankivs'k, wrote that Kyiv 'belonged to the zone of influence of certain 'non-Ukrainian' mental and psychological currents'. After the Orange Revolution in 2004, when Kyiv showed its 'pro-Ukrainian and pro-European face', he said his attitude towards Ukraine's capital had changed.
For Andrukhovych, 'western Ukraine' was 'the last territory' where, thanks to the Habsburg Empire, the Ukrainian language and European architecture had survived.
In a book published nearly twenty years later, The Lexicon of Intimate Cities (2012), Andrukhovych admitted that he had been wrong on that point too: 'I should have fallen to my knees and begged the people of Dnipropetrovsk to pardon me for my thoughtless nonsense.' After the Maidan in 2013–2014 and the beginning of an armed conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Andrukhovych wrote that Dnipropetrovsk had become the border 'between Ukraine and non-Ukraine'. In other words, by 2014 one could think that 'eastern Ukraine' was limited to the war-torn 'Donbas'.

Ukraine minus Donbas = Europe?

The Maidan protests mobilized Ukrainian society. Yanukovych's attempts to stage an 'anti-Maidan' in Kyiv by bringing organized groups of people from Ukraine's eastern and southern regions to the capital prompted anger among the supporters of the 'Revolution of Dignity' and raised fears of a violent escalation (it is important to remember that until the end of 2013 the protests were peaceful). The emotional intensity of the moment was reflected in a 'Christmas column' by the L'viv-based historian Yaroslav Hrytsak, published at the end of 2013. The text was a satirical description of 'the Soviet-minded people' – people who were attached to Soviet TV shows, Russian salads (especially the so-called Olivier salad), horoscopes and, most importantly, never learned to sing carols, always believing only in things 'that were useful'. Writing at a moment when Ukraine was in turmoil, Hrytsak offered an emotional explanation of the role of culture and 'values' in the country's political development (key themes in Hrytsak's social commentary). Hrytsak's Christmas column was especially telling because he had been criticizing the discriminatory policies of 'two Ukraines' for many years.

In April 2014, when Ukraine was gradually losing its legitimate monopoly on violence in Luhansk and Donetsk, writer and Ivano-Frankivs'k native Taras Prohas'ko made the following statement:

"The people living in our remote eastern regions are very different people. The kind of people whom we zakhidnyaki(westerners) cannot understand, accept or, least of all, consider one of us. The sweet fairy tales about sobornist' (cultural and political unity) fall apart instantly when you meet these people in person. They have their own agenda. And they are not at all like us."

In May 2014, when the Anti-Terrorist Operation launched by the government in Kyiv was already underway, the L'viv journalist Ostap Drozdov used his Facebook page to comment on the first killings of Ukrainian soldiers:

"I have a feeling that other than Galicians nobody is dying for the Donbas. I have already said more than once that Donbas as a part of Ukraine is not worth a single death. Least of all a Galician's death... Skhidnyaki (people living in the east of Ukraine) should be on the front lines of the battle for eastern Ukraine."

In June 2014, amidst the political discussions about the necessity of building a defensive wall on the Russian border, another L'viv journalist, Volodymyr Pavliv, posted on Facebook:

"building a wall along the border is a good idea, but hardly a feasible one – there are moskali (a pejorative definition of the Russians – A.P.) on either side of the wall, so maybe we should waste no time and build the wall right at the Zbruch River (the river that separated the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires) so that we would not have to relocate it again later?"

Most of these public statements were made by Ukrainian intellectuals from eastern Galicia. They might be called 'Galician reductionism' – the idea that Ukraine can prosper only if it gets rid of the dead weight of the 'incurably Sovietized Donbas'. The term is not intended to imply that all people living in a given western Ukrainian region share the view that Ukraine should let some of its territories go. It simply points the fact that most commentators supporting this solution to the 'Donbas problem' live in Galicia. This is important because the very same writers are known for their nostalgic pronouncements about 'lost multiculturalism' and 'the golden age of the Habsburgs'. In other words, pretty phrases about erstwhile diversity have not reduced negative attitudes towards real diversity in the slightest, which was always perceived not as a cultural advantage but as a political threat.

The slogan 'Let's get rid of Donbas' was not invented in 2014. It seems more appropriate to talk about a new lease on life for ideas that emerged as early as 2010, when Viktor Yanukovych was elected president of Ukraine. Many believed then that it was Crimean and Donbas voters that brought Ukraine under the thumb of a corrupt and poorly educated former criminal. Shortly after Yanukovych came to power, the L'viv-based writer Yuriy Vynnychuk published a column in which he asked 'Why do we need such a big state?' He went on to claim that he would 'let go of Crimea and Donbas', confident that after this 'we are going to have an entirely democratic state'. In the summer of 2010, Yurii Andrukhovych also advocated 'giving Crimea and Donbas the opportunity to secede'. The population of these regions, who voted for Yanukovych en masse, was 'politically a part of the Russian nation', he wrote. As for the Ukrainian minority, 'it would be easier to offer them the opportunity to emigrate'.

Arguing for abandoning 'unnecessary' territories, rather than acquiring new ones, is fairly unusual in the history of nationalism. The logic can be described as frustration with the 'incorrect' political behaviour of 'the people of the Donbas', who are viewed as a collective. The offer of a 'civilized divorce from Crimea and the Donbas' was formulated as an abstract (and bloodless) realization of 'the right to self-determination', which was

intended, first of all, to rescue the remaining (and not so hopeless) part of Ukraine. And in the context of the war in 2014, deliberately or not, this puts the blame for the violence in regions of Donetsk and Luhansk on the local population rather than on the Russian invasion, mistakes by the Kyiv government, and the 'neutrality' of local elites. In this narrative, it was precisely the local population who if they did not invite, then 'failed to drive out the occupiers', and which is therefore fully responsible for the war and its consequences.

Intellectual descriptions of the loss of part of the Donbas rarely allude to a sense of pain. If anything, Ukrainian intellectuals have often betrayed relief that the country has got rid (at least partially) of an 'unnecessary' and 'un-Ukrainian' region. In September 2014, Yurii Andrukhovych said emphatically that:

"The only thing I know is that, even without Donbas, our goal – a free, humane, European country – can be reached only with great difficulty, and that if Donbas stays with us, this goal becomes simply unreachable – just forget it."

In November 2014, Ostap Drozdov shared his 'political arithmetic':
- Ukraine + Donbas = Donbas
- Ukraine – Galicia = Donbas
- Ukraine + Galicia = Europe
- Ukraine – Donbas = Ukraine
- Galicia + Donbas = war

In early 2015, the essayist who came up with the metaphor of 'two Ukraines', Mykola Riabchuk, confided that: 'I'll be honest – I like the new Ukraine, without Donbas and Crimea, much more... In principle, I'm not against Donbas being in Ukraine, but only provided that its people earn this right sometime in the future.' In late 2014, the L'viv philosopher Taras Voznyak argued that 'the Soviet society of the Donbas' had 'fallen out of the process of creating a new political community – the Ukrainian civic nation' and 'fallen into extreme Russian nationalism with elements of fascism'. This line of thinking was carried to its most extreme by Olexander Boichenko, an essayist from Chernivtsi, who wrote arrogantly about 'the residents of the Donbas' as 'oligophrenic people with no future'. Boichenko, adopting a Darwinist vocabulary, argued that 'the human subspecies *Homo Sovieticus* who live in Donbas' simply 'should disappear' if they are incapable of accepting the future and continue to cling desperately to the Soviet past.

All these pronouncements made by reputedly 'liberal' and 'European' writers conjure up a bleak image of a homogenous 'Soviet Donbas' that is static and utterly useless for the Ukrainian and European projects. According to this logic, the Donbas in Ukraine is an alien, aggressively hostile and anti-cultural element, which only weakens Ukraine and pulls it back into the 'Soviet past'.

On behalf of 'Donbas'

An important feature of Ukrainian intellectual discussions of the 1990s–2000s was the weakness (or even absence) of attempts to conceptualize the position of 'eastern Ukraine'. The subject of 'two Ukraines' was addressed either from a Galician or from a Kyivan perspective. The 'other side', so to say, appeared uncommunicative and unwilling to talk. The result was a weak interest in 'the East' on the part of intellectuals – a point raised by one of the most influential Ukrainian social commentators, Ivan Dziuba. A former dissident and a native of the Donetsk Region, Dziuba wrote that 'so-called national-democratic forces were partially to blame'.

Perhaps the sole exception to the general rule was the Ukrainian-language writer Serhii Zhadan, who was born in the region of Luhansk and lives in Kharkiv. Zhadan's poetry and prose (much of which is devoted to the Donbas) has gained wide recognition both in Ukraine and abroad. During the war, Zhadan wrote several commentaries in which he urged against blaming the population of the war-torn region for the results of Russian aggression or decisions made by Kyiv and local elites. For example, Zhadan wrote:

"So, it turns out that our virtue only extends to those who are in a majority. It does not apply to those who have found themselves in a minority. For the latter group, we reserve our arrogance and inattention, our anger and our fears."

Here, Zhadan identifies with the Ukrainian intellectual mainstream, speaking about a 'we' who are incapable of understanding those that have found themselves in a minority. Responding to Boichenko, who took Zhadan to task for his humanization of 'Homo Sovieticusdoomed to extinction', Zhadan wrote sarcastically:

"Sometimes I think it is good to have a kind heart and nerves of steel – to watch how Neanderthals are being killed by multiple rocket launchers, all the while talking about evolution, drawing historical parallels and putting forward geopolitical proposals, denying some people the right to continue to exist by your side in this nice, just world."

Zhadan's tone is fundamentally different from Boichenko's: he seeks reconciliation, appeals to humanist values and refuses to engage in historical-cultural discussions and definitions. Perhaps it was this, together with Zhadan's international recognition, that provoked heated reactions from some of his colleagues. In particular, the L'viv poet Viktor Neborak advised Zhadan, to become the minister of culture of the 'Donetsk People's Republic.

In the course of the war, the spotlight has been focused on writers, philosophers, historians and sociologists from Donetsk and Luhansk. These are intellectuals who write in Ukrainian and Russian and who were compelled to move to Kyiv, L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'k or Kryvyi Rih. They include the historian and sociologist Oksana Mikheeva, the journalists Serhii Harmash and Oleksiy Matsuka, the sociologist Ilya Kononov, the poet

Lubov Yakymchuk, and the social commentator Kateryna Yakovlenko, and have become 'the Ukrainian voice of Donbas'.

The historian and Russian-language writer Olena Styazhkina has become one of the most prominent figures in this group. In her writing and talks, she repeatedly criticizes the notion of 'Donetsk people' as a special cultural or political group, and asks people not to identify the region's population with 'separatists' and 'terrorists'. According to Styazhkina, in order to understand the logic of the actions of the majority of the people living in these war-torn areas, it is necessary to recall the experience of occupation – a situation where most people think only about their own survival, and not about 'guerrilla warfare' or 'unqualified support for the regime'.

The issue of the collective responsibility of the 'Donbas people' also haunts other writers who left the region as the war raged. Oleksandr Yeremenko, a philosopher from Luhansk, writes repeatedly in his reflective diary on the events in his native town about 'Luhansk residents' penchant for wait-and-see', and their 'excessive absorption in daily routines'. A resident of the town of Sverdlovsk, near Luhansk, Olena Stepova (Elena Stepnaya), who gained fame with her online posts, also talks about 'a town of taciturn consent', where people walk hurriedly along with their minds focused on their own problems and 'do not feel the coldness of war creeping in'.

An important recurring theme in the writings of people who stood up for Ukraine's territorial integrity in Donetsk and Luhansk and participated in local Maidan protests is 'the feeling of abandonment', the feeling that local pro-Ukrainian initiatives were supported neither by Kyiv nor by local elites. Despite the passivity of the majority of the region's residents, the fact that Ukraine did not provide assistance to those who fearlessly stood up for the nation in Donetsk and Luhansk becomes an important argument for showing that the war was not predetermined by a 'Donbas identity'.

In Ukraine one rarely comes across comparisons of the anti-Donbas rhetoric of the champions of 'a smaller and European Ukraine' and the anti-Galician rhetoric of the champions of the so-called Russian World. But a parallel reading of both types of text can reveal many interesting things. Petro Tolochko, director of the Institute of Archaeology at Ukraine's National Academy of Science in Kyiv, who is also known for his anti-Maidan views, wrote an essay arguing that it is necessary 'to abandon once and for all the chimerical dream of turning Ukraine into a Greater Galicia' and that Donbas rejects 'the national socialist values of Galicia'. According to Tolochko, in Ukraine 'the population has never crystallized into a single nation' and Russians and Ukrainians 'are essentially one ethnic group'. For him, the war in the Donbas is not just a 'civil' war – it is a war waged 'by Ukrainian nationalists of the Catholic faith against a population raised in Russian culture and with a Christian Orthodox identity'. This formula essentially identifies Ukrainian nationalism with the communion of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church with Catholicism (Tolochko argues that the 'western Ukrainian sub-ethnic group' came into being as a result of the Union of Brest in 1596).

Tolochko's concept mirrors the narrative of Ukraine's 'Europeanness' – while Tolochko argues that 'Europeanness' is evil rather than good, like his opponents he localizes this phenomenon geographically, describing it using the techniques of homogenization and othering. The only difference is the good thing is now 'Soviet-ness', which is identified with the 'Christian Orthodox faith'.

In Tolochko's pejorative description of the 'West', emphasis is placed on criticism of homosexuality. According to him, this links Ukraine to 'the West's withering liberal societies, many of whose value orientations are not only incompatible with common sense but are also obviously contrary to Divine Providence'. On this, Tolochko finds himself in complete agreement with the former leader of the Ukrainian nationalist Right Sector, Dmytro Yarosh, whom he unconditionally condemns in his writing. According to Yarosh:

To a large degree, the propaganda of homosexuality and gender ideology is supported by the West ... Now let's stop and think whether Ukraine needs this sort of eurointegration, when someone forces their will upon us? Slavish worship of a colossus with feet of clay – the European Union – will not do us any good.

The identical attitudes towards homosexuality and the essentialization of the 'West' expressed by Tolochko and Yarosh are the area where two seemingly antithetical narratives overlap.

The nationalism of abandonment and the fear of complexity

In post-Soviet Ukrainian intellectual debates, the idea that the country is 'too big' and that it is burdened by the Soviet experience, which is disproportionately distributed among its regions, has proved to be very much in vogue (in both times of peace and times of war). In the minds of many intellectuals, the ideal of national homogeneity as the necessary precondition for successful state building and efficient post-communist transformation has become an undisguised yearning for homogeneity. A particular irony is lent to this yearning by the fact that it is expressed by the same writers who owe their literary fame to nostalgic depictions of 'the lost multiculturalism' of Austro-Hungary and are reputed to be 'postmodernists'.

Describing the fear of modern complexities, they often apply a categorical label such as 'identity' – a static set of characteristics determined once and for all, unchangeable even through (correctional) education. Attributing a set of essentialized characteristics to the entire population of a certain region (regardless whether it is 'Donbas' or 'Galicia') can be called an internal orientalization – a strategy for creating the Other (benighted and dangerous at the same time) out of part of the territory and population of one's own country. Both models of internal orientalization (anti-Donetsk and anti-Galician) rest on identical ideological postulates and intellectual pre-conditions: fear of diversity, failure to recognize that social phenomena can be dynamic and variable, and a rigid notion of 'norms' and 'deviations'.

The Ukrainian debate about the 'otherness' of 'the Donbas' not only has a local dimension, but also a more general significance, touching as it does on key issues of contemporary politics: How much heterogeneity can a democratic system sustain? What is the relationship between intellectual, media and political discourse? How do the categories of citizenship and ethnicity, political loyalty and religious and linguistic belonging relate in the modern world?

#14
New Book

The Crimean Nexus
Putin's War and the Clash of Civilizations
Constantine Pleshakov
Yale University Press
ISBN: 9780300214888
http://bit.ly/2sQBrbP

How the West sleepwalked into another Cold War

A native of Yalta, Constantine Pleshakov is intimately familiar with Crimea's ethnic tensions and complex political history. Now, he offers a much-needed look at one of the most urgent flash points in current international relations: the first occupation and annexation of one European nation's territory by another since World War II.

Pleshakov illustrates how the proxy war unfolding in Ukraine is a clash of incompatible world views. To the U.S. and Europe, Ukraine is a country struggling for self-determination in the face of Russia's imperial nostalgia. To Russia, Ukraine is a "sister nation," where NATO expansionism threatens its own borders. In Crimea itself, the native Tatars are Muslims who are vehemently opposed to Russian rule. Engagingly written and bracingly nonpartisan, Pleshakov's book explains the missteps made on all sides to provide a clear, even-handed account of a major international crisis.

A former foreign policy analyst at the Institute of U.S. and Canada Studies in Moscow, Constantine Pleshakov emigrated to America in 1998. In 2012, The Princeton Review named him one of the 300 best college professors in the U.S. He lives in Amherst, MA.

#15
New Book

The Kremlin Strikes Back
Russia and the West after Crimea's Annexation
Cambridge University Press
Paperback
ISBN 9781107572959
http://bit.ly/2s28m0A

America and Europe responded to Russia's annexation of Crimea on March 18, 2014 by discarding their policy of East-West partnership and reverting intermittently to a policy of cold war. The West believes that this on-again/off-again second Cold War will end with Russia's capitulation because it is not a sufficiently great power, while the Kremlin's view is just the opposite; Vladimir Putin believes that if Moscow has strategic patience, Russia can recover some of the geostrategic losses that it incurred when the Soviet Union collapsed. The Kremlin Strikes Back scrutinizes the economic prospects of both sides, including factors like military industrial prowess, warfighting capabilities, and national resolve, addressing particularly hot-button issues such as increasing military spending, decreasing domestic spending, and other policies. Stephen Rosefielde aims to objectively gauge future prospects and the wisdom of employing various strategies to address Russian developments.

UKL 482, 6 June 2017

Dominique Arel, Chair of Ukrainian Studies
University of Ottawa
559 King Edward Ave.
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5
CANADA
tel 613 562 5800 ext. 3692
fax 613 562 5351