



# The Ukraine List #501

The Ukraine List (UKL) #501  
compiled by Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca)  
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, U of Ottawa  
www.chairukr.com  
www.danyliwseminar.com  
23 October 2019

- 1- Call for Proposals: ASN 2020 Convention (6 November 2019 Deadline)
- 2- Danyliw 2019 Seminar Program (7-9 November, uOttawa)
- 3- Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine, uOttawa (1 February 2020 Deadline)
  
- 4- Euronews: What is the “Steinmeier Formula” and Will It Lead to Peace ?
- 5- Foreign Policy: Zelensky Flounders in Bid to End Ukraine’s War
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- 7- Kyiv Post: Ukraine Could Have Won in Donbas, but Now is Doomed to Unjust Peace
- 8- War on the Rocks: Marten/Oliker, The Threat of Ukrainian Volunteer Battalions
  
- 9- Der Spiegel: Oleg Sentsov on Being a Political Prisoner in Russia (Interview)
- 10- Human Rights in Ukraine: DNR/LNR Remove Ukrainian/Ukraine from Schools
- 11- Financial Times: Havrylyshyn/Hartwell, Ukraine and the Two Myths of Reform
- 12- Hollywood Reporter: Review of Sergei Loznitsa’s The Funeral
  
- 13- Svitlana Krysz: Latest Issue of East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies
- 14- MA program in European and Russian Affairs, CERES, U of Toronto

#1

**\*\*The ASN 2019 Convention had 21 Ukraine panels, 4 new books on Ukraine, and altogether 52 papers on Ukraine –DA\*\***

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Call for Papers

25th Annual World Convention of the  
Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN)

International Affairs Building,  
Columbia University, NY  
Sponsored by the Harriman Institute  
7-9 May 2020  
<https://www.asnconvention.com/proposal-information>

\*\*\*Proposal deadline: 6 November 2019\*\*\*

Proposals must be submitted to:  
[darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca) and [darelasn2020@gmail.com](mailto:darelasn2020@gmail.com)

Over 150 Panels/Events in 11 Sections

Nationalism Studies  
Migration/Diasporas  
Balkans  
Central Europe  
Ukraine  
Russia  
Caucasus  
Eurasia (Central Asia and China)  
Turkey (and Greece)  
Book Panels  
World Documentary Films

Thematic Sections

Populism, Radicalism, Extremism  
The Refugee Crisis  
Historical and Political Memory  
Political Violence  
The Russia/Ukraine Conflict

## ASN Awards

Best Doctoral Papers  
Best World Documentary Film  
Best Book on Nationalism  
Best Article in Nationalities Papers  
Best Field Work Photos

The ASN World Convention, which annually brings 750+ scholars from 50+ countries to Columbia University, welcomes proposals on a wide range of topics related to nationalism, national identity, ethnicity, race, conflict and migration in regional sections of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe or cross-regional sections on nationalism and migration/diasporas.

In addition to the thematic sections on populism/radicalism, refugees, memory, violence and the Russia/Ukraine conflict, popular themes over the years have included gender, language, religion, EU integration/exit, security, nation-building, energy politics, parties and elections, youth, media, and civil society.

Disciplines represented include political science, history, anthropology, sociology, international studies, security studies, area studies, economics, geography, literature, and other fields of humanities and social sciences.

Prospective applicants can get a sense of the large thematic scope of ASN Convention papers and presentations by looking at the 2019 Final Program.

The ASN scholarly journal Nationalities Papers is now published by Cambridge University Press. The ASN 2020 Convention Opening Reception will celebrate this new partnership between ASN and Cambridge University Press.

## Proposal Forms

Paper Proposal  
Panel Proposal  
Roundtable Proposal  
Documentary Film Proposal  
Book Panel Proposal  
Discussant Proposal

To submit a proposal, download the relevant form above, send it to [darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca) AND [darelasn2020@gmail.com](mailto:darelasn2020@gmail.com) and fill out a Fact Sheet online.

Applicants can be considered for only one paper (included either in a paper proposal or a panel proposal) and appear in a maximum of two proposals (paper, panel or roundtable).

An exception is made for book panels or films, although applicants can only be on one book panel proposal.

Applicants whose proposals is accepted are responsible for covering all travel and accommodation costs. *ASN has no funding available for panelists.*

The receipt of all proposals will be acknowledged electronically, with some delay during deadline week, due to the high volume of proposals.

An international Program Committee is entrusted with the selection of proposals. Most applicants will be notified between January and February 2020.

Practical information on the Convention, including registration costs, will be communicated in January 2020.

Publishers and companies wishing to exhibit at the Convention or advertise in the Convention printed program can contact ASN Executive Director Ryan Kreider at [rk2780@columbia.edu](mailto:rk2780@columbia.edu).

For practical questions on the Convention, please contact ASN Executive Director Ryan Kreider at [rk2780@columbia.edu](mailto:rk2780@columbia.edu).

The ASN website is at <http://nationalities.org>

The ASN Convention website is at <http://asnconvention.com>

To follow us on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/Nationalities>

To follow us on Twitter, go to [@asn\\_org](https://twitter.com/asn_org)

We very much look forward to receiving your proposal!

Dominique Arel, ASN Convention Director

Agathe Dudzinski, ASN Convention Assistant Director

Lisa Koriouchkina, ASN Communications Director

Ceren Belge, Evgeny Finkel, Tamara Pavasović Trošt, Program Committee Associate Directors

On behalf of the ASN Convention Program Committee

*Deadline for proposals: 6 November 2019 (to be sent to both [darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca) AND [darelasn2020@gmail.com](mailto:darelasn2020@gmail.com) in a single attachment).*

#2

## 15th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine

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Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada

Desmarais Hall 12102

7-9 November 2019

<https://www.danyliwseminar.com/program-2019>

### Thursday 7 November

The Holocaust in Ukraine: Perpetration and Rescue

9.00-10.30 AM

Moderators: Daria Mattingly (U of Cambridge, UK, dm628@cam.ac.uk) and Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

Marta Havryshko (Krypiakevych Institute, Ukraine, havryshko@gmail.com)

*Local Perpetrators of Sexual Assaults against Jewish Women during the Holocaust in Ukraine*

Raisa Ostapenko (Sorbonne U, France, raisa.s.ostapenko@gmail.com)

*To Risk One's Life for Another: The Moral Psychology behind Rescuing Jews during the Holocaust in Occupied Ukraine*

Coffee Break

Civil Society during the Crimean Annexation and the Donbas War

11.00 AM-12.30 PM

Moderator: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris Nanterre, France, ioulia.shukan@gmail.com)

Discussant: Natalia Stepaniuk (U of Ottawa, Canada, natalia.stepaniuk@gmail.com)

Elmira Muratova (Taurida National U, Crimea, Ukraine, murelmira@gmail.com)

*Gender in Crisis: Women and "Crimean Solidarity" during the 2014 Annexation*

Olena Andriushchenko (Open TV, Dnipro, Ukraine, anlena05@gmail.com)

Nick Kupensky (US Air Force Academy, nick.kupensky@gmail.com)

*The Outpost of Ukraine: The Role of Dnipro in the War in Donbas*

12.30-1.30 PM

Lunch Break

## New Methods in the Study of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

1.30-3.15 PM

Moderators: Oxana Shevel (Tufts U, US, [oxana.shevel@tufts.edu](mailto:oxana.shevel@tufts.edu)) and Dominique Arel (U of Ottawa, Canada, [darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca))

Jakob Hauter (U College London, UK, [jakob.hauter@bath.edu](mailto:jakob.hauter@bath.edu))

*How the War Began: Process Tracing, Open Source Intelligence Analysis and Conflict Escalation in the Donbas*

Khrystyna Holynska (Kyiv School of Economics, Ukraine, [cholynska@kse.org.ua](mailto:cholynska@kse.org.ua)) and Stephan de Spiegeleire (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, Netherlands, [sdspieg@gmail.com](mailto:sdspieg@gmail.com))

*The RuBase Project: A New Tool to Study Russia's Coercion towards Ukraine*

Coffee Break

3.45-4.30 PM

The Facts of Life in Donbas

Moderator: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris Nanterre, France, [ioulia.shukan@gmail.com](mailto:ioulia.shukan@gmail.com))

Oksana Mikheieva (Ukrainian Catholic U, Ukraine, [mikheieva@ucu.edu.ua](mailto:mikheieva@ucu.edu.ua))

*The Impact of the Non-Recognition by Ukraine of Civil Documents in the Donbas Uncontrolled Territories*

4.30-5.30 PM

Ukrainian Studies in North America, 1960s-1980s:  
A Conversation with Paul Robert Magosci

Moderator: Dominique Arel (U of Ottawa, Canada, [darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca))

Paul Robert Magosci (U of Toronto, Canada)

*Author of On Becoming a Ukrainianist*

Short Break

5.45-7.00 PM

The Danyliw Foundation and the Danyliw Seminar (2005-2019)

*A conversation on the origins of the Foundation and the evolution of the Danyliw Seminar in the past 15 years*

Moderator: Dominique Arel

Participants: Mayhill Fowler, Daria Mattingly, Oxana Shevel, Ioulia Shukan

Guest: Andrew Danyliw (Director, Danyliw Foundation, Toronto)

## **Friday 8 November**

New Archival Evidence on Mass Violence in Ukrainian History

9.00-9.45 AM

Moderator: Daria Mattingly (U of Cambridge, UK, dm628@cam.ac.uk)

Artem Kharchenko (Center for Interethnic Relations, Ukraine, 81archil9@gmail.com)

*Educators and Inmates: Orphanages in Soviet Ukraine during the Holodomor*

9.45-10.30 AM

Moderator: Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

Andriy Kohut (Director, SBU State Archive, Ukraine, andriy@kohut.in.ua)

*Operation “Zapad” (“West”): The Forcible Deportations of Ukrainians as an Instrument of Soviet Counterinsurgency*

Coffee Break

Researching the Holodomor:

A Conversation with Anne Applebaum

11.00 AM-12.30 PM

Moderators: Daria Mattingly (U of Cambridge, UK, dm628@cam.ac.uk) and Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

Anne Applebaum (LSE, UK/Washington Post)

*Author of Red Famine—Stalin’s War on Ukraine*

Lunch

Chronicling Maidan and the Donbas War:

A Conversation with Mychailo Wynnyckyj

1.30-3.00 PM

Moderators: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris Nanterre, France, ioulia.shukan@gmail.com) and Dominique Arel (U of Ottawa, Canada, darel@uottawa.ca)

Mychailo Wynnyckyj (U Kyiv Mohyla Academy, mychailo@ukma.edu.ua)  
Author of *Ukraine's Maidan, Russia's War: A Chronicle and Analysis of the Revolution of Dignity*

Coffee Break

Historical Memory in Eastern Ukraine since Maidan

3.30-5.00 PM

Moderator: Oxana Shevel (Tufts U, US, oxana.shevel@tufts.edu)

Ursula Wooley (U College London, UK, ursula.woolley.16@ucl.ac.uk)  
*Dnipro(petrovs'k): Discourses of Public History and Historical Politics (2012-2019)*

Iuliia Skubytska (Internews Ukraine, iuliiask@sas.upenn.edu)  
*Defending the Right to Remember: Eastern Ukrainians and the Politics of De-Communization*

## **Saturday 9 November**

History and Culture in Soviet Ukraine

9.00-9.45 AM

Moderator: Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

Nataliia Otrishchenko (Center for Urban History, Ukraine, n.otrishchenko@lvivcenter.org)  
*Architects and the Visions of Urban Development in Late Soviet Lviv*

9.45-10.30 AM

Moderator: Daria Mattingly (U of Cambridge, UK, dm628@cam.ac.uk)

Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)  
*Soviet Ghosts: The Former Theater of the Soviet Army in Lviv and Post-Socialism as a Crisis of Infrastructure*

Coffee Break



11.00 AM-12.30 PM

The Cold War and the Ukrainian Diaspora

Moderators: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris Nanterre, France, [ioulia.shukan@gmail.com](mailto:ioulia.shukan@gmail.com)) and Oxana Shevel Tufts U, US, [oxana.shevel@tufts.edu](mailto:oxana.shevel@tufts.edu))

Markian Dobczansky (Columbia U, US, [markian.dobczansky@gmail.com](mailto:markian.dobczansky@gmail.com))  
*Cold War and the Fate of Ukrainian Culture*

Simone Bellezza (U of Naples, Italy, [sabellezza@gmail.com](mailto:sabellezza@gmail.com))  
*The Formation of a Transnational Diasporic Belonging in the Ukrainian Emigration*

Lunch

Societal Change

1.30-2.15 PM

Moderator: Dominique Arel (U of Ottawa, Canada, [darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca))

Anna Vozna (U of British Columbia, Canada, [annavozna@email.arizona.edu](mailto:annavozna@email.arizona.edu))  
*Reasons for Success and Failure of the Revitalization of Ukrainian in Eastern Ukraine*

2.15-3.00 PM

Moderator: Oxana Shevel (Tufts U, US, [oxana.shevel@tufts.edu](mailto:oxana.shevel@tufts.edu))

Discussant: Oleh Havrylyshyn (Carleton U, Canada, [olehhavrylyshyn@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:olehhavrylyshyn@cunet.carleton.ca))

Oksana Huss (Leiden U, Netherlands, [oksanahuss@gmail.com](mailto:oksanahuss@gmail.com))  
*Civil Society against Corruption in Ukraine*

#3

## Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine

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Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa  
Application Deadline: 1 February 2020 (International & Canadian Students)  
<https://www.chairukr.com/kule-doctoral-scholarships>

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 \$25,000, 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 Philanthropy: 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 2020** 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 2020-2021 are invited to contact Dominique Arel ([darel@uottawa.ca](mailto:darel@uottawa.ca)), Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, and visit our web site [www.chairukr.com](http://www.chairukr.com).

## #4

### What is the “Steinmeier Formula” and Will It Lead to Peace in Eastern Ukraine?

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by Emma Beswick

Euronews, 19 September 2019

<https://bit.ly/2m8qHXS>

The “Steinmeier Formula” is little spoken about yet it has been touted by some as a possible route to armistice in eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists have fought with Ukrainian forces.

It is a peace plan of sorts, proposed by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier back in 2016 when he was foreign minister. But what does it consist of and where do Russia and Ukraine stand on its implementation?

What exactly is the “Steinmeier Formula”?

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has left around 13,000 people dead, a quarter of them civilians, according to the UN, and wounded up to 30,000.

In September 2014 — and again in February 2015 — Ukraine and Russia, along with France and Germany, signed off on the so-called Minsk agreement, a plan to establish peace.

Painting the two key actions the agreement encompasses with a broad brush, they amount to holding local elections and returning pro-Russian separatist regions to Ukraine’s control.

However, there was no clear indication of the order in which steps should be taken.

What is Russia’s position?

“In its most Moscow-friendly interpretation, the formula holds elections would take place (in eastern Ukraine) with the current security environment still in place,” Dickinson said. “Essentially with the separatist/Russian forces still in charge.”

This could legitimise Russian proxies or appointees by seeing them elected, he added. Moscow would like to see the status quo confirmed in this way, to ensure it has influence in the area to stop Western integration and it could then stage a “theatrical retreat”, Dickinson explained.

How do Ukrainians feel about the formula?

“Ukraine seems to be hedging its bets somewhat,” Dickinson said.

While foreign minister Vadym Prystaiko said on Wednesday Kyiv had “already agreed” to the “Steinmeier Formula”, the country also held a working group this week which laid out conditions surrounding the roadmap and refused to sign a “blank cheque”.

When it was first voiced in 2015, the Steinmeier Formula was rejected, so there is a feeling that accepting it now would be a concession, he explained.

There is a lot of uncertainty among the public about what the government has agreed to and it will have to be careful not to appear to offer too many concessions. “Any attempt to legitimise the Russian forces in eastern Ukraine and local representatives appointed by the Russians would be a red line in Ukrainian public opinion,” he said.

But the country is “war-weary” and new President Volodymyr Zelensky has huge momentum, enjoying unprecedented popularity, and wants to deliver peace.

There is also the fear, however, that Zelensky is an unknown quantity and political novice who is going up against Putin, Dickinson added.

What next?

The meeting to firm up the formula between the Normandy Four — leaders of France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia — was set to take place on September 17.

But it didn't go ahead.

Tasked with finding a solution to the conflict, their last meeting was in 2016.

There is talk of the meeting being pushed to the end of September or early October, according to Dickinson.

Russia has said it will not attend a summit unless they have guarantees of progress — essentially they want an agreement to be ready to sign, he added.

While there is a fear in Ukraine that the three other actors will force the country's hand to resolve the conflict, it is "tired" of war, said Dickinson.

It remains to be seen how far Zelensky is willing to go in compromising to remedy the situation in the East.

## #5

### Zelensky Flounders in Bid to End Ukraine's War

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by Justin Lynch

Foreign Policy, 11 October 2019

<https://bit.ly/2N85Bmo>

Cast as an unwilling character in Washington's impeachment drama, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is facing his own political crisis over a compromise deal to end Ukraine's war with Russia. And he may be losing.

The Ukrainian comic-turned-president announced on Oct. 1 that he had signed the Steinmeier Formula, a road map to ending the war with Russian-backed separatists in the eastern part of his country. The process, which is overseen by Germany and France, calls for local elections in occupied parts of the Donbass region and its recognition as a special autonomous region.

Yet Zelensky faced an immediate backlash at home after agreeing to the scheme, and he does not yet have the political support to implement the plan, casting doubt on its future.

Thousands of people took to the cobblestone streets of Kyiv and chanted “No to capitulation” following the deal’s announcement, arguing that the formula violates Ukraine’s sovereignty. Giving the occupied Donbass region an autonomous status would require changing Ukraine’s constitution, and Zelensky’s Servant of the People party lacks a supermajority in parliament to make that happen. Opposition parties reject the formula.

“Autonomy is not something that we would support,” said Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, an opposition official in parliament and former deputy prime minister. She told Foreign Policy that opposition parties would be willing to discuss other security arrangements, like the “withdrawal of Russian forces, Ukraine getting control over the border, or international peacekeeping operations from Europe or the U.N.”

Without the support of opposition parties, Zelensky held a marathon 12-hour press conference on Thursday—which Ukraine’s National Records Agency declared the longest on record—and tried to gain support for the formula. Zelensky said he was afraid the conflict in the Donbass would become “frozen” and said if Russia did not want to negotiate “there will be no deal.” A person briefed on Zelensky’s thinking told Foreign Policy that he signed the Steinmeier Formula— named for a 2016 proposal by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who was serving as foreign minister at the time—in as a political concession to France and Germany. A spokeswoman for Zelensky did not respond to questions.

Similar to the origins of the 2014 invasion of eastern Ukraine, in which Russia initially denied involvement, both Moscow and Kyiv have presented different interpretations of the Steinmeier Formula, which does not have an official text that both sides can refer to. Zelensky said that elections in the Donbass would take place only after Russian troops withdraw from their positions in the occupied territories. Few comments have come from the Kremlin, but the flagship program on Russia-1 state television, Vesti, reported that Kyiv agreed to withdraw its troops from the front lines, and the Kremlin has already accused Zelensky’s government of setting new conditions.

“The agreement is certainly ambitious and it’s certainly ambiguous with a purpose,” John Herbst, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, told Foreign Policy. “Is that because Zelensky wants to manage the domestic side as he makes a concession or because he wants to show some flexibility to the French and the Germans while conceding nothing?”

Western diplomats and military officials believe that some variation of the Steinmeier Formula is the only long-term solution to ending the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Implementing the formula will next require a meeting of the so-called Normandy Four—Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France. But diplomats and experts told Foreign Policy they believed Russia did not want the Normandy meeting to occur.

“The pressure is on Russia and that is why a delay is taking place. In my opinion Russia is feeling uncomfortable at the moment. Moscow is in a situation where they have to react to

Ukraine,” Kaimo Kuusk, Estonia’s ambassador to Ukraine, told Foreign Policy. Kuusk said that the next step in the process is the Normandy meeting followed by Russia agreeing to disarm its separatists. “Nothing is clear, because this is the first step.”

Other observers take an opposite view, saying it’s Zelensky, not Russian President Vladimir Putin, who’s in the uncomfortable position. “The pressure of this formula is all on Ukraine and Zelensky and not on Putin, and that is the reverse of where it needs to be,” Michael Carpenter, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense covering Russia and Ukraine, told Foreign Policy. “Merkel and Macron have said that Ukraine needs to make concessions to help Putin find an offramp, which is ridiculous because it is Russia that has troops in Ukraine.”

It’s difficult to assess which interpretation is correct, as there is no public document that lays out the agreement, meaning that all sides can present their own interpretations.

Further confusing the picture is that there may be differences in the positions of the United States and European nations regarding elections in the Donbass. U.S. officials have pushed for the reinstatement of Ukrainian control of its international border, a sentiment that has not been publicly expressed by Germany or France, according to a source familiar with the diplomats’ positions. A spokesperson for the U.S. State Department directed Foreign Policy to a previous statement expressing cautious support for the formula. Both Obama and Trump administration officials have grown frustrated with the European Union’s unwillingness to take a tougher stance on Russia’s annexation of parts of Ukraine. “We do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time. Much more than the European countries are doing, and they should be helping you more than they are,” U.S. President Donald Trump told Zelensky in a now-infamous July 25 phone call, during which Trump also asked Zelensky to open investigations into former Vice President Joe Biden, a political rival, according to a summary released by the White House.

The bid to end the war in eastern Ukraine comes amid a swirl of other deals among the four nations involved in the Steinmeier Formula. German and European officials are in the final stages of constructing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which will provide a new route for natural gas from Russia and bypass Ukraine. Kyiv would lose some \$3 billion in gas transit fees. It means that if Zelensky agreed to the Steinmeier Formula, it may be a cold-blooded calculation to gain European support in upcoming natural gas negotiations.

From Moscow, experts believe that Putin is reveling in the political and military chaos across his border. “Putin’s goal is to destabilize democracies in the region in order to shore up support for his kleptocratic regime,” Carpenter told Foreign Policy. But he said that increasing U.S. pressure on Putin in the form of broader financial sanctions was necessary: “Absent any significant U.S. leverage over Moscow, I don’t think we can end the war in the Donbass. I think we are miles away from that right now.”

Russian-backed separatists began their takeover of eastern Ukraine in early 2014, and some 13,000 people have died. The front lines have not generally moved for the past two years, Ukrainian soldiers told Foreign Policy in a visit early this year to the no man's land between both sides.

## #6

### Most People in Separatist-Held Areas of Donbas Prefer Reintegration with Ukraine – New Survey

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by Gwendolyn Sasse  
The Conversation, 14 October 2019  
<https://bit.ly/2JaQ83S>

With renewed negotiations to end the conflict in Ukraine's Donbas region on the horizon, the views of those people most affected by the war – the residents of eastern Ukraine – should be taken into account. Russia insists that the people living in areas of the Donbas currently controlled by separatists, who it supports, do not want to reintegrate with Ukraine.

But two surveys I carried out in the Donbas in 2016 and 2019, revealed that a majority of those we surveyed in areas not controlled by the government would prefer to be part of the Ukrainian state.

The war in the Donbas started more than five years ago and has cost in excess of 13,000 lives. At least 1.4m Donbas residents have been internally displaced, and at least 75,000 have fled to Russia.

Ukraine's newly elected president Volodymyr Zelenskiy put ending the war at the centre of his election campaign, alongside fighting corruption. His rhetoric has remained consistent, treating the inhabitants of the areas not currently controlled by Kyiv – the self-declared people's republics of Donetsk and Luhansk (DNR/LNR) – as fully-fledged Ukrainian citizens and emphasising their reintegration into the Ukrainian state.

In early October, Zelenskiy made an explicit commitment to what's called the "Steinmeier formula", proposed in 2016 by the then German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. His idea envisaged the sequencing of local elections in the separatist-held Donbas which, if deemed acceptable by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, would clear the way towards a permanent special status of the fought-over territories.

While uncertainties remain surrounding the precise gist of Zelenskiy's commitment, and there have been some early stumbling blocks, it has made the first meeting in three years of the Normandy group, involving the heads of state of Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France, a realistic prospect.



## What the people want

The attitudes and preferences of people living through war remain poorly understood in the comparative study of war. Empirical evidence collected during war remains scarce. At the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), I conducted two surveys in the two parts of the Donbas in December 2016 and March 2019. Both times, 1,200 face-to-face interviews were conducted in the government-controlled Donbas, split evenly between Donetsk and Luhansk administrative areas, called oblasts. We also conducted 1,200 telephone interviews in areas of the Donbas held by separatists supported by Russia.

Between 2016 and 2019, the size of territory in Donbas controlled by the Ukrainian government and the separatists has remained roughly the same.

The face-to-face interviews were based on a quota sample, with age, gender and level of education quotas taken from Ukraine's last available official statistics. In the absence of equivalent information, the same quotas were applied in the separatist-held Donbas territories. Due to concerns related to access, security and ethics, the interviews in the separatist-held Donbas were conducted by telephone. As the results don't capture the same people over time, statistical tests are applied to control for the differences between the two samples.

Preferences about the future status of the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics remained stable in the government-controlled Donbas. Across both 2016 and 2019, around 65% of the respondents wanted to see these areas reintegrated into Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts without any kind of special status.

In the separatist-held areas of the Donbas, about 55% of the respondents expressed a preference for being part of the Ukrainian state. This is very significant for the next round of the negotiations as this wish for reintegration is an important corrective to Russia's official rhetoric and public perceptions in the West.

[See web link for first table]

Of the overall majority in favour of staying within Ukraine, roughly a third of the respondents in both years voiced a preference for an autonomy status within Ukraine. Meanwhile, about 21% of the respondents in 2016 said that the territories should return to Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts without any special status. In 2019, 24% chose this option. Though small in absolute numbers, this is a statistically significant change that indicates that the idea of returning to the pre-war status has gained in popularity.

### Identities in flux

Our results also demonstrate how identities remain in flux during war. Identity change is hard to trace empirically, but crisis situations offer a window onto these processes. In 2016, a clear majority of the residents in the government-controlled part of the Donbas identified as Ukrainian citizens when asked about their primary identity. But in 2019,



respondents self-identified in roughly equal measure as “Ukrainian citizens” and “ethnic Ukrainian”. The civic identification with the state has significantly decreased in the Donbas, suggesting widespread disappointment with the state’s role in handling the war. By comparison, self-identification as “ethnic Ukrainian” increased significantly, which may express the respondents’ wish to distance themselves further from the war.

[See web link for second table]

By comparison, in the separatist-held areas of the Donbas, 21% of respondents in 2019 said they had a mixed ethnic Russian-Ukrainian identity, alongside different expressions of a regional identity. About 13% chose Ukrainian citizenship as their main identity – similar to 12% who identified as ethnic Russian. We didn’t ask this question in 2016.

Mobility across the frontline continues to be high but remains, by and large, in one direction – from the separatist-held areas of the Donbas to the Kyiv-controlled areas. Monthly crossings in this direction increased significantly from 2016 to 2019, a trend that reflects people’s need to travel for socio-economic reasons but perhaps also a sense of normalisation amid a continued low level of fighting.

Ahead of a new round of negotiations under the Normandy format, three key findings from our surveys are worth remembering for all sides: the wish by the majority of the population of the separatist-held Donbas territories to remain part of the Ukrainian state, the absence of a clear-cut identity among the resident population in this part of the Donbas, and the strong personal linkages across the frontline.

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## #7

### Ukraine Could Have Prevailed in Donbas, but Now is Doomed to Unjust Peace

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by Illia Ponomarenko  
Kyiv Post, 7 October 2019  
<https://bit.ly/2LTWNBb>

A week after the ill-fated Steinmeier Formula was agreed on in Minsk, Ukrainians stay flustered and angered about it.

An estimated 10,000 persons gathered on Independence Square in Kyiv, joined by many more in other cities, to protest fiercely against what they see as deadly concessions to Russia over Donbas by President Volodymyr Zelensky.

A majority — 60 percent — of the country’s population find it hard to define their attitude towards it, as polls show. But the word “capitulation,” both terrifying and menacing, has

gone viral on social media. Angry crowds across the country are lifting their voice against this surrender they all heard about on Facebook. And Zelensky opponents, spearheaded by former President Petro Poroshenko, are stoking public wrath.

For some odd reason, when Zelensky says the same thing Poroshenko did for five years — local elections and self-rule for Donbas only after full Russian withdrawal and restored Ukrainian control of the border with Russia — it is decried by Poroshenko's furious supporters as treason, surrender, and the end of Ukraine's independence.

Few, however, can explain why it is so now.

Even fewer are talking about what outcomes — realistic scenarios, I mean — could be good for Ukraine. If we're not accepting the formula and not continuing to negotiate other provisions of the Minsk, where is another way? Don't you forget: the Minsk accords "have no alternatives," as Poroshenko kept saying since 2014.

So, what do we have instead of that?

An all-out offensive in a fashion similar to Croatia's Operation Storm of 1995? With the Ukrainian army cracking the heavily entrenched 450-kilometers frontline and continuing with a battle march to the border with Russia? The plan seems glorious, but the problem is estimated at 35,000 local militant troops, well-armed and organized, as well as countless units of Russia's 8th, 49th, 58th, and 20th combined arms armies always ready to intervene again within hours.

There is no military option, and everyone knows this. I'm not even talking about the hell of urban war, with unloyal and suffering local population, that the Ukrainian army would have had to deal with.

Are we better off simply continuing this static war without end? Without having any clear strategic plan and basically doing nothing but holding our troops in the frontline wastelands and receiving a soldier coffin every 2-3 days for endless years? These primitive tactics of putting the doomsday off at the cost of the blood of Ukrainian soldiers are now reaching its limits.

Praise it or damn it, but the majority of Ukrainian society has got sick of this war. It is not interesting to them, they see no sense in it. Especially given the fact that the country's leadership in all these five years did not come up with a solution better than running with the wind and waiting for the Donbas question to resolve itself spontaneously by some miracle — with Russia's downfall, for instance.

Even the long-rumored Donbas re-integration law approved as late as in 2018, simply declared the region occupied and ruled by Russia and said that Ukraine was committed to reintegrating the lost territories "via political and diplomatic means," proposing no practical roadmaps and certain means.

They simply preferred to drag it out until the Second Coming and wait for what's unknown.

But here's the most terrible thing. This do-nothingism has ruined the patience of Berlin and Paris. Our leadership has failed to offer them something more than five years of headache, moaning, losses, demanding that someone else cares about Ukraine more than the very Ukrainian leadership, and total lack of will to propose a good plan of action.

But Russians in their turn proposed them a lot for turning a blind eye on Crimea and Donbas. Lucrative trade deals, investment, the Nord Stream II. We've wasted so much time that Europe and Russia eventually ended up making a deal over our heads. And now Paris, Rome, Berlin, Brussels, and Amsterdam are pressuring Kyiv really hard for some sort of an acceptable peace deal with Moscow on Donbas.

They now really want to lift Russian sanctions and continue making business as usual rather than wasting time and money on Ukraine. And they will force us to continue with the withdrawal of troops, the elections, the semi-independence for Donbas, and all those things Poroshenko had to agree on after Ilovaik and Debaltseve.

The incompetence of Ukrainian leadership is, of course, not an excuse for Europe to make yet another appeasement deal with an aggressor. But in this unjust world of cynical politics, the time of our momentum has run out.

There can be no miracles. And the ugly truth about this "capitulation" is that we now have no good ways out of this war.

I am broken by the uneasy feeling that the war that has become a huge part of our lives might end soon. But this will be an extremely bitter and unjust peace to us all. And open is the question whether this scenario for postwar Ukraine — with a heavily-armed, semi-independent, pro-Russian enclave integrated into it — can potentially result in even more hateful and bloodletting war several years on.

So in such a situation, the best thing Zelensky can do is to leave no stone unturned in bargaining the least bad option from the Kremlin — if he really wishes well to Ukraine and is not going to let us all down, in his own words. The upcoming Normandy Four meeting will show what he is really up to.

That's even more sorrowful is that, against all the odds, we had a chance all these years. Yes, we could have prevailed in Russia's occupation of Donbas. And this, by the way, would also have had a serious influence on Crimea.

The key to our victory was the nation's unity, constantly increasing the quality of life, real reforms, and eradicated corruption — and also effective armed forces defending the nation's gains behind the lines.

As a person originally from Donbas, I know my fellow country people and what works with them.

The non-occupied part of the region could have become a show-window of living in a peaceful, inclusive, comfortable, westernizing, democratic country that recovers from the wounds of war at a dramatic pace. People crossing the frontline entry points into the Ukrainian territory should have seen new good roads, clean and well-tended streets, crowded restaurants and cafes, polite policemen, cheap and comfortable public transport, and affordable medical assistance.

They should have surprisingly found themselves in the 21 century as they addressed Ukrainian public authorities and saw there was no need to stand in queues. And that many public services could be easily obtained online. They should have seen that there was no need to pay bribes in Ukrainian courts to obtain justice. That the police were successfully tackling crime, and all the corrupt officials and local mafia bosses were having really hard times.

They should have been learning that their relatives “on the other side” were having increasingly higher wages and that finding a decent job or opening a business was much easier in Volnovakha or Mariupol than in Russian-occupied Donetsk or Luhansk.

If at least half of these idealistic dreams come true, much more of my fellow countrypeople would say: “Screw this, living in Ukraine is much better.” The collaborating regime in Donbas would have been quickly losing popularity. Mind this, it was the resentment from never-ending economic troubles and political instability in Ukraine exploited by Russian propaganda that set the scene for the war in Donbas, in many ways.

No matter how angry they are about Ukraine, the people of Donbas are getting Ukrainian biometric passports for themselves to spend a weekend in Poland and see real Europe for the first time in their lives. People consume from quite sensible, material benefits of being law-obeying Ukrainian citizens, not from patriotic slogans. Western newspapers would have called this renaissance “a Ukrainian economic miracle amid simmering conflict.” Sounds sweet, doesn’t it?

Apart from that, Ukraine could have offered to Europe tempting opportunities for investment, huge contracts for nationwide infrastructure contracts, firm leadership against Russian expansionism — much more than we have done in reality.

We had enough time to accomplish much of that. Our soldiers and officers deterring the Russian proxies have been buying us time for 2,000 days already — close to the whole duration of World War II — and paying for that with their sweat and blood.

Facebook patriots love posting mournful pictures and comments about fresh casualties in Donbas, again and again. But do they have an answer to what are Ukrainian soldiers dying for in this endless trench war? Estimated 4,000 Ukrainian combatants have been killed

in action for the sake of buying the nation more time for rising again as an economic and military force, therefore becoming a too dangerous prey for the Kremlin.

And we have neglected their sacrifice.

Instead, those five years under Poroshenko were wasted on eye-washing, simulated reforms amid rampant corruption and political posturing.

On sowing discord through armies of Facebook trolls and opinion-makers hurling insults against Poroshenko's opponents. On divvying up the fattest defense contracts between Poroshenko and his business partners. On putting Poroshenko's men in most important offices and making profits from it. On pushing through absurd language regulations, deeply divisive and intrusive.

On igniting religious hysteria and crazy dances around the Tomos that ended up useless and was forgotten weeks after Poroshenko's downfall. On cosmetic reforms in the military that have resulted in our soldiers being a bit better fed and dressed, but not even closer to ruining the deeply ineffective and untransparent system of Soviet-style chaos.

And on many other things that eventually brought us to being unable to keep withstanding those pressuring us to accept the ignoble peace of the Minsk. And don't tell me a fighting nation could not afford such a glorious rise from the ashes — the web of corruption cast out by Poroshenko's friends in defense sector alone has divested us of more blood of life than several wars combined.

## #8

### Ukraine's Volunteer Militias May Have Saved the Country, But Now They Threaten It

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By Kimberly Marten and Olga Oliker  
War on the Rocks, 14 September 2017  
<https://bit.ly/2N83LLL>

Earlier this year, armed protesters used violence and threats to force Ukraine's government into a substantial policy reversal: a ban on anthracite coal imports from separatist-controlled territory, crucial to the country's electricity supply. The protesters were representatives of "volunteer battalions" (or pro-state militias), broadly credited with helping Ukraine survive the early days of its continuing conflict with Russian-backed separatists in the East. This incident, and others like it, illustrate how the continued cohesiveness, weapons access, and politicization of these groups threatens Ukraine's democracy and stability.

When the volunteer battalions (although not all are technically battalions, we will use this terminology as shorthand) first appeared in 2014, their assistance was welcome and necessary, albeit controversial. Although seen as patriots by many, critics deemed

these groups undisciplined, politically extremist, and insufficiently controlled by Ukrainian authorities. Some were credibly linked to human rights violations and neo-Nazi sympathies.

One recent account suggests that those problems have disappeared and today the heroic narrative appears triumphant in Ukraine and beyond. It holds that the volunteer battalions rose to their country's defense in a time of need, and members have now either stepped back into their civilian lives or joined the state's formal security sector as Ukraine's military forces became more robust. Almost all of these units are now under state command, subordinate to the National Guard or other security forces.

The reality is more complicated. In fact, several of these formations continue to function as relatively autonomous and politicized units inside state security forces, with separate recruitment and command structures. Moreover, volunteer battalion veterans, even after official demobilization, retain easy access to weapons, and many remain loyal to their old commanders and financial patrons.

This raises serious concerns about Ukraine's future, which both Kyiv and its supporters ignore at their peril. This is not to argue that Ukraine is in imminent danger of armed conflict among patriotic groups, or that the vast majority of volunteer or former volunteer units currently challenge the state. But if the Ukrainian government does not take steps now to cement its monopoly over armed violence, the risks will grow. Already, these groups are linked to several violent political actions. As we detail below, some prominent political actors in Ukraine, including members of parliament, are today leveraging what amounts to small private armies in order to further their agendas and withstand pressure from the state.

Left unchecked, at least some of these private militias have both the resources and the will to engage not merely in organized crime, but in warlord politics. As we have seen around the world, from sub-Saharan Africa to the Balkans, such groups can steal or control elections and the distribution of state resources, engage in internecine street warfare, and dictate Ukraine's foreign policy choices. Obviously, this would leave Ukraine unstable and plagued with organized private violence. But with Ukraine increasingly linked to the rest of Europe (it now enjoys visa-free travel to the European Union), instability there would also threaten the financial health and border and crime control efforts of the continent as a whole. Even European military security could be at risk, for instance if Kyiv's weakness sparked further Russian intervention.

### **How Did This Happen?**

Ukraine's security forces proved inadequate in the early days of the conflict with Russian-backed separatists. The manpower, training, and equipment of the Ukrainian Army were undermined by years of failed reforms, corruption, and neglect. Meanwhile some local police forces failed to stand up to separatists and were not fully trusted. Even as the Defense Ministry revived Soviet-era mobilization rolls to call up and train those with



prior military experience, volunteer battalions took up arms to assist the state. These units varied greatly in their origin and ideologies. Some were created with the cooperation of local authorities, but others were founded independently by large business oligarchs.

These groups were a success story of citizen mobilization and organization, and many Ukrainians credit them with saving their country. And Kyiv did recognize at least some of the dangers of relying on groups that were armed and highly independent, taking steps to ensure that the volunteer units were coordinating with the Defense and Internal Affairs Ministries (the latter is responsible for Ukrainian police forces). The volunteer forces were integrated within command and control chains, amidst questions about their true subordination. Some were legally incorporated under state ministries from the start, or soon thereafter. Yet Ukraine's government was in such dire straits that it had difficulty financing and supplying even its regular forces. Thus, it welcomed the support the volunteers received from business leaders and the population as a whole. Kyiv gradually took responsibility for payment and other administrative functions for many of the units. The three dozen or so such groups that had originally existed began to disappear. Yet some remained.

### **Current Status**

Today the only groups of this sort that are not legally subordinated to government bodies are those linked to Right Sector (Pravy Sektor), known for ultra-rightwing symbolism and rhetoric. Right Sector and other battalions affiliated with founder Dmytro Yarosh (who officially withdrew from Right Sector itself in 2016) continue to fight on behalf of Ukraine in the East. But in July 2015 they also engaged in an armed battle in the West, in the town of Mukacheve near the Hungarian border, against Ukrainian military and police forces in a dispute over cigarette smuggling routes. Right Sector later continued the fight by setting up a roadblock outside Kyiv to demand the ouster of Ukraine's Interior Minister — and its members have also regularly threatened Ukraine's LGBTQ communities. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko demanded that Right Sector disarm after the 2015 confrontation. But as of mid-2017 they continue to coordinate with Ukrainian security forces, ostensibly while pursuing formal integration.

Meanwhile other groups' legal subordination masks their substantial autonomy and political activism. Our incomplete inventory includes the Azov Battalion, also associated with rightwing ideology. It has been state-affiliated since 2014, and is currently a unit of the Ukrainian National Guard. It also retains an active political arm and its commander and founder, Andriy Biletsky, is a member of parliament. The Azov website advises new candidates to join the Guard and then request a transfer to Azov. The Azov battalion was recently featured in a laudatory article in the Kyiv Post, an English-language newspaper widely read by expat and diaspora communities.

The founder and commander-in-chief of another battalion, Yuri Bereza of the locally based Dnipro-1 (now a police unit), is also a member of parliament. The Dnipro-1 website actively recruits new members via a telephone number. The Aidar Battalion, accused

of war crimes by Amnesty International, is now the 24th Assault Battalion of Ukraine's Armed Forces — even as its former leader (and member of parliament) Sergei Melnichuk faces criminal charges. And the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which takes its name from a 20th-century organization accused of anti-Semitism, has partially integrated as a subunit of the 93rd Mechanized Brigade of the Armed Forces, under the leadership of Andriy Pastusheno, the OUN's deputy commander. The OUN, too, maintains a web and social media presence for fundraising and political activism. The Donbas Battalion, now formally under the National Guard, maintains a similar online and social media fundraising presence. Its founder, Semen Semenchenko, is also a member of parliament, although in June some members of the Donbas battalion broke with him amid accusations of criminality.

Aidar was at its inception openly funded by billionaire oligarch and former Dnipro region governor Ihor Kolomoisky. Kolomoisky is also rumored to have funded the Donbas and Dnipro-1 battalions. He currently heads the Ukrainian Association of Patriots, a nationalist party that holds two parliamentary seats, even as he holds triple citizenship with Cyprus and Israel and faces constant accusations of tax evasion and corruption.

### **The Pros and Cons**

The Ukrainian government has an understandable desire to maintain good relations with the volunteer battalions' powerful patrons and leaders, especially since several are now popular legislators. Ukraine also has reason to be grateful to volunteer fighters, causing those who might otherwise have doubts to excuse their unsavory politicization. Ironically, volunteer veterans have had to undertake legal battles to receive medical treatment and other support from the state, while continuing to rely on battalion organizations for help.

Yet the dangers these units present are real. While far right parties as a whole have not gleaned broad electoral support, the election of prominent rightwing militia commanders has raised the influence of such ideologies in Ukraine's parliament. Moreover, some former commanders have made violent threats against the current leadership. Their capacity to command armed militias lends ominous weight to what might otherwise be seen as parliamentary bluster.

Let's return to the example from the start of this essay: Veterans of the Donbas and Aidar Battalions disrupted Ukraine's political process in January 2017. Under Semenchenko's leadership, they launched an unauthorized train blockade of anthracite coal coming in from the breakaway territories of Donetsk and Luhansk (known as the Donbas region). Ukraine depends on anthracite coal (geographically much rarer, and also cleaner-burning and more efficient than bituminous coal) for 50 percent of its electricity generation, and the state had been making deals with pro-Russian separatists to continue to buy it from Donbas mines. The blockade was initially condemned by President Poroshenko and his advisers. They feared it would threaten Ukraine's already shaky financial situation by raising unemployment and requiring expensive imports from distant lands like South Africa or the United States. Moreover, cutting these ties would make the eventual



reintegration of the Donbas region back into Ukraine that much harder. In February, the government was forced to declare an energy emergency due to a coal supply gap that the blockade aggravated. Meanwhile, pro-Russian militants reacted to the blockade by seizing steel and other factories owned by pro-Kyiv oligarchs in the Donbas.

On March 13 the Ukrainian authorities decided they had had enough and stormed blockade checkpoints, arresting 43 activists who refused to disarm. Yet those activists were released the next day after their supporters occupied administrative buildings in four Ukrainian regions overnight, and blocked the logistics terminal of one of Poroshenko's own Roshen candy factories in the town of Yagotyn. Poroshenko then turned on a dime and on March 15 made the blockade official, issuing a "temporary freeze" on all rail and road cargo from the Donbas until pro-Russian militants returned seized factories to their rightful owners. While Poroshenko did this at least in part because the blockade had become popular among Ukrainian citizens who practiced peaceful civil disobedience in response to the arrests, this chronology makes clear that it was illegal armed force that directed policy: The original blockade was carried out by militia affiliates using unauthorized force — not by peaceful protesters. In June, Semenchenko called for Ukraine to end coal imports from Russia as well, threatening more blockades if the government did not act. Meanwhile Ukraine has begun importing anthracite coal from the faraway U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

Donbas and Aidar patron Kolomoisky is widely believed to be the biggest funder of the coal blockades, although this is impossible to prove. Kolomoisky has a long history of employing private forces to resolve business disputes, and in 2015 a group of armed men under his command (linked to Dnipro-1) occupied the Kyiv headquarters of the UkrTransNaft oil company in a fight for control with Poroshenko's government. That 2015 dispute appeared to be resolved with a deal, ensuring that Kolomoisky's finances would not be subject to investigation, while removing him from both his governorship and leadership in UkrTransNaft. The coal blockade seems to be an escalation of using armed resistance to make deals with the government in Kyiv, now extending beyond commercial disputes to include foreign policy decisions.

An even more direct example of violent political action occurred in the Kyiv municipal government on June 1. Veterans associated with Azov and other volunteer battalions burst into City Hall in camouflage, demanding the same pensions and other benefits that regular state veterans receive. They scuffled with City Hall security forces and forced a vote that awarded them benefits.

### **Next Steps: Learning from History**

Ukraine is not the first country to have developed pro-state militias, intentionally or otherwise. Great powers from imperial Great Britain to Russia and the United States have often found themselves bargaining with warlords to manage difficult security situations, exchanging favors for loyalty. But the problems this has engendered are legion.

What history shows is that militias not under strong state control are dangerous. They may serve an important purpose in the near term, but they can undermine unity, impede democratic development, violate human rights, and even become so strong that they are untouchable if they are allowed to endure. Examples can be found in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Iraq, Russia, Liberia, and even the United States. Ukraine should not make the mistake of thinking it will be the exception.

What lessons can Ukraine and its U.S. and other Western partners take from history to further stability and peace in the face of militia actions?

First, Kyiv should cease negotiations with Right Sector and declare its armed forces illegal, prosecuting those who continue to fight under its banner while allowing qualified former members to enroll in the National Guard and other state security organs as individuals. The U.S. and other Western governments who provide security assistance to Ukraine try to weed out human rights violators from their training programs (even if that vetting is not always successful); the Ukrainian government should follow their example. Vetting of former militia personnel who seek to join state security forces must eliminate both those who have practiced and those who continue to espouse violence against civilians.

Second, other battalions that are already formally integrated into the security services should be held to strict standards of depoliticization. Formal ties to political parties should be prohibited, and the government should show some spine and truly prosecute groups of armed veterans who take political action. Members of Parliament and government officials should meanwhile be precluded both from command roles and from serving in the armed forces as anything other than reservists, throwing off their political mantles for the duration of their service.

Third, international experience in cases ranging from Sierra Leone to Colombia shows that the thick neighborhood network connections that bind locally recruited militias together lead them to flourish (for example, as organized crime groups) long after war has ended. One useful way to overcome this is to provide state assistance and training to former fighters, so they are less economically dependent on their former comrades. Ukraine should ensure that all police and military units and their veterans depend solely on an adequate state budget for weapons, training, income, and benefits—not on voluntary contributions. The United States and Canada could help through tax and other laws that encourage pro-Kyiv groups located abroad to make their donations to a fund controlled by the Ukrainian state — not militia veterans’ groups. Article 22 of the 2014 law establishing the National Guard of Ukraine allows unspecified “other sources” of financing outside the state budget. But while it may make sense to continue to rely on such funds in some cases, Ukraine’s government should regulate how donations from Ukrainian businesspeople, the foreign diaspora, and ordinary citizens can be used, in order to break chains of external dependency and loyalty.

This means, too, that the Ukrainian state should provide civilian training and geographically dispersed housing and job opportunities to battalion veterans (including

those from Right Sector), to further sever the financial dependence and bonds of obligation they might otherwise feel to former commanders, donors, and battlefield comrades. Otherwise, the natural tendency, especially for locally recruited armed groups, will be to demobilize in name only while remaining ready to follow the lead of neighborhood commanders if called. In other words, the Kyiv City Council decision to give voluntary battalion veterans state-mandated benefits was the right one to take, even if the method of getting there was less than desirable.

Fourth, it is crucial that the state gain high quality intelligence about the business interests and other incentive structures that tie militias together, because this can help drive their members into the arms of the government. For example, in Georgia in the mid-2000s, Georgian officials used deep personal connections to gain local trust and hence information that enabled the state to reestablish control over two areas of the country that had been dominated by warlords, Ajara and Upper Kodori. In this way, Tbilisi turned the militias and followers of the warlords over to the government's side. When one-off battles fail to destroy militia loyalty, as has been the case in Ukraine in recent years, long-term monitoring and wooing might be a next-best alternative. Paradoxically, Ukrainian authorities should not be too quick to prosecute powerful oligarchs in its anti-corruption drive if a slower approach would allow Kyiv to gain additional intelligence and convert more volunteer veterans to the side of the state.

Fifth, both Ukraine and its Western supporters must ensure that justified respect for the contributions of the volunteer battalions does not translate into tolerance of extremist violence. Neither Kyiv nor Washington should turn a blind eye to far right extremist activity, even when it involves Ukrainian government officials.

Finally, Kyiv's Western partners must take this problem seriously. This means providing assistance to Kyiv, as relevant, in implementing the recommendations above, and holding it accountable for progress. Continued security assistance, especially, should be at least partly conditional on ensuring that the volunteers who did so much to save Ukraine do not emerge as threats to its security.

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#9

## “They Try to Get Under Your Skin”

### Ukrainian Director Oleg Sentsov on Being a Political Prisoner in Russia

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by Christian Esch

Der Spiegel, 15 October 2019

<https://bit.ly/2oVQswG>

The Ukrainian director Oleg Sentsov, 43, is from Crimea. When Russia annexed the peninsula, he ended up in prison due to his resistance to Moscow’s move -- and became the most famous Ukrainian prisoner in Russia. International filmmakers, human rights organizations and Russian activists all fought for his release. On September 7, he was set free as part of a prisoner exchange. He cannot, however, return to Crimea, where his mother and two children lived until recently. We spoke with him in Berlin in his first interview with a German-language media outlet since his release.

**DER SPIEGEL:** Mr. Sentsov, you spent five years in Russian prison camps. Were you excited when you learned of the prisoner exchange?

**Sentsov:** When they transferred me from northern Russia to Moscow and during the nine days I waited there, I was very calm. I felt no emotion, and I likewise felt nothing in the plane, even when it landed. It was only when I saw my daughter that I was overcome with emotion. It was then that I realized: This is one of those days that makes life worthwhile.

**DER SPIEGEL:** Your daughter transformed from a girl into a young woman during your imprisonment. Next to her was Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who said simply: “Hello Sentsov.” What did you say to him?

**Sentsov:** I asked him: “How are you doing?” And he answered: “We’re working.” I thanked him. Many people were involved in my release, but ultimately, he made the key contribution and brought it to fruition.

**DER SPIEGEL:** You involuntarily traveled through all of Russia. From Crimea, you were first brought to Moscow. Your trial was then held in southern Russia before you were taken to Yakutia and then, finally, to the northern Urals. All in all, I think you traveled around 20,000 kilometers (12,500 miles). You’d be able to write a travel guide about the Russian prison system. Is it a diverse world? Are the prisons and labor camps different from each other?

**Sentsov:** The official rules are the same everywhere, but unofficially, there are differences. And where I was, the differences were often for the worse. But the people who are locked away there are like you and me. That is the most important thing to know. It is an isolated world with its own etiquette and rules, but I learned a lot about Russian society.

DER SPIEGEL: For example?

Sentsov: I had spent time at the Maidan protests (in the winter of 2013-2014 in Kiev) and thought that Putin's system, with its iniquities and barbarity, would soon collapse -- that the people wouldn't take it anymore and that a revolution was coming. We Russians and Ukrainians are kindred peoples, we're essentially brothers with few differences between us. I myself have a Russian background. But with each year in prison, I understood with increasing clarity that the people are completely indifferent to what is happening in their country. They have distanced themselves from the state and think: We can't change things anyway. Even after 20 years of Putin, they haven't even realized that he might actually be the problem. They consider poverty to be normal, along with the fact that the state cares little for them, that it constantly lies and that both the police and the courts are corrupt. When I tell them that there are countries in Europe where things are completely different, they don't believe it. "In America, it's just the same," they'll tell you, even though they've never been to America and have only heard about it from Russian television. This indifference is combined with a kind of imperial ambition, with pride in some sort of foreign policy success that doesn't help you one bit back home in Yakutia. It is a terrible mixture of aggression and passivity.

DER SPIEGEL: How were you treated by the guards and your fellow prisoners? You were a political prisoner, but Kremlin propaganda vilified you as a right-wing extremist terrorist.

Sentsov: There was no open aggression against me as a Ukrainian. Such a thing would violate the unwritten code of conduct in prison. But beneath the surface, I could feel a certain antipathy anyway. People see you as someone who is against Putin, and thus against Russia and in favor of the fascists and the khokhly (a derogatory term for Ukrainians, referring to the traditional haircut worn by the Cossacks).

DER SPIEGEL: You gave President Zelensky a jar in which you kept your tea during your imprisonment. Using two strips of paper, you had attached a Ukrainian flag to it. What was the message?

Sentsov: The jar aggravated the guards, just as the very fact of my existence did. There were a number of adventures associated with this jar. They would take it away from me and scrape the flag off, and I had to fight to keep it in every prison I was brought to. For me, it was a fight for a symbol: Me and the flag alone against an entire system that seemed invincible. But I never gave up and I was ultimately released. With my jar.

DER SPIEGEL: We on the outside didn't hear anything about such battles, but we did learn of your hunger strike during the World Cup in Russia, when you demanded the release of Ukrainian prisoners in the country. You were apparently planning another one?

Sentsov: During my hunger strike, I knew that neither I nor the others would be released. But I wanted to generate attention. I stuck with it until the laboratory test results became dangerous. I could feel that death wasn't far off. I knew that it would take me a long time

to recover from the hunger strike and that I might have done permanent damage. But later, they allowed me to exercise three times a week. There was an area with a rack, a horizontal bar and a rusty dumbbell. That is where I readied myself for a second hunger strike. I thought: The first time, you began with very little body mass, and you felt terrible immediately. The next time, do it with maximum weight so that you have reserves. I wanted to start the hunger strike in late May or early June. But then there was movement on the prisoner exchange.

**DER SPIEGEL:** Documentary filmmaker Askold Kurov made a film about your trial and there was one scene I found particularly disturbing. It is a video from the Russian secret service agency FSB of your interrogation. One agent says in a quiet, earnest voice: “The court will clear it up. Russia’s courts are the most humane in the world.” Essentially, it’s a cruel joke at the expense of the prisoner.

**Sentsov:** I’m glad that the video exists! It shows how they work. First, they tried to break me -- that was immediately after my arrest. Then, they offered me a deal: Seven years in prison for a confession and for some names. They wanted me to incriminate someone important in Kiev, they didn’t care who. Otherwise, they threatened to lock me away for 20 years. For the entire year that I was held in pretrial detention in Moscow’s Lefortovo prison, they tried using soft power, so to speak. It was like a psychological battle of attrition. The video shows exactly that. Someone speaks to you in a friendly voice, but at the same time, they taunt and tease you. That’s how it was the entire time. They try to get under your skin.

**DER SPIEGEL:** In your closing statement in court, you quoted from “The Master and Margarita,” the Soviet-era novel from Mikhail Bulgakov. It is a book about another trial, the one against Jesus. And it is about the regret felt by Pontius Pilate because he wasn’t able to find the courage to follow his convictions and set Jesus free. You quoted the line: “Cowardice is the worst sin of all.” Did you have the impression that your judges might someday reconsider their behavior and ultimately regret it?

**Sentsov:** When I said those words, I looked at the judge. At just this moment, my gaze met that of his assessor, and he looked down at the floor. That proves that the man knew what he was doing. And there was a similar moment that took place before that. When I was transferred to Rostov for the trial after a year spent in pretrial detention in Moscow’s Lefortovo prison, I spoke one final time with Artyom Burdin, the lead investigator for FSB. Only the two of us were in the room. He asked: “Oleg, will you testify in court?” I replied: “No, what would be the point? Everything has already been decided anyway.” He answered: “Yes, but I would really like to know how things actually were.” It really hit me -- that this man was fully aware that his entire investigation was rubbish. That doesn’t mean, of course, that he thought I was innocent. They know that they put someone behind bars despite a lack of sufficient proof for conviction. But they think: He’s guilty anyway because he is an enemy of the state.



DER SPIEGEL: You are a writer and a director, an artist. Were you able to work in prison?

Sentsov: I took 15 notebooks, completely full, with me when I left prison: Two novels, two collections of short stories, diaries, three screenplays -- and all kinds of notes about the cinema and other things. It's quite a lot, enough for another three or four years of work.

DER SPIEGEL: You were presumably searched frequently. Were your writings also examined?

Sentsov: I was quite concerned because of the journals, because I wrote about the prison itself in them, things they might not like. I actually didn't want to keep a diary at all, but I started during the hunger strike and took the risk. I was on the way toward death and knew that my heart could fail any day, or my kidneys or liver. I wanted to create a record of myself on paper. A couple of times, guards picked up the journal and flipped through it, and I thought it was over. But luckily, I have terrible handwriting, and it got even worse as a result of the hunger strike. Next year, on the anniversary of my release, all of the journals are to be published. But I've never read them again myself, and I don't plan to read them or edit them either.

DER SPIEGEL: Why did you so clearly take sides with Ukraine in 2014? You come from a Russian family and grew up in a Crimean village where only very few people likely shared your pro-Ukrainian position.

Sentsov: Putin's propaganda seeks to convince us that it's all about a conflict between Russians and Ukrainians. That's not the case. There isn't really even a conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It's more a conflict between worldviews. On the one hand are those who want to live according to civilized, European principles, while the others want to live in the Soviet Union.

DER SPIEGEL: What do you think people want in Crimea, which you were forced to leave in 2014?

Sentsov: I don't know. All of my close friends left because they couldn't stand the atmosphere, this lack of freedom, as if somebody took away your air to breathe. I felt it immediately. I still remember those two months extremely well. The people were frightened, and at the same time, there were these crazies shouting their slogans. They were clearly activists who had traveled in from Russia -- I could tell from their accents. But when 20 people are screaming, before long, the whole crowd joins in. And the people of Crimea wanted to belong to Russia for a number of reasons. By far not everyone wanted to, but more than half did.

DER SPIEGEL: At the time, you brought food to the Ukrainian troops, who had been surrounded by the Russian army. Later, you learned more about this episode ...

Sentsov: In the Rostov courthouse, I by chance got to know an officer with the Russian military secret service GRU. He had been charged with domestic violence and manslaughter. We were both awaiting our trials and were locked in special cages in the basement set up for that purpose. We had a lot of time to talk. In Yevpatoria, he had besieged the same Ukrainian unit that I had brought food to. And he told me how everything had been prepared -- that they had been brought by ship to Crimea from the Russian city of Novorossiysk. And that he later fought in Donbass, in Ilovaisk ...

DER SPIEGEL: ... that was the battle during which the Ukrainian army suffered tremendous losses. Russian troops were also involved, though the Kremlin denies it.

Sentsov: The GRU man said: "That was our job. We destroyed your people." He just said it openly, without trying to hide it. There was no reason for him to be afraid and lie: I was facing 20 years in prison as was he. This encounter made quite an impression on me. When Putin's system collapses one day, there will be a number of such people. You'll suddenly have hundreds of statements and pieces of evidence.

DER SPIEGEL: You last saw Kiev in spring 2014. What is your impression after five years? How has the city and society changed?

Sentsov: I wrote about it on Facebook, a post that generated quite a bit of controversy. First, I wrote that quite a bit less had changed than I had expected and hoped. Second, I wrote that it seems as though everyone in Ukraine is fighting against everyone else. Even good people find themselves locked in conflict with other good people. I believe that the first thing that must happen is this discord must be overcome. Only then can the process of reconciliation with Donbass begin -- not with the criminals who are in power there, but with the residents who don't see themselves as part of Ukraine. That would be the second stage. And only then comes reconciliation with Russia, as soon as the government collapses. Until then, there can be no talk of reconciliation, only of a cease-fire and negotiations.

DER SPIEGEL: Do you hope to be able to return to Crimea?

Sentsov: I will not return to a Russian Crimea, that much is clear. But I don't believe it is so unlikely that Crimea will return to Ukraine, even if it seems difficult.

DER SPIEGEL: There were impressive testimonies of solidarity during your imprisonment, with directors like Wim Wenders, Pedro Almodóvar and Ken Loach making efforts on your behalf. Russian filmmaker Alexander Sokurov beseeched Putin for mercy on your behalf on live television in 2016, saying it was "Russian and Christian."

Sentsov: I watched the scene live from the labor camp in Yakutia. I watched as Sokurov implored and begged. I am extremely grateful to him, he did so on more than one occasion. But Putin made his excuses, because I was his hostage, just like the others.



DER SPIEGEL: What can countries like Germany do to secure the release of the remaining Ukrainian prisoners?

Sentsov: You have to constantly talk about them using all channels, including with Putin. There aren't any well-known persons like myself among them anymore. Such people have all been released. Now, it's about helping those who hardly anyone knows. You have to constantly talk about them and about how many of them there are. Currently, there are 87 Ukrainians imprisoned in Russia and another 227 in Donbass. Every single one of them is having a bad time of it in prison.

DER SPIEGEL: What would you say to Putin if you were to meet him today?

Sentsov: There's nothing to talk about. But if he ever ends up in The Hague, convicted by the International Criminal Court, then I will definitely write him a letter to ask him how it feels. I can already see it, him standing in front of the court, aging suddenly before our eyes. His face will grow wrinkly, like in Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray," and in the end, he'll look like an old turtle. That's when I'll write him a letter and ask: So, Vladimir Vladimirovich, how are things? Do you need anything? Tea perhaps? (laughs)

## #10

### Russian-Controlled Donbas "Republics" Remove Ukrainian Language and Everything

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Connected With Ukraine From Schools

by Halya Coynash

Human Rights in Ukraine, 17 September 2019

<https://bit.ly/2m3LV9s>

Although Russia repeatedly claims that Russian speakers were under threat in Crimea and Donbas, it is the Ukrainian language that has come under attack as soon as Russia took actual or effective control, as well as Ukrainian history and culture. In the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk 'republics' [DPR, LPR], there are no Ukrainian classes anymore, with the Ukrainian language taught as a subject for one hour a week. This is very clearly a 'Russification' program, with the textbooks for schools being brought into occupied Donbas by the so-called 'humanitarian' convoys from Russia.

The official line taken in both occupied Crimea and Donbas is identical: supply has not been terminated, it's just that those demanding Ukrainian has radically decreased. During the preliminary hearings into Ukraine's case against Russia at the UN's International Court of Justice in March 2017, Russia tried to counter Ukraine's accusation of discrimination against ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars by, among other things, citing the fact that Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar are all officially state languages. The Court was unconvinced, and ordered Russia to ensure availability of education in the Ukrainian language. This is just one of the orders it has flouted to the present day. .

In an important study published on 2 September 2019, Dmitry Durnev explains that the self-proclaimed Donbas ‘republics’ have also stated in their so-called constitutions that Ukrainian is the second ‘state language’, after Russian. In fact, however, no official proceedings are carried out in Ukrainian and all Ukrainian schools and classes are now in the Russian language, after a transitional phase from 2014 to 2016.

Durnev spoke with several teachers, including some who are currently teaching in Donbas schools. All agreed to speak with him only on strict condition that their names were concealed, and voices on recordings distorted. Judging by cases of persecution that human rights groups are aware of, it seems quite likely that objecting to the lack of Ukrainian in schools could easily result in a person being ‘arrested’ and incarcerated on charges of ‘collaborating with the Ukrainian SBU’ or similar. There are very likely many people who are unhappy about the situation, but worried of being ‘denounced’ to the militants’ so-called ‘ministry of state security’ if they speak out.

Tatyana is now a former teacher of junior classes, and has left Donetsk, but she still insisted on total anonymity and voice distortion, as she does visit occupied territory. She says that they were able to finish the fourth grade still in Ukrainian, however after that, there was no choice, they simply had to go over to Russian. Older teachers of Ukrainian Language and Literature in senior classes simply lost their jobs. Other teachers of all subjects were given the option of retraining to teach in Russian. In 2015, they received textbooks with the syllabus now according to ‘School of Russia’ The only exception is Nature Studies, where instead of learning about nature in Russia, they study the nature in Donbas. The one hour a week the children have of Ukrainian is divided in half between language and reading literature. Tatyana mentions that there are five hours of Russian language, but this, of course, is in addition to all the classes taking place in Russian. An additional compulsory subject, entitled ‘civic awareness and spirituality of Donbas’ has been introduced. She adds that ‘patriotism’ is also given a huge amount of attention, with the first lesson of the school year entitled ‘Five years of DPR – we grow together with the republic’. “We were told that if it’s impossible to replace some topic about Ukraine by Donetsk or Donbas, then we should change it to any other about our own area”.

Durnev says that in both unrecognized ‘republics’, a system of education has been created since 2014 that is based on the Russian grading system and on the Russian textbooks which Russia transported to occupied Donbas in its so-called ‘humanitarian convoys’. The said convoys are illegal, and there are grounds, including boasts from the militants themselves, for believing that they have often carried weapons. Given the acute need for all kinds of basic items, it is also typical that they should have instead brought books aimed at strengthening its grasp and influence over Donbas.

Students can later travel to Rostov-on-Don (across the uncontrolled border into Russia) and take Russian matriculation exams. There are special quotas for students from Donbas to enter Russian universities. What is significantly harder is for these young Ukrainians to pass the Ukrainian school-leaving exams and compete for a place in Ukrainian universities. There are concessions for young students from Donbas, but they will need to

have separately studied Ukrainian to an adequate level, getting additional tuition in both the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian history.

Another teacher, still working in Donetsk, told Durnev that the situation now reminds her of 1984 when she had first begun teaching. In the Russian-controlled ‘republic’, there is the same amount of Russian in secondary schools as during Soviet times (6-7 hours a week of Russian language and literature).

Durney says that, while there is very little commercial advertising in Donetsk, you can find political agitation about the ‘republic’ everywhere. A recent study also found that disinformation about Ukraine in the so-called ‘republics’, with most of the favourites for fake news the same as in the Russian state-controlled media. If in 2017, 11% of content constituted disinformation, in April 2019 21% of ‘news’ about Ukraine was of dubious accuracy or outright fakes or disinformation.

Such a high level of disinformation is of major concern given that the vast majority of people in these areas have no access to Ukrainian media. One of the first things that happened as soon as the Russian and pro-Russian militants seized control of an area in 2014 was that Ukrainian television channels were taken off air, with Russian or militant channels using the frequencies. A large number of Ukrainian Internet sites, especially the ones like News of Donbas that report honestly on events in the ‘republics’ are blocked. This means that the population in occupied Donbas are receiving information from channels that are overtly propagandist and anti-Ukrainian, while children are growing up on the aggressor state’s textbooks and dangerous fiction about essentially fake ‘republics’.

## #11

### 30 Years of Lessons on How to Help Yourself

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by Christopher Hartwell and Oleh Havrylyshyn  
Financial Times, 2 October 2019  
<https://on.ft.com/33UnTys>

Last month, the Trump administration finally released approximately \$250m in military aid for Ukraine after a delay that critics and a possible whistleblower said was politically motivated.

Donald Trump’s defenders have noted that the president’s actions, whatever they actually may have been, towards Ukraine were intended to help a “corrupt country” clean itself up. And indeed, still fighting Russian-backed separatists in the east of its country, Ukraine once again stands at a crossroads of economic and political reform.

With a new president and a brand-new parliament, it has a key opportunity to shed its image of corruption and undertake real and effective reform. But while the US aid was

military in nature, the precarious nature of donor funding — including from the IMF — underlines how important it is for Ukraine to stand on its own two feet.

Luckily, three decades of economic transformation throughout central and eastern Europe have given a blueprint to President Volodymyr Zelensky's team on how Ukraine can become stronger and more resilient.

Please use the sharing tools found via the share button at the top or side of articles. November 2019 will mark 30 years since the Berlin Wall fell and signalled the beginning of a massive and novel experiment never seen before in history, the transition from communism to capitalism in the countries of the Soviet bloc.

With the hindsight of three decades, several key lessons have been learned on what makes a “successful” transition, lessons that Ukraine should heed. Unfortunately, many of the polemics of the first decade of transformation have crystallised into a series of myths about transition, arguing for a much slower approach.

The first myth, prevalent even among western politicians from the left, is that neoliberal big-bang reforms in communist countries caused tremendous pain for little gain. While socialists and neo-socialists in the region and elsewhere claim that economic reform can be done slowly over time, the reality of transition tells a different story.

Comprehensive statistical analysis of the past 30 years confirms that adjustment pain did inevitably occur at the outset of transition, but, more importantly, that pain was limited and of short duration in countries that moved fastest to a market regime (notably most of central Europe and the Baltics). For countries that moved most gradually and lingered in a mixed socialist/market hybrid, as in the former Soviet Union or the Balkans, the pain was far greater and persisted for longer.

This disparity between fast and slow reformers is evident not only in the statistics for broad measures such as gross domestic product and GDP per capita, but also for finer measures such as the Human Development Index of the UN, poverty and income distribution, and levels of per capita consumption of key goods. Illustrative of these diverging roads is the fact that while Ukraine and Poland started the transition with about the same level of per capita income, today Poland's income is from three to four times larger.

Equally important for Ukraine is the myth that it was market reforms which created an extortive oligarch class, a common complaint also against swift reforms made with reference to Russia. The reality here is also different: the greatest concentration of oligarch power is not in the rapid reformers of central Europe, but in those like Ukraine which delayed reforms for years and moved slowly thereafter.

Russia merits a special mention here, as it started reforms well in 1992-93 under President Boris Yeltsin and the reformer Yegor Gaidar, but then stalled and reversed as the old

guard came back to power. To illustrate the difference with central Europe, it has been estimated that if Poland had the same number of Forbes billionaires in proportion to GDP as does Russia, there would be about 38; the actual number is four. Equally striking are comparisons of inequality, as in Russia the income share of the top 1 per cent is 20 per cent or more, while in central Europe it runs at about half that.

But the best argument against these “go-slow” strategies for Ukraine is its own experience. In the 1990s, it endured a series of stop-start reforms, and has always lagged countries such as its neighbour Poland in creating the basis for a market economy.

Incomplete reforms such as full property rights, stymied by a “temporary” moratorium on agricultural land sales in place since 2001, have held back Ukraine’s development. In every case, the argument against these reforms has been the same, mainly that the “market wasn’t ready” or the “supporting institutions didn’t exist”, though closer analysis suggests the real reason for delayed reforms was the self-interest of rent-seeking leaders and their oligarch patrons.

This embrace of gradualism has created a fragile Ukraine vulnerable to economic blackmail and military aggression. Jettisoning the slow pace of liberalisation for a speedier move towards openness can help reverse this state of affairs. With an emphasis on protecting property rights and lessening the power of the state, Ukraine may soon find it will need less help from its friends.

Early indications are that the new government in Kiev does intend to move in this direction, but it must not allow established vested interests to oppose this move with a repetition of these debunked canards. If Ukraine’s new government relies on the real historical evidence, it too will find that rapid reform is far more successful than gradual ones.

*Christopher A. Hartwell is Professor at Bournemouth University (UK) and Kozminski University (Poland) and author of “Two Roads Diverge: The Transition Experience of Poland and Ukraine”.*

*Oleh Havrylyshyn is former deputy finance minister of Ukraine, adjunct research Professor in the Institute of European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at Carleton University in Canada, and author of “The Political Economy of Independent Ukraine”.*

#12

## State Funeral

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by Deborah Young

Hollywood Reporter, 12 September 2019

<https://bit.ly/2MD5SyH>

*Reviewed at the Toronto International Film Festival*

Director Sergei Loznitsa uses footage of Joseph Stalin's massive funeral to convey the personality cult surrounding the feared Soviet premier.

Sixty-six years after the death of Joseph Stalin, one of the bloodiest dictators in modern history, filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa re-creates the mass delusion of citizens across the Soviet Union who reacted to the news of his demise as though they had lost their ideal father. The title *State Funeral* sounds like an understatement amid the grandiose pomp and ceremony of nationwide mourning fit for an ancient emperor. This cannily edited selection of rare archive footage reveals the peak of the people's mind-born terror, and it is the beginning of the end.

But what is the meaning of the gigantic funeral ceremony that engulfs the entire country, bringing it to a standstill for four days of mourning while the propaganda machine works overtime pumping its crocodile tears? As the end credits remind us, under Stalin's almighty hand, 27 million were murdered and 15 million starved to death. How, then, to interpret this sea of stunned, grief-stricken faces and weeping women?

Loznitsa has said that he sees the film as "a visual study of the nature of Stalin's personality cult," which it certainly is. In his attempt to make the audience a "participant and witness" at the mega-funeral, he eliminates captions and explanations as superfluous to over two hours of superbly edited archive footage, most of it in black and white but some in glorious color. But we can't identify the players without a scorecard — we're left wondering who the dignitaries are and if Stalin's children, Vasily and Svetlana, are framed briefly as he lies in state on a mountainous bed of flowers and wreaths. Loznitsa aims over the heads of most audiences, and the film will remain the pleasure of festival and special venue admirers.

It can be seen as the third part of a trilogy that includes the director's two other fine historical reconstructions of the U.S.S.R.: *The Event*, about the 1991 failed coup d'état against Gorbachev, and *The Trial*, presenting the tragic absurdities of a classic Soviet show trial.

Stalin died unexpectedly in his home on March 5, 1953, of a stroke. While a lugubrious announcer goes into great detail about his final illness over the nation's loudspeakers, we see a coffin adorned in bright Kremlin red. After officials deposit it on a bier surrounded



by a jungle of red and white flowers, the lid is removed and the pallid face of the embalmed Stalin appears resting peacefully, just as the oceans of mourners will see him as they parade by to the heavenly strains of a symphony orchestra and choir.

The sorrow extends far beyond Moscow: to snowy villages in Mongolia, seaports in the south and north, factory hands, uniformed soldiers and peasants in the interior, gathered together in awestruck remembrance ceremonies. During the four days of mourning leading up to the state funeral, planeloads of Communist prime ministers are greeted at the airport by unnamed generals. In towns and cities, people carry potted plants as offerings to giant Stalin statues. Lines form and people cram into avenues to walk by the body, which lies for three days in the Hall of Columns in the House of Unions. Finally the coffin is closed, and it is transported by a bizarre horse-drawn vehicle to Red Square. There, in front of a vast but orderly assembly of soldiers, officers and citizens, it is placed on permanent display in the Lenin mausoleum.

(In reality, the times changed quickly and the government ordered Stalin's body removed from the mausoleum and entombed in the Kremlin wall just eight years later. But that's another film.)

The final section of the film shifts gears to show the addresses given by four ranking politburo members to those assembled in Red Square in which, amid the hypocrisy and the hyperbole, the future of the country is sketched. The camera captures the confidence of Nikita Khrushchev, who would succeed Stalin as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, as he introduces Georgy Malenkov, the new premier, Stalin's protege Vyacheslav Molotov and the powerful Lavrentiy Beria, who would soon take the lead in policy and de-Stalinization. Even those who don't like speeches will be impressed by the gravity of the scene, with its overtones of Kafka.

Danielius Kokanauskis, who edited the footage into a stately but never boring 135 minutes, deserves a round of applause along with the dozens and dozens of cinematographers who are listed in the credits.

Production companies: Atoms & Void, Studio Uljana Kim  
Director, screenwriter: Sergei Loznitsa  
Producers: Sergei Loznitsa, Maria Choustova, Uljana Kim  
Editor: Danielius Kokanauskis  
Venue: Venice Film Festival (Out of competition)  
World sales: Atoms & Void  
135 minutes

#13

From: Svitlana Kryss <kryss@macewan.ca>

Date: Tuesday, October 22, 2019 at 7:38 PM

Subject: New Issue Published by East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies

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East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies (EWJUS) has just published its latest issue, and we invite you to review the Table of Contents at <https://ewjus.com/index.php/ewjus/issue/view/16>.

Vol 6, no 2 (Fall 2019) of EWJUS features (1) a special thematic section “Platforma: New Frontiers in Ukrainian Studies,” which showcases research in literature and political geography areas within the Ukrainian studies field; (2) three regular articles that bring up such diverse topics as language attitudes of Ukrainian Canadians on the Prairies, the involvement of wealthy businessmen-politicians’ philanthropy foundations in the Ukrainian Maidan Protests of 2013-14, and translation of the Roman classics into Ukrainian; as well as (3) translation of two Ukrainian nineteenth-century texts.

The issue also presents reviews of recent books in Ukrainian studies and offers an obituary for Mark Von Hagen, a long-time champion of Ukrainian studies, who recently passed away.

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Sincerely,  
Svitlana (Lana) Kryss  
Editor-in-Chief  
EWJUS



#14

From: Larysa Iarovenko <larysa.iarovenko@utoronto.ca>

Date: Tuesday, October 22, 2019 at 4:00 PM

To: Dominique Arel <darel@uottawa.ca>

Subject: please help to spread a word: the MA program in European and Russian Affairs at CERES

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## UKL 501, 23 October 2019

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