The Ukraine List #491

The Ukraine List (UKL) #491
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Chair of Ukrainian Studies, U of Ottawa
www.chairukr.com
www.danyliwseminar.com
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#1
14th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine

Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, 8-10 November 2018
http://www.danyliwseminar.com

CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS
Deadline: 21 June 2018

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies, with the support of the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation, will be holding its 14th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine at the University of Ottawa on 8-10 November 2018. Since 2005, the Danyliw Seminar has provided an annual platform for the presentation of some of the most influential academic research on Ukraine.

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

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

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

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

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

****To mark the 85th Anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor), a number of papers/events will be devoted to the Holodomor. Holodomor-related proposals are most welcome****

The Seminar will also be featuring panels devoted to recent/new books touching on Ukraine, as well as the screening of new documentaries followed by a discussion with filmmakers. In 2017, new books by Oleh Havrylyshyn, Yuliya Yurchenko and Mayhill Fowler were featured, as well as the films *The Trial* (by Askold Kurov) and *Alisa in Warland* (by Alisa Kovalenko), with the filmmakers present. Information on the 2016 and 2017 book panels and films can easily be accessed from the top menu of the web site. The 2018 Seminar is welcoming book panel proposals, as well as documentary proposals.

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

People interested in presenting at the 2018 Danyliw Seminar are invited to submit a 500 word paper proposal and a 150 word biographical statement, by email attachment, to Dominique Arel, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, at darel@uottawa.ca AND chairukr@gmail.com. Please also include your full coordinates (institutional affiliation, preferred postal address, email, phone, and Twitter account [if you have one]). If applicable, indicate your latest publication or, in the case of doctoral or post-doctoral applicants, the year when you entered a doctoral program, the title of your dissertation and year of (expected) completion. Note that a biographical is not a CV, but a written paragraph.

Books published between 2017 and 2019 (as long as near-final proofs are available prior to the Seminar) are eligible for consideration as a book panel proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the book, as well as the 150 word bio and full coordinates.

Films produced between 2016 and 2018 are eligible for consideration as a documentary proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the film, as well as the 150 word bio, full coordinates, and a secure web link to the film.

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

The proposal deadline is 21 June 2018. The Chair will cover the travel and accommodation expenses of applicants whose proposal is accepted by the Seminar. The proposals will be reviewed by an international selection committee and applicants will be notified in the course of the summer.

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Danyliw Seminar in 2014, a special website was created at www.danyliwseminar.com. The site contains the programs, papers, videos of presentations and photographs of the last fourseminars (2014-2017). To access the abstracts, papers and videos of the 2017 presenters, click on “Participants” in the menu

and then click on the individual names of participants. The 2017 Program can be accessed at https://www.danyliwseminar.com/program-2017.

Check the "Danyliw Seminar" Facebook page at http://bit.ly/2rssSHk.
For information on the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, go to https://www.chairukr.com. (The site is being re-developed).

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

#2
The Future Is Now: The State of Doctoral Research on Contemporary Ukraine

by Dominique Arel
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa

Presented at the Conference "Ukraine in the World: Fifty Years of Ukrainian Studies at Harvard University," Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI), 11-12 May 2018

Since 2005, the Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa in Canada has had the privilege of hosting an annual international research conference on contemporary Ukraine, called the Danyliw Seminar, named after a foundation in Toronto. The Seminar includes a number of doctoral students. As we are taking stock of the state of Ukrainian Studies at this conference, I thought that I could rely on the participation of these doctoral students at the Danyliw Seminar to assess trends that may not be apparent to most of us.

The first caveat is that the Chair in Ottawa is in the social sciences. I am attached to a political science department, and so are my students (except one who is in sociology). HURI, CIUS (and other programs at the University of Alberta), as well as the Toronto Chair have built their reputations in the humanities, and we saw our mission in Ottawa to focus on social science research. We thought initially that this would exclude history, but it took us only two years, by 2007, to realize how mistaken that was, with historical memory being thrown at the center of post-Orange Ukrainian politics. We quickly realized that the study of contemporary Ukraine had to include contemporary history, which in practice meant the study of 20th century Ukraine. In other words, the cohort of doctoral students that we are examining are from the social sciences and the history of the past century — not literature, linguistics, folklore, or pre-20th century history, generally understood as the humanities.

Between 2005 and 2017, 196 people were on the program of the Danyliw Seminar, an average of 15 new participants every year, which is itself is a sign of the vitality of the field. (Several made repeat visits over this time span, but they are counted only once). Of this number, 58 were doctoral students (at the time of their visit if they came back

later). On average, thus, between 4 and 5 doctoral students present their research at the Seminar every year. The database I will be using for my remarks is thus based on 58 doctoral students over a period of 13 years. I could have used a larger database, since I have also been in charge of the academic program of the ASN Convention for the past two decades, with a large Ukraine section (we had 24 panels/events on Ukraine in early May in New York). An ASN database would probably yield three to four times as many doctoral students working on Ukraine, and I could certainly build one in the near future.

Yet there are definite advantages in relying on a Danyliw Seminar database. The first is funding. The Seminar covers all expenses for participants that are selected, which is not the case for a large Convention like ASN. This makes quite a difference for graduate students, especially those from Ukraine, as it is rare that Ukraine-based students can get funding on their own. The Danyliw Seminar has the means to identify very good students from Ukraine and bring them over – enabling us to draw inferences on graduate student research in Ukraine.

The second advantage is that a Seminar, by definition, is much more selective than a Convention, as there are far fewer slots available. Overall, only between 15-20 percent of applicants are accepted by the Seminar. What this means is that those making it are cumulatively the strongest with, in principle, greater opportunities of remaining active in academia, and in Ukrainian studies in particular, after their doctoral studies. I could add that a cohort of 58 doctoral students is large enough to make some general observations.

The first observation concerns gender. Forty of the 58 doctoral students are women, a proportion of 68 percent, a complete reversal of the older generation represented on panels at this conference. From the beginning, I could always see with my own eyes how the field had changed since the mid-to-late 1990s. Among all Danyliw participants (nearly 200, as I indicated earlier), the proportion of women is actually at 55 percent. But I never realized, until I computed the data, that it was so high among doctoral students. Upon closer inspection, however, we can detect a definite ethnic factor (or more broadly ethno-territorial).

As we all know, Ukrainian studies in North America (or before the war, in Germany and Czechoslovakia) was a creation of the Ukrainian diaspora. (I didn't mention interwar Poland, since to categorize Polish Ukrainians as a diaspora is obviously problematic). We learned at this conference of the extraordinary fund-raising effort in all corners of the Ukrainian-American diaspora to make the creation of HURI possible. Understandably, the first generation of Ukrainian studies scholars were almost entirely from the diaspora, first and second generation, with a few notable exceptions. The demography of the field began to change dramatically in the 1990s after Ukraine became independent and an increasing number of non-ethnic Ukrainians, or people whose relatives did not hail from the territory of Ukraine, became interested in the study of problems that could be investigated in Ukraine. In our Danyliw doctoral database, a slight majority (53 percent, or 31 of 58) do not have a Ukraine connection. Roughly speaking, we can say that the field is now half connected to Ukraine by biography, and half unconnected, which is probably the

sociologically normal equilibrium for an area study. In other words, the field has become legitimized among graduate students. It has a lot to do with statehood, but also with the fact that, when everything is said and done, Ukraine is an open society, which allows for a great variety scholarly research. Unlike Russia, there is a dynamic civil and political society to investigate in Ukraine.

The other half, those doctoral students with a personal link to Ukraine, can be divided in three different types. The first is the Ukrainian diaspora, which is by far the least numerous, with only 2 of our 27 students. The field used to be dominated by either first generation (born in Europe) or second generation scholars (born abroad of parents born in Europe), but there are very few third generation doctoral students. They have been replaced by students either from Ukraine or born in Ukraine while residing abroad at the time of the Danyliw Seminar that they participated in. We had 10 Ukraine-based and 15 Ukraine-born students at the Seminar. (I should add that a few of these Ukraine-born students were borderline diaspora, since they came with their parents as teenagers before they embarked on graduate studies).

A stunning statistic is that 84 percent of these Ukraine-based or Ukraine-born doctoral students are women – all but four in a group of 27. This in itself explains why more than two-thirds of our Danyliw doctoral students are women. As I mentioned earlier, the gender breakdown of the entire Seminar over 13 years is 55 percent-45 percent favoring women. The same proportion applies to doctoral students without a personal connection to Ukraine. Those with a direct Ukraine connection, however, are overwhelmingly women. Why? I can only hypothesize that socio-economic conditions in Ukraine have an asymmetrical effect on gender, with young Ukrainian men disporportionately not opting for an academic path, either in Ukraine or abroad.

The discipline breakdown is also surprising – certainly to me. All but three students were from four disciplines: political science, sociology, anthropology and history. The surprise is that only 22 percent (or 13) were in political science. Yet the Chair is based in the political science department, four of the five scholars on the selection committee are political scientists (and so were two of three others who were members in earlier Seminars). A plurality of our doctoral students were historians (20), with 13 sociologists and 9 anthropologists. What accounts for this relative downgrading of their own discipline by Seminar organizers? The first point is that it is not a self-conscious effort. As with the gender breakdown, it is only now that I realize that the proportion is so low. Doctoral students are on average one-third, sometimes less, of the overall participants in any given Seminar, where political scientists tend to be well represented, which is why these trends may not be obvious even to us. More substantively, what makes proposals stand out is a promising theoretical argument with a solid empirical base. It is the latter criteria that appeared to have given a comparative advantage to historians and sociologists. Put differently, political science applicants are not as strong as they should be on field work. A caveat is that the boundary between political science and sociology is porous, particularly in Europe. Two of my French colleagues on the selection committee actually call themselves political sociologists.

The European factor is significant. If we include those based in Ukraine, a touch over half of our doctoral students are from Europe. If we exclude them, a little more than a third are Europeans, 40 percent of whom are Ukraine-born. This points to a clear shift from the previous generation: Ukrainian studies outside of Ukraine is no longer predominantly North American. Expectedly, the UK, Germany and France are of doing well. The outlier remains Russia. Prior to Maidan, we never had a single proposal from a Russia-based doctoral student that we considered strong enough for an invitation. In fact, we received comparatively few proposals to begin with. The remark by Sherman Garnett, twenty years ago, that hardly anyone in Russia is seriously studying contemporary Ukraine remained true well before the tension between the two states reached a breaking point. We had our first student in 2015, and would have had two more in 2016 and 2017, except they could not get a visa – at all or on time. These three candidates were affiliated with the European University in St. Petersburg, whose existence is now under threat in Russia.

How well are these students faring on the job market? Fifteen of them, or about a quarter, have found tenure-track appointments in universities. An additional five are affiliated with research institutes, all in Europe, but I do not have additional information to establish the degree of job security that these appointments bring. While these numbers may appear to be on the low side, I must point out that we are dealing with a moving target: a dozen of our doctoral students are still doctoral students, six more have postdoctoral fellowships, and four have teaching contracts that may or may not lead to a more permanent situation. We could plausibly get to a point where half of the cohort, perhaps a little more, have secure appointments. Three more have institute or programn staff positions that keep them connected to academia. Overall, only 13 of our cohort, or 22 percent, are either no longer in academia or could not be accounted for.

In closing, a few observations on the research agenda. Nearly 30 percent of our students work on topics related to civil society, with a core on protests (Orange, Maidan). This reflects the strong presence of sociologists and anthropologists in the pool. The flip side is that only a couple work on regime politics (democracy, authoritarianism), the kind of research that Lucan Way and Serhiy Kudelia have been leading. And only two touch on the rule of law. In other words, our students shy away from the state and are attracted to non-state actors. Access to respondents and data may be a factor at play. Fourteen, or almost a quarter, work on World War II, often with an additional focus on how war events are interpreted in memory narratives. They touch on all the difficult questions: the Holocaust, the police, the Diviziia, the Polish-Ukrainian war, and the deportation of civilians. Seventy percent of our history doctoral students work on World War II.

Three final remarks. First, the study of the Holodomor at the graduate level is only beginning. We have had two candidates and there appears to be quite a few more in the emerging cohort. Second, the study of gender is on the rise. I can see that among my own students at the Chair and on ASN panels. Third, the most glaring absence is that of security studies. The proposals are not lacking, but we have not had a single paper-based presentation over the years by a doctoral student. This could be a bias on our part, as

the political scientists in our group are all in comparative politics, and not international relations. There are, however, persistent methodological issues: either too descriptive (such as following the conditionality process in the EU), lacking originality (as in the discourse analysis of dominant tropes), or normative (oriented more towards policy than theory).

Running the yearly Danyliw Seminar is an exercise in discovery – discovering the rising generation. The findings have been most encouraging.

#3
Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine

Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa
Application Deadline: 1 February 2019 (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 $22,000, with all tuition waived, for four years (with the possibility of adding a fifth year).

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

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

The application for the Kule Scholarship must include a 1000 word research proposal, two letters of recommendation (sent separately by the referees), and a CV and be mailed to Dominique Arel, School of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, Room, 7067, University of Ottawa, 120 University St., Ottawa ON K1N 6N5, Canada.
Applications will be considered only after the applicant has completed an application to the relevant doctoral program at the University of Ottawa. Consideration of applications will begin on 1 February 2019 and will continue until the award is announced.

The University of Ottawa is a bilingual university and applicants must have a certain oral and reading command of French. Specific requirements vary across departments.

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

#4

Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)

Department of Press and Public Relations
Prof. Dr. Andrii Portnov appointed Professor Entangled History of Ukraine
May 2018
https://bit.ly/2L39h6m

Prof. Dr. Stephan Kudert appointed Prof. Dr. Andrii Portnov Professor of "Entangled History of Ukraine."

"I am the only professor in Germany whose history of denomination includes Ukraine," said the Ukrainian-born historian following his appointment. "Being able to teach and research permanently at the Viadrina is a dream. The University and the cities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice are very much in line with my research interests," says Portnov, who studies mainly Ukrainian, Polish, Russian and Jewish history in the 19th and 20th centuries. He is particularly interested in a comparative perspective and interconnections between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia. For a historian, Ukraine is the key to better understanding this geographical area.

Portnov intends to build a Ukrainian studies porgram in the coming years at the Viadrina and at the Collegium Polonicum, which includes history and literature and political science. "I would like to continue the existing projects, such as the Viadrinicum Summer School and the Ukraine Calling advanced training program. I also plan to hold an interdisciplinary conference on Ukraine here in the Twin City once a year, and to expand Ukrainian language teaching for students."

["Entangled History of Ukraine" was used in English in the German-language announcement –UKL]

#5
New Film

The Trial
The State of Russia vs Oleg Sentsov
Directed by Askold Kurov, 2017
https://bit.ly/2suMc5V

This powerful documentary on the fabrication by the Russian state of the case of Crimean filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, currently on a hunger strike in a Siberian prison, is now available in open streaming, with English subtitles: https://bit.ly/2semu5g.

For my June 2017 blog post on the film, https://bit.ly/2xESXai

For the latest on his critical condition, https://bit.ly/2LNnBRA

#6
New Book

Timothy Snyder
The Road to Unfreedom
Russia, Europe, America
Tim Duggan Books, 2018
https://bit.ly/2HRNNMR

From the author of *On Tyranny* comes a stunning new chronicle of the rise of authoritarianism from Russia to Europe and America.

With the end of the Cold War, the victory of liberal democracy seemed final. Observers declared the end of history, confident in a peaceful, globalized future. This faith was misplaced. Authoritarianism returned to Russia, as Putin found fascist ideas that could be used to justify rule by the wealthy. In the 2010s, it has spread from east to west, aided by Russian warfare in Ukraine and cyberwar in Europe and the United States.

Russia found allies among nationalists, oligarchs, and radicals everywhere, and its drive to dissolve Western institutions, states, and values found resonance within the West itself. The rise of populism, the British vote against the EU, and the election of Donald Trump were all Russian goals, but their achievement reveals the vulnerability of Western societies.

In this forceful and unsparing work of contemporary history, based on vast research as well as personal reporting, Snyder goes beyond the headlines to expose the true nature

of the threat to democracy and law. To understand the challenge is to see, and perhaps renew, the fundamental political virtues offered by tradition and demanded by the future. By revealing the stark choices before us–between equality or oligarchy, individuality or totality, truth and falsehood–Snyder restores our understanding of the basis of our way of life, offering a way forward in a time of terrible uncertainty.

#7

A Conversation with Timothy Snyder on

The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America (Tim Duggan Books, 2018)
ASN World Convention, 3 May 2018
Transcription by Catherine Corriveau

****The most attended panel at the ASN World Convention, at Columbia University, was a Conversation between Timothy Snyder, author of the newly released The Road to Unfreedom (whose Chapter 5 is entirely on Maidan and the Russia-Ukraine War), and myself, as ASN Convention Director. Excerpts are featured below – DA****

Dominique Arel: An overarching element of your book is this attack on what you call "factuality." Beyond the technological changes brought about with the rise of social media and the web, what is the difference between the Soviet totalitarian "lie," as exposed by dissidents like Solzhenitsyn, and the Russian attack on factuality which is now spreading across the ocean?

Tim Snyder: Many Central European references and thinkers, such as Solzhenitsyn, were arguing for factuality in a late totalitarian context. They were arguing that the truth is not something that can just be grasped. The pursuit of the factual is a moral action in a certain political setting, which in itself is an important argument. An objectively comprehensive understanding of the truth cannot be achieved and no productive debate is possible if one is defining the self as owner of the truth. Taking the totalitarian reference in a different direction: one of the things we do not notice of cyberspace is just how totalitarian it is. We are confronted with a universe of control and calculation. The deep problem with the cyber world is that it dissolves the difference between what is true and what one wants to be true. Email leaks are an interesting representation of this control. In reading these emails, individuals eagerly engage in the totalitarian process, disregarding the rule of law, and breaching the boundaries of the personal and public lives. That is a sign that we don't remember what our traditional politics used to be about.

Let me then define what the difference is in terms of what is the same. This book is largely about "active measures": essentially intelligence work that gets someone else to do something by playing on their weaknesses. The Soviets were always the best at using these active measures. The Cold War was not won by spies but was won in the 3D world by consumer goods and debts. The cyber world has made it so that we do not spend as

much time in this same 3D world anymore. The measures are very much the same but the world has changed. The Russians only have to go through the Internet to extend their totalitarianism. The world has changed to favour those who are good at these active measure techniques. Indeed, Russia has used the cyberspace to pursue its goals and we (Americans) did not follow. It has been happening for a decade, beyond simply the US elections.

Why does the book focus on Putin's chosen philosopher Ivan Ilyin and why is it relevant to understand Russian politics, or more specifically, the attack on factuality?

As a general trend, there has been a return to the 1930's ideals, not only by the Russians, but by everyone. In the United States, this is the case when we say "America First," when Steve Bannon revived [Italian fascist thinker Julius] Evola, and in Britain similarly, even if it's not so philosophically specific. I wanted to make the point that ideas matter and that they matter a lot. The idea that ideas don't matter is a bad idea. It's an idea that allows people to lazily ignore the influence of ideas when they appear. Why Ilyin? It's sort of obvious when you look at the factual condition of the Russian discourse. There are not a lot of philosophers that have been quite literally dug up by presidents in the 21st century and so omnipresent in political discourse and propaganda. Ilyin thought that "our factual world" was entirely without merit and that God created the world. The only truth is the whole, which exists only implicitly, and only inside Russia. The only hope for the redemption of the world is that Russia will be ruled by a totalitarian leader, will bring all the fragments together, and will somehow restore the world, as Russia is responsible for the spirituality of the world. In line with this thought, if Russia is destroyed, the rest of the world doesn't matter. Ilyin's description of the nation as a body, and individuals as cells that must know and stay in their place, can be useful for the Russian elites, such as Putin or Surkov, to justify their oligarchic ideals.

Ilyin is also cited in a certain number of speeches regarding domestic and foreign policy, such as the invasion of Ukraine. As of March 2014, Ukraine no longer existed as a state for Russia. Rather than a cranking up of tensions in "international relations," it is a change in the nature of domestic relations. The nature of foreign relations did not change but rather virtues of civilisation will change: for example, for Putin, this Russian world includes Ukraine. It is not true that international relations exist in reaction to the West's actions. I did not choose Ilyin. The President of the Russian Federation chose to resuscitate him in every sense of the word. I wanted to show that you can present ideas coherently, that intellectual history matters and these ideas can be helpful in justifying actions. I am trying to show that older ideas can actually work pretty well with technologies of the early 21st century to build political orders that are unfamiliar and that we try to figure out.

You make the claim that the 2011 Russian parliamentary and 2012 presidential elections were not fair and free. In understanding that the elections are seen as illegitimate, the President seizes this discourse of politics of eternity: in your narrative, this is the trigger. The broader context is inequality, but really the trigger is the elections. When you shift to the case of the

United States, the trigger is less clear. The model is being exported, quite literally with Russian help, but what is the trigger in the American case?

The idea of eternality helps us think about a general process, but at the same time, there are contingencies in history. I present Russia in the 1990's as getting through the politics of inevitability [the idea that the laws of progress are known and that there are not alternatives] very quickly. The Russian disenchantment with the market and democracy is understandable and happened quite quickly, as this notion that capitalism was going to bring democracy was nonsensical. Similarly, this has happened in America, but it has been a slower process than in Russia. The superficial trigger is the elections. Nevertheless, there are deeper things to consider in assessing these dynamics. Russia was the first state that failed to join the European Union integration process, which is one of the most important things to know about Russia. Refusing to admit their failure and in response to this, Russian elites chose to change the nature of politics: it was not about achieving the rule of law but rather about achieving dictatorship, subjectivity and civilization. The Eurasia project is, in a way, a historical response to the failure of becoming Europe. An ever-deeper factor to consider is the crisis of succession. It is not so much that the elections were faked, it is that they were openly faked: even Putin admits that there were irregularities. What that means in the long term is that there is no succession mechanism. Russia faces this deep dark abyss because no one knows what will happen when Mr. Putin dies as nobody really believes in the election process anymore. This fuels the Russian foreign policy, forcing Russia to send so much energy outwards, including to the United States. Russia angles for the particularly weak places that we show them.

Strategic relativism must also be considered in the equation, as politics and the so-called international relation process are now less about power and more about how people feel at the time. President Trump personifies a fictional embodiment of illusionary truth encapsulating emotional responses to events. He does not necessarily lie, but rather, broadcasts unreality, disregarding traditional factuality. Trump's fiction was only possible because of Russia and he serves as a Russian instrument in turning the American system upside down. In this way, 2016 was a shock to the existing politics of inevitability and the traditional notions of power. This is important, as one of the novelties of the 21st century is our capacity for belief without object and the possibility for fiction to be randomly constructed. Credulousness very much impacted by action and facts may only serve to fuel hatred for those who believe in opposing or diverging myths. Politics of "us vs. them" therefore become extremely prevalent and efficient techniques in political discourse. One of the objectives of history is to highlight structures of accountability. Recalling the title of the book, it becomes our task to exit the road of unfreedom and to head towards a road of responsibility, seeking out and rewarding factuality.

#8
New Book

Serhii Plokhy
Chernobyl
The History of a Nuclear Catastrophe
Basic Books, 2018
https://bit.ly/2kkWmBk

From a preeminent historian of Eastern Europe, the definitive history of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. On the morning of April 26, 1986, Europe witnessed the worst nuclear disaster in history: the explosion of a reactor at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Soviet Ukraine. Dozens died of radiation poisoning, fallout contaminated half the continent, and thousands fell ill. In Chernobyl, Serhii Plokhy draws on new sources to tell the dramatic stories of the firefighters, scientists, and soldiers who heroically extinguished the nuclear inferno. He lays bare the flaws of the Soviet nuclear industry, tracing the disaster to the authoritarian character of Communist party rule, the regime's control of scientific information, and its emphasis on economic development over all else. Today, the risk of another Chernobyl looms in the mismanagement of nuclear power in the developing world. A moving and definitive account, Chernobyl is also an urgent call to action.

#9
New Book

Omer Bartov
Anatomy of a Genocide
The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz
New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018
https://bit.ly/2HaMNxO

A fascinating and cautionary examination of how genocide can take root at the local level—turning neighbors, friends, and even family members against one another—as seen through the eastern European border town of Buczacz during World War II.

For more than four hundred years, the Eastern European border town of Buczacz—today part of Ukraine—was home to a highly diverse citizenry. It was here that Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews all lived side by side in relative harmony. Then came World War II, and three years later the entire Jewish population had been murdered by German and Ukrainian police, while Ukrainian nationalists eradicated Polish residents. In truth, though, this genocide didn't happen so quickly.

In *Anatomy of a Genocide* Omer Bartov explains that ethnic cleansing doesn't occur as is so often portrayed in popular history, with the quick ascent of a vitriolic political leader and the unleashing of military might. It begins in seeming peace, slowly and often unnoticed, the culmination of pent-up slights and grudges and indignities. The perpetrators aren't just sociopathic soldiers. They are neighbors and friends and family. They are human beings, proud and angry and scared. They are also middle-aged men who come from elsewhere, often with their wives and children and parents, and settle into a life of bourgeois comfort peppered with bouts of mass murder: an island of normality floating on an ocean of blood.

For more than two decades Bartov, whose mother was raised in Buczacz, traveled extensively throughout the region, scouring archives and amassing thousands of documents rarely seen until now. He has also made use of hundreds of first-person testimonies by victims, perpetrators, collaborators, and rescuers. *Anatomy of a Genocide* profoundly changes our understanding of the social dynamics of mass killing and the nature of the Holocaust as a whole. Bartov's book isn't just an attempt to understand what happened in the past. It's a warning of how it could happen again, in our own towns and cities—much more easily than we might think.

#10
New Book

Jeffrey Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg
Intimate Violence
Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018
https://bit.ly/2LP4BCc

Why do pogroms occur in some localities and not in others? Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg examine a particularly brutal wave of violence that occurred across hundreds of predominantly Polish and Ukrainian communities in the aftermath of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. The authors note that while some communities erupted in anti-Jewish violence, most others remained quiescent. In fact, fewer than 10 percent of communities saw pogroms in 1941, and most ordinary gentiles never attacked Jews.

Intimate Violence is a novel social-scientific explanation of ethnic violence and the Holocaust. It locates the roots of violence in efforts to maintain Polish and Ukrainian dominance rather than in anti-Semitic hatred or revenge for communism. In doing so, it cuts through painful debates about relative victimhood that are driven more by metaphysical beliefs in Jewish culpability than empirical evidence of perpetrators and victims. Pogroms, they conclude, were difficult to start, and local conditions in most places prevented their outbreak despite a general anti-Semitism and the collapse of the

central state. Kopstein and Wittenberg shed new light on the sources of mass ethnic violence and the ways in which such gruesome acts might be avoided.

#11
Journal Symposium

Identity Politics in Times of Crisis
Post-Soviet Affairs 34 (2-3), 2018
https://bit.ly/2s5QnE8

Olga Onuch, Henry E. Hale and Gwendolyn Sasse, Introduction

Articles

Olga Onuch and Henry E. Hale, Capturing Ethnicity: The Case of Ukraine

Grigori Pop-Eleches and Graeme B. Robertson,
Identity and Polititcal Preferences in Ukraine—before and after the Euromaidan

Volodymyr Kulyk
Shedding Russianness, Recasting Ukrainianness:
The Post-Euromaidan Dynamics of Ethnonational Identifications in Ukraine

Gwendolyn Sasse and Alice Lackner
War and Identity: The Case of the Donbas in Ukraine

Elise Giuliano
Who Supported Separatism in Donbas?
Ethnicity and Popular Opinion at the Start of the Ukraine Crisis

Commentaries

Lowell W. Barrington
Understanding Identity in Ukraine—and Elsewhere

Oxana Shevel
Towards New Horizons in the Study of Identities in Ukraine

Dominique Arel
How Ukraine Has Become More Ukrainian

#12
Journal Symposium

Civil Society in Post-Maidan Ukraine
Kyiv-Mohyla Law and Politics Journal, No. 3, 2017
https://bit.ly/2xErEwq
[In Open Access]

Olga Burlyuk, Natalia Shapovalova, Kateryna Zarembo
Introduction, Civil Society in Ukraine: Building on Euromaidan Legacy

Susann Worschech, New Civic Activism in Ukraine: Building Society from Scratch?

Kateryna Zarembo, Substituting for the State: The Role of Volunteers in Defense Reforms in Post-Maidan Ukraine

Valentyna Romanova, The Comparative Analysis of Regional Governors' Approaches to Fostering Inclusive Political Institutions in Post-Maidan Ukraine

Ganna Bazilo, Giselle Bosse, Talking Peace at the Edge of War: Local Civil Society Narratives and Reconciliation in Eastern Ukraine

Tatiana Kyselova, Professional Peacemakers in Ukraine: Mediators and Dialogue Facilitators Before and After 2014

Halyna Budivska, Dariya Orlova, Between Professionalism and Activism: Ukrainian Journalism after the Euromaidan

Maryna Shevtsova, Learning the Lessons from the Euromaidan: The Ups and Downs of LGBT Activism in the Ukrainian Public Sphere

Vera Axyonova, Diana Zubko, The European Union through the Eyes of Ukrainian Think Tankers: Studying EU Perceptions Post-Euromaidan

#13
Russian Journalist Lives to Tell the Tale of His Murder

by Leonid Bershidsky
Bloomberg, 30 May 2018
https://bloom.bg/2JkTYIZ

The survival skills of Russian journalist Arkady Babchenko are nothing short of amazing. He fought in two wars and came back alive. He survived several conflicts as a war reporter. On Tuesday, if the Ukrainian authorities are to be believed, he nearly got killed for his political opinions; his family, his friends and the global media all considered him dead — but he resurfaced on Wednesday afternoon, alive and well.

Ukrainian police reported on Tuesday that Babchenko's wife found him in a pool of blood at the entrance to his apartment in Kiev, shot in the back by a hit man, and that he died on his way to hospital. The reporter's friends and colleagues — including this one — wrote obituaries and tearful Facebook posts. Then, on Wednesday afternoon, Babchenko showed up at a press conference and the Ukrainian Security Service said it had all been staged so the hit man could be traced to the person who had given him the contract. That, according to the Ukrainians, was a local man who had been recruited by Russian intelligence.

Ukrainian legislator Anton Gerashchenko praised the "brilliant special operation" and wrote that "law enforcers couldn't fail to understand that news of Arkady Babchenko's murder would send a shot of pain through thousands of hears the world over, they couldn't do it any other way." The theatrics will probably hurt Ukraine's credibility, but it's more important to consider why Babchenko was a credible target for such an attack on his life — which wouldn't be the first one of this kind for an opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Active opponents of the Putin regime in Russia — politicians, investigative journalists — can be harassed and jailed for short terms like Alexey Navalny and his crew of dirt diggers. They can pursue their journalistic careers overseas or even in Moscow, like the authors of numerous published exposés about regime figures, including Vladimir Putin's daughters. But they don't tend to die for what they know.

It's their strong, passionately expressed opinions that put regime opponents in mortal danger. That's the pattern which unites Babchenko with Anna Politkovskaya and Boris Nemtsov, both murdered in Moscow with no anti-Kremlin intelligence services to protect them.

Babchenko didn't start out particularly opinionated. He was sent to the first Chechen war as an 18-year-old conscript in the mid-1990s, then re-enlisted to fight in the second one. The books he's written about it ("One Soldier's War" has been translated into

English; I recommend it) are anything but politicized. They are, as he admitted, therapy — attempts to get war out of his system. They are matter-of-factly physical, gritty and sarcastic — stories of survival told deliberately from the point of view of someone focused on making it through another day even if it means selling weapons to the enemy. They steer clear of delving into the motives behind the wars.

Since 2000, Babchenko worked as a war reporter for a number of Russian news outlets. His journalism differed sharply from his prose: He made no secret of condemning, quite consistently, all of the Putin regime's wars — the one in South Ossetia and Georgia in 2008, the unacknowledged one in eastern Ukraine since 2014, the one fought in Syria since 2015. Reading his stories after having read some of his prose, I think I understood where he was coming from. Despite the widely touted Putin-era military modernization, what Babchenko saw wherever he went was the ugly, dehumanizing, desperately violent military in which he served. It was hard for him to justify the endless repetition of his Chechen experiences for others.

That led to a particular kind of moral clarity in his writing and a lack of nuance that even Babchenko's colleagues and editors couldn't always accommodate.

In December, 2016, a Russian plane carrying a Defense Ministry choir and a delegation of dignitaries and journalists flying to visit the troops in Syria crashed into the Black Sea. Babchenko responded with a Facebook post saying he wasn't particularly sorry for the ministry employees or for propagandists from government TV stations. He wrote:

"No, I have no sympathy or pity. I do not express condolences to the next of kin. Just as they didn't. They continued to sing and dance in support of the government or pour manure from TV screens even after people died. I only have one feeling: I don't give a damn. It wasn't I who put myself in opposition to this government and its servants. It was the government and its servants that put themselves in opposition to me. It was they who appointed me an enemy and a traitor."

Babchenko described what followed in a column for The Guardian: a full-scale bullying campaign, not just on social networks but on state TV with its massive firepower, with legislators and all sorts of pro-Kremlin characters and outlets joining in. Death threats arrived by the thousand. Even Babchenko's friend and erstwhile editor at the liberal Novaya Gazeta newspaper wrote that he would now cross the street if he accidentally ran into Babchenko.

Many of my generally anti-Putin friends and colleagues thought at the time that Babchenko's hatred of the Putin war and propaganda machines had crossed a line into callous incoherence. I too thought he'd missed a good opportunity to show more humanity than those he criticized, or at least to remain silent. Now, I'm not sure anymore — even despite Babchenko's miraculous resurrection.

The reporter moved first to Prague, then to Kiev. The latter isn't exactly a safe place for journalists: some high-profile murders, including the one of another Russian reporter and editor, Pavel Sheremet, remain unsolved. Babchenko, the professional survivor, has been more lucky than others.

That doesn't change the fact that he still shares a defining trait with Politkovskaya and Nemtsov — that clarity and certainty of opinion about the Putin regime. All three have hated it for its cult of force, its contempt for human life, the hypocrisy of its propaganda — its reptile cruelty and cunning and its lies. All three could be counted on never to equivocate. "On the one hand, on the other hand" was not their style; they delivered a simple message they believed in, an inconvenient "us vs. them" message than won them more enemies than friends.

Even despite their inability to deliver that message to large Russian audiences, it apparently has plenty of power of its own. Facts can be distorted by propaganda. Convictions that grow from personal experience are much tougher to counteract, except with a bullet. It's good when it misses — even though Babchenko's friends have a good reason to smack him when they next see him for giving them such a fright.

#14

Death of 15-year-old Girl in Shelling in Donbas Highlights Child Death Toll in Russia's War on Ukraine

Kyiv Post, 29 May 2018
by Veronika Melkozerova
https://bit.ly/2LP7Zgn

Daria Kazemirova, a 15-year-old resident of Zalizne, a Ukrainian government-controlled town in the war-torn part of Donetsk Oblast, some 700 kilometers southeast of Kyiv, was killed on May 28 when a shell exploded in the yard of her house.

Kazemirova was in the yard at 12.30 p.m. when forces in the Russian-occupied part of Donetsk launched a shelling attack on Ukrainian-held frontline areas.

A shell landed three meters away from her, the press service of Donetsk Oblast National Police wrote on its website on May 28. Daria was severely wounded by shell fragments, and had no chance of survival, the police said.

"The war in the Donbas is not over," Vyacheslav Abroskin, the head of Donetsk Oblast National Police department wrote on Facebook on May 28. "Every day thousands of Ukrainian citizens from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are suffering from it. Children are dying in this war."

Police have categorized the incident as a terrorist attack.

Only six days earlier, on May 22, another tragic incident involving child casualties occurred in the Russian-controlled city Debaltseve, in the war-torn part of Donetsk Oblast. A 14-year-old boy died and another two boys and a girl were wounded in an explosion on a bus, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in the Donbas reported on its website. The explosion was caused by a grenade that was in the possession of one of the children, according to media reports.

One of the grandmothers of one of the injured boys told the SMM that her 15-year-old grandson had serious wounds in elbow and thigh and was taken to a hospital in a hospital in Yenakiieve, a Russian- controlled city, some 41 kilometers northwest of Donetsk.

Witnesses of the tragedy told the OSCE that the explosion occurred in the bus while it was driving in the city, filling the vehicle with a lot of smoke.

A total of 95 boys and 48 girls have died since the start of the war in the Donbas, with another 80 children being killed when Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down by a missile launched by a unit of Russia's 53rd Anti-aircraft Missile Brigade. Overall, 223 children have been killed during the war in eastern Ukraine, Iryna Yakovlieva, the human rights officer of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, told the Kyiv Post on May 29.

Russia's war in the Donbas has killed more than 10,300 people since the Kremlin launched its military intervention in the region in 2014.

More than 2,500 civilian men, women, and children have been killed, and over 9,000 injured since 2014, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or OCHA reported in April. Explosive hazard contamination in eastern Ukraine impacts 1.9 million people, including around 200,000 children.

As the war in the Donbas enters its fifth year, UNICEF has reported that more than 500,000 children are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

Daily ceasefire violations have left more than 200,000 children and their families at risk of death and injury, UNICEF has reported.

Over 600,000 people, including 100,000 children, are bearing the brunt of the continued armed clashes along the 457-km front line in war-torn Donbas, the OCHA has reported.

#15
The Only "Ukrainian School" Left in Occupied Crimea Teaches in Russian

by Halya Coynash
Human Rights in Ukraine, 21 May 2018
https://bit.ly/2rUY1C6

A year after the International Court of Justice at the Hague ordered Russia "to ensure availability of education in the Ukrainian language" in occupied Crimea, the only remaining 'Ukrainian school' does not a single class taught in Ukrainian.

School No. 20 in Feodosia does claim, both on the website in Ukrainian which stopped being updated in January 2016, and in a Russian-language version, that classes are available in Ukrainian and in Russian. The Crimean Human Rights Group has, however, learned from both students at the school and their parents that this is not the case.

In its report on 'the situation with education in state (Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar) languages and the study on native languages', the Russian-controlled 'Crimean education ministry' cites this school with fictitious teaching in Ukrainian. The Crimean Human Rights Group [CHRG] notes that this is not the first time that the 'ministry's assertion on that site are at odds with the actual situation.

The ministry provides a list of seven Crimean schools which it claims provided Ukrainian language classes for the 2017/2018 school year. CHRU has information that the only Ukrainian class at Lycée No. 11 in Simferopol was stopped back in 2016 and now Ukrainian is only available as an optional extra course.

The claim that Zuysk Secondary School No. 2 in the Belogorsk district has classes taught in the Crimean Tatar language also clashes with the information which CHRG has, namely that children are taught in Russian.

It was evident soon after Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea that the Ukrainian language was being pushed out of Crimean schools. Oleksandr Sedov from the Crimean Human Rights Group recently described the forms of intimidation used. At the parents' meetings at the end of each school year, parents are "asked to decide" what language they want their children to study in, while being strongly 'advised' by the teachers and school head to choose Russian.

He noted also that "people are simply afraid to demonstrate their Ukrainian identity since the propaganda is making Ukrainians into 'enemies of the people'"

In March 2017, the UN's International Court of Justice began preliminary hearings into Ukraine's claim that Russia is violating two UN conventions - the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism through its role in the military conflict

in Donbas, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination against Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians in occupied Crimea.

The Court accepted prima facie jurisdiction over both claims (dashing Russia's hopes that the claims would be rejected). Importantly, it also agreed that provisional measures were required in occupied Crimea, pending a final ruling. It ordered that Russia withdraw its extraordinary ban on the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, which is the self-governing body of the main indigenous people of Crimea. It also ordered Russia to ensure access to education in Ukrainian. The latter vote was unanimous, while that regarding the Mejlis was by a majority of 13 against 3.

The Court ruling was extremely important though few believed that Russia would keep its commitment and obey the ruling. It was, however, assumed that they might try to make some cosmetic improvements to the situation with Ukrainian.

In fact, this has not happened, with Russia seemingly relying on lies presented on the occupation ministry website and the information vacuum it has deliberately created through restrictions on the media and on human rights and other monitors.

The Crimean Human Rights Group is therefore asking people in Crimea to inform them of any restrictions on studying in Ukrainian or Crimean Tatar.

As reported earlier, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed that its actions in early 2014 were needed to 'protect' ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers in Crimea. On the eve of that invasion, 90.7% of school students studied in Russian; 6.5% in Ukrainian; and 2.7% in Crimean Tatar. 99.2% of all Crimean children studied Russian as a subject. There were 7 schools with the entire program in Ukrainian and 15 in Crimean Tatar, as well as several schools with two languages.

Russia wasted no time in ensuring that even that top-heavy situation became still further stacked against Ukrainian and, to a lesser extent, Crimean Tatar. By 2014/2015 school year only one of 532 schools in Crimea had a full program in Ukrainian, and the overall number of classes in Ukrainian had fallen from 875 to 163. By 2016, there were only 28 classes, meaning that only 371 children were receiving education in Ukrainian. This was 0.2% of the overall number of children at school in Crimea.

While there has been a reduction in the already small number of schools with lessons taught in Crimean Tatar, the drop is modest in comparison (the number of schools fell from 384 to 348, for example).

#16

Thirty Percent of the News on Russian TV is Dedicated to Ukraine – UCMC Research

Ukrainian Crisis Media Center, 23 May 2018
https://bit.ly/2Jk7bBX

A third of all news on top Russian TV channels is dedicated to Ukraine, and more than 90% of references are negative. In the spotlight of Russian mass media are Ukrainian state institutions, which, according to the Russian media, represent a radical minority of the state. Such conclusions were presented at the Ukrainian Crisis Media Center by the Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group (HWAG) of the UCMC.

HWAG has analyzed the news of the top Russian channels over the past three years and presented six main narratives of Russian propaganda about Ukraine. 33% of all references to Ukraine are related to the thesis that there is a civil war in Ukraine. ~~W~~within this narrative, a lot is communicated about the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The focus is on the delegitimization of the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces of Ukraine are being delegitimized by accusations that it commits crimes against the civilian population, against humanity. Allegedly, the Armed Forces suffer huge losses and are the source of ceasefire violations~~,~~ explained Ruslan Kavatsiuk, an analyst of Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group, advisor to the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration.

In the second narrative, Russian propaganda presents Ukraine as "a failed state". Russian media reinforce this thesis by delegitimizing public authorities. In 15% of all references to Ukraine, Russian propaganda highlights the diverse Russia assistance to Donbas. "This is one of the evidence of how the Russian authorities are trying to justify for their own population, on the one hand, why the Crimea was taken to the "Russian world", and Donbas was not. On the other hand, the level of tension in Donbas itself is decreasing because the local population living there also wants to understand the answer to this question," said Ruslan Kavatsiuk.

Among the other narratives of Russian propaganda is the coverage of Ukraine as a state in which Russophobia prevails, the Russian-speaking population is being persecuted, and the radical and "fascist" minority is in power. In six percent of the news, Russian mass media use the thesis that Ukraine is a puppet state controlled by the West. "If Ukraine, for example, has gained visa-free regime, it's because the West is flirting with Ukraine. If the West has given nothing to Ukraine – it means that the West is punishing its puppet Ukraine. This is the carrot and the stick used by the West to rule Ukraine", Ruslan Kavatsiuk said.

In addition to the fact that Russian mass media cover Ukraine only from the negative side, they often present false information. "Stop Fake" has found more than 2 thousand fake news in the Russian media over the past 4 years. "If you have been wondering which

Russian media organizations are involved in the fake news production, the answer is all or almost all, briefly speaking. It does not make any difference if the organizations are state-owned or are in private ownership. In Russian realities, there is no difference, because, de facto, the information flow, the news cycle is regulated from the center", – said Evhen Fedchenko, co-founder of "StopFake".
At the same time, some Ukrainian media also use the main theses of Russian propaganda. Usually, such information is highlighted by information channels. "We understand that some Ukrainian media are not directly Ukrainian and they are financed by other parties, including by Russia. Unfortunately, the SBU does not work well enough to prove how the so-called 'Ukrainian mass media' are funded. On the other hand, the problem is that now the spread of Russian propaganda theses often correlates with criticism of the Ukrainian authorities. It is very difficult to distinguish between the criticism that should take place. Democracy is impossible without criticism; democratic media should criticize the government. Very often it is taken up by Russia in its own interests", explained Natalia Ligachova, chairman of the board of "Detector Media".

The Hybrid Warfare Analitycal Group of UCMC has also presented the main narratives of Russian propaganda about Europe. The presentations of this study were held in London, Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, and Tallinn. "I had the personal experience of presenting this research and I heard how it was commented on in Western countries. The reaction was shocking, especially in Scandinavian countries: 85% of absolutely negative perception", said Raul Rebane, a media expert from Estonia.

The research was conducted by the Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group of UCMC with the support of the Estonian Center for Eastern Partnership.

#17

The Ukrainian Far-Right National Corps Picks Up Where Svoboda Left Off

by Anton Shekhovtsov
Euromaidan Press, 22 May 2018
https://bit.ly/2Hc2EfF

Five years ago, the Ukrainian far-right Svoboda (Freedom) party could legitimately brag about their vast contacts with European far-right movements and parties. Even Svoboda's predecessor, the Social-National Party of Ukraine (SNPU, renamed into Svoboda in 2004), was a member of the Euronat, an international far-right organisation formed at the end of the 1990s by the French National Front (FN). And it was the FN, then still headed by Jean-Marie Le Pen, who advocated granting Svoboda an observer status in the Alliance of European National Movements (AENM) formed in 2009.

Svoboda, in order to still maintain international contacts, had to turn to more extreme organisations. Taras Osaulenko, head of Svoboda's international relations, took part in the "Vision Europa" conference organized by extreme-right Party of the Swedes in Stockholm on 23-24 March 2013. The conference also hosted representatives of the New Force (Italy), Land and People (France), Party of the Danes (Denmark), National Democracy (Spain). In May 2013, Svoboda's MP Mykhaylo Holovko visited the Landtag of Saxony to speak to the local office of the neo-Nazi National-Democratic Party of Germany (NPD). Furthermore, in June that year, representatives of the New Force, including its leader Roberto Fiore, visited Ukraine where they discussed the creation of a new group of European far-right movements with representatives of Svoboda.

It all went rather well, but the Ukrainian revolution in 2014 messed things up for Svoboda. At first, however, it did not look this way. For example, John Morgan, the co-founder of the far-right Arktos publishing house that published, in particular, translations of Russian fascist Aleksandr Dugin's works, visited Kyiv during the revolution upon the invitation from Svoboda's Yuriy Noevy. But after the revolution and the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the FN and Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), being – like Jobbik then – openly pro-Kremlin, criticised Ukraine and, thus, distanced from Svoboda. The year 2014 essentially became the end of Svoboda's international contacts. Roberto Fiore's New Force even deleted from its website a report on his visit to Kyiv in 2013.

Other Ukrainian far-right organisations also failed to either establish or re-establish contacts with European far-right movements. There were a few exceptions, of course. The Italian fascist CasaPound was split on the "Ukrainian question" – some of its members supported Ukraine, while some others supported Russia. And several members of minor European extreme-right movements went to Ukraine to fight on the Ukrainian side against pro-Russian separatists and Russian military.

In 2016, the Azov Civic Corps, a Ukrainian extreme-right organisation founded on the basis of the Azov regiment, cautiously started to reach out to European far-right organisations. On 10 November that year, a representative of the Azov Civic Corps participated in a far-right conference that took place in Warsaw and hosted representatives of the Polish Niklot group and CasaPound movement. Against the background of the epidemic support for Putin's Russia among the European far right, the conference that hosted European and Ukrainian far-right activists was quite unique, but still largely insignificant.

In the beginning of 2017, the Azov Civic Corps was renamed into the National Corps and re-activated its search for European allies. The main driving force behind those attempts was Olena Semenyaka, a representative of the Traditionalist wing of the Ukrainian far-right scene. She already had experience in building international far-right relations. She cooperated with Troy Southgate and contributed to publications of his Black Front Press; she also had contacts with John Morgan and Aleksandr Dugin but severed ties with the latter because of his rampantly anti-Ukrainian stances.

While building a bridge to European far-right movements and organisations, Semenyaka's challenge was to re-inform them on the "Russian question" and convince them to support Ukraine, rather than Russia, as the majority of far-right parties in the West do. As the recent developments show, she chose a rather successful strategy. First, she built contacts with remaining anti-Kremlin far-right movements in Central and Eastern Europe. Second, after securing support for the Ukrainian far right from them, she used her knowledge of the works of Julius Evola and Ernst Jünger (who are revered by the European far right of all geopolitical convictions) to reach out to European far right who are less friendly to Ukraine.

In October 2017, the Young Nationalists (JN), a youth wing of the NPD, announced a conference called [RE]generation.Europa to take place on 11-12 May 2018. The JN listed a dozen of participating far-right organisations, including Svoboda, which would be represented by Yury Noevy, and Russian Imperial Movement (RID), which became notorious for its logistical and material support for pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. In February 2018, as Noevy found out of the RID's participation in the conference, he cancelled his participation, possibly out of fear of confronting the Russian enemy in real life. The JN also listed five guest speakers, including Olena Semenyaka (without mentioning her affiliation with the National Corps), who eventually took part in the conference.

According to various reports from the event, Noevy's decision to cancel his participation was strategically misguided: the RID's representative chose a wrong strategy to present the Russian cause and promoted Russian imperialism which was not well accepted by many participants of the conference who considered imperialism as an antithesis to their ultranationalism. During a drinking party, the RID's representative was even punched by a member of the Czech National and Social Front. At the same time, Semenyaka (and one more female member of the National Corps) seem to have built even more international contacts.

It remains to be seen whether the National Corps will be able to strengthen their relations with the NPD (and the broader West European far-right milieu): the German neo-Nazis are largely pro-Kremlin and will not be easily "re-informed". The NPD's Udo Voigt, who was listed as a guest speaker at the conference, participated in the fascist conference in St. Petersburg in 2015, while the NPD itself is a member of the pro-Putin, extreme-right Alliance for Peace and Freedom led by Roberto Fiore. However, it is already significant that the National Corps' representatives took part in an event organised by the very same people who were the last most significant allies of Svoboda until 2014.

#18

Who Killed the Kiev Protesters? A 3-D Model Holds the Clues

by Mattathias Schwartz
New York Times Magazine, 31 May 2018
https://nyti.ms/2IWqwtu

On Feb. 20, 2014, Evelyn Nefertari, a graduate student living in western Ukraine, watched as the most violent day in her country's recent history unfolded. On that morning, paramilitary police forces loyal to President Viktor Yanukovych clashed with protesters in Kiev, who were demonstrating against the government's tilt toward Russia and away from economic integration with Western Europe. When the tear gas and smoke finally cleared, four police officers and 48 protesters were dead. "They were highly educated intellectuals," Nefertari told me recently over the phone. "The nation paid a very high price for freedom." In the aftermath of the confrontation, she decided to assemble the definitive record of what happened. "The whole country was in mourning," she remembers. "I knew that I should do it."

Most of the deaths occurred within half an hour along a few hundred feet of streetscape. The scene unfolded before dozens of cameramen, smartphones and security cameras. But these recorded fragments from the day were overshadowed by a fight over what they really showed: The claims of grief-stricken activists, who blamed the Ukrainian paramilitary for shooting the protesters, collided with denials from Yanukovych, who would later testify that the killings were part of a "planned provocation" and "pseudo-operation" carried out by the protesters themselves, a U.S.-backed plot to remove him from power. Pro-Russia sources went even further, pushing the notion that the Feb. 20 killings were a "false flag" operation carried out by snipers associated with the protesters, or mercenaries from the country of Georgia, who were said to have shot down from nearby buildings. To this day, the story continues to circulate on Kremlin-funded media like Sputnik and RT.

The killings took place within a few blocks of Kiev's Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or "independence square," the center of the nationwide protests. Nefertari began collecting and synchronizing snippets of video from the internet and from news broadcasts. The task seemed impossible given that the videos were shot in different places from different angles and filled with irrelevant noise. Only with great patience, by picking out sounds and landmarks, could she begin to assign them time stamps and coordinates and figure out how each related to the others. The most crucial videos showed civilian protesters in helmets and winter jackets facing off against masked riflemen who had taken up barricaded shooting positions. The protesters cowered in groups of five or six behind makeshift shields; one would suddenly tumble to the ground and be carried off by comrades on a stretcher. On the first anniversary of the killings, Nefertari released a 164-minute real-time video on YouTube showing the standoff from up to nine simultaneous points of view. Within the first month of being posted, it was watched more than 270,000 times.

Three years later, Nefertari's video trove has turned into the seed of an even more complicated piece of analysis: a sophisticated multimedia presentation that tries to recreate the deaths of three protesters using three-dimensional laser scans of the streetscape, ballistics analysis and autopsy reports. The combination of so many disparate data sources into a single three-dimensional model has little precedent. The arduous work of timing and placing individual videos was assisted by artificial intelligence, which helped organize and synchronize the enormous quantity of footage. Now assembled on a mini-PC and received as evidence by a Ukrainian criminal court, the reconstruction project could prove crucial in the trial of five police officers who, Ukrainian prosecutors say, are responsible for the killings.

The Maidan demonstrations are one of many cases in which mass protests, fueled by popular discontent and social media, have threatened to topple, or at least embarrass, governments around the world. From the border fence of the Gaza Strip to urban centers in Nicaragua and Turkey, the response from the international community often hinges on whether the party in power can effectively make the case that its use of force was justified. To avoid being cast as authoritarian, governments must do more than control the crowd; they must control the narrative. Forensic tools like those used in the Ukraine inquiry can make the difference in pinning down the truth of what happened. Similar investigations, using detailed analyses of open-source data, have been conducted into the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government and the killing of a Venezuelan activist.

In Ukraine, the Maidan protests began in a similar way to the Tahrir Square demonstrations in Egypt and the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States — a few thousand determined protesters battling the police for a small but highly visible piece of urban terrain. The anti-Yanukovych crowds toppled a statue of Lenin and cut off the wide Soviet-era boulevards with piles of debris, pulling up paving stones and heaping them up into barricades. Russian-backed media quickly set about framing the protesters as "fascists" who posed a threat to Russian ethnic minorities in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Ukrainian police officers tried and failed to scatter the assembly by force, and by December, protesters were occupying and setting fire to government buildings.

By the third week of February, protesters had spent months living in a tent city in the heart of Kiev. They built kitchens and brought portable toilets to the encampment on the central square. Their purpose was to challenge Yanukovych's rule and to demand reforms: new elections, more freedom to protest and closer ties with the European Union.

The violence came to a head on Feb. 20, during one of the bloodiest and most controversial hours of European conflict since the end of the Cold War. Police officers massed around the protesters, who set their barricades on fire and tried to march on Ukraine's Parliament. Protesters threw bricks and Molotov cocktails; the police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. A wave of people pushed out of the square and down Instytutska Street. Defending themselves with helmets and homemade shields, the protesters were met by barricaded riflemen from the Berkut, an elite police force loyal to Yanukovych. By the end of the day, dozens of bodies lay in the streets.

Almost immediately, a disinformation campaign began on social media to try to reframe the violence. Reporting by The Washington Post has attributed the effort to the G.R.U., Russia's military-intelligence agency. On Facebook and the Russian social-media site VKontakte, G.R.U. operatives created fake accounts, which characterized the Maidan uprising as a "coup" by "armed nationalists." The G.R.U. also set up online groups that promoted Crimea's secession from Ukraine. The effort, which also used paid Facebook ads, presaged Russian interference with the 2016 presidential election in the United States.

Two days after the shootings, Yanukovych fled to Russia. Over the next few weeks, Ukraine's Parliament held new elections. Pro-Western parties won at the polls and would later enter into a trade agreement with the European Union. President Vladimir Putin of Russia claimed that what had just taken place amounted to a coup. He seized Crimea and made inroads into Ukraine's eastern provinces. In April, prosecutors in Kiev opened an investigation into the Feb. 20 killings, searching for someone to hold responsible for the protesters' deaths. Prosecutors hoped to bring charges against the unit of the Berkut that appeared to have taken up shooting positions behind a barricade on Instytutska Street. Most of the unit's members had fled to Russia. Ukrainian prosecutors tried to extradite them; the Russian government ignored the request.

The remaining five members of the Berkut unit awaited trial in a Kiev prison. Their Kalashnikov assault rifles and pump-action shotguns were discovered at the bottom of a nearby lake, sawed into pieces. In addition to murder, the officers were accused of terrorism: using violence to intimidate the population. Because the officers worked as an organized unit, it wasn't necessary to prove which of them fired the lethal shots. "We defend the government elected by the people," one officer told a German TV station. "None of our commands were illegal," he went on. "We just did our job." All five pleaded not guilty. The bullets that killed many of the protesters had long since disappeared, and without them it would be impossible to work backward from the bodies to the individual rifles. The prosecutors would have to find another way.

A few months after the protests ended, lawyers representing the families of the dead protesters started working with the prosecution to try and put together a reconstruction of the shootings that the court could accept as evidence. They became aware of Nefertari's project and reached out to her. "Evelyn's work was the keystone," said Pavlo Dykan, one of the lawyers. "It allowed this case to proceed."

In the summer of 2015, Dykan and his colleague Aleksandra Yatsenko presented Nefertari's video and discussed the challenges of the Maidan case at a small conference at the Center for Human Rights Science at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Among the other presenters was Brad Samuels, a principal of SITU, an architecture firm and research lab in Brooklyn. The firm combined traditional architecture work with grant-funded deep dives at the outer limits of human rights research. Samuels had come to the conference to present a project that SITU did with Eyal Weizman's forensic-architecture research group on the death of Bassem Abu Rahmah, a Palestinian protester in the West

Bank who was struck in the chest by a tear-gas canister. Israeli authorities claimed that Abu Rahmah's death was an accident. SITU reconstructed the event using live video and ballistics to show that the fatal tear-gas round, which was supposed to be fired upward at a steep angle, was fired straight at Abu Rahmah. The case did not lead to an indictment, but SITU's work was accepted by an Israeli court as evidence. Samuels told me that the parallels between the Abu Rahmah and Maidan cases were clear.

"The problem was how to take multiple vantage points and put them together into a coherent analysis," he said. "Maidan was the same problem set, but on steroids."

The quantity of raw footage amassed by Nefertari was overwhelming, running into the thousands of hours. The problem was how to fuse it into a whole that would persuade the judges and stand up to cross-examination. Prosecutors would have to do more than cherry-pick a few convincing moments. Their theory of the case would have to be strong enough to survive every alternative scenario, from the mysterious rooftop snipers to the possibility that protesters were killed by friendly fire. Samuels worked out the basics of a collaboration with Dykan and Yatsenko over a picnic table. He planned to copy their data onto his laptop but wound up having to buy an external hard drive when he saw how much they had.

The Maidan reconstruction is a product of its time, an age when high-quality video can be recorded from any street corner or citizen's hand, and when gigabytes of data can easily circulate among experts in Pittsburgh, Brooklyn and Kiev. The archive the lawyers handed over was huge — a folder of more than 400 videos with different naming conventions and file types. "This was as robust a data set as we've ever had the opportunity to work with," Samuels says. Nefertari had spent months going through the footage on her computer, trying to synchronize the videos and wrangle them together. The Center for Human Rights Science in Pittsburgh subsequently tried to automate this process, using an A.I. algorithm that could quickly analyze each file's audio component and propose possible matches. "Machine learning is not a magic bullet," says Jay D. Aronson, the center's director. "It's just a tool. You still need a lot of human judgment." Once the videos were assembled into a database, SITU narrowed them down to a smaller number — fewer than 20 — that were relevant to the cases. Then, working with collaborators on the ground in Ukraine, they built a virtual model of Instytutska Street. The first version, created using existing site surveys, wasn't sufficiently detailed, so Nefertari organized surveyors with laser scanners who could capture details at what Samuels calls the "sub-centimeter level." The scan was so fine that it documented paving-stone patterns and individual leaves of foliage. The surveyors stood in the streets of Kiev with tall white poles to pinpoint exactly where each victim fell. The granularity was necessary to get a fix on not only the victims and the supposed shooters but also on the people holding the cameras. The 70-gigabyte master layout, known as a "point cloud," was stitched together from 40 individual scans of the street and its environs.

When a bullet breaks the sound barrier, it produces a small sonic boom that registers as an audible crack. For people positioned downrange, the crack arrives a fraction of a

second before the thump or blast of the weapon actually firing. In the Maidan case, SITU enlisted a ballistics expert to measure the time that elapsed between the cracks and the thumps. The time difference yielded a maximum and minimum distance between the shooter and the camera, which SITU rendered as a doughnut-shaped "area of interest."

Using the video archive, SITU positioned the victims' bodies within the virtual space of the point cloud. Autopsy reports noted the locations of entry and exit wounds, which were joined by thin red lines and extended, with a five-degree margin of error, forward into space. Viewed from overhead, these five-degree cones trim the doughnut-shaped area of interest down into a narrow segment. In the first two cases, the segments overlapped with a position that the Berkut were defending behind a barricade; in the third, the segment overlapped with a position behind a line of supply trucks. A crucial piece of additional footage obtained by Nefertari arrived in SITU's office more than a year into the case. Taken from a surveillance camera at the Ukrainian National Bank, it clearly shows the Berkut positioned behind their front line. In all three cases, individual officers can be seen aiming and firing their rifles during the moments leading to the victims' deaths.

The Ukrainian court could accept the findings only if they were entered into evidence as a physical object. So SITU loaded its multimedia presentation onto an Intel minicomputer and shipped it to Kiev. At the center of the exhibit are the three cases, with SITU's analysis presented in three silent videos, each about five minutes in length. Key snippets of live video are laid on top of the virtual space as footnotes. The analysis arrives in a clean and linear presentation, and yet SITU manages to show its work, letting viewers see the crack-thump audio files and the frames of video used to establish the positions of the bodies. "It's pretty banal," Samuels says. "What we're trying to do is take something that's already pretty obvious and make it abundantly clear, by putting it into space."

"The criminal court has never admitted evidence of such technological complexity," Yatsenko told me. "It's a milestone." There are more than 100 witnesses left to interview in the Feb. 20 case. It could be more than a year before the court reaches a verdict. Nefertari, meanwhile, continues to work on her own project, an even more ambitious reconstruction of the entire Maidan uprising, with all the victims included. "I want people in the future to know the truth," she says. "I don't want rumor turned into facts."

#19

MH17 – Russian GRU Commander 'Orion' Identified as Oleg Ivannikov Bellingcat

25 May 2018
https://bit.ly/2LtGDfC

Andrey Ivanovich 'Orion': SBU intercepts and the JIT Call for Witnesses

One day after the downing of MH17 over eastern Ukraine, on 18 July 2014, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) published intercepted telephone conversations allegedly related to the criminal act that led to the deaths of all 298 people on board the plane. One conversation dated 14 July 2014 – three days before the downing – was reported to be between Oleg Bugrov, former Deputy Minister of Defense of the LNR, and a man referred to as 'Andrey Ivanovich' with the call sign 'Oreon', who, according to SBU's description to the call, was a Russian citizen and officer of the GRU. In this conversation, 'Oreon' is heard boasting that "they" have come into possession of a 'Buk' and will start shooting down [Ukrainian military] planes with it. According to a 18 July 2014 statement by the SBU, the Buk-M1 missile launcher that downed MH17 was transported from Russia to Ukraine during the night of 16 to 17 July 2014. It is unclear from the call whether 'Oreon' was referring to a different Buk that had been procured in Eastern Ukraine on or before 14 July 2014, or about the Buk that was expected to arrive later that week.

The same persona – 'Andrey Ivanovich' with the call sign 'Orion' (Oreon) – was referenced again on 28 September 2016, when the Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team (JIT), responsible for the criminal investigation into the downing of MH17, published more intercepted telephone conversations in a call for witnesses. The JIT appeal focused on identifying two individuals: the aforementioned Andrey Ivanovich with the call sign 'Orion', and Nikolay Fedorovich with the call sign 'Delfin'. In a previous joint investigation, Bellingcat and The Insider identified the person behind the covert alias 'Delfin'.

Out of the five conversations published by the JIT, two conversations were between Andrey Ivanovich 'Orion' and Nikolay Fedorovich 'Delfin'. 'Orion' appeared also in a third intercept, speaking to a third individual. 'Delfin', in turn, appeared in two other conversations speaking to a fourth individual. In our report on 'Delfin', we pointed out that 'Orion' addresses 'Delfin' with the formal form of you in Russian ('~~—'),~~ while 'Delfin' addresses 'Orion' with the informal form ('~~—'),~~ an indication that 'Orion' has a lower military rank and/or is younger than 'Delfin'.

As described in our previous report on 'Delfin', the exact role of Andrey Ivanovich 'Orion' and Nikolay Fedorovich 'Delfin' in the MH17 tragedy cannot be determined from the released telephone calls included in the JIT's call for witnesses. While 'Orion' and 'Delfin' appear to discuss, in different segments of the JIT-released calls, procurement of a crane and trailers, as well as repatriation of certain military equipment across the border, no one explicitly mentions a 'Buk'. Furthermore the JIT did not disclose the date and time of the intercepted calls. However, considering that the JIT specifically requested more information on the two individuals involved in these five conversations, and in the SBU-released calls 'Orion' discussed a Buk while discussing plans to start "shooting down [Ukrainian military] planes" just days before the downing of MH17, it is highly likely that 'Orion' had a role, at a minimum, in the transport of the Buk missile launcher that downed MH17.

The third conversation between 'Orion' and another person is the one most likely to be directly related to the downing of MH17, as the route and convoy described in the call matches that of the Buk missile launcher from the day of the tragedy.

Novaya Gazeta reported on 13 July 2015 (archive), based on interviews with former separatist sources, that Orion was a military advisor to the LNR command and that he "is or was an officer from Russia's Ministry of Defense." This information is corroborated by additional reports from sources familiar with the situation in Luhansk from 2014-2015, including a blog post from a former separatist combatant describing how 'Andrey Ivanych' was sent to the LNR as an advisor from Russia and worked with former LNR leader Igor Plotnitsky in a military commissariat building. (In Russian, 'Ivanych' is a colloquial variant of the patronymic 'Ivanovich'.) According to this post, while based in Luhansk 'Andrey Ivanych' was in close contact with the authorities in Moscow, even providing recommendations on political appointments in Eastern Ukraine to Vladimir Putin's advisor Vladislav Surkov. The military advisor who went by the name 'Andrey Ivanych', per the post, possesses two traits that matches the 'Andrey Ivanovich' from the intercepted calls: a distinctly high voice, and a background in military intelligence.

In an interview with Russian pro-government news site Ridus on 15 May 2018, a former battalion commander of Russian and separatist militants in the LNR, Evstafiy Botvinyev, stated that a certain Andrey Ivanovich, based in LNR during the summer of 2014, was his de facto commander. Botvinyev also claimed that Andrey Ivanovich directly supervised the (then) defense minister of LNR Igor Plotnitzky, and Dmitry Utkin, the commander of the Russian private army known as Wagner. Botvinyev told the new site that Andrey Ivanovich was part of certain "public structures" in Russia that provided funding, instructions, and protection to the Wagner private army, which has been active both in the Russia-Ukraine military conflict and in Syria.

Identification of 'Orion'

Initially, Bellingcat attempted to identify the persona behind 'Orion' by the method used to identify 'Delfin' – i.e. by identifying all possible candidates with matching name and patronymic and securing voice samples, in the hope of obtaining a match, as described later in this report. For at least two reasons, this approach was quickly deemed ineffective. First, 'Andrey Ivanovich' is a relatively common name-patronymic combination among Russian names. Second, assuming 'Orion' might indeed by a GRU officer, as claimed in the SBU intercept release, the likelihood of him using his real name and patronymic in communication on open (GSM) lines was deemed negligible. This assumption was corroborated by a 2016 post from an LNR insider asserting that 'Andrey Ivanovich' was an alias and not the real name of the Russian military adviser to LNR.
Instead, Bellingcat used a different starting point for its identification process. In the initial publication of the phone call intercept from 14 July 2014, the SBU had included the phone number used by 'Orion' in that call: +380634119133.

The Ukrainian mobile number visible on SBU's video was disconnected shortly after the publication of the intercept.

Bellingcat investigated an extensive list of open source databases of telephone numbers in the hope of identifying this number. Ultimately, the number was found in two telephone number-sharing apps popular among Russian speakers, one of which was TrueCaller.

As seen in this screenshot from TrueCaller, the owner of the telephone number is described as 'Oreon', identical to the spelling of the call sign initially announced by SBU, and slightly different than the 'Orion' spelling used in the subsequent JIT releases. The difference might be explained by the nature of phone-sharing apps which aggregate all contact lists of their users. Therefore, the owner of a telephone number may appear with various spellings – or even different names – reflecting the way this number is described in the contact list of the user who first introduced it into the phone sharing app.

The operator of the mobile number, 'Life', offered anonymous prepaid SIM cards in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. Thus Bellingcat assumed it is unlikely that the number would be registered to an actual identifiable person.

In early 2018, while working with several investigative reporters on a joint unrelated project, Bellingcat, through a Ukraine-based reporter, obtained access to mobile traffic data for the Ukrainian mobile number listed under the name 'Oreon'. Four Russian mobile numbers were found that had received or originated calls to the Ukrainian number belonging to 'Oreon'. These Russian numbers became the focus of Bellingcat's further investigation.

Bellingcat checked all four Russian numbers against various open source telephone-number databases. Two of the numbers appeared in phone-sharing apps, and one of the them appeared in two phone-sharing apps. Bellingcat deemed this latter number to be of particular interest.

In one phone sharing app, this number appeared under the name 'Andrey Ivanovich GRU – from Husky'. In the other phone-sharing app, the same number appeared under the name 'Ivannikov'.

This discovery provided Bellingcat with an initial confirmation that the persona behind 'Orion' is indeed known as 'Andrey Ivanovich' and plausibly linked to GRU. Crucially, it provided the investigating team with the clue that he may be known under the (family) name 'Ivannikov'. The 'from Husky' comment next to the name in the first app suggested that the number had been obtained from a person or organization known as Husky. We identifieda special operations military unit in the Donetsk People's Republic using the call sign 'Husky'.

Following this discovery, the investigating team searched for additional open source data on the Russian telephone number in combination with the name 'Ivannikov'. Bellingcat

located this number in two databases: in a Russian open source online telephone database, and on a now defunct e-commerce site with an exposed customer and order-booking database.

The telephone number in the online telephone database displayed its owner's full name as 'Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov', as well as his full address in Moscow, and his birth date (2 April 1967). Bellingcat located the address to be across the street from the Russian Military Academy, housing among others the Military Intelligence Institute. A photograph of a residential building, found on a social media profile of a relative of Oleg Ivannikov residing at the same address, was geolocated to the address listed in the telephone database. (The home address and telephone number, as well as the identity of the relatives identified and used by Bellingcat to validate the identity of Oleg Ivannikov, have been withheld from publication to protect the privacy of the family members.)

In the exposed database of the defunct Russian web shop, the same telephone number appeared in the customer profile of a person named 'Oleg', who had ordered an 'elevation training mask' from that website in 2017. The address for delivery noted in the database was not Ivannikov's home address, but a different address in Moscow, described as 'ulitsa Polina Osipenko 76'. Searches both in Google maps as well as Yandex Mapsshowed that this address did not exist, as house numbers in this street do not exceed the number 22. A reporter from 'The Insider' traveled to review the address, and drove the street until the end at number 22. He noticed, however, that the street morphs into Khoroshovskoye shosse', a section of a highway running through Moscow. The reporter proceeded to number 76 on that road, and realized he was standing in front of the headquarters of the Main Intelligence Directorate, or the GRU. The official address of the GRU is 'Khoroshovskoye shosse 76', as identified in open sources.

After obtaining sufficient level of certainty that the person Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov is linked to GRU and is likely to be the same person known as Andrey Ivanovich 'Orion', the investigating team needed to determine which of the two names – if any – is the actual legal name, and which is the cover name. Bellingcat's hypothesis was that Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov was the true identity, and Andrey Ivanovich was an alias for covert operations. This hypothesis was supported by the discovery of a 2003 record for a person with an identical full name and birth date, in an open source automobile registration database from Rostov-on-Don.

In order to confirm this hypothesis beyond any doubt, Bellingcat and The Insider reviewed address registration details of an Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov, born on 2 April 1967, who resides at the same address identified by Bellingcat in open sources. Based on the registration records, the team could further establish that this person is – or was at one point – an officer with the Russian Ministry of Defense who had graduated from the Kyiv Military Aviation Engineering Academy in 1988.

The investigating team also obtained a 2012 photograph of Ivannikov.

As last step in confirming that the Russian citizen Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov, born on 2 April 1967, is the actual legal identity behind the person of interest to JIT known as Andrey Ivanovich a.k.a. Orion, Bellingcat and the reporting team needed to obtain a voice sample from Ivannikov, to be compared with the samples published by JIT. Attempted phone calls to Ivannikov's Russian mobile number were unsuccessful as the number appeared continuously offline.

Seeking for additional forms of contact, Bellingcat identified a landline telephone number registered in the name of a relative of Ivannikov, residing (according to a Russian open source database) at the same address where Oleg Ivannikov is registered to.

The Insider called the landline number twice, seeking to speak with Ivannikov. During the first call, a relative of Ivannikov answered the phone and said that he was not at home, suggesting a call later that day. During the second phone call, Ivannikov was at home, but refused to talk. When his relative asked him 'Is it convenient now to take the call?', Ivannikov shouted from a distance 'No, it is not convenient now'. The sample of Ivannikov's voice, while indicating a very strong similarity to the JIT sample, was too short to provide forensic-level certainty of the identity of the person.

After months of monitoring Ivannikov's mobile number in various messenger apps, Bellingcat noticed that the number was online in March, and attempted a phone call. The call was made under the pretext of seeking contact with a different 'Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov', a relatively well-known NGO head who makes frequent media appearances, as described later in this report. After the call was answered, our investigator inquired if the person he was talking to was Oleg Ivannikov. The person on the other end of the line implicitly confirmed and asked what the call was about. Bellingcat then inquired if the person on the other end was the Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov who was the head of the NGO. Ivannikov replied that he was not, and added that he wished he was that famous person, but that this was a different person.

Both phone conversations were recorded, and his voice can be heard here:

Despite the fact that both audio fragments are too short for forensic computer-assisted audio analysis, a linguistic and acoustic comparison of the two voices compellingly points to the voices belonging to the same person, as both samples' high-pitched timbre and vocal intonation are highly idiosyncratic and rare among male voices. A comparison between the two voice samples (Ivannikov vs. Andrey Ivanovich "Orion") can be heard here:

On the basis of all collected evidence, including mutually-consistent records from multiple open sources, residential records, and voice data obtained in the course of the investigation, Bellingcat and its reporting partners conclude with very high certainty that Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov, born on 2 April 1967, is the person of interest whose identity was sought by the JIT in the 28 September 2016 cal for witnesses.

Reconstruction of Ivannikov's curriculum vitae

Oleg Ivannikov's address registration records provided basic information about the man sought by the JIT. Cross-referencing this information in open sources provide a significant volume of additional information which permitted Bellingcat to reconstruct, with high level of certainty, key events from Ivannikov's curriculum vitae.
Early life and education

Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov was born on 2 April 1967 in and around Karl-Marx-Stadt (now Chemnitz) in what was East Germany. Several Soviet military units were located in Karl-Marx-Stadt, implying that one of his parents was likely serving in the Soviet military.

Based on Olev Ivannikov's residential registration records, his father's name full name is Vladimir Pavlovich Ivannikov. A man named Vladimir Pavlovich Ivannikov was at some point the commander of the 53rd Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment, stationed in Šiauliai in the Lithuanian SSR throughout the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. Oleg Ivannikov, in an interview given in his capacity of military expert in the context of a 2014 article about the secret services in the Baltic States, is described as having lived in Lithuania for some time. Considering the identical full names, common professions, and biographical details of Oleg and Vladimir Ivannikov, it may be presumed that Oleg is the son of Major General of Aviation Vladimir Pavlovich Ivannikov.

According to a 2003 passport application, contained in the registration records, Oleg Ivannikov attended the Kyiv Military Aviation Engineering Academy in Kyiv in the 1980s and graduated from this academy in 1988.

Soon thereafter, Ivannikov moved to Moscow for a postgraduate specialization at Aerospace Faculty (dubbed as 'rocket department') of the Moscow Aviation Institute. His name appears on a 1990 list of graduates of the department's graduate club. The official name of Ivannikov's specialization is not known, as the department program names have changed, but the Aerospace Faculty of the Moscow Aviation Institute offers various master courses and specialization related to missile systems. Photographs in the 2009 photo gallery archive of the faculty show Buk 9M317 surface to air missiles, the successor of the Buk 9M38 type of missile that downed MH17.

After his graduation, Ivannikov moved to Rostov-on-Don, where he lived through at least 2003.

South Ossetia and academic period

In 2004, Ivannikov moved to South Ossetia, initially serving as Chairman of the Security Council, and later as Minister of Defense and Emergencies from 2006 to 2008. During this period he acted under the pseudonym 'Andrey Ivanovich Laptev'. Notably, in four years of public service in South Ossetia, two of which as government minister, there was not a single published photograph, video or audio recording of "Andrey Laptev", despite

a number of interviews or statements issued by him in text form. By contrast, Bellingcat identified photo and/or video records of all other government ministers of the period 2006-2008. This unprecedented secrecy for a government minister provided additional circumstantial evidence that the person in that position was serving a covert role under a pseudonym, as any public appearance by Ivannikov would have exposed him to identification from people in his social circles. Due to the relevance of this secrecy to the identification of Ivannikov's links to GRU, his role as Minister of Defense of South Ossetia will be described in detail in a separate section later in this investigation.

After returning from South Ossetia in 2008, Ivannikov wrote a PhD thesis (as a candidate of philosophy), titled 'The Complex Nature of the Information War in the Caucasus: socio-philosophical aspects', which he defended at the Southern Federal University in Rostov-on-Don. An extract is available from the university's website; the full text of this thesis, which is not freely available, was obtained by Bellingcat. This thesis refers to earlier publications by Ivannikov from 2006 to 2008 about the so-called information war in the Caucasus and the wars in the region in general. The thesis, which cites, among others, works of Russian nationalist conspiracy theorist Alexander Dugin, proposes coordinated Russian counteraction of the so-called "western information and cultural infiltration of the Caucuses" by means of "special groups consisting of high-ranking officials, representatives of various special services (SVR, GRU, FSB, etc.), scientists with high intellectual potential, engineers, sociologists, political scientists, culturologists, psychologists, patriotic workers of mass media and cultural figures".

Bellingcat confirmed that the thesis belongs to the person of interest Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov, based on graphological comparison of the signature on the thesis paper with the one on a form signed by him and contained in his residential records. Additional circumstantial evidence was the timing of the thesis and the underlying publications, which were written around the same time the persona "Andrey Laptev" worked as a GRU officer and as Minister of Defense of South Ossetia, tying his work experience directly to the topic of his academic pursuit.

On 2 July 2012, Ivannikov – using his real name – became director of the Russia-Caucasus Research Center of the International Institute of the Newly Established States in Moscow. The International Institute for Newly Established States is a Moscow-based think tank whose publications are focused on maintaining Russian sphere of influence in the republics of the former Soviet bloc. The institute does not disclose its sources of funding. Notably, at the same time when Ivannikov was appointed as director of its Caucuses branch, Polish citizen Mateusz Piskorski was appointed director of its East Europe branch. In 2016, Piskorski was detained by Polish law enforcement on charges of espionage for Russi~~–a~~nd his case is currently pending a court decision.

In his capacity as director of the Russia-Caucuses center and citing public credentials as 'military expert', Ivannikov published over 20 papers; several of which tackling the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia. Half of the articles are about the war in Syria, suggesting that he might have been involved in aspects of Russian

operations in Syria. Bellingcat has not yet identified evidence of such involvement. One particular article stands out in demonstrating Ivannikov's knowledge of air defense missile systems. This article details the S-300 air defense missile system that Russia supplied to Syria in 2016, according to Russia only to defend a Russian naval base. This S-300 air defense missile system was produced by Almaz-Antey, the same defense firm that manufactures the Buk-M1 missile system. The article implies Ivannikov appears to have at a minimum basic technical knowledge about the S-300 Air Defense system, such as the altitude and launch ranges of its missiles, which would be consistent with his studies at the 'rocket department' of the Aerospace Faculty of the Moscow Aviation Institute. For the same reasons, it can be presumed he has similar knowledge about the altitude and launch range of other Russian advanced anti-aircraft missile systems, such as the Buk-M1, which – according to a Bellingcat source who graduated from the same institute several years earlier than Ivannikov – were subjects of study at the Aerospace Faculty of the Moscow Aviation Institute.

Note: as this investigation progressed, Bellingcat noticed that evidence of Oleg Ivannikov being involved with the International Institute of the Newly Established States had been deleted from the think-tank's website, along with his webpage as expert for the institute. All articles authored by him for the institute's website had his name stripped. However, an archived copy of the original websites showing his name can be retrieved here.

Ukraine Period

Information about Ivannikov's undercover work in Ukraine is based on multiple reports on the activities and alleged crucial role of 'Andrey Ivanovich' operating in the LNR in 2014-2015. These reports originate from current or former Russian militants and separatist fighters who were based in the Donbas in 2014-2015. The various reports consistently paint the picture of a senior Russian officer, working under the pseudonym 'Andrey Ivanovich', functioning as one of the most important handlers for the Russian Ministry of Defense in Luhansk. Pursuant to these reports, Ivannikov supervised Igor Plotnitsky, who was then the defense minister of the LNR. One report from a Russian former militant commander states that 'Andrey Ivanovich' recommended Plotnitsky as potential political leader of LNR to Vladimir Putin's adviser on Ukraine, Vladislav Surkov; a recommendation which was honored but later regretted.

A Russian militant commander, speaking to a pro-Kremlin news site in May 2018, reported that 'Andrey Ivanovich' – which he acknowledged was a cover name – was in de facto control not only of then-minister of defense of LNR Plotnitsky and of free-lance Russian militant groups, but also of the direct command of Russia's private army known as Wagner. This source also claimed 'Andrey Ivanovich' represented official Russian structures.

Bellingcat and its investigative partners have concluded that it is beyond doubt that the persona 'Andrey Ivanovich'/'Andrey Ivanych' described in the aforementioned reports is in fact Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov. The descriptions of his role in LNR is fully consistent

with his prior role in South Ossetia, as well as the role of Andrey Ivanovich 'Orion' that can be extrapolated from the phone calls published by JIT and SBU. Additionally, at least one of the separatist sources described 'Andrey Ivanovich' as having the distinctive high-pitched voice identified in Ivannikov.

There is no plausible reason to doubt the information on 'Andrey Ivanovich' volunteered by these different Russian militant and separatist sources; as it would not be in their interest to forge a coordinated, consistent narrative of a GRU/Russian military commander being in command in a conflict which Russian and separatist authorities have systematically attempted to present as a civil war constrained to intra-Ukraine actors.

(...) [Read more in the online version –UKL]

Last two paragraphs of the Conclusion:

1. The secondary identification of Ivannikov as 'Laptev' provides a consistent and plausible explanation for Ivannikov's role in two different military conflicts in Russia's 'near abroad' – in Georgia and in Ukraine. Russian media has previously reported, based on interviews with pro-Russian separatists, that Andrey Ivanovich 'Orion' served as "adviser to the military command of LNR", and "is or was an officer of Russia's Ministry of Defense". This role is starkly reminiscent of the role 'Laptev' played in South Ossetia. It is thus plausible that the Russian Ministry of Defense has deployed Ivannikov, in his capacity of senior GRU officer, as military advisor and de facto military commander to separatist groups abroad working under Russia's direction.

2. The findings in this report provide new information on Russia's use of GRU operatives in special operations in neighboring countries. They also establish for the first time – subject to the JIT making public the exact role Ivannikov had in the chain of events that led to the downing of MH17 – a direct link between a high-ranking Russian military officer on active service operating in Ukraine and the destruction of the passenger airliner.

#20
Russian Officers and Militants Identified as Perpetrators of the January 2015 Mariupol Artillery Strike

Bellingcat, 7 May 2018
https://bit.ly/2FR8Uss

The Bellingcat Investigation Team has determined conclusively that the artillery attack on the Ukrainian town of Mariupol on 24 January 2015, which resulted in at least 30 civilian deaths and over 100 injuries, came from Russia-controlled territory. Bellingcat

has also determined that the shelling operation was instructed, directed and supervised by Russian military commanders in active service with the Russian Ministry of Defense. Bellingcat has identified nine Russian officers, including one general, two colonels, and three lieutenant colonels, involved directly with the military operation.

Furthermore, Bellingcat has determined that two artillery batteries of Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) were transported from Russia into Ukraine the day before the Mariupol operation. In the early morning of 24 January 2015, these batteries were deployed near the village of Bezimenne exclusively for the shelling of targets in and around Mariupol, after which they were repatriated back into Russia.

In the course of analyzing the events in the eve of and on 24 January 2015, Bellingcat has also identified two Russian generals involved with the selection and assignment of Russian artillery specialists to commanding roles in eastern Ukraine.

This investigation was made possible due to access to raw video and audio data that is being submitted by the Ukrainian government to the International Court of Justice as part of an ongoing legal case. This data was made available to a small group of international investigative media for the purposes of independent assessment.

Bellingcat and its media partners analyzed a large volume of intercepted calls from and to participants in the armed conflict located in the area of Bezimenne at the time of shelling. Bellingcat conducted detailed cross-referencing of events, names and locations, as well as metadata from the calls, to open source data, including satellite photography data, social media posts, and voice samples from public statements of some of the identified persons. A detailed analysis permitted the identification of persons and military units, and the reconstruction of events leading up to the shelling of residential areas in Mariupol.

While previous reports, including the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine report from 24 January 2015, have identified that shelling of Mariupol's residential areas came from separatist-controlled territory, Bellingcat's investigation is the first to fully detail and identify the role of active Russian military units, as well as the direct commanding role of active Russian army officers in this military operation.
Our full report identifying the nine Russian officers involved with the military operation that led to the deaths of 30 Ukrainian civilians in Mariupol will be published later this week. Today, we are revealing the names of these individuals, along with a sampling of the telephone conversations that led to their identification.

The Russian officers who were in charge on high and lower levels of the MLRS batteries on the day of the shelling at Mariupol, or provided target instructions from another location in Eastern Ukraine, have been identified by Bellingcat as:

Major General Stepan Stepanovich Yaroshchuk
Alexander Iozhefovich Tsapliuk, call sign 'Gorets'
Alexander Anatolevich Muratov

Maksim Vladimirovich Vlasov, call sign 'Yugra'
Sergey Sergeyevich Yurchenko, call sign 'Voronezh'
Alexander Valeryevich Grunchev, call sign 'Terek'

The Russian officers who were in charge of selecting and sending artillery commanders and artillery equipment to Eastern Ukraine have been identified by Bellingcat as:

Colonel Oleg Leargievich Kuvshinov
Major General Dmitry Nikolaevich Klimenko
Colonel Sergey Ivanovich Lisai

The two Russian and Ukrainian militants in direct charge of the artillery units that shelled Mariupol have been identified by Bellingcat as:

Alexander Mikhailovich Evtody, call sign 'Pepel'
Grayr Manukovich Egiazaryan, call sign 'Shram'

[The full report, "Russian Officers and Militants Identified as Perpetrators of the January 2015 Mariupol Artillery Strike", is available at https://bit.ly/2xtkQle]

#21

How Western Anticorruption Policy Is Failing Ukraine

It Should Focus on Institutions, Not Individuals
by Adrian Karatnycky and Alexander J. Motyl
Foreign Affairs, 29 May 2018
https://fam.ag/2J31n0r

Western aid programs designed to attack corruption in Ukraine are failing. Instead of acknowledging the significant degree to which Ukraine has changed for the better, Western-backed approaches misrepresent ongoing reforms as woefully inadequate. In so doing, they discredit the reforms, polarizing the country's elites, promoting mass mobilization, encouraging left- and right-wing populism, weakening Ukraine at a time of war and Russian occupation, and contributing to the country's instability.

Ukraine is a pivotal country on the frontline of an aggressive Russian state. Its success in countering Russia is a crucial part of the West's effort to contain and push back against President Vladimir Putin. But as a country under constant Russian pressure, Ukraine can benefit from a more comprehensive reform approach. More specifically, it needs a pragmatic anticorruption and reform policy, carefully designed to enable Ukraine to progress without reinforcing Russian efforts to undermine the state and create instability.

THE RECORD SO FAR

Ukraine is a pluralistic society with highly competitive democratic politics. Twice in its recent history it has seen months-long mass protests (once in 2004 and again in 2013–14). Its citizenry has demonstrated a high degree of grass-roots organization and activism in support of democracy and rule of law.

At the same time, as a legacy of its transition from communism, the country has inherited an oligarchic economic system, widespread corruption, massive tax evasion through a gray economy estimated at around 40 percent above the official GDP, weak protection of property rights and contracts, and largely dysfunctional courts. Not surprisingly, efforts to root out widespread corruption have been a long-standing policy priority of Western aid since independence in 1991. Progress in this area was negligible until 2014, when the Euromaidan revolution toppled then President Viktor Yanukovych and brought to power pro-Western and pro-reformist elites. That same year, businessman Petro Poroshenko, one of the principal financial backers of the protests, was elected president and created a largely reformist coalition government.

Western donors saw in the government's mix of new and older faces the signs of political change and an opportunity to rapidly reform the country. To aid in this project, they funded a wide array of proxies in the form of anticorruption nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and public policy institutes with the aim of developing, lobbying, and speeding through legislation and institutional changes.

Initially, the new government and legislature pliantly implemented virtually every reform idea that was presented. Simultaneously, a team of reformers succeeded in making deep inroads into the major corruption schemes that had been in place for decades and had metastasized under the Yanukovych regime.

A major reform of gas pricing eliminated arbitrage that had resulted in billions of dollars in ill-gotten gains for government-linked gas traders and intermediaries. The state gas and oil monopoly was taken over by a team of reformers, who increased transparency and led the company to profitability.

A transparent public procurement system, ProZorro, was introduced in 2015, saving the state hundreds of millions of dollars each year. The militia, traditionally a source of corruption and abuse, was overhauled as a new national police force.

As 2016 drew to an end, Ukraine had also begun to clean its banking sector of zombie banks, so called because they had been made insolvent by giving loans to businesses and shell companies related to their owners. This new tougher policy included the government's takeover of the Pryvat bank, Ukraine's largest, which the state charged with making over $5.5 billion in dubious or corrupt loans to related shell companies. Through coordinated action by the Prosecutor General's Office, $1.5 billion in assets belonging to

the "organized crime group led by Yanukovych" was confiscated and returned to the state treasury.

Tighter administrative controls and personnel changes in Ukraine's remaining state-owned companies dramatically cut annual losses that many experts believed were the result of corrupt practices.

The state also largely eliminated so-called currency conversion centers. These illicit facilities charged exchange fees of between six and 12 percent, which were then shared with tax inspectors who rubber-stamped fictional transactions and expenses to facilitate money laundering and tax evasion. These schemes and machinations amounted to several billion dollars per year.

Finally, the introduction of an electronic system for the claiming and payment of value-added tax injected transparency into the process and eliminated a major source of corruption.

By any objective measure of change, Ukraine's efforts to reduce corruption have achieved more positive change in the last four years than in the two decades preceding them. They did so by altering the structure of incentives: making honest behavior more profitable than dishonest behavior and turning fraud into an increasingly risky undertaking. This decreased the likelihood of corruption, since the old method of prosecuting individuals without changing the root cause meant they could always be replaced. According to a forthcoming study by Ukraine's Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, the abovementioned reforms are estimated to have saved as much as $6 billion in annual losses to the state.

WESTERN POLICYMAKERS' FATAL CONCEIT

Amazingly, in the eyes of U.S. and European policymakers, these major gains were insufficient and inadequate. Prosecuting and punishing wrongdoers increasingly became the true measure of change. Western governments continually increased pressure and encouraged their well-funded NGO surrogates to put out a steady drumbeat of criticism at the supposedly slow pace of reforms. It is no wonder that large numbers of Ukrainians believe that "nothing has changed" and that "all is lost." A poll taken by the respected Democratic Initiatives Foundation in early 2018 showed that 80 percent of people felt that the war on corruption in Ukraine had failed, despite the abovementioned reforms.

Western aid groups pressed for punitive measures to root out corruption, such as through new investigative and prosecutorial institutions, and for unprecedented levels of transparency within the state sector. At the same time, comprehensive reform of the courts was put on the back burner.

The main investigative body that the West sought to empower was the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, which was founded in October 2014 with significant

Western financial support and technical assistance. Although it struck a position of independence from state officials and won cheerleaders among Western diplomats and NGOs, its most senior personnel included solid members of the old prosecutorial and police establishment. Moreover, some of the bureau's practices were revealed to be decidedly corrupt, including the alleged use of illegal means to gain evidence, reliance on pliant judges who were themselves being investigated by the bureau for corruption, wiretapping of conversations without a court order, use of unregistered eavesdropping devices, and the sharing of confidential case materials with favored journalists.

The new Western-backed National Agency on Corruption Prevention operated at a snail's pace, bringing very few charges to bear against politicians whose asset declarations showed surprising storehouses of money and property. Both institutions, as well as the main Prosecutor General's Office, suffer from weak knowledge of business law and commercial transactions, which in the end are likely to constitute the bulk of cases on which anticorruption prosecutions will hinge. Meanwhile, a proliferation of Western-funded investigative journalist projects provided a constant diet of TV and news stories about corrupt schemes, unexplained riches, and unanswered questions. Sometimes the programs adopted a vindictive agenda focusing on critics of some of the reforms.

When government asset declarations became public, they didn't lead to many prosecutions or convictions but instead opened a Pandora's box that led to the widespread loss of confidence in Ukraine's elites, anticorruption reformers included. A large portion of Ukraine's parliamentarians and government officials, many of whom came from business, held multimillion-dollar assets, including lavish homes, fine artwork, and expensive cars. In a country where pensions and wages outside the major cities average $200–$300 per month, the evidence of upper-middle-class and rich lifestyles among the country's government officials, legislators, and NGO activists heightened public anger that in turn fed the politics of resentment.

As new investigations and law enforcement efforts documented wrongdoing, the failure to address court reform kicked in. Judges were overwhelmed with mounting caseloads and began a de facto slowdown that enabled them to put off taking decisions in sensitive anticorruption cases involving the rich and powerful.

Ironically, the Western-supported anticorruption campaign did not contribute to the consolidation of pro-reform forces. It did, however, diminish public appreciation for the real gains that had been made and dragged down support for those in power, including Poroshenko. The public began to lose faith in the reformers, whom they now considered a feckless alternative. Not surprisingly, polls today show three worrying trends: political fragmentation, with as many as eight parties on the verge of making the five percent threshold to gain office when elections are held in November 2019, with no party commanding even ten percent support; the strength of populist movements; and the absence of a serious liberal alternative. Similar trends of fragmentation and populism are reflected in presidential electoral preferences, with no candidate polling above eight percent in a crowded field gathering for a March 2019 vote.

The root cause of the failure of the West's anticorruption effort is depressingly familiar: the flawed belief that the key to change was individual politicians and not institutions. As analysts and policymakers increasingly argue that Poroshenko has to go, they overlook the fact that systemic reform is always a complex process highly dependent on changing structural relationships and institutional practices and not on changing the personalities that head them. Poland and Hungary, which seemingly leaped toward democracy and the market in the early 1990s, demonstrate this nonlinear process quite well, with both lapsing into right-wing populism that threatens to dismantle democratic institutions. Inflated Western expectations that former Russian President Boris Yeltsin would transform his country in the 1990s further illustrate the dangers of emphasizing personalities and ignoring institutions.

The Ukrainian public's alienation from those in power is all the more unfortunate because of the significant steps these leaders have already taken in implementing reforms. They legitimately felt that they had taken great political risks in challenging a large part of the old order, including oligarchs Dmitry Firtash and Ihor Kolomoysky, who wielded tremendous influence through their national TV channels.

Western anticorruption policies in Ukraine are failing because they have focused on creating and empowering adversarial structures rather than creating cooperative relationships with the state. Future pro-reform diplomacy needs to factor in three realities about the country: first, that the authorities will never pursue a policy that will lead to the defection of their shaky ruling majority; second, that the country is under a relentless hybrid military and political attack from Russia; and finally, that if the ruling elite is to be shaken from its moorings, the alternatives need to be electorally viable and the new political configurations need to be capable of promoting further reforms.

A BETTER ANTICORRUPTION POLICY

How should the United States, Europe, and international financial institutions adapt their anticorruption strategy to allow reform to succeed at a time of Russian aggression? Simply put, Western policy should focus on building on the impressive institutional changes that Ukraine has already adopted and further reducing the structural incentives for corruption. To this end, the West should pursue five policies.

First, Western anticorruption policy should focus on the reduction of the scope for rent seeking and other corrupt schemes rather than on wide-ranging punishment for those engaged in them. Such a new policy focus could include the creation of truly independent licensing bodies, regulatory agencies, and tariff-setting entities. To this end, remaining state holdings should be privatized, as should Ukraine's vast agricultural lands. Second, reformers should introduce competition to the entrenched business elite through de-monopolization. Third, Western bodies should renew and repair cooperation with Ukraine's main law enforcement and justice institutions by committing to improve their professional capacity and internal continuing education. Fourth, Western governments

should show neutrality in their relations with Ukraine's various state institutions and promote the monitoring of all criminal justice institutions, including those that Western policy has helped birth. Finally, grant providers should strictly warn their grantees that engagement in political projects and movements requires their withdrawal or recusal from administrative, executive, and supervisory roles in Western-funded NGOs. These approaches are likely to win support within segments of the oligarchic elite, part of which seeks to legitimate and make transparent its businesses.

The current policy toolbox is insufficient to transform Ukraine. Ukraine's first few years of reform occurred with the support and concurrence of its governing elite and many of its business leaders and oligarchs, as well as of its new generation of reformers. Further progress will require that Western policymakers continue to engage all these forces.

#22
Conference Announcement

Ireland Ukraine and Empire
Colonialism, Dependence, Conflict, 1800-2017
Kyiv, 14-17 November 2018
https://bit.ly/2JfYRDn

Vladimir Putin's 2014 invasion of Ukraine started a war at Europe's eastern extreme, 15 years after a war at its western extreme, in Ireland, had ended. The Irish and Ukrainians were ruled by two of the world's biggest empires. By 1922 both had only qualified success in their bids for independence. Neither the Ukrainian nor Irish Republics were recognized by the Treaty of Versailles.

After independence both peoples had to deal with the demographic, economic, social, cultural and psychological legacies of imperial rule. The Ukrainians, unlike the Irish, not only must deal with decolonization but also with de-communization. Although each country had a foreign minority that originated as settler-colonists rather than immigrants, and thus formed a dominant urban minority, both countries figure only marginally in scholarship on imperialism and colonialism, which assumes these phenomenon must involve race and long oceanic distances. Both countries have large diasporas that had significant impact on their respective countries of origin.

The Conference examines five issues:

The first is a tradition of anti-colonialism and interpretation of their pasts as a colonized country that existed alongside romantic-nationalist interpretations.
The second, the applicability of colonial/imperial paradigms to modern Ireland and Ukraine, countries whose peoples had a self-image as exceptionally oppressed .
The third, violence liberation and domination.

The fourth are mass famines for which there exists considerable evidence pointing to the culpability of the ruling imperial elites.
The fifth is the presence of extremist empire loyalists, the product of imperial settlement and industrialization, and their role in maintaining imperial rule.

PANEL PROPOSALS

The organizers will accept full panels devoted to the examined issues if they do not conflict with already accepted panels. Possible topics yet not covered might include:

- Ukraine and Ireland 1919-1923
- Ukraine and Ireland at Versailles
- Imperial images of Irish and Ukrainians
- Language Identity and Politics
- Nationalism and Revisionism in historiography
  Michael Collins and Evhen Konovalets
- Role of émigrés/diasporas in Irish and Ukrainian history.

We expect first drafts of papers by October 1, 2018. Presentations and final versions can be in Ukrainian or English. Address all enquiries about and panel submissions to, Stephen Velychenko and Volodymyr Kravchenko. The proceedings will be published as a book by CIUS Press (University of Alberta).

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