The Ukraine List #503

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10 November 2020

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Call for Proposals

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

Online
Co-hosted by the Harriman Institute (Columbia University)
6-8 May 2021

Proposal Deadline: 11 November 2021

Proposals must be submitted to darel@uottawa.ca and darelasn2021@gmail.com.

The Association for the Study of Nationalities is proud to announce the return its Annual Convention. *The ASN 2021 Annual World Convention will take place entirely online on 6-8 May 2021*. Its 25th Anniversary, after an unforeseen hiatus forced upon us by the pandemic, will be celebrated with style.

Adapting to an Online Format: Key Points

- The scope of the Convention will be as large as previous Conventions held in person at Columbia University, i.e., between 150-170 panels/events running over three days.

- The panels, however, will be shorter: 90 minutes, instead of the usual 120 minutes.

- Most of the panels, as before, will be structured around presentations based on written papers. There will also be book panels, roundtables, film screenings and special events.

- Given the circumstances, in an effort to minimize technical problems, all panel chairs will be selected by the Convention Program Committee.

- Registered panelists and non-panelists will be able to attend any session they want. Registration and membership fees will be announced later. A few special events will be open to the general public without a registration wall.

- Applicants whose paper or panel proposal was accepted in 2020 can resubmit their application (or a revised version), using the updated application forms. The Convention will look favorably at these applications, without being able to make guarantees in advance that applicants will be on the program.

- The schedule will take into consideration the panelists' time zone.

- In the wake of the pandemic, ASN has successfully launched a new initiative – Virtual ASN (vASN). Events are planned throughout the year. The ASN World Convention is entirely distinct from vASN.

The Convention

Over 150 Panels/Events in 11 Sections

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

Thematic Sections

Populism, Radicalism, Far Right
Historical and Political Memory
Political Violence
Nationalism and Race
Nationalism and the Pandemic

ASN Awards

Best Doctoral Papers
Best Book on Nationalism (*Joseph Rothschild Award*)
Best Documentary Film
Best Article in Nationalities Papers (*Huttenbach Prize*)
The *Nationalities Papers* Photo Contest

The Scope of the Convention

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

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

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

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

Applying to the Convention

To send a proposal, fill out a Fact Sheet online, download the relevant form below and send it by attachment to darel@uottawa.ca and darelasn2021@gmail.com.

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

Each form can be downloaded at https://www.asnconvention.com/proposals.

Applying to the Convention: Key Points

• Only ONE paper proposal by applicant will be considered, whether as an individual paper proposal or as part of a panel proposal. If your name appears on more than one paper proposal, your applications will not be considered.

• Since the length of the panel will be shorter than usual (90 minutes), an individual paper proposal can only include the name of ONE author. If the paper was co-written, this will be acknowledged in the online program, but only the author whose name appears on the proposal will present. Panel proposals can only include single-authored papers.

• Proposals for panels, roundtables or book panels do NOT include a Chair. Exceptionally, the Convention Program Committee will select all the Chairs.

• Applicants can be on a maximum of TWO proposals (and only on ONE paper proposal). For example, you can submit an individual paper proposal and be discussant on a panel proposal, or participant in a roundtable or a book panel. If your name appears on more than TWO proposals, your applications will not be considered. This rule does not apply to a Documentary Film Proposal.

- Book panel proposals will be considered for monographs published in 2019, 2020 or early 2021. Co-authored book panel proposals will be considered. Edited volumes will not be considered.

- Documentary film proposals will be considered for films produced in 2019, 2020 or 2021.

- An international Program Committee is entrusted with the selection of proposals. Applicants will be notified by January 2021.

- Publishers and companies wishing to advertise in the Convention online program can contact ASN Executive Director Ryan Kreider at rk2780@columbia.edu.

The ASN Convention website is at http://asnconvention.com
The ASN website is at http://nationalities.org
To follow us on Facebook, go to https://www.facebook.com/Nationalities
To follow us on Twitter, go to @asn_org

We very much look forward to receiving your proposal!

Dominique Arel, ASN Convention Director
Lisa Koriouchkina, ASN Communications Director
Alexandra Wishart, ASN Convention Assistant Director
On behalf of the ASN Convention Program Committee and Organizing Committee

Deadline for proposals: 11 November 2020 (to be sent to both darel@uottawa.ca AND darelasn2021@gmail.com in a single attachment).

#2
Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa

Application Deadline: 1 February 2021 (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 $30,000, 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 2021 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 2021-2021 are invited to contact Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca), Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, and visit our web site www.chairukr.com.

#3

Constitutional Court Destroys Crucial Pillar of Ukraine's Anti-Graft Infrastructure
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By Oleg Sukhov
Kyiv Post, 29 October 2020
https://bit.ly/3kE4yud

Ukraine is probably closer to losing its anti-corruption infrastructure, Western funding, and visa-free travel with Europe than at any time in recent years.

The nation's anti-corruption infrastructure, created after the EuroMaidan Revolution that drove President Viktor Yanukovych from power in 2014, has come under unprecedented attack.

On Oct. 27, the Constitutional Court effectively destroyed Ukraine's entire asset declaration system for state officials, eliminating a crucial pillar of the country's anti-corruption system. The court did not respond to a request for comment.

"The Constitutional Court is returning Ukraine not even to 2013 but to 1991, when there was no anti-corruption legislation at all," Oleksandr Novikov, head of the National Agency for Preventing Corruption (NAPC), said on Oct. 28 at a news briefing. "The court has canceled all anti-corruption tools developed since Ukraine became independent."
The Anti-Corruption Action Center said that the Constitutional Court had "allowed officials to legalize their bribes for all years since the EuroMaidan Revolution and hide ill-gotten wealth."

"Now officials will be able to buy villas, castles and other expensive things that don't fit into their official income or legalize what they purchased before and will not be afraid of punishment because Constitutional Court judges gave them an indulgence."

The court reacted to the accusations on Oct. 28 in a statement accusing the NAPC and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) of unlawful interference in its work.

On Oct. 26, the Kyiv District Administrative Court also used a different Constitutional Court ruling to order the dismissal of Artem Sytnyk, head of the NABU. The Kyiv District Administrative Court is headed by Pavlo Vovk, a suspect in a high-profile NABU case.

The electronic declaration system and the NABU's independence were preconditions for funding from the International Monetary Fund and visa-free travel with the European Union. This means that Ukrainian authorities' assault on anti-corruption institutions may disrupt lending by the IMF and lead to suspension of visa-free travel.

Zelensky's reaction

In a statement, Zelensky's office said that "there are still corrupt politicians who cannot tolerate the fact that their lifestyle, property and income can be under control" but "relevant tools in Ukrainian legislation will be kept or at least reinstated."

However, even if the anti-corruption laws canceled by the Constitutional Court are reinstated, officials who committed crimes before their reinstatement will escape punishment. Moreover, the new laws are likely to be canceled again by the Constitutional Court, according to the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

The real solution would be a genuine judicial reform and replacing the Constitutional Court with people of integrity, according to DEJURE, a legal think-tank.

Commenting on the court order on Sytnyk's dismissal, Zelensky's office said that the NABU law contains an explicit list of grounds for firing the NABU's chief and "this list can only be changed by the Verkhovna Rada and not by a court."

Bizarre decision

Under Ukrainian law, the NAPC is tasked with running the asset declaration system. The Constitutional Court eliminated the declaration system by depriving the NAPC of most of its powers.

Specifically, the Constitutional Court ruled that public access to officials' declarations and the NAPC's authority to monitor and check officials' declarations and lifestyle were unconstitutional. The court also abolished the NAPC's authority to issue warnings and ask courts to consider administrative and criminal penalties for officials, as well as to determine conflicts of interest.

Moreover, the Constitutional Court ruling abolishes the concept of conflict of interest for top officials altogether, according to the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

The ruling also cancels the requirement for officials and agencies to provide information to the NAPC.

Additionally, the court canceled penalties for officials who lie in their asset declarations and abolished the requirement for officials to declare changes in their assets.

As a result of the ruling, the NAPC has closed the register of asset declarations, and the NABU said 110 corruption cases would be closed.

Flimsy grounds

The Anti-Corruption Action Center and DEJURE, a legal think-tank, argued that the ruling lacked any meaningful legal grounds.

The ostensible grounds in the ruling is that the judiciary is independent, and any influence on it, including by the NAPC, is unconstitutional.

"The assertion has no legal grounds whatsoever," Constitutional Court judge Serhiy Holovaty said in a dissenting opinion. He said that the NAPC's powers cannot be considered "control over the judiciary" and that "the NAPC's powers are not interference in judges' professional activities and have a legitimate goal – preventing corruption." DEJURE argued that the Constitutional Court had entirely misconstrued the concept of the judiciary's independence. Checks and balances mean that every branch of government checks and balances the others, not a judiciary branch that is completely out of control, according to DEJURE.

Without explaining its rationale, the court also claimed that criminal penalties for lying in asset declarations were excessive.

Conflict of interest

The NAPC said that Constitutional Court judges Iryna Zavhorodnya and Serhiy Holovaty had a conflict of interest but took part in the voting, which is banned by the law.

The agency said it had identified incorrect information on assets worth Hr 3.6 million in Holovaty's asset declaration and incorrect information on assets worth Hr 1.4 million in Zavhorodnya's declarations. The NABU has opened a criminal case against Zavhorodnya.

The NAPC also said that Constitutional Court judges Ihor Slidenko and Volodymyr Moisyk had failed to declare changes in their assets on time, which is a misdemeanor. Meanwhile, Oleksandr Tupitsky, head of the Constitutional Court, acquired land in Russian-annexed Crimea in 2018 and did not show this in his asset declaration, according to an Oct. 28 report by the Schemes investigative show.

Vovk's role

The Constitutional Court's unprecedented moves are directly linked to the activities of the Kyiv District Administrative Court, which is headed by odious judge Vovk.

The NAPC has issued a warning to Oleksandr Tupitsky, head of the Constitutional Court, for failing to submit information on Constitutional Court judges' conflicts of interest, including those in decisions on the NABU.

The Constitutional Court has disputed the NAPC's warning for Tupitsky with Vovk's Kyiv Administrative District Court. As a result, the court has banned the NAPC from requesting information from the Constitutional Court.

Vovk tapes

Wiretapped conversations published by the NABU in the Vovk case reveal the judge's efforts to unlawfully influence the Constitutional Court and get control over it, according to the bureau.

In February 2019 the Constitutional Court canceled the law criminalizing illicit enrichment.

"Thanks to our common efforts, the decision to recognize the illicit enrichment (law) as unconstitutional has been born," Vovk told one of his court's judges after the ruling was issued. "That's why you can buy anything you want."

Vovk and his deputy Yevhen Ablov were personally interested in the Constitutional Court ruling because the NABU had investigated illicit enrichment cases against them. Both had to be closed after the ruling.

One of the court's judges also told Vovk: "Chief, you effectively pressured Constitutional Court judges through lawmakers, and a case may be opened against you."

The judges of the court also discussed getting their assets "out of their shadows" after the ruling and come up with excuses for unexplained wealth.

"I think you and Ablov can now declare the $1 million in income from stock that you had. Your mom gave it to you as a gift when you were a child," Vovk joked.

"We already own two courts – the Constitutional Court and the Kyiv District Administrative Court," Vovk also said in the tapes.

Constitutional coup d'etat

A source familiar with the matter told the Kyiv Post that Vovk had allegedly bribed the Constitutional Court to cancel the illicit enrichment law in February 2019. The source added that Tupitsky features in the Vovk tapes.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity because it is an investigative secret, also said that Vovk was behind the scheme to fire Stanyslav Shevchuk as chairman of the Constitutional Court in May 2019 and to appoint Tupitsky as head of the court in September 2019.

Vovk and Tupitsky have denied all accusations of wrongdoing.

Sytnyk's dismissal

Vovk's court on Oct. 26 used a lawsuit as a pretext for ordering Sytnyk's dismissal. The court upheld a lawsuit by Oleksandr Kareyev, a former NABU investigator, and reinstated him at the bureau.

The court ruled that Sytnyk's authority expired on Aug. 28 as a result of a Constitutional Court ruling on the unconstitutionality of the 2015 decree on Sytnyk's appointment. Therefore an acting head of the bureau should replace Sytnyk and reinstate Kareyev, the court added.

Mykhailo Zhernakov, head of legal think-tank DEJURE, ex-Constitutional Court Chairman Shevchuk and former top investigator Sergii Gorbatuk argue that the issue of Sytnyk's dismissal was outside the Kyiv Administrative Court's jurisdiction in this case.

Lawyers also cast doubt on the legality of the Constitutional Court ruling itself and on whether it can have any consequences from the legal standpoint.

The NABU and the Justice Ministry said on Oct. 27 that a court decision ordering Sytnyk's dismissal cannot be implemented.

"Effectively, this is an attempt to fire by any means the head of the NABU as the guarantor of the organization's independence, eliminate its ability to investigate top-level corruption and turn the agency into a politically dependent puppet body. As a result, investigations of multi-billion corruption in the Ukrainian government will be blocked," the bureau said.

Vovk saga

The administrative court's decision appears to be part of a broader conflict between Vovk and Sytnyk. The Vovk case has faced unprecedented obstruction by Ukraine's entire state system.

In August 2019, the Prosecutor General's Office charged Vovk and other judges of his court with obstruction of justice. However, a court rejected a motion to extend the Vovk investigation, and prosecutors failed to send the case to trial on time.

In July 2020, the NABU resurrected the case and charged Vovk and other judges of his court with organized crime, usurpation of power and bribery.

In August judge Serhiy Vovk of the Pechersk Court, Pavlo Vovk's namesake, ordered the case to be transferred from the NABU to another body. Anti-corruption activists interpreted this as an effort to kill the case, and the ruling is being appealed.

Continued sabotage

On Sept. 1, the High Council of Justice also unanimously refused to suspend Vovk and other judges implicated in his case.

In wiretapped conversations released by the NABU, Vovk mentioned the involvement of several members of the High Council of Justice in his alleged bargains with the council. They did not respond to requests for comment.

On Oct. 12, Judge Serhiy Vovk of the Pechersk Court also ordered the Prosecutor General's Office to cancel the charges for Pavlo Vovk because they had been allegedly brought in violation of procedure. The ruling is also being appealed.

The High Anti-Corruption Court was scheduled to consider bail for Vovk and Ihor Pohribichenko, a judge at Vovk's court, on Oct. 22. However, both judges failed to show up for the hearing, and it was postponed until Oct. 29.

Meanwhile, a petition on the site of the President's Office for the liquidation of Vovk's court collected the required 25,000 signatures on Oct. 26. Zelensky's office responded to the petition with a vaguely worded statement proposing "consultations" with the High Council of Justice, a discredited and distrusted body, on resolving the issue of the Kyiv District Administrative Court.

Venediktova's actions

A law enforcement source told the Kyiv Post that Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova continues obstructing the Vovk case. The source spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the press.

Specifically, she has refused to extend the Vovk investigation, and it had to be extended by ex-Chief Anti-Corruption Prosecutor Nazar Kholodnytsky before he resigned in August, according to the source.

Venediktova has also refused to have Vovk brought to interrogation by force due to his refusal to come, conduct further searches in the Vovk case and wiretap him, the source said.

Other decisions

The Constitutional Court has recently dealt other major blows to Ukraine's anti-corruption institutions.

On Aug. 28, the Constitutional Court ruled that then-President Petro Poroshenko's 2015 decree to appoint Sytnyk as head of the NABU was unconstitutional. On Sept. 16, the Constitutional Court also ruled that some clauses of the law on the NABU were unconstitutional.

The rulings did not explicitly say that Sytnyk was no longer head of the NABU. However, there have been fears that Zelensky's majority in the Verkhovna Rada would change the law in order to fire Sytnyk and appoint a Zelensky loyalist who would block cases against top incumbent officials.

The Constitutional Court helped corrupt officials by canceling the previous law criminalizing illicit enrichment in 2019. The Rada had to pass a new law on penalties for illicit enrichment later last year.

The Constitutional Court also partially canceled the judicial reforms of both ex-President Petro Poroshenko and Zelensky in February and March 2020 and entrenched judicial impunity by canceling the law criminalizing unlawful court rulings in June 2020.

The Constitutional Court is also considering abolishing the High Anti-Corruption Court and the Deposit Guarantee Fund, canceling the new law on illicit enrichment, and reinstating the ban on farmland sales.

On Sept. 17, the Verkhovna Rada also appointed controversial members to a commission to choose a new chief anti-corruption prosecutor. Anti-corruption activists say the members do not meet integrity standards and will likely choose a puppet who will obstruct graft cases.

#4

Parliament Fails to Act on Crisis Caused by Discredited Constitutional Court

by Oleg Sukhov
Kyiv Post, 6 November 2020
https://bit.ly/36jei73

The Verkhovna Rada ended the week without taking any action to solve the political crisis triggered by the Constitutional Court's decision to effectively destroy the entire asset declaration system for public servants, a key anti-corruption measure.

The Constitutional Court ruling on Oct. 29 deprived the National Agency for Preventing Corruption, which is tasked with checking declarations, of most of its powers.

The ruling prompted President Volodymyr Zelensky, whose party holds a 246-member majority in the 422-seat parliament, to demand that lawmakers dissolve the 15-member court.

The court's dismantling of a key facet of Ukraine's anti-corruption infrastructure could lead to the suspension of visa-free travel with Europe and block further Western funding. Unless the Constitutional Court is stopped, the judges are expected to hear cases that cripple Ukraine's banking sector and threaten the status of the Ukrainian language as the sole official language.

Multiple bills

Several bills have been submitted to parliament to resolve the impasse with the Constitutional Court. None of them have been passed, and they may be considered next week. It is not clear if there will be enough votes to pass any of them.

On Oct. 30, Zelensky submitted to the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, the bill seeking to fire all incumbent Constitutional Court judges and treat their decision on asset declarations as null and void.

The bill was seen as the most radical one. The Ukrainian Constitution and law do not allow the dismissal of Constitutional Court judges without the court's consent, thus giving them absolute immunity and impunity. Adding to the court's untouchable status, the Rada has no authority to nullify any Constitutional Court decisions. Zelensky has admitted that he was seeking a political, rather than legal, decision to find a way out of the impasse.

On Nov. 2, Verkhovna Rada Speaker Dmytro Razumkov and about 100 other lawmakers submitted a bill to reinstate the asset declaration system in the same way as it was before the Constitutional Court decision. The bill has been lambasted by anti-corruption activists and legal experts, who say that it will be immediately recognized as unconstitutional again by the Constitutional Court and that it does not solve the underlying problem.

On Nov. 3, lawmakers from the Servant of the People and 22-member Holos factions submitted a bill to temporarily block the Constitutional Court's work by increasing its quorum from 12 to 17 judges. Currently, three of the 18 Constitutional Court seats are vacant.

The Rada also considered on Nov. 6 appointing two judges of the Constitutional Court without a transparent competitive procedure in what some lawmakers claimed would help to resolve the crisis. However, the move has been criticized by anti-corruption activists, who said that the appointment of Constitutional Court judges without competition was unlawful, and that some of the candidates were controversial.
It was not clear how such an appointment would resolve the crisis. It could also exacerbate it by giving the Constitutional Court the necessary quorum. However, parliament eventually decided not to appoint them on Nov. 6.

Zelensky and the Rada have also called on all incumbent Constitutional Court judges to resign as a potential way out of the deadlock. They have refused to do so.

Other solutions

On Nov. 5, four Constitutional Court judges who did not support the cancellation of the asset declaration system – Serhiy Holovaty, Oleh Pervomaisky, Viktor Kolesnyk, and Vasyl Lemak – said they would temporarily refuse to attend court hearings. This will effectively block the court's work due to a lack of quorum until some of them decide to resume their work.

Vitaly Tytych, a lawyer and ex-head of judicial watchdog Public Integrity Council, argued that one of the possible solutions for the crisis would be for the Constitutional Court to issue an interpretation of its ruling that would narrow its impact and minimize its negative consequences. Such an interpretation could both reinstate the asset declaration system and make sure that officials who committed declaration-related crimes before the Constitutional Court ruling do not escape punishment, he said.

Ihor Slidenko, the rapporteur and the principal architect of the Constitutional Court's Oct. 29 decision, has already backed down partially, saying that the decision only applied to asset declarations for judges and that a minor change in the wording would allow the Rada to reinstate penalties for lying in asset declarations.

However, this is not clear from the text of the Constitutional Court decision, and the court has not issued an official interpretation that would allow the Rada to reinstate the asset declaration system.

Negative consequences

The Constitutional Court decision is already having a negative impact on corruption investigations.

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine said 110 corruption cases would be closed due to the decision.

On Nov. 5, the High Anti-Corruption Court closed a major corruption case against Odesa Mayor Hennady Trukhanov. In 2019, the NABU charged Trukhanov with failing to declare assets worth Hr 51 million ($2.1 million) owned by his common-law wife Tetiana Koltunova.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian company Altaur, whose servers are used to store officials' asset declarations, has filed a lawsuit with the Kyiv District Administrative Court to stop storing them based on the Constitutional Court decision.

The Kyiv District Administrative Court is headed by tainted judge Pavlo Vovk, who has been charged with corruption and obstruction of justice.

#5
Ukraine's Judiciary on the Brink of Arbitrariness:
What Went Wrong with the Constitutional Court's Ruling

Ukraine Crisis Media Center, 30 October 2020
https://bit.ly/2TQspuQ

This week, the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine that deemed unconstitutional a number of provisions of the law on corruption prevention, made the headlines in Ukraine. The law does not allow to appeal the ruling that has jeopardized the entire architecture of anticorruption institutions seen as Ukraine's major achievement in combatting corruption after the Revolution of Dignity. Ironically, this historic decision comes just a few days after the local elections and the nationwide survey dubbed "the

President's five questions" that asked if Ukrainians approve of life sentence for grand corruption. Ukraine's civil society and experts are discussing the problem, the President called an extraordinary meeting of the National Security and Defense Council, while western partners are openly criticizing the court ruling. We take a closer look at what's happening.

In a nutshell: what happened. On October 28, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine issued a ruling that deems unconstitutional a number of provisions of the Law "On corruption prevention" and criminal liability for introducing false information when declaring assets. Thus, electronic declaration of assets was actually cancelled on October 28.

Only four of the 15 judges spoke against the decision (including three judges appointed by President Poroshenko). As of this writing, only two of them – Serhiy Holovatyi and Vasyl Lemak, have publicly criticized the ruling, explaining in detail why it profoundly contradicts the European law and the ECHR's practices.

Starting from 19:00 on October 28, the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption cut access to the state registry of asset declarations, as ordered by the court ruling. Head of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksiy Danilov sent an indirect warning message to the Constitutional Court. He said that "decisions made by some state agencies pose a threat to the national security."

What went wrong with the Constitutional Court's ruling? The ruling violates Ukraine's commitments under the IMF program and loan agreements with the EU, as well as the pre-requisites for Ukraine's visa-free regime with the European Union.

The most dangerous thing about the ruling is that its content and the conclusions it gives do not match. While the Court ruled unconstitutional a number of highly important elements within the system that exercises control over the assets of civil servants, it provided no explanation for the decision it made.

The Court ruling contains over ten pages that describe legal positions on the principle of independence of the judiciary, while completely ignoring explanation and legal arguments behind the decision.

The explanation boils down to the statement that the asset declaration system puts independence of the judiciary at risk. In the logic of the Court, the price to pay to avoid that is the amnesty to all civil servants who have declared assets with violations. Also, there is no explanation why the ruling deems unconstitutional open asset declarations as well as a number of powers and rights of the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption, and provisions on responsibility for corruption offences.

Who are the judges? Judges of the Constitutional Court will benefit from the ruling themselves. According to the e-registry that was still open on the day when the decision

was passed, head of the Constitutional court Oleksandr Tupytskyi declared UAH 4.5 million (USD 157,746) of income last year. Back then, the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption had all grounds to hold him liable for not declaring a land plot in the Russia-occupied Crimea that he bought in 2018 and registered under the Russian law.

By annulling e-declaration of assets, Tupytskyi saved himself. To remind, Tupytskyi was appointed to the Constitutional Court by Viktor Yanukovych, he was elected head of the Court last year. His wife Olena Tupytska was an assistant to an MP of the "Party of Regions" between 2012 and 2014.

Who's behind? The Constitutional Court got to the case following a request signed by MPs from the "Opposition Platform – For Life" (Opozytsiyna Platforma – Za Zhyttia) faction and a few MPs representing the faction "For the Future" (Za Maybutne). "For the Future" party is chaired by Ihor Palytsia, Kolomoyskyi's long-standing ally.

MPs of the above factions do have grounds to fear. Thus, the family of MP Viktor Medvedchuk of the "Opposition Platform – For Life", one of the signatories of the request to the Court, owns a yacht worth of USD 200 million, hectares of land along the coast in Bulgaria and two dozen real estate sites in Ukraine. These assets are missing from Medvedchuk's 2019 declaration.

E-declaration of Taras Kozak, Medvedchuk's ally and owner of pro-Russian television channels was also subject to thorough checks by the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption.

Reaction of the National Security and Defense Council, government, President, State Bureau of Investigation. After the Constitutional Court issued the ruling, the National Security and Defense Council held an extraordinary meeting. Also, on October 29, the government ordered that the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption immediately reopened the access to the registry of e-declarations.

Besides, President Zelenskyi ordered to prepare a draft law seeking to "restore the trust in the constitutional court" (without specifying what that means) and submit it to the Parliament for immediate consideration. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said that the government and the Office of the President were already working on the draft.

The National Security and Defense Council also ordered to intensify the work of the Commission on legal reform under the President as well as speed up the submission of proposals on the judicial reform.
Finally, the State Bureau of Investigation summoned for interrogation the head of the Constitutional Court Oleksandr Tupytskyi on November 2.

Oleksiy Sukhachov, acting director of the State Bureau of Investigation was quoted as saying: "State Bureau of Investigation investigates into a series of criminal proceedings, conducting checks on the involvement of the head of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine into the crimes as part of a criminal group."

#6

Why War-Torn East Ukraine Votes for pro-Russian Parties

by Mykhaylo Shtekel
Atlantic Council, 4 November 2020
https://bit.ly/32wTrfA

Pro-Russian candidates and parties achieved considerable success in eastern Ukraine during nationwide local elections held on October 25. In towns and cities throughout the region, Moscow-friendly political forces claimed the lion's share of the vote and maintained their traditional dominance over the political landscape.

This result was widely expected. Despite the close proximity and heavy emotional toll of the six-year Russo-Ukrainian War, political loyalties in the region have changed little since the prewar era. Young voters remain deeply disillusioned and inclined to abstain, while the elderly electorate continues to dutifully back the kind of paternalistic pro-Russian parties that have long held sway in these parts.

Nowhere is the resilience of Ukraine's pro-Russian vote more apparent than in Slovyansk. Six years ago, this city of a little over 100,000 people served as the initial focus of Kremlin efforts to spark a massive anti-Kyiv uprising throughout eastern and southern Ukraine. For three months beginning in April 2014, it was the de facto capital of Novorossiya ("New Russia"), the client state that Moscow intended to create from the ruins of independent Ukraine.

During the Russian occupation of Slovyansk, the city suffered an array of horrors including mass expropriation of businesses and property, arbitrary arrests and detentions, forced labor, torture, and executions. The nightmare finally ended in July 2014 when Ukrainian forces liberated Slovyansk. It has remained at peace ever since.

This experience has scarred the city in many ways, but it has made relatively little impact on the political landscape. A clear majority of local citizens still feel strong ties to Russia, while suspicion of Ukrainian political parties in Kyiv runs deep. These preferences were on display during the recent local election, which saw a pair of pro-Russian politicians make it through to this month's runoff vote to choose the next mayor of Slovyansk.

The two candidates are incumbent mayor Vadim Lyakh (Opposition Bloc party) and his challenger Pavlo Prydvorov (Opposition Platform-For Life party). Prydvorov is the former secretary of Slovyansk City Council. He also served briefly as acting mayor in the immediate aftermath of the city's liberation in 2014.

Both politicians attended Slovyansk City Council sessions at the time of the Kremlin takeover in spring and early summer 2014, and are accused of backing the creation of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic. Neither has ever faced charges over their involvement in the Russian proxy regime that ruled the city during those fateful months.

This lack of criminal prosecutions is a common theme in the liberated parts of eastern Ukraine, where many local officials initially backed the Kremlin uprising but have since managed to remain in office by making themselves useful to the Ukrainian government in Kyiv. Lyakh was elected mayor of Slovyansk in 2015, while Prydvorov became a member of the city council at the same time.

Among the many local officials in eastern Ukraine who stand accused of supporting the Russian invasion of 2014, the most notorious is arguably former Slovyansk mayor Nelya Shtepa. In late 2014, she was charged with separatism and organizing a terrorist group. Shtepa spent three years in custody before being placed under house arrest in 2017. Six years on, her case is still in court, but she is no longer subject to any restrictions.

Shtepa has remained defiant throughout, and has sought to portray herself as something of a martyr. She even campaigned in the recent election to win her old job back, finishing third and narrowly missing out on a place in the coming head-to-head vote between the two front runners.

The dominance of pro-Russian politics in Slovyansk creates obvious challenges for the city's considerable contingent of pro-Western residents and supporters of Ukraine's European integration. Local activist Dmytro Braslavsky says most of Slovyansk's European-leaning voters will now back current mayor Vadim Lyakh, who he calls "the lesser of two evils."

Braslavsky believes voter apathy is one of the key obstacles faced by pro-Western politicians seeking to make inroads in eastern Ukraine, and claims few residents of Slovyansk appreciate the significance of local elections. This is especially true among younger demographics, he says.

"It is still very hard to explain to people that the municipal authorities are more important for everyday life in Slovyansk than either the president or parliament," explains Braslavsky. "Young people in particular did not vote in the first round, and it is likely that turnout in the second round will be even lower. They could have made a difference if they had backed the more pro-Western candidate from the Servant of the People party. Instead, elderly voters have once again determined the outcome of an election in Slovyansk. No wonder we are still ruled by the same political class as before."

Local ecological activist Kapitalina Pasikova shares many of Braslavsky's concerns and admits to feeling depressed following the October 25 vote. She argues that a mood of resignation prevents Slovyansk residents from becoming engaged in efforts to bring about meaningful change, and points to local elections five years ago as a key turning point for many local people that crushed fledgling hopes of a new beginning. "When the city was first liberated in 2014, lots of activists initially emerged," Pasikova recalls. "We believed this was our city. We felt it was up to us to make things better. But the 2015 local elections were devastating. Everything remained the same and all the old faces returned to power."

Thirty-something Slovyansk resident Ksenia is wary of speaking publicly about the political climate in the city and asked not to use her full name. She claims the atmosphere is becoming increasingly uncomfortable for those who support Ukraine's westwards geopolitical trajectory. "Many pro-European people are now looking to leave Slovyansk, and some would like to leave Ukraine entirely."

Ksenia herself says she has no such plans, and would prefer to build a future in her home town. She was not at all surprised by the results of the recent local elections and favors a pragmatic approach, arguing that anyone planning to remain in Slovyansk must adapt to existing political realities rather than pinning their hopes on change. "I am certainly not waiting for any miracles from politicians," she quips.

Despite the gloomy mood among many in Slovyansk's pro-Western community, the political atmosphere in the city is not entirely unchanging. During his past five years in office, Mayor Lyakh has begun to tentatively embrace a number of more pro-European positions, according to political analyst and Slovyansk resident Denis Bigunov. This attempt to claim the middle ground makes perfect sense politically, says Bigunov. "Lyakh received around 30% of votes in the first round of the recent local elections, while the leading pro-Western candidate from the Servant of the People party secured almost 15%. By demonstrating that he does not intend to be a strictly pro-Russian politician, Lyakh hopes to gain pro-European votes in the second round while maintaining his traditional support base among pensioners."

The advances made by Euro-friendly candidates during the recent local elections in Slovyansk are still far too modest to worry the city's pro-Russian political heavyweights. Nevertheless, there are numerous similar signs of a gradual shift taking place across the region, beginning with President Zelenskyy's remarkable performance in 2019's presidential and parliamentary elections, and continuing in the stronger-than-expected recent showing in parts of eastern Ukraine by former president Petro Poroshenko's European Solidarity party.

If this is evidence of a changing political landscape, it is taking place at near-glacial pace. In reality, it may take decades before the balance of power shifts decisively away from a political status quo rooted in traditional notions of strong ties with Russia.

This is only natural, says Bigunov. He argues that Slovyansk and other cities in eastern Ukraine lack the historical ties that bind much of central and western Ukraine to a broader European political culture. Instead, the far younger settlements of the east have known nothing but authoritarian rule for more than a century. Czarist autocracy was followed directly by Bolshevik totalitarianism. The eventual collapse of the Soviet Union then led to a new era of regional dominance by Viktor Yanukovych's Party of Regions. Genuine democracy did not reach Slovyansk until summer 2014, when it arrived together with the Ukrainian Army.

Six years on, pro-Russian parties continue to dominate political affairs in the city, much as they do elsewhere in eastern Ukraine. However, the region's pro-Western electorate is slowly finding its voice and gradually becoming a factor to be reckoned with in the electoral calculations of rival candidates. This is undermining the monopoly on power that once stifled public debate. A more pluralistic political culture is slowly taking shape, but pro-Russian parties will likely remain in the ascendancy for a long time to come.

#7

On the Edge of a European War, Who Gets to Defend the State?

by Olesya Khromeychuk
openDemocracy, 14 October 2020
https://bit.ly/2SZsufa

The war in Eastern Ukraine has been going on for over six years. A public holiday, Day of the Defender of Ukraine, was created soon after the outbreak of hostilities, and has since been celebrated on 14 October. It is mostly military men who are hailed as the embodiment of the "defender of the nation". The events of the past six years, however, have shown that civilians and frequently civilian women are just as likely to take up the defence of statehood when it is threatened.

"You only call me 'Maria' when you are cross with me. Are you cross with me?" Masha asks after I use her full name on Skype. I was cross with her then. I don't remember why now. Probably because I noticed that she had been too friendly with the radical nationalists, and I thought that that was dangerous for her, for her cause, for her reputation. I thought it was wrong. She didn't think it was right either. But she was either less naïve or less self-righteous than I was.

It's funny that I normally call her Masha. We are both from western Ukraine, where the name Maria can become "Marichka" or "Marusia", but not Masha. Masha is the Russian diminutive and if you use it, it suggests that you are a Russian speaker, which neither of us is. But that is how she was introduced to me when we first met and Masha is the name I use when I'm not cross with her.

I first contacted Masha to interview her in 2014, as I wanted to know about her involvement in the Maidan protests. It was soon after the demonstrations had finished; the protest camp city still stood in the middle of Kyiv, some fires were still smouldering, crosses and other makeshift shrines had started to appear where people had been shot. Central Kyiv looked post-apocalyptic. It looked as if a war had just ended. In fact, the war was just beginning, but we didn't know it yet.

Masha waited for me in a hipstery little café for two hours. I kept texting her that I was running late, and she waited. I had been held up by my previous interviewee, a far-right activist who turned up very late to the interview smelling of alcohol even though it was ten in the morning. The interview turned out to be pointless and I didn't use it in the article for which I had collected it. The interview with Masha was quite the opposite: I collected enough material to fill a book. But most importantly, I acquired a new friend.

When I finally got to the café, I saw a striking young woman. Tall, with a long, messy ponytail, Masha looked younger than me, but projected such confidence that I muddled my words as I tried to introduce myself and apologise for my lateness.

"So, you are a British scientist then," she said sarcastically when I told her I was from the UK. "British scientists" is a phrase that is abused by the media in Ukraine whenever a new invention is being promoted, and is often used as a joke. Sarcasm did not seem like a good start to an interview. But I didn't really know how to fix things.

She got up and said: "Let's go outside. I need a smoke." I followed her obediently. Masha chain-smoked and told me the story of her involvement in the protests. It was only then that I noticed that her deep green eyes were still seeing those images of death and destruction. She looked shell-shocked and searched for the words that could adequately describe what had just happened to her and her country.

Eventually, Masha forgot that she was speaking to a British scientist, or maybe just warmed up to me. She relayed her experiences of the Maidan the way they had etched themselves in her mind. This was her first interview. She didn't realise it at the time, but she would be asked similar questions again and again by researchers and journalists for years to come.

Masha is well-known in Ukraine now. It's the sort of fame that people gained quickly and unexpectedly for themselves when the Maidan had just finished and the war was just starting. Between Viktor Yanukovych fleeing the country and the new presidential elections, activists and volunteers replaced the state and in many ways turned out to be more efficient than the government. Volunteers collected everything that the army needed, demanded punishment for those who had shot at civilians during the protests, and many joined the army and went to the front.

Masha did everything she could during the protests. She made Molotov cocktails and gave speeches on gender equality. After experiencing discrimination from male protesters, she secured permission to talk about equal rights from the Maidan's central stage. Eventually, late in the evening when the stage was finally free, as she was about to be given the microphone, several men stopped her and said:

"You know, what I have between my legs, and what you have between your legs are two different things. You should do what you do well: borscht, sewing."
Masha was having none of that. She went up on the stage and delivered her speech. As it turned out, it was the first of many about women's rights.

When the war started, Masha packed up and went to the front. She taught herself to fly drones and then set up an organisation that taught others to fly them. She argued that in the 21st century we should not be fighting with people, we should use technology. And it's not as if the Ukrainian army lacked technology. Volunteer organisations like Masha's, the Ukrainian diaspora all over the world and western governments provided a steady supply of drones for the army. But a combination of untrained soldiers, overly cautious officers and corrupt generals meant that sometimes these drones either never made it to the frontline, or ended up somewhere in storage to make sure that they didn't get broken. As Masha pointed out, some officers in charge were worried about being told off by superiors for damaging army property. Damaging people was less risky, it seems.

Masha wanted to change all this. She organised free training courses for others and flew drones herself at the front. She enjoyed the best of both worlds: she went to the frontline every few months and felt like she was making a contribution to the war effort. But she didn't sign an official contract with the army and thus couldn't be totally controlled by it. The state also benefited from this situation: it had someone who provided free training, drones and risked her own life at the front. If something happened, the state bore no responsibility. In Masha's flat, on Masha's desk, there was a pile of requests from various army units asking her to train their personnel – for free, of course.

I admired her determination. But I also realised that the more Masha and people like her did the job of defending the state, something that should have been done by the professional military, the more the state would feel that it needed to do nothing. When I reproached her for enabling the state to take a passive role while the volunteers did the hard work, she asked me how her stopping flying drones or training others would help the people at the frontline. When I told her to be careful with her friendships with radical nationalists, because, after all, they tend to see feminists as a threat to national security and are the most ardent supporters of patriarchy and gender discrimination, which she so passionately tried to fight against, she replied that there were only two categories of people at the frontline: decent people and arseholes. Nationalists could be found in both camps; she tried not to hang out with the arseholes. When I tried to persuade Masha to take a break from saving Ukraine and look after her health, she smiled in response and said she would. I wasn't convinced by any of these answers.

In her attempt to help those at the frontline, she tried to have the laws on army recruitment changed in order to stop (or at least minimise) discrimination of women. When Masha first started to go to the war zone, she noticed that women were doing everything from kitchen duties to taking part in combat and were often responsible for both at the same time. Because of restrictions in recruitment law, the majority of army positions - and not only combat ones - were inaccessible to women. As a result, female snipers were registered as administrators and female combat fighters as seamstresses. The state again was happy to use people's willingness to risk their lives at no expense to its budget.

These women were completely unprotected when it came to frontline injuries: how do you explain a firearm wound received by an administrator? They were not remunerated adequately, because you don't pay a seamstress additional money for participating in combat. The status they enjoyed was nowhere near that of their male colleagues. Indeed, if things went very wrong and a servicewoman with a semi-legal status was killed, her family would get no compensation. The woman could be blamed for going to the frontline out of her own choice; she should have known that it's "no place for women". And, of course, they were vulnerable to frequent sexual harassment and violence from their own men, not to mention the enemy if they were unlucky enough to be captured.

Masha wanted to change all this too. Like flying drones, she thought she could do it from within the army. I told her that you couldn't reform such a patriarchal institution from inside, because you would only legitimise it by joining it. She disagreed. We had many heated discussions after which I sometimes thought that she would never speak to me again. Other times she found my arguments persuasive. Despite my scepticism she persevered: she lobbied the Ministry of Defence, encouraged women veterans and servicewomen to demand their rights, and became an outspoken critic of the military as an institution while supporting the frontline daily. And her efforts paid off. The discriminatory laws were altered as a result of the campaign she had started and led. She did not achieve gender equality in the army, but she made a vital first step towards it.

When I called Masha to say that my brother, Volodya, had been killedwhile serving in the Ukrainian army in the Donbas region, she happened to be at the front. She said that she'd go to the unit where he had served to pick up his stuff and bring it to me. On her way back from Luhansk oblast, her car broke down. A walking stick in one hand - she was suffering from an injured leg - my brother's belongings in the other, she boarded train after train and eventually made it to Kyiv. A few days later, when I arrived in Kyiv from Lviv after my brother's funeral, we sat in her little kitchen in an old Soviet-style apartment and went through my brother's things together. There, on her kitchen floor, lay my brother's life of the past two years, and we had to sift through it piece by piece.

After the funeral and a week of bureaucratic hell, I thought the worst was over, but I was wrong. Masha, my mother, my partner and I went through everything carefully, sorting it into three piles: stuff that could be useful to others (uniform, boots, rucksack, etc.), stuff that could be thrown away (which wasn't much, you don't accumulate much clutter at the

frontline), and stuff we wanted to keep. I took his phone, documents and a khaki scarf. My mother kept the helmet liner with the hole in it, the one he must have been wearing when the shrapnel pierced it, and we kept a t-shirt for my other brother. That was it. The useful pile was quite sizable, and Masha was tasked with finding a volunteer who could pick it up and make sure that it was given to those who needed it. She did this in minutes. I saw the experience acquired through her frontline volunteering in action. She dialled a couple of numbers and in a business-like tone said:

"I've got a family of a fighter here. He was killed in action. His family want to make sure that his things can serve others. Can you sort it?"

Someone came to her flat almost straight away. This was such a relief: we didn't have to carry my brother's belongings somewhere or pack them up and take them with us, simply not knowing what to do with them other than go through them later and cry again. Masha dealt with it all quickly and efficiently. We were grateful.

Another time I saw her war experience in action was when she called my brother's commander, whom she knew from her volunteering. A business-like tone again:

"Hello. I've got one of your fallen fighters' families here. Can you tell me how he died? Okay, I'm turning the loudspeaker on."

I would never have found that number myself and if I had, I wouldn't have had the courage to dial it. I wouldn't have thought that the commander had any obligation to tell me what had happened in the war zone. Nor would I want to traumatise him by making him tell me the details. But the phone call she initiated was very helpful – because we did want to know how Volodya had died, even if we didn't want to ask. As with the belongings, she allowed us to take the back seat while she sorted out the rest. We were grateful again.

As it turned out, my brother's last job was to stand in a trench, watch where enemy shelling was coming from, and pass the information on to those who could return fire. He managed to pass on the details of three attacks. The fourth one killed him. This was no job for a human. This was a job for a drone. Perhaps one of those sitting in storage not being damaged. Perhaps one of those Masha could have trained another soldier to use. My brother, perhaps.

My brother's defence of Ukraine ended. Masha's, however, continued.

Masha and I met as researcher and respondent. But we became friends, because only a friend can bring your brother's things from the frontline, help you go through them on her kitchen floor, and find out the details of his death. We try to stay in touch even if time difference and our busy lives make it difficult. We argue about many things. But in the end, I still almost always call her Masha.

Ukraine's ruling Servant of the People Party's Honeymoon is Over After it Loses Ground in Regional Elections to Local Incumbents

by Ben Aris
BNE Intellinews, 27 October 2020
https://bit.ly/34zs1ai

The ruling Servant of the People (SOTP) Party got hammered in Ukraine's regional elections over the weekend, where the governorships and mayor's offices in the main towns were up for grabs.

The party set up by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and named after the comedy show that made him famous won a landslide victory last summer in the general election, taking an absolute majority of 54%. But with the slow pace of reform and the party's failure to make much progress on Zelenskiy's main election promises – end corruption, bring peace to the Donbas, and increase the incomes of the population – the honeymoon is well and truly over and the party has now been punished at the polls. SOTP is expecting to take about 30% of the overall votes in the election, down from the 64% it won in the 2019 snap parliamentary elections.

Normally regional elections are a non-event, but this year they are more important thanks to a new Electoral Code that both decentralises power by resetting relations between local governments and Kyiv and mandates that women occupy no less than 40% of local council seats.

Despite SOTP poor showing, it retains a core constituency of supporters and remains a political force in the country. While Zelenskiy has seen his personal ratings fall dramatically in recent months, he remains by far the most popular politician in the country and would almost certainly be re-elected as president if elections for the post were held on Sunday.

The really big loser in these elections was opposition leader, former Prime Minister and head of Batkivshchyna (Fatherland) Party Yulia Tymoshenko, whose party failed to win any representation.

Once the prominent prime minister of the Orange government following the revolution that ousted Leonid Kuchma in 2008-2009, Tymoshenko's star has waned inexorably since the 2014 revolution of dignity that ousted president Viktor Yanukovych. Her fiery popularist rhetoric has failed to strike a chord with voters and she is increasingly seen as relic of pass politics from a system that has been completely discredited.

Tymoshenko lost ground at the expense of parties backed by oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky, who has already taken command of a group of some 40 deputies within the SOTP fraction.

The other big established player is Viktor Medvedchuk, the head of the Political Council of the Opposition Platform, For Life Party and a close personal friend and ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Kolomoisky bankrolled Zelenskiy's presidential campaign in 2018 but since then has focused on undermining the independence of the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) as part of his campaign to take back control of PrivatBank that was nationalised in 2016, or at least get the state to pay him $2bn in compensation. Increasingly he is actively working against Zelenskiy, who is trying to sail a middle ground between the demands of the people and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on one side and his friend on the other.

He also has experience in regional politics, having served as governor of the Dnepropetrovsk region where he armed a local militia to prevent Russian-backed separates taking over as the fighting in Donbas began. He was eventually fired by Poroshenko, but retains deep ties to the industrially powerful region.

During his early career Medvedchuk was seen as the eminence grise behind the Kuchma government that was close to Moscow in the '90s and a willing partner in looting the country of billions of dollars from its gas transit business. He is now seen as the Kremlin's proxy in Ukrainian politics.

And the two men are allies. While they have very different agendas they both control major media assets and even have joint holdings in the leading 1+1 broadcaster that was instrumental in getting Zelenskiy elected president.

By improving their hold they further the oligarchic political system in Ukraine that has perverted politics towards the interests of the existing elite and made it increasingly difficult to push through the genuine reforms demanded by donors such as the IMF. The regional election results will also strengthen Moscow's hand in Ukrainian domestic politics.

Medvedchuk's Opposition Platform, For Life party did well and won seats in multiple regional councils to establish itself as a political force at the regional level. The Kolomoisky-backed For Future Party, however, failed to win a single seat in the regional councils, despite a heavy advertising campaign.

Poroshenko's European Solidarity Party won representation in all regional assemblies except for the breakaway Donestk and Luhansk regions and improved its 2020 results (blue) compared to the parliamentary election 2019 (yellow). As Zelenskiy's popularity wanes that of Poroshenko's party has improved.

"As expected, Ukraine has become more polarised, with Kyiv firmly rejecting pro-Russian forces in its city council results, but the south-eastern cities becoming more Russian-

oriented," Zenon Zawada of Concorde Capital said in a note. "As expected, the pro-Putin Opposition Platform For Life Party had strong results, likely gaining the second-largest factions in the city councils of Kharkiv, Odesa and Dnipro, according to the Rating exit poll."

Mayors are big winners

The main winners in the elections were incumbent mayors in the biggest cities, which largely managed to hold on to their seats.

The mayors of Ukraine's seven-largest cities gained the most votes, some of them exceeding the 50% threshold and allowing them to win in the first round.

Under the new election laws, local elections are held primarily according to the party list system, with 5% thresholds for representation on local councils. Settlements with fewer than 10,000 people will still use single-mandate districts.

The main race was for control of the city hall in Kyiv, where the ex-boxing champion Vladimir Klitschko was defending his position. Klitschko announced he had contracted coronavirus (COVID-19) shortly before the vote, but still managed to win re-election in the first round with 50.6% of the vote after 99.5% of the ballots were counted.

Klitschko easily beat Oleksandr Popov, his predecessor and candidate from the pro-Putin Opposition Platform For Life Party, who won 8.6% of the vote, according to the exit poll of the Rating Sociological Group.

In the vote for the Kyiv city council – the more important body as it is the one that actually spends the money – the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform led by Klitschko earned about 21.3% of votes, while former President Petro Poroshenko's European Solidarity Party, led by his wife Maryna Poroshenko, took about 18%. The president's SOTP, led by Yevhenia Kuleba, came in third with about 9.5%, according to the Rating exit poll.

SOTP did poorly in all the important regional city races, which will undermine its grip on the Rada, where it is already facing increased opposition as rival groups, many of them backed by powerful oligarchs, are actively working against the SOTP fraction and persuading its deputies to leave the fraction.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, mayor Hennadiy Kernes won re-election with 57.9% of the vote, followed by Oleksandr Feldman with 12.1%, the exit poll said.

In Odesa, Ukraine's third-largest city, incumbent mayor Gennady Trukhanov also won with 34.6% of the vote, but will now face a run-off against Mykola Skoryk of the pro-Putin Opposition Platform who took 17.7%.

In Dnipro, Ukraine's fourth-largest city, Borys Filatov took 44.4% of the vote, followed by Zahid Krasnov of The People's Servant Party with 14.4%.

"The biggest story of these local elections, which was expected, is the surge in support for local leaders and parties above national ones. All four mayors re-elected in Ukraine's largest cities lead their own local parties that have no presence in Parliament. Moreover, they are not capable [of] competing for Parliament. But they are very popular at the local level, which is a unique phenomenon in Ukrainian politics," according to Concorde Capital's Zawada.

The success of the local mayors is a feature of the decentralisation of power, which has been one of the most successful reforms implemented since the 2014 Euromaidan revolution.

More than 1,400 newly merged communities have been formed since 2014, which have more resources, decision-making authority, and power that has been delegated from Kyiv to solve local community problems. the decentralisation process has been pushed on Kyiv by its Western donor partners as a way to improve local government and reduce corruption.

While the polls show the population is very unhappy with the national government – the last poll found two thirds of Ukrainians believe the country is going in the "wrong direction" – the same polls find the opposite is true of attitudes to local government, where they are very happy.

Local leaders have focused on things like collecting the rubbish, lighting the streets, funding the schools and repairing the roads to the widespread approval of the local populations. A similar phenomenon is seen in Russia, although there it is less noticeable and less successful when compared to Ukraine.

Turnout and Hungarian interference

Voter turnout was decent, but not astronomical at 37%, compared with 46.6% in the 2015 local elections, according to the Central Election Commission, which cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a major source for the drop in turnout. One fifth of registered voters said they didn't participate owing to health reasons, according to the Rating sociological group.

The election was deemed to be free and fair, although some abuses were reported including: carousel voting schemes, and insufficient voting booths and ballot boxes. One smallish scandal involved the Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto, who called upon ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine to vote for the candidates of a particular party, the Association of Hungarian Culture in Zakarpattia.

Ukraine is home to a large ethnic Hungarian population that lives along the Ukrainian side of the border. This population was negatively affected by former President Petro Poroshenko's drive to ban "foreign languages" in public life and schools as part of his nationalistic driven rhetoric. While Poroshenko's rules were aimed at Russophiles, the Hungarian community was caught up in the crossfire that generated much resentment. The scandal deepened when the Hungarian consulate in the region was caught handing out Hungarian passports to the locals. Relations between Budapest and Kyiv have been tense since.

Szijjarto also called for the residents of the town of Berehovo to re-elect its ethnic Hungarian mayor, Zoltan Babiak. He encouraged Ukrainian citizens living in Hungary to cross the border to vote, stating they would not be required to undergo a 14-day quarantine. All of this drew a strong rebuke from the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, which accused Hungary of interfering in its domestic politics.

"Budapest's ignoring of numerous calls by Kyiv to stop abusing the principles of rule of law and neighbourly relations, and to respect Ukraine's laws," the statement said. "Unpleasant suggestions to voters by Budapest violate Ukrainian legislation and don't leave the Ukrainian side another choice than harshly reacting to such steps according to established international practice and the legislation of Ukraine."

National poll conducted in parallel

In parallel to the regional vote Zelenskiy organised a poll to answer five questions. This poll was partly a pre-election stunt, as the debate it engendered allowed the Zelenskiy team to take control of the media coverage ahead of the election as it drip-fed questions into the public sphere, and to control of debate.

Some of the questions themselves were criticised for being vague and/or meaningless, rather than forming the basis of some sort of referendum to provide the president's office with an agenda going forward. A third of those that voted said they ignored the poll, according to the Rating Sociological Group.

81% of those who responded to the first question: "do you support life in prison sentences for those involved in large scale corruption?" said they agree. About 45% of respondents said they support creating a free trade zone in the Donbas region, about 95% support reducing the number of MPs to 300, from 450 currently, about 70% support legalising cannabis for medical use and 78% support raising Ukraine's security guarantees in the Budapest Memorandum.

"As expected, these elections will be declared free and fair by election observers, and meeting international standards. Zelenskiy's national poll was too poorly organised to be taken seriously. It will be soon forgotten, given how few participated overall and how easily multiple ballots could have been cast," Zenon Zawada of Concorde Capital said in a note.

Where are the Transformational Leaders of the Maidan Generation?

by Yuri Polakiwsky
New Europe, 22 October 2020
https://bit.ly/3kuShIg

Almost seven years after Ukraine's EuroMaidan Revolution, the continuing promises of changing Ukraine's political and governing elites have not materialized. Even after the clarion call for systematic value changes were democratically affirmed by electors in two elections, the essential values informing governing fundamentals have not occurred.

Despite public rhetorical dronings that are directed at both audiences at home and abroad, which state that anti-corruption mechanisms either have or are in the process of being implemented to combat the corruptive nature of Ukrainian governance, the country remains mired in the governing traditions of a post-Soviet and oligarchic world.

As a result, it is must be asked: what are the results of these efforts?

Ukraine remains a corrupt country and it operates as such at every level of societal transaction, be it political, judicial or economic.

It is stuck. Its politicians and technocrats remain in possession of an unreformed and unrepentant kleptocratic mentality pervaded by the traditions of Soviet bureaucratic inefficiency, favoratism and nepotism.

In addition, the so-called elite suffers from an unfathomable ignorance of Western governing principles and best practices as to how to run a modern government and an alleged contrarian force that has largely been made impotent and frustratingly bereft of the initiative to combat the essential nature of the corrupt system.

Of course, the essential question that must be asked of Ukraine is: How have you made the fight against the partnership of politicians and technocrats and criminal interests?

Needless to say, this fundamental question is not asked in Ukraine. One reason being, that there is absolutely no concern over the moral imperative of this question. And second, those in positions of power and influence have no interest in having this question asked, let alone answered. It is because a vast majority of individuals who seek out and enter the ranks of bureaucracy and politics enter because it is an opportunity to make money.

It has always been thus, and this tradition has not been broken in Ukraine's post-Maidan world. Nonetheless, when all is said and done, where are the country's post-Maidan transformational leaders?

With the election of Volodymyr Zelensky, a new generation of leaders entered politics. Many old political faces were replaced. However, the Maidan generation, many who have experienced life in the West's democracies and who have been exposed and formed by the experiences of Western governing styles and business practices and those who were emotionally and politically formed by the hope for democratic change during the EuroMaidan Revolution, have been deliberately excluded or have been thwarted by the malignant and soul-destroying anti-change agenda of unreformed influencers.

As individuals and as a group, many have been frustrated by the deliberate effort of Ukraine's major political leaders and influencers at the lack of change. A recent example includes the story of a deposed minister who was accused of crimes connected to money laundering and terrorism by the SBU, Ukaine's intelligence service, with whom he had been working in an effort to expose corruption in the ministry that he headed.

Many in the reform movement, especially those who are around forty years of age, are now out of government and are overcome by their sense of deepening frustration. They have been let down and their morale diminished because there was a failure to be protected by the higher-ups, including both post-Maidan presidents, Petro Poroshenko and Zelensky, who had publically stated their commitment to change.

One such example is that of an ex-deputy minister, an acknowledged expert in her field, whose attempts at reforming the processes in her ministry were so emphatically thwarted by the bureaucracy that she had to leave in frustration.

Such reformed-minded individuals have not been incorporated into the country's high-level political and management leadership. This is because their sheer presence represents fundamental change to the status quo.

Far too many stories exist about how they remained constantly susceptible to the pressures of intransigent corruptionaires who constantly fought their reformist tendencies at every step. When asked why they had been stonewalled, they were told it was because the bureaucrats feared that if proven and capable reformers were to ascend to any position of influence, or to even actually take control of the leadership from within ministries, that the reformers would become 'a clear and present danger' to the entrenched system.

The constant refrain of political rhetoric towards a commitment of change from national politicians has become a hollow and boring refrain, in action, a continuing charade of posturing that is endemic of all corrupt societies. In Ukraine, after so many years without tangible success, a storm gathering cynicism regarding the governing class is once again darkening Ukraine's environment.

After such a long period since the Maidan, it is clearly evident that the establishment of the Western values and governing ethos which would guide and inspire the fortitude that would give Ukrainian politicians the courage to make systematic changes has failed.

Up and coming politicians are not protected by courageous political leaders who would eschew 'dirty' money. They face daunting temptations because there are no effective monitoring systems of how monies are expended during campaigns. Those who want to run on a 'change' agenda often cannot obtain financial support for their political campaigns from impoverished citizens and cannot pursue their political activities because they don't want to be beholden to oligarchic sponsors. They also refuse contributions because they are unwilling to participate in 'quid pro quos' in addition to believing that taking money from oligarchs is morally wrong.

This is most perfectly illustrated by the story of a young civic activist who wanted to run for municipal office in western Ukraine. When this person's intentions became known, they were targeted by the security services who attempted to bribe the individual by offering business opportunities and money, and using various pressure tactics to dissuade them from running. When these entreaties were refused, and in classic KGB style, the activist was placed under constant surveillance.

Maidan generation politicians also routinely face electoral failure in Ukraine because they do not have the resources to mount effective campaigns. The country's financial monitoring authorities continually fail to apply spending rules. Granted, there are exceptions, but the exceptions don't and cannot change the rules. Instead, the unreformed system is based on political parties led by personalities who have proven be more easily bought and manipulated, which prevents potential change from occurring because of the limiting of political success by reformed minded newcomers.

Needless to say, efforts to introduce reforms into post-Maidan Ukraine's political realm have largely focused on the championing of individual reformers. Ironically, such a strategy has actually made it easier to thwart actual reform in Ukraine because it is easier to intimidate, legally threaten, bribe and bureaucratically single out individuals than it is to fight against a highly organized and society-wide, Westernized anti-corruption movement.

A particularly sad development has become evident especially over the last year – the Maidan generation has not become fully cognizant that it is being called out to truly fight for Ukraine's democratic future. Unfortunately, they have not shown any awareness, nor the effort needed, to take control of the country's democratic agenda.

Poroshenko's efforts stalled because he failed to overcome his oligarchic, Soviet-bred mentality and he lacked the essential courage needed to succeed. Zelensky is failing because he neither has the political know-how nor the personal expertise needed to effectively govern. Instead, he will continue to use his will to impose his huge electoral mandate on the country's governing system. In addition, he remains unknowingly blocked because of his advisors' fealty to an unreformed system and its most malicious practitioners.

It is now abundantly clear that Zelensky has governed Ukraine assuming that he cannot govern without the support of the oligarchic system. His performance as president reveals the truth that he is failing in the implementation of the change agenda to which he was overwhelmingly elected. This strongly suggests that he will be a one-term president.

If the Maidan generation is to effect the transformation of Ukraine into a modern, functioning and democratic society, it should consider the following:

1) The 'rebellion' against corrupt practices and the work of Ukraine's broken institutions, which inspired the EuroMaidan Revolution, has not been completed. Continual and ever-growing discontent strongly suggests a potential revolutionary effort could arise in the future.

This lack of completion is one major problem contained within the essential national character. Ukrainians talk a lot, make many promises, begin a project, but after much-expended effort, they fail to complete what they have started.

The Maidan generation must first realize that this attitude is unacceptable and that this practice must change if Ukraine is to enter into the community of democratic European nations. They must realize that a free and democratic system is not a given. They cannot assume that a rules-based democracy will come into existence based on a wish or by waiting or by attending a Western-sponsored political governing seminar where they can make contacts with European and American representatives.

They must ascend to an understanding that a free and just society is built as a result of personal sacrifice and a commitment towards obtaining an idealistic goal that would create the foundations of democratic rule and values-based institutions. They must first ask, and then answer: "If not us, then who?"

A 'change' revolution occurs and is only defined by its ability to first destroy and 'deconstruct' old and corrupt governing values and practices and then create, assemble and erect a new governing framework. In Ukraine's case, a structure that is influenced by such fundamental democratic values and an effort to forge a societal agreement and full

societal acquiescence to the rule of law that is inspired by the principle of individual and sovereign dignity and the belief in the potential to build a society that would be led by a political and governing class that would be informed by economic and legal justice, does not exist.

2) The Maidan generation must realize that they are 'at war'. At the very least, the can be guaranteed a conflagration, to be sure, or a fierce competition against Ukraine's entrenched corrupt class. Young Ukrainians simply don't fully comprehend or act like they realize how serious the stakes for the citizens of the country.

This war against entrenched interests cannot be fought individually, but rather as a unified force. Not only do personal ambitions have to be put aside for the sake of the country, but the old adage, "when there are two Ukrainians, there are also three generals", must be dispelled.

They must first form a unified 'opposition' and 'alternative' that is defined by the primary aim of defeating the corrupt and revanchist forces now reasserting their power in light of a weak and relatively ineffective president who does not have the chutzpah to confront criminal oligarchic interests and impose his will on society.

What's paramount, however, is that they must also understand that this 'opposition' and 'alternative' force must not be limited to or defined strictly through political expressions.

3) The Maidan generation must realize, along with Ukraine's Western partners, that their strategy and implementation plan for changing Ukraine, of better yet, a plan to transform Ukraine from a post-Soviet society into a modern state, cannot be limited to what has until now been limited to a strictly political critique of society.

Ukraine's problem has been that it lacks the moral leaders and a freedom-based values agenda which can both access and speak to the spiritual, philosophical and psychological aspirations of a people who are seeking to define their quest for freedom in a modern world.

Whether understood or not, Ukrainians are a people who aspire for concrete answers for their existential angst and access to an alternative moral vision to lingering Soviet/Marxist and oligarchical values. Most Ukrainians believe, and want to live in a just and free society even though many cannot fully define what this means.

It is incumbent on the Maidan generation that it must develop and then effectively communicate an idealistic vision for Ukraine's long-term future that more than transcends the rhetorical barrier of the meaning of corruption and the institution of political reforms. Ukrainians know corruption when they see it, and they are against it. The question that they themselves must ask and answer is: "As Ukrainians, what are we for?"

The generation that was shaped by the historic events of the Maidan, as well as Ukrainian society as a whole, have still failed to fully understand the true meaning of the country's corruption. It cannot be defined in strict economic terms, but rather, in the true Western sense – it is the absence of an 'ideal'. Fundamental change hasn't yet occurred in Ukraine because it still operates on the assumption of a discredited and rejected set of values.

The Maidan generation has the responsibility to establish a societal vision that will present a picture that shows how Ukraine can look when the values of rule of law, justice, freedom and fairness are applied. Only then will there be a possibility for the transformation of Ukrainian society. That will come when there is a recognition that such values have the power to change the nature of their corrupt society and that in such a transformation is contained the energy to transform the very nature and appearance of their society.

And last, the Maidan generation must develop a document, a "Statement of Principles" or something of the kind, that will act as a code and guidance for the development of a democratic future. It must attract the best and the brightest in the country to contribute their ideas and aspirations for the transformation of society.'

This effort will provide the country with a way forward and it will provide Ukraine's Western partners with a list of leaders, show who has leadership credentials and who can be trusted, and who has exhibited the competence to institute change.

In addition, it will eliminate Ukraine's heretofore piecemeal approach towards reform, providing Western institutions and organizations with a long term strategy which would guide their partnership with Ukraine.

If the Maidan generation is to distinguish itself in Ukraine's modern political history, the politicians and governing technocrats of this generation, must exhibit courage, commitment and resolve at this moment. They cannot sit on the sidelines even though they might not be elected officials or hold government positions.

They must both individually and corporately prepare in these years before the next presidential and parliamentary elections and muster the courage to plan and ultimately lead a societal rebellion against Ukraine's corrupt governing nature.

Ukraine's Maidan generation must establish a road to freedom. It then must become prepared to govern a society based on individual dignity; a "just society" which will allow Ukraine to finally become a democratic and modern European state.

Introducing Dr. Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Newly Appointed Director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies

CIUS, 16 April 2020
https://bit.ly/2JWrkQB

Following an extensive international search which drew many qualified candidates, we are pleased to announce that Dr. Natalia Khanenko-Friesen has been appointed to become the Director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies for a five-year term beginning in July 2020. A native of Kyiv, in 1989 she completed a B.A. in Geography at Kyiv State University before subsequently pursuing her graduate studies at the University of Alberta, where she first earned her Master's Degree in Ukrainian Folklore in 1994, and then in 2001 obtained a joint Doctoral degree in Anthropology and Ukrainian Folklore, with the Departments of Anthropology and Modern Languages and Cultural Studies. Upon completion of her Ph.D. studies she was hired as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture at St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan. In 2005 she was appointed Associate Professor, and a full Professor in 2016, in the meantime also serving from 2007 as Adjunct Professor in the Department of History. Over the course of her studies and academic career she has worked as an Ethnographer at the Museum of Folk Life and Architecture in Kyiv, a Lecturer at the University of Alberta and the Harvard Ukrainian Summer Institute, a Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto, and, most recently, a Research Fellow at Harvard University.

Her extensive administrative experience includes coordinating the Ukrainian Language Program and directing the Harvard Ukrainian Summer Institute; initiating popular University of Saskatchewan Study-Abroad Semester in Ukraine and guiding its successful development as its founding Academic Director from 2003-2018; heading St. Thomas More's Department of Religion and Culture, and serving the University of Saskatchewan in other academic capacities. She also was the Director of the Prairie Centre for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage at St. Thomas More College from 2005-2007, 2009-2013, and again since 2019, overseeing all aspects of the Centre's activities. In 2014, she founded and continues to be the editor of Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching and Learning, Canada's premier academic journal devoted to community-university partnerships.

Dr. Khanenko-Friesen has a long list of academic publications. She is the author of two monographs, The Other World or Ethnicity in Action: Canadian Ukrainianness at the End of the 20thCentury (Smoloskyp Press, 2011), and Ukrainian Otherlands: Diaspora, Homeland and Folk Imagination in the Twentieth Century (University of Wisconsin, 2015). She was lead editor of Reclaiming the Personal: Oral History in Post-Socialist Europe (University of Toronto, 2015), and a co-editor of Orality and Literacy: Reflections Across Disciplines (University of Toronto, 2011) and In Search of Voice: Oral History as

Theory, Method and Source (Karazin University, 2010). She has presented papers at numerous conferences around the world, contributed chapters to more than a dozen books, had articles published in many leading peer-reviewed scholarly journals, and developed a number of oral history online archives.

Dr. Khanenko-Friesen is fluent in Ukrainian, English and Russian. Her wide-ranging intellectual interests and areas of expertise include oral history, vernacular culture, narrative and ritual; diasporas, ethnicity, and migration; post-socialist Ukraine and Eastern Europe; Canada and Ukrainian Canadians. With her background experience teaching Ukrainian, her activity and passion for the field of Ukrainian Canadian studies, and her work in the realms of Ukrainian history, culture and folklore, she is ideally equipped for her new role as CIUS Director. She is looking forward to returning to Edmonton with her family and assuming her new responsibilities.

Dr. Khanenko-Friesen succeeds Jars Balan, who has been serving as the CIUS's Director since 2018 and will now continue in his role as the Coordinator of the Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre at CIUS.

#11
New Director of Ukrainian Institute London as of 1 Sept 2020: Dr Olesya Khromeychuk

Ukrainian Institute, 7 April 2020
https://bit.ly/3n5AGaT

The trustees of the Ukrainian Institute London are pleased to announce that from 1 September 2020 the Director of the Institute will be Dr Olesya Khromeychuk.

She will succeed Marina Pesenti, who has been Director since 2015. The trustees are very grateful for all that Marina has done for the Institute. For the first two years she received no fee. Since 2015 the Institute has grown and developed rapidly, reaching wider audiences year by year. By 2018-2019 it had over 7,000 Facebook followers and 1,279 newsletter subscribers. In 2016 it was registered as a charity. Marina has actively built partnerships with leading UK academic and cultural institutions. She has organized a wide range of lectures, panel discussions and film screenings, as well as the ongoing Ukrainian language classes and book club. She has helped to raise funds from a variety of donors, including through memorable and enjoyable Ukrainian-themed parties. Under her direction, the Institute has helped Ukraine to build its own narrative in the UK, and has both deepened its programming and reached a wider audience, including the Jewish community in London.

Olesya Khromeychuk is a historian of 20th century East-Central Europe, specializing in Ukrainian history. She teaches at King's College London, and has previously taught at the University of Cambridge, University College London and the University of East Anglia.

She taught a special module at the Ukrainian Catholic University in 2019. She also runs a theatre company, Molodyi Teatr London, that stages documentary pieces exploring urgent social and political themes, including the war in Eastern Ukraine. Originally from Lviv, Olesya Khromeychuk moved to the UK in 2000, since when she has been actively engaged in the life of the Ukrainian community in London and beyond.

Emily Channell-Justice to Lead New HURI Program on Contemporary Ukraine

Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 19 April 2019
https://bit.ly/2U969wb

The Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University is pleased to announce that Dr. Emily Channell-Justice will develop and lead its new program on contemporary Ukraine.

The program, named the Temerty Contemporary Ukraine Program (T-CUP), has been established with the generous financial support of Mr. James Temerty, a Ukrainian-Canadian entrepreneur and philanthropist. The T-CUP initiative will extend the scope of HURI's work beyond its traditional focus on literature, history, and language. With an emphasis on the social sciences, the program is a response to the growing need for experts who can analyze the unfolding changes in Ukrainian society and politics. It is HURI's hope that the program will serve as an influential platform for the academic and policy communities to exchange ideas.

As Director of T-CUP, Channell-Justice will first be charged with developing the priorities and strategy of the program. She will be responsible for day-to-day management and implementation of projects that support research on Ukraine's contemporary foreign policy, domestic government and politics, and significant sociological and cultural trends. While organizing events that bring together numerous experts, Channell-Justice's expertise will enrich the program as she carries out her own research and analysis.

As she prepares to join HURI this summer, Channell-Justice is finishing her term as a postdoctoral fellow and visiting assistant professor at Miami University, Ohio. Previously, she completed a doctorate degree in cultural anthropology at the City University of New York, conducting ethnographic fieldwork on contemporary activist initiatives in Ukraine. Her current project seeks to understand some of the ways the growing IT sector has influenced self-perception in Ukraine. In general, her research interests include contemporary Ukrainian politics, economy, and society, with a focus on social movements, gender issues, and economic development.

We hope you will join us in extending a warm welcome to Emily Channell-Justice. We're looking forward to working with her on this exciting initiative and will share more news as plans for the project develop. The program will officially launch later this year.

At this time, HURI would also like to sincerely thank James Temerty for making T-CUP possible. In addition to his philanthropic activities, Temerty has made his mark as a successful business entrepreneur, an inspiring leader, and an advocate for sustainable energy. Born in Ukraine, Temerty moved with his family to Canada in 1950. Ukraine has joined Canada in recognizing Temerty's skill and leadership, honoring him with the Order of Yaroslav the Wise in 2015. Temerty's business ventures have spanned the technology, retail, and energy sectors, while his generosity has benefited causes such as mental health and addiction treatment, music, and education in Ukraine.

#13
New Book: Erik S. Herron

Normalizing Corruption:
Failures of Accountability in Ukraine.
Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020
https://bit.ly/3kWSFjf

Accountability is crucial to every successful democratic system. The failure to develop functioning mechanisms of accountability has undermined democratic consolidation worldwide. Reliable tools that hold officials accountable are essential for democratic governance; one of the key threats to accountability comes from corrupt practices, especially when they are integrated—or normalized—in the day-to-day activities of institutions. This book focuses on the experiences of contemporary Ukraine to evaluate the successes and failures of institutions, politicians, political parties, bureaucracies, and civil society. Yet, the topic is directly relevant to countries that have experienced democratic backsliding, and especially those countries that are at risk.

Normalizing Corruption addresses several interconnected questions: Under what circumstances do incumbents lose elections? How well do party organizations encourage cohesive behavior? Is executive authority responsive to inquiries from public organizations and other government institutions? How can citizens influence government actions? Do civil servants conduct their duties as impartial professionals, or are they beholden to other interests? The research builds upon extensive fieldwork, data collection, and data analysis that Erik S. Herron has conducted since 1999.

#14

New Book: Oksana Huss

How Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies Sustain Hybrid Regimes:
Strategies of Political Domination Under Ukraine's Presidents in 1994–2014
Stuttgart, ibidem Press, distributed by Columbia University Press, 2020
https://bit.ly/3na2AlU

Leaders of hybrid regimes in pursuit of political domination and material gain
instrumentalize both hidden forms of corruption and public anti-corruption policies.
Corruption is pursued for different purposes including cooperation with strategic
partners and exclusion of opponents. Presidents use anti-corruption policies to legitimize
and institutionalize political domination. Corrupt practices and anti-corruption policies
become two sides of the same coin and are exercised to maintain an uneven political
playing field.

This study combines empirical analysis and social constructivism for an investigation
into the presidencies of Leonid Kuchma (1994–2005), Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010),
and Viktor Yanukovych (2010–2014). Explorative expert interviews, press surveys, content
analysis of presidential speeches, as well as critical assessment of anti-corruption
legislation are used for comparison and process tracing of the utilization of corruption
under three Ukrainian presidents.

Dr Oksana Huss is a Research Fellow at Bologna University. She earned her PhD at the
University of Duisburg-Essen and held a postdoc position at Leiden University. Huss
taught at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy as well as Kyiv School of Economics, and consulted the
Council of Europe, EU, UNESCO, and UNODC. She is a co-founder of ICRNetwork.org—the
Interdisciplinary Corruption Research Network.

#15

New Book: Hanna Shelest and Maryna Rabinovych, eds.

Decentralization, Regional Diversity, and Conflict: The Case of Ukraine
New York: Palgrave, 2020
https://bit.ly/3khHyzU

This edited volume focuses on the links between the ongoing crisis in and around
Ukraine, regional diversity, and the reform of decentralization. It provides in-depth
insights into the historical constitution of regional diversity and the evolution of center-
periphery relationships in Ukraine, the legal qualification of the conflict in Eastern
Ukraine, and the role of the decentralization reform in promoting conflict resolution, as
well as modernization, democratization and European integration of Ukraine. Particular

emphasis lies on the securitization of both regional diversity issues and territorial self-government arrangements in terms of Russia's support for self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. The volume captures the complexity of contemporary "hybrid" conflicts, involving both internal and external aspects, and the hybridization and securitization of territorial self-governance solutions. It thus provides an important contribution to the debate on territorial self-government and conflict resolution.

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