

Global Dialogues 11

Engaging Crimea and Beyond: Perspectives on Conflict, Cooperation and Civil Society Development

David Carment and Milana Nikolko (eds.)



Centre for
**Global
Cooperation
Research**

David Carment and Milana Nikolko (eds.).
*Engaging Crimea and Beyond: Perspectives
on Conflict, Cooperation and Civil Society
Development* (Global Dialogues 11).
Duisburg 2015: Käte Hamburger Kolleg/
Centre for Global Cooperation Research
(KHK/GCR21).

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Please cite the work as follows: David Carment
and Milana Nikolko (eds.) 2015. *Engaging Crimea
and Beyond: Perspectives on Conflict, Cooperation
and Civil Society Development* (Global Dialogues
11). Duisburg: Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for
Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21).
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ISSN 2198-1957 (Print)
ISSN 2198-0403 (Online)

doi: 10.14282/2198-0403-GD-11

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Introduction

This issue of Global Dialogues draws on a two-day event organized by the Centre for Global Cooperation Research in the spring of 2015. Bringing together academics and policy-makers from Crimea, Russia, Ukraine, Canada, and Germany, the meeting explored the current situation in Crimea, day-to-day life in the region, relations – present and future – between Ukraine and Russia, and the role of the West in finding a cooperative solution to the conflict.

The future of Ukraine remains uncertain. Although the Crimean secession was virtually bloodless, the position of the peninsula's minority populations is still unclear. One year post-referendum, Crimea is de facto Russian territory, incorporated at both political and societal levels, whilst in Eastern Ukraine, hostilities have significantly intensified. Recent surveys indicate that a substantial majority of the Crimean population support the Russian annexation and feel safe and secure in the territory. At the same time, a survey published by the Kiev-based Democratic Initiative Foundation found that 68 per cent of Ukrainians considered Crimea still to be part of Ukraine.¹ Who is right – the majority in Crimea or the Ukrainians who still see Crimea as part of Ukraine? Given these divergent perspectives, what does the future of Crimea hold for Ukraine as a whole? Can we expect more sanctions and more conflict in the shorter term – and along with these a wider role for regional organizations? Can a middle ground be found, based on political solutions and regional cooperation? What are the entry-points for engaging Crimea's minorities?

Events in Crimea have, without question, brought an irrevocable change in the dynamic of Ukraine–Russian relations. They exemplify to some extent a clash of methodological paradigms in international relations. On the one hand, we have the Western approach to conflict-resolution, with its focus on universal values such as the common good, the inviolability of national sovereignty, international justice, and the rule of law. On the other, we have a framework based on geopolitical strategy and characterized by major-power spheres of influence and so-called 'realpolitik'. This is the path which present-day Russia has chosen to follow. The two disparate approaches have given rise to distinct, parallel discourses, with very few openings for dialogue.

When it comes to the situation of ethnic minorities in Crimea, there are concerns about the situation of the Tatar peoples, which has become much more precarious over the last year. Raids of homes and mosques, confiscation of religious literature, arrests of religious activists, and the application of pressure on Tatar media have all become more common during this period. These new realities have brought new challenges: we may see a rise in the number of Tatars leaving the peninsula, or we may see increased radicalization of Crimea's Tatar community under the banner of Islam.

¹ <http://dif.org.ua/ua/events/-krlitiki--sprijannja-.htm>.

A 'Caucasus scenario' for Crimea has wide currency amongst those with expert knowledge of the situation of Islam in post-Soviet space.

In Russia, pressure on NGOs has intensified, with political activists and opponents of the regime being harassed and intimidated. The most recent and most acutely felt example of this was the murder of opposition politician Boris Nemtsov. Meanwhile, the Russian public continues to have very little influence on politics. As far as Crimea is concerned, the territory has been fully integrated into Russia as a Federal District endowed with a unique administrative system and generous federal funding. As things currently stand, the majority of people in Crimea have good reason to keep up their robust defence of President Putin.

It is possible that the situation in Crimea will remain frozen for the foreseeable future. Although military recapture is an unthinkable prospect, and – for this and other reasons – a return of Crimea to Ukraine is unlikely, the peninsula's legal and political status is likely to remain uncertain. Economically, Crimea's star will now rise and fall with Russian fortunes: if sanctions are eased and the Russian economy picks up over the next twelve months – as a result of the exploitation of natural resources in the Black Sea region, for example – Crimea could well benefit from increased tourism and the growth this brings with it. That said, one year post annexation, Crimea's status remains uncertain: members of the political establishment declare it to be part of Ukraine, but there is little or no investment in policy-processes that would make this assertion a reality. The proposal to create a Ministry of Occupied Territories remains mired in controversy and the physical control which Ukraine wields over Crimea via services such as electricity and water, internet provision, and telephone communications has so far not been used as leverage in negotiations with Crimea's political elite – though Crimeans do have to contend with the continued suspension of rail-links with Ukraine. The policy of the Ukrainian government towards Ukrainians who prefer to stay in Crimea is also very unclear.

Even assuming a scenario – in which, for example, Crimea's current status is reconciled with international law and Russian occupation is legalized – it will probably take up to a generation, if not longer, for the Russian incorporation of Crimea to be fully accepted. From the European standpoint, it makes sense to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis, always bearing in mind that a simple and speedy solution is unlikely. A complex dynamic typical of modern international relations is at work here, involving a mix of geopolitics and global cooperation.

On the broader question of Ukraine's future: few would have imagined, a little over a year ago, that the country would be facing problems such as loss of territory, ongoing military

conflict, economic decline, and social and humanitarian instability, notably in the Donbas region. Despite these difficulties, however, Ukrainian social activism – on the part of volunteer and civil-society organizations, for example – continues to shape and influence Kiev's political structures. Meanwhile in Russia, civil society has become somewhat polarized over the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's role in it, with the greater part of Russian society, and the majority of Russian political parties, continuing to support President Putin and his cabinet.

Ukraine still has difficulties with the methodological interpretation of nation-building and with perceptions of 'the other'. Having lived in the shadow of 'Big Brother' for so long, and having acquiesced to myths about 'brother nations' ('bratskie narody'), the country continued, even after independence in 1991, to be what was, for all intents and purposes, a colony, with a political elite conditioned by colonial-style thinking. Now involved in a dramatic conflict and afflicted by various kinds of social, political, and physical trauma, the country is searching for a new national ideal. Talk of 'the Other', in the guise of Russia/the Soviet Union, has become the dominant narrative in political and social circles.

Some interesting insights can be gained by reconstructing the process of transformation undergone by the Ukrainian 'grand narrative' at the height of the crisis in Kiev last year and more recently in Eastern Ukraine. Because of the current configuration of events, with its emphasis on confrontation, war, and the pursuit of victory, masculinity has acquired a markedly symbolic quality. Opportunities to emulate, and share in, the glory attaching to bygone Ukrainian heroes abound and the concept of man as defender and warrior is eliciting particular interest and regard in Ukrainian political discourse. The Euromaidan protests emphasized the continuity of this masculinized national narrative and reinforced its standpoints and attitudes. A mythologized and heroic past is evoked, in which women too are portrayed as warriors of epic stature.

Part I

Engaging Crimea: Prospects for Conflict and Cooperation

The Future of Crimea: The Crimean Tatar Perspective

Elmira Muratova

Any analysis of the situation in Crimea, and of what lies in store for the region, has to take into account the Crimean Tatar perspective. The March 2014 referendum on the peninsula's status and, following this, the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation have lent urgency to the Tatar question and seen it surface as a topic of wide-ranging debate at various international venues. More than ever before, the leaders of the Crimean Tatar community are looking to the international community to help them safeguard Tatar rights.

Anyone familiar with the history of the Crimean Tatars will appreciate the irony of the scenario currently being played out in the region. An indigenous people of Crimea, the Crimean Tatars experienced great suffering during both the Russian and the Soviet regimes. Their attitudes to the so-called 'Crimean Spring' have been shaped by the memory of the dramatic events of their history – the annexation of Crimea in the late eighteenth century and the mass deportations of 1944 – which are engraved in their collective consciousness. Recent events elicit in them a sense of *déjà vu*, a sense of something familiar and poignant. Unsurprisingly, the stance taken by the Crimean Tatars has been actively pro-Ukrainian, based on the hope that the new government in Kiev would bring about positive change across society. One of the changes most sought after by the Tatars was recognition of their status as an indigenous people of Crimea and the restoration of the rights that flow from this. Unfortunately, the long-awaited Ukrainian decision on this came too late – in the spring of 2014, when Crimea was already under Russian rule.

For some Tatars, the decision was nonetheless a source of moral satisfaction, signalling as it did acknowledgement of their pro-Ukrainian stance; others viewed it as belated and purely rhetorical.

After 200 years, the Crimean Tatars are once again feeling like outcasts in their own homeland, suspecting Crimean authorities of wanting to drive them completely out of the peninsula. The pressure being exerted on the Tatar's representative body, the Mejlis, is seen as an attempt to weaken the Crimean Tatar national movement and rob it of the leadership that could marshal popular opposition to the Russian authorities. The raids on the homes of Crimean Tatar activists and on the mosques and madrasas (Muslim schools), the confiscation of religious literature, the summons to appear before investigative committees – all these are perceived as attempts to sow fear and panic among the Tatars and pressurize them into leaving Crimea. Despite these difficulties, some Tatars plan to stay in their homeland. Others (including members of the intelligentsia, business people, and practising Muslims) fear for their personal safety and have moved to Ukraine or elsewhere. According to figures published by Ukraine's Ministry of Social Policy on 18 May 2015, of the 20,000 and more Crimean citizens who have moved to other parts of Ukraine since the troubles began, about half are Crimean Tatars.

A number of worrying trends make it difficult to be optimistic about Crimea's future. For one thing, civil-society structures are being destroyed and replaced by 'quasi' equivalents. The Mejlis, for example, formerly a representative body elected by the Council of the Crimean Tatar People (Qurultai), has been forced to change its leadership and register as a regular public organization. Crimean Tatars, who had a long record of excellent organization and an established set of public institutions, now find themselves in the position of having to have every public activity approved by the authorities. Where Crimean Tatar organizations are concerned, only events of a cultural nature, and only those organized by individuals loyal to the authorities, have any chance of being approved. All the activities currently being run within the Crimean Tatar community consist either of courses in the Crimean Tatar language or youth competitions centred on culture or religion.

Worrying trends are also emerging in inter-ethnic relations. The events of the 'Crimean Spring' have exacerbated ethnic divisions between Russians and Crimean Tatars. This is reflected, for example, in the fall in inter-ethnic marriages and the increase in divorce in this category. Mistrust of people from other ethnic groups has also grown, having almost returned to the levels of the 1990s, when Tatar repatriation had just begun. Bringing people together to tackle increasingly common cross-group problems (such as corruption, official

incompetence, unemployment, and the late payment of salaries) has become more difficult and effectively limited the organized protection of rights.

Recent research on xenophobia in Ukraine during 2014, against the backdrop of revolution and intervention, shows that Crimean Tatars are one of the main targets of discrimination by Crimean authorities. For this reason, the involvement of third parties – particularly human-rights missions permanently based in Crimea – would be a positive move. Missions of this kind should be established under the aegis of the United Nations or the European Union and should be tasked with monitoring the protection of human rights in the peninsula. In April 2015, an unofficial Turkish delegation visited Crimea to assess the situation of the Crimean Tatars. This shows not only that initiatives of this kind are possible despite all the diplomatic obstacles but also that they can have a positive influence. If such missions were international, they could be even more effective.

International organizations can also play a useful part in tackling the isolation currently being experienced by Crimean citizens. Many Crimeans hold pro-Ukrainian and pro-European views and feel doubly punished by the Ukrainian government's obstructive attitude in regard to relocation from Crimea to Ukraine. For many, the door to Ukraine is now closed: they are unable to resolve problems with their paperwork, cannot visit their relatives, and are prevented from applying for foreign visas. This piles added problems onto an already overburdened Crimean population and stirs up anti-Ukrainian feeling even amongst those supportive of Kiev's cause.

Crimea: Russia's Other Chechnya?

Ivan Preobrazhenskiy

One of the models which experts on the development of Islam in the post-Soviet space most often discuss in relation to the emergent situation in Crimea is the 'Caucasus scenario'. But exactly what form would this scenario take in the peninsula? We know of several possible permutations. One – typically dubbed the 'Dagestan scenario' – would involve an unremitting but low-level terrorist-type war between loyalists and (playing the part of the radical Islamists in Dagestan) Tatars. Such a scenario is implausible. If anything, Crimea is more likely to face a situation similar to that in Chechnya. This is because Russia is set on running Crimea in the same way that it runs the North Caucasus, a stance prompted at least in part by its distrust of the local ethnic Russians and its belief that it can exploit the Crimean Tatars for its own purposes.

Moscow's distrust of the local ethnic Russian leadership is so deep that Crimea's ethnic Russian population may one day come to view the period of Ukrainian rule as a golden age during which they were able to manage their affairs largely without outside interference – a situation which Moscow will not allow to continue. Having annexed the peninsula, the central Russian government has made it into a new Crimean Federal District and appointed Sergey Belaventsev, a non-Crimean Russian, to run it. More importantly, the Kremlin has assigned the task of overseeing the peninsula's integration into Russia to Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak, former Pro-consul in the North Caucasus – who, according to those who saw him in action there, has his own distinctive 'method' of dealing with things. Under his direction, claim expert observers of this region, Moscow began increasingly to rely on long-established local clans rather than attempt any overhaul of the system. This approach, I would argue, was

driven by Moscow's desire to find an ally in the fight against the Islamists in the Caucasus, but its negative effects are now making themselves felt in the form of increasing corruption, rising nationalism, and the marginalization of local ethnic Russians, who, in order to retain any influence, have been forced to ally themselves with one of the ethnic clans.

On the face of it, the situation in the North Caucasus seems to bear little relation to conditions in Crimea, where there is a sizeable Russian majority, a high proportion of Russian-speaking Ukrainians, and only a small contingent of Crimean Tatars (14 per cent of the total population). Many in Moscow would appear to think otherwise. Besides putting Kozak in charge, they have announced a number of initiatives designed to boost the position of the Crimean Tatars at the expense of the rest of the population. In one move, for example, Moscow has called for the recognition of three official languages in the peninsula: Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatar. It has also sought, in various ways, to buy the loyalty of the Crimean Tatar nation – or at least of some of its clans. Most significantly, Putin himself has spoken of the need for the matter of the final rehabilitation of the Crimean Tatars, deported *en masse* by Stalin, to be resolved. Such a measure will involve providing additional compensation and settling the question of land-ownership by regularizing the status of houses constructed illegally on land seized by the Crimean Tatars. It will also involve setting aside quotas of seats for Tatars in the Crimean Republic's parliament. In short, events in Crimea are likely to follow the same course as those in Kozak's North Caucasus. This will include the continued de facto appointment of the head of the region by Russia and the forging of alliances between this official and local 'clans' – more likely the Crimean Tatars than the ethnic Russians, and certainly not the Ukrainians. In its turn, this balancing-act act will lead to Moscow's special economic relations with Crimea being transformed into direct dependence on the centre and its oil and gas revenues – in just the same way as has happened in North Caucasus, particularly Chechnya. The new system of administration will be fashioned by those who celebrated the peninsula's return to Russia; but these same sections of the population risk becoming the chief victims of these changes if what they get is not a truly popular system of governance but a Crimean satrapy.

Crimea in Retrospect: Missed Opportunities?

David Carment

¹ It had initially been scheduled for May and later for 30 March.

When, on 6 March 2014, the Crimean parliament brought forward the date of the proposed referendum on the status of Crimea to 16 March,¹ this left little time or opportunity either for a dialogue to be brokered between the conflicting parties or for Crimeans to ponder the significance of their choice. At the time, many analysts were asking whether the Crimean crisis would inevitably lead to armed conflict. With war looming, the need for a political, or indeed legal, solution to the dispute was obvious. Although, diplomatically speaking, nothing of significance subsequently emerged, the dire warnings and threats from the West regarding Russian expansion were unhelpful and unnecessary.

We know that Ukraine's leaders were taken by surprise at the speed of events, but the government seemed, in any case, unable or unwilling to engage in negotiations with Russia, even as a way of thwarting the latter in the pursuit of its strategic goals. Few, if any, of the politicians in Kiev or the West were prepared to entertain alternative scenarios for resolving the crisis, refusing even to contemplate the notion of increased autonomy for Crimea – never mind the possibility of its secession. When proposals of this kind finally made it onto the table, it was too late. In hindsight, it is possible to identify a number of reasons for this diplomatic failure.

Blinkered strategies

For one thing, apart from the threat of sanctions, there was little evidence of any interest in the political and economic situation of the Crimean people. Having chosen to take the diplomatic lead in challenging Moscow, the USA, for example,

focused most of its efforts on threatening Russia, or punishing it, specifically targeting its leader, Vladimir Putin. Almost no diplomatic effort was expended in engaging the Crimeans themselves. In the lead-up to the Russian annexation, the world was treated to a steady stream of grave pronouncements from various representatives of the State Department and White House, notably John Kerry and Samantha Power, all of them vilifying the Russian leader. Though often skilfully crafted and impressive in their rhetoric, these messages had little impact on their intended target – the Russian government. The almost maniacal enthusiasm with which the media, academics, and policy-makers in the United States took up the anti-Putin mantra came as both a surprise and a disappointment. The Russian leader's every word was dissected and the usual analogies were resorted to, with Putin being variously likened to Hitler or Stalin – a tactic no doubt employed by Western leaders in order to try to impress on their publics just how dire the situation was. To the New Europe and the frontier states bordering on Ukraine, whose populations had lived through Nazi and Soviet occupation, these analogies struck home with particular force.

In sum, Western policy in the lead-up to the Crimean referendum was aimed primarily at punishing Putin or coercing him into a desired course of action. It made little attempt to address the factors that persuaded him to send his forces into Crimea in the first place. John Kerry, for example, repeatedly sought to discredit Putin's claims that he had intervened at the request of the Crimean leadership and that he was concerned about the safety of the Russian population in the peninsula. The only kind of overture made to the Crimean people themselves consisted in warning them repeatedly that they were being manipulated by Russia for its own interests. Suggestions that the referendum was a sham and had succeeded only because it was held at gun-point completely missed the point. The Americans, it seemed, were not interested in what the people of Crimea wanted – and what the majority of them clearly wanted was to not be part of Ukraine anymore.

In fact, Crimea had long seen popular support for reunification with Russia. These sentiments were ultimately expressed in the phrasing of the questions posed to the people of Crimea. Two questions were on the table: Should Crimea be part of the Russian Federation and should Crimea restore Crimea's Constitution of 1992 that gave the region more autonomy and remain as part of Ukraine? The first question regarding membership in the Russian Federation is an important one. The Russian Federation was recognised in international law as the successor state of the Soviet Union. In essence, the referendum question was asking Crimeans to decide if they should return to the status quo ante before the break-up of the Soviet Union.

That many Crimeans were ultimately convinced that this first choice was reasonable is evident in the second question that asked for a return to the 1992 Constitution. Consider that in January 1991, through a referendum, Crimea regained its status as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which gave extended rights to the peninsula. On 26 February 1992, the Verkhovniy Sovet proclaimed self-government as the Republic of Crimea (adding a few days later a paragraph 'as a part of independent Ukraine'.)

During this period, using the weakness of the central Ukrainian government and relying on Russian support, the Crimean local elite voted for its first Crimean constitution on May 5 1992 and, within a few months, the position of the President of Crimea was established. In the summer of 1992, an all-Crimea referendum was held and a majority of the population voted in support of the new Crimean Constitution. This is the point of reference the question of March 16 considered. So, in essence Crimeans were being asked to turn back the clock to a time when they had previously considered breaking away from Ukraine. Like today, the 1990s were a period of economic and political uncertainty for Ukraine. It took the then leader, Leonid Kuchma, the better part of a year to muster enough support from the Kiev elite to start the political process of getting the Crimean peninsula reintegrated into Ukraine – a process which many Crimeans resisted. In 1995, the Ukrainian parliament voted to review the position of Crimea within the Ukraine, scrapping the Crimean constitution and removing the then president of Crimea, Yuriy Meshkov, from office for his anti-state activities and his support for integration with Russia.

Against this background, it comes as no surprise that the Kiev government should have declared the 2014 referendum illegal – on the grounds that the Ukrainian constitution made no provision for it. John Kerry, meanwhile, argued that the whole of Ukraine should have been given the opportunity to vote on the issues involved. Neither of these responses was adequate, given the lack of mechanisms for enforcing corresponding solutions on all the parties concerned. Simply put, if the United States was serious about finding an alternative to Russian annexation of Crimea, the conditions that followed from this should have been clearly laid out by its lead diplomats. Apart from the threat of sanctions, no meaningful or adequate mechanism of enforcement was proposed as a curb on Russian annexation. And in retrospect even the sanctions did not produce the intended effect.

Again, the approach on the Russian side essentially consisted in questioning the legitimacy of the Kiev government's claim to Crimea, based on precedent, experience, and Crimean sentiment. The results of recent surveys showing strong Crimean support for remaining within Russia suggest this was a strategy that found favour with the majority on the peninsula.

Had there been meaningful negotiations, however, attention might instead have focused on the long-term political and economic viability of Crimea's remaining within Ukraine. In this connection, it is worth noting that some (but not many) Crimeans now question whether it was ever a good idea to be part of Ukraine: in 2008, despite already being an autonomous republic, Crimea, reliant on Kiev for two-thirds of its (dwindling) regional budget, was particularly hard hit by the recession.

Conversely, the West could have spelled out the costs of Crimean absorption into Russia. With a population of just over two million, a weak, dependent economy, and poor water and electricity supplies, the peninsula has now become something of an economic burden to Russia. And yet neither the international community nor Kiev spelled out this possibility. There were bail-outs and aid-packages for Kiev, but the economic and political benefits that would accrue to the Crimeans from staying in a unified Ukraine were never properly explained to them.

Security concerns disregarded

Another reason for the failure in diplomacy was an unwillingness to address Russia's legitimate security concerns. A compromise might have been possible, for example, whereby Sevastopol was annexed, but Crimea resumed its 1992 constitution and remained an autonomous part of Ukraine. Even when part of Ukraine, Sevastopol was a 'city with special status' and the area in which it was included was a distinct municipality, separate from Crimea. The majority (over 70 per cent) of the city's residents are ethnic Russians. In addition, it is home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet (and formerly also to the Ukrainian Naval Forces), the naval facilities having previously been leased to Russia by Ukraine. An independent Sevastopol might have been enough to satisfy Russia's strategic needs – and the Sevastopol city council in fact held a referendum of its own on accession to Russia.

Finally, we come to Crimea's Ukrainian and Tatar minorities, numbering around 25 per cent and 13 per cent respectively of the region's overall population. Most members of these minorities live in four sub-regions in the north of Crimea. Historically, they have sought the union of Herson oblast with the adjoining oblasts in Ukraine proper. A second possible territorial compromise would have been to allow these four oblasts to remain in Ukraine, with the rest of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol coming under Russian control.

None of the solutions mentioned were easy choices, and it may be that none of them was obvious to the parties in conflict, who were acting under immense pressure to avoid a full-blown crisis.

Nevertheless, there is empirical evidence to show that ethnic groups can reach negotiated solutions through political and territorial compromise. In addition, history shows that such solutions often only present themselves after years, if not decades, of war. The Crimean crisis was an opportunity to show the world that blood need not be spilled and states need not collapse.

Had there been greater openness to different kinds of self-government for Crimea before the referendum, complete separation might have been avoided. One option might have been a form of self-government and sovereignty of the kind that Canada has negotiated with its native peoples and in which relations between the two entities concerned are based on treaty obligations rather than on political rights.

Even in the absence of meaningful diplomacy, Crimea managed to come away from the crisis virtually without violent incident. Was this simply luck? What would have happened if Putin's forces had not scrambled into Crimea? There is little doubt that Crimea would have sought independence anyway – and a good chance that it would have done so through force, meaning Crimea could easily now be a bloody battleground. This conclusion is based largely on prior history, notably the occasions in 1991 and 1992 when the Crimean parliament voted for autonomy ('within an independent Ukraine') – an endeavour in which they were ultimately thwarted, in 1994, by the then leader of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma. In addition, transfer payments from Kiev to Simferopol have been shrinking over the last two decades and the prospect of remaining part of an economically even weaker Ukraine would have been unappealing.

In retrospect, it is clear that the West underestimated Crimea's importance to Russia. Putin's actions now also come across as clearly pre-emptive in nature: in the context of his fear that he was about to lose the peninsula to a pro-Western government – and along with it a long-standing arrangement for leasing naval facilities – his choices become understandable, if only at a strategic level. And understanding an adversary's motives is a vital ingredient of effective crisis-related decision-making and diplomacy.

Three Myths for Crimea: Does Ukraine's Version Have a Chance?

Pavel Kazarin

Fighting a myth is no more possible than fighting a dream – perhaps because a myth is itself a dream. The only way to vanquish a myth is with the help of another one. 'Myth' is not simply a synonym for 'fiction'. In the classical sense, it meant a framework of ideas through which people made sense of the world and their place within it. It might be defined as a way of conceiving the architecture of the surrounding universe, the past and present, values and taboos. Against this background, the current conflict in Ukraine can be seen as a battle between the Russian myth about the country and the country's own myth about itself. And seen from this perspective, the nub of the problem lies in Crimea, because although the peninsula has a Russian myth in place, no Ukrainian counterpart has so far emerged and Ukraine instead relies on Crimean Tatar narratives.

The Russian Myth

The ancient city of Chersonese,¹ the 'Crimean Riviera' beloved of the early twentieth-century Russian intelligentsia, the southern palaces, Alexander Pushkin's sojourn in the region, the heroic defence of Sevastopol during the Crimean War, the tragedy of the White officers in the 1920s, the second defence of Sevastopol in World War II – all these have long since become part and parcel of the Russian notion of Crimea, in particular the version of it that seeks to justify Russian control over the peninsula. Analysing the ethnic composition of the

¹ The Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1411>.

regiments that fought at Sevastopol in 1854–6 and pointing to their Ukrainian roots will do nothing to alter this situation. Unless the Crimean War features prominently in the annals of Ukrainian history, and unless Ukraine claims ownership of it, the myths about it will remain lodged in Moscow.

Simply put, the Russian myth about Crimea succeeds because it is inclusive: in principle anyone can become part of it; ethnicity is secondary. Considering the timing of its appearance, and the circumstances, some would say the Crimean version of the Russian myth is actually the Soviet myth. Maybe so, but it exists nevertheless.

The Crimean Tatar Myth

The Crimean Tatars also have a myth about Crimea. This is the story of the 'stolen motherland', of three and a half centuries of autonomous governance as part of the Crimean Khanate. It tells of the deportation of an indigenous people and their replacement by newcomers and people shipped in from Russia and Ukraine. It tells of a pre-war, multi-ethnic Crimea where the Crimean Tatar language was a vital *lingua franca*.

The weak point in this myth is its exclusivity. It is, so to speak, defensive and was originally aimed at preserving, rather than extending, an ethnic group's boundaries. This was natural: on returning from deportation, the Crimean Tatars found themselves in a minority on the peninsula and their prime objective was to re-establish an identity for themselves in the region. They therefore worked to stave off dissolution and assimilation, and the Crimean Tatar myth, which enabled them to define boundaries between Self and Other, helped them in this task. But therein lies the problem with the myth: it is difficult to be part of it if you are not a Crimean Tatar. It is premised on ethnic and territorial autonomy, parliamentary quotas, and a system of preferences. With its antagonistic overtones, the myth tends to galvanize opponents as well as supporters.

The Ukrainian Myth

The Crimean Tatar myth is increasingly being embraced by Ukraine as its own. This is understandable: twenty years after independence Ukraine still has no conception of its own in regard to the peninsula. Its authority there is established in law but not yet legitimized in myth: legitimacy of that kind is not about legality but about popular assent and willingness to conform. And yet all the conditions were in place for Ukraine to forge a Crimean myth of its own – not a militaristic or historical or religious one, but something simple and practical.

Such a myth could, for example, have been based on the major role that Kiev has played in rebuilding the peninsula since the transfer of the region to Ukraine in 1954, establishing communication systems and supplying all vital needs. After all, amongst the justifications offered at the hand-over sixty-one years ago was 'the commonality of economy, geographical proximity and tight domestic and cultural ties between the Crimean region and the Ukrainian SSR'.

The supply of fresh water to the peninsula via the North Crimean Canal, the provision of electricity and goods – the Ukrainian myth about Crimea could have been built on the routine but vital details of everyday life. Prosaic-sounding, no doubt, and no match for the booming pathos of slogans about 'Russia's Jerusalem'.

One of those who wanted to inject new meaning into the peninsula was the economist Andrey Klimenko. Urging Ukrainians to look to the present rather than the past, he suggested shifting the peninsula's focus towards cooperation within the Black Sea region, with a view to transforming the area into a communications hub and investing it with new parameters and dynamics. These ideas would fit in well with the Ukrainian myth described above, producing an inclusive story with which all could identify, regardless of nationality. So far, however, no one has paid any attention: inertia has carried the day.

Who wins?

Legitimizing as it does the return of the peninsula to Kiev, the Crimean Tatar myth benefits Ukraine. The Russian myth, meanwhile, naturally strengthens Moscow's hand – especially since Kiev does not seek to claim ownership of the portion of shared Ukrainian–Russian history that has an imperial narrative. Significantly, the legislation restoring the rights of people deported on ethnic grounds, kept in abeyance by the Ukrainian parliament for many years, was only adopted on 17 April 2014, just one month after the annexation of Crimea. And Russia made its own attempt at appropriating the Crimean Tatar cause by according the Crimean Tatar language official status in the peninsula's constitution – a move undermined by the subsequent closure of the Tatar television channel and the regular subjection of activists to interrogation.

To some, the issue of myths may seem of secondary importance: what determines the course of politics, they say, is economics and military strength. But the modern world is a space inhabited by more than just statistics, energy supplies, and firepower: it is also a space of symbols. People's perceptions generate and shape public demands and these demands in turn shape political action – which, incidentally,

is why Crimea was designated 'Russia's Jerusalem' and the Donbas, for example, was not.

A fact worth reflecting on.

The Quest for a Political Mythology: Ukraine and the Crimean Tatar Story

Serhii Kostynskyi

This article was inspired by long discussions with the Ukrainian journalist Pavel Kazarin and by his recent article 'Three Myths for Crimea'.¹ It would be hard to argue with the claim that Crimea is a land of three competing myths – the Russian, the Ukrainian, and the Crimean Tatar – and there is no doubt that following the Crimean referendum and annexation, Ukraine's political elite have tended to focus on the Crimean Tatar strand of the story. I would, however, like to challenge the commonly held notion that the modern Ukrainian state has given up on the Ukrainian myth of Crimea.

Russian Mythology

Underpinning Russia's geopolitical ambitions and expansionist policies towards its neighbours is the myth of the 'Slavic/Russian world'. In the nineteenth century, this myth encompassed Ottoman Porte territory in the Balkans; in the twenty-first century it extends over the former Soviet republics. Russian historical myths talk of Russians as a 'God-bearing people',² as keepers of 'traditional values', or as members of a 'Russian Orthodox civilization' that is neither European nor Asian but follows its own 'third way'. The Russian political elite draws on this mythology to try to rationalize the cultural, social, and economic backwardness of a country that essentially constitutes the rearguard of Western civilization. Other myths evoke the 'victorious Russian nation'³ that will keep the Western powers in their place. In these narratives, 'the West' figures as

¹ English version at p. 18 in this volume. First published in *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2015/04/24/7065788/>.

² This idea derives from Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* and has become a new meme in modern political mythology.

³ In reference to the crucial role played by the Soviet Union in the Second World War.

an enemy constantly seeking to enslave or destroy 'the Russian' or 'the Orthodox'. These myths explain Russia's urge to mobilize and its isolationism and readiness to keep replaying the Cold War scenario. They also function as 'millennium programmes' for newly emerged states with Russian-speaking minorities.

Crimean Mythologies

Crimea is a potential home to three different ethnic myths: the Crimean Tatar, the Russian, and the Ukrainian. In reality, however, the area is crammed full of autochthonous myths relating to one people only – the Crimean Tatars. Rooted in this region, this group have gradually fashioned and reinforced various myths about their origins, about their significance for the peninsula, and about their special role within Ukraine. One such myth presents the Crimean Tatars as issuing from all the different peoples who have inhabited the peninsula, another as an indigenous people that has its own unique statehood and is now undergoing a third Russian occupation. Operating at a number of levels – historical, territorial, political, and national – these myths have more recently also assumed the colours of Ukrainian patriotism: Crimean Tatars as the foremost Ukrainians of Crimea.

Neither Russians nor Ukrainians – the main beneficiaries of Soviet and Ukrainian statehood – have been able to develop comparable myths and galvanize social support for them. As a result, they have been less successful in mustering themselves around their particular political agendas. The Ukrainian myth in Crimea, for example, has remained marginal: the many years of unrelenting Russification undergone by Ukrainian settlers has resulted in their being largely absorbed into the mass of 'Russian-speaking Soviet peoples'. Those Ukrainians who have preserved their ethnic identity often operate with myths that juxtapose Ukraine and Crimea, or Ukrainian history and Crimean history. Such patriots still talk enthusiastically about the Cossack Zaporizhian Sich, symbolically underlining the fact that they too came to Crimea many years ago, from the mainland. Again, the myth concerning the post-1954 economic revival of Crimea as part of Ukraine, though useful in bolstering state propaganda in war, largely ignores the indissoluble cultural and historical ties that bind the two neighbouring lands. Meanwhile, the 'Russian myth' currently being promoted by the occupying authorities in Crimea is in fact a 'Russian Soviet myth' and is being drummed into Crimean heads artificially, mechanically, 'from above'. Over the past twenty-three years, this myth had gradually lost its shine and power: no officially imposed myth can perpetuate itself, or its social base, forever, and without 'government support' and active propaganda, belief in it runs into the sand.

True, following the occupation of Crimea, many Crimeans nostalgic for Soviet times took delight in reviving Soviet practices: 'young pioneer' organizations came back to life and portraits of Stalin reappeared at parades. But the myth is an official, 'top-down' phenomenon with no connection to those on the ground, and as time goes on and political fatigue and economic decline set in, all this nostalgia will peter out and hatred of Russian officialdom will return.

People may talk smugly about the fact that throughout the years since independence, Ukraine did nothing to encourage grassroots support for an 'official Ukrainian myth' in Crimea, but this is to overlook the basic fact that Ukraine is not Russia. The Ukrainian state is outranked by its Russian counterpart. To put it another way, if the Russian state is 'sovereign and God' (Leviathan), the Ukrainian state is nothing but a collection of 'presumptuous servants'. Its political elite has never had total control over the regions and this fact has facilitated the emergence of a strong Crimean Tatar myth, issuing not from the Ukrainian state but from Crimean society itself. In a longer-term perspective, this myth may serve as a source of hope to all Ukrainians that they, in their turn, will find a future in Europe. For all of us in Ukraine, this is a heartening – if not immediately realizable – 'plus'.

The 'black box'⁴ factor from the behaviourist domain is also of relevance in regard to the Ukrainian political system: to get an output there has to be an input. But – to put it in cycling terms – if you want to get from A to B, you need to get on the state bicycle and do the pedalling yourself. The 'Just do it!' sentiment – quintessentially Ukrainian – has been much in evidence in the recent surge in volunteer activity. Clearly, the state's inertia and poor functionality poses risks in terms of its oversight of national security. At the same time, it creates massive scope for societal initiatives and a chance for Ukrainians to rid themselves of the kind of paternalism and collective shirking of responsibility that engulfed Russian society for so long.

Why, then, should Ukraine's new policy in regard to Crimea be based on the Crimean Tatar myth? Because it is the only one that has inner strength and the only one that brings Ukraine into Crimea's symbolic space. It is also the only one that has been consistently on offer to Ukrainian politics over a long period. The Crimean Tatars, who make up 13 per cent of the population of Crimea, have not only created a myth of their own; they have fed that myth into Ukraine's political 'black box'. By lending their support to the national democratic camp, they have signed up to the Ukrainian nation-building process. It is a stance they reaffirmed with their defiant gestures in the early phase of the occupation of Crimea – gestures paid for with the loss of their independent media⁵ and the enforced exile of the Mejlis.

⁴ Easton, David (1965), *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

⁵ Notably the ATR television channel.

Part II

Constructing 'the Ukrainian Nation': the Role of Civil Society in the Nation Building Process After the Crimean Referendum

Symbols, Meanings, and Conflicts: How the Interpretation of History Influences Contem- porary Events in Ukraine

Oksana Danylenko

¹ The key findings of my 2005/6 research, and the methodological approach used, are described in the book 'Language of conflict in a transforming society: from construction of history to social identities formation' (Vilnius, ENU 2007). See also: Danylenko, Конструирование истории и конфликтный потенциал социокультурных идентичностей в Украине (2005–2006, 2013–2014) // Перекрестки, N 1–2, 2014, Журнал исследований восточноевропейского Пограничья, Вильнюс, Литва, Европейский гуманитарный университет, С. 24–45.

With conflict ongoing in Ukraine, there is an urgent need for scholarly reflection on the mind-sets that have brought us here – and in particular on the symbolic level that has played such a key role in both escalating and attenuating the hostilities. There is a strong dependence between contemporary social conflicts and conflicts in the interpretation of historical events and this has to be taken into account when it comes to exploring the differing interpretations of symbols. My preferred approach is that of lingua-conflict analysis, a method involving examination of conflict through text and discourse. With this technique, language of conflict can be used as an indicator of the conflict potential of particular socio-cultural identities.¹

The term 'language of conflict' is here used to denote a specific semiotic system capable of demarcating and conveying levels of conflict potential on a scale ranging from 'conflict' to 'consent'. Language of conflict has its own set of rules, linked directly to the values and norms of a specific social system in relation to which that language is apprehended. The major finding to emerge from my investigations is that current conflicts are closely linked to interpretations of past conflicts, particularly at the symbolic level. In order to show precisely how such interpretations have intersected in Ukraine,

² The 2005/6 research comprised 96 problem-oriented in-depth interviews with experts and with individuals drawn from several generations in Kharkiv, Lviv, and Crimea plus content-analysis of approximately 200 historical textbooks published in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus between 1924 and 2005.

³ The 2014 research comprised 26 problem-oriented in-depth interviews plus analysis of symbols, slogans, and posters featuring in demonstrations in Kharkiv.

⁴ All-Union Leninist Young Communist League.

⁵ The NKVD (Народный комиссариат внутренних дел – People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) was a Soviet police agency.

⁶ Although modern Ukrainian historical textbooks depict the UPA (Українська Повстанська Армія – Ukrainian Insurgent Army) as fighting both against the Soviet Army and against the Nazis, doubts continue to be expressed about this (both in the media and in everyday discourse).

⁷ The ‘Galicia’ Division was a Ukrainian division of the German Waffen SS.

I propose to give a brief overview of the results of my 2005/6² and 2013/14³ research.

One key aspect dealt with in the research-interviews was broached in the form of the following question: ‘Please name three historical events that you consider particularly significant. Please give a description of the events, providing an indication of content, participants, meaning, ‘heroes and anti-heroes’, what happened and how, sequence of events, etc.’ For the 2014 interviews, questions were added about key Euromaidan and Anti-Maidan symbols.

The themes and events that figured most prominently in the narratives of the citizens of Kharkiv and Lviv respectively (2005/6 interviews) were:

For Kharkiv –

- The Great Patriotic War and the Nazi occupation
- Collectivization, the extermination of the ‘kulaks’
- The 1933 and 1946 famines
- Arrests and repression under Stalin
- The construction of factories, railroads, cities
- Stalin’s death, his personality cult and its debunking
- Tales of grandparents’ days in the Komsomol⁴

For Lviv –

- Aversion to the communist party
- The 1946 famine (known as the ‘Holodomor’)
- The horrific cruelty of the NKVD⁵
- The people’s reaction to Stalin’s death
- War-time tales (‘Grandpa fought in the Great Patriotic War’ – referred to as ‘World War II’ in most other interviews) and stories about the UPA⁶ (‘They were our brothers and sisters’) and the Ukrainian ‘Galicia’ Division⁷

From an analysis of the transcripts of this first batch of interviews, two major conclusions can be drawn: firstly, there are crucial differences of interpretation between eastern and western Ukrainians in regard to the Great Patriotic War/ World War II and the Revolution of 1917; secondly, the term ‘Soviet’ has a predominantly negative connotation in Lviv (‘They enslaved us and decimated us’) and a predominantly positive one in Kharkiv (‘We were busy building and restoring; we had won’).

The 2014 research, using the same methods, indicates that the above conclusions are still relevant for Kharkiv. In addition,

⁸ The key slogan of Euromaidan 2014. Used as a greeting amongst members of Stepan Bandera’s army (the UPA) during World War II.

-
- Nothing good. Ukrainian nationalism. (1)
 - It’s a purely Banderite slogan. It’s unacceptable to us here in the east. It’s a totally Banderite slogan. (4)
 - Nationalism ... Fascism ... nationalism. (2)
 - Ambivalent ... it still has overtones of the UPA. (2)
 - I think of the fact that some ‘heroes’ – in quotes – have basically split apart our great country, our power ... I don’t approve. (1)
 - I think the heroes should really be honoured because what Ukraine means more than anything is oneness, an oneness that takes in all these different events. I think most people are united and realize that our Ukraine is a united Ukraine. (2)
 - When I hear a slogan like that, I take it positively. I know people who stand by this slogan, I’ve seen people stand by it. (2)
 - Patriotic associations, a patriotic attitude. (4)
 - Associations with people defending their country. (1)
-

⁹ A ribbon with three black and two orange stripes. A key Anti-Maidan symbol, it previously had a very different connotation, being worn by veterans on Victory Day (9 May) and used to decorate wreaths commemorating those killed in World War II.

analysis of various slogans and posters used by Euromaidan and Anti-Maidan protesters points up connections with the oral-history themes that divided the Lviv and Kharkiv interviewees. Take, for example, the responses of Kharkiv citizens when asked to say what they associated with two key symbols – the Euromaidan slogan ‘Glory to Ukraine! Honour to the Heroes’ (in Ukrainian: ‘Слава Україні! – Героям слава!’)⁸ and the Anti-Maidan St George ribbon.⁹

The following is a list of the negative (l.) and positive (r.) responses given in regard to the slogan ‘Glory to Ukraine! Honour to the Heroes!’:

Clearly, the slogan evokes very diverse sentiments in regard to both the past and the present and these differences of interpretation correlate with those that emerged in relation to the oral-history subject-matter. However, such conflicts are resolvable through a ‘transformation of meaning’ and a ‘distancing’ from the past. The following additional responses from the interviews illustrate the first of these processes – the transformation of meaning:

‘I think that over the last while our country has sort of come together, become more united, and very few people make the connection that this is a rallying cry, a slogan – “Hail to the Banderas!”’. At least that’s how it seems to me and I’m glad.’(3)

'Just taking the slogan by itself. I only recently found out about it. If you think about the meaning of the words, it's a great slogan – "Glory to Ukraine! Honour to the heroes!" What can I say about the slogan except that it's a good slogan.' (3)

Currently, associations deriving from perceptions of the past are increasingly shifting to the present-day plane. The cry 'Glory to Ukraine! Honour to the Heroes!' is now often associated with heroes of the present age – the 'Heavenly Hundred' shot on the Maidan, for example, or the Ukrainian soldiers currently defending the country. Little by little, the historical dimension is receding into the background – though the existence of this subtext provides ongoing opportunities for linguistic manipulation in the information war against Ukraine.

On the ribbon

Turning to Kharkiv citizens' views on the St George ribbon – a key symbol of the Anti-Maidan in 2014 – I list a range of answers given during the interviews in response to the question 'Please complete the following sentence: "When I see someone wearing the St George ribbon, I think . . .":'

'This person has respect for the past.' (1)

'I used to think "The 9th of May will soon be here", but now I think. . . what do you call it? . . . "Separatism . . . will soon be here."' (3)

'A symbol of victory.' (1)

'I used to associate it with Victory Day but now [I associate it] with some rather weird people.' (2)

Here we see a variety of interpretations associated with both present and past. Next, I would like to show how the conflict between these is resolved, as in the case of the slogan, through a 'transformation of meaning' or 'distancing':

'The initial idea of the St. George ribbon was really good – I mean the idea of respect for people who laid down their lives for their country. But now, for me – and for many others, I think – it's come to represent something negative because it's being used as a front by people who are committing senseless brutal acts.' (2)

'[It's] about the war veterans ... the Great Patriotic War ... well, World War II. Not about the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine or ... pro-Russian or pro-Ukrainian. Only about the veterans.' (2)

The transformation of meaning is still going on: the Saint George ribbon is becoming less and less associated with World War II and increasingly linked to current events taking place in an entirely different context. This shift has been particularly marked following various events in 2015 and the ribbon has now acquired a 'separatist' connotation, having been actively promoted by supporters (some armed) of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR). All this suggests a significant increase in the negative associations surrounding these symbols in the present context. As a result, the Saint George ribbon is not a feature of daily life on the streets of Kharkiv in 2015.

The symbols discussed here thus come to be interpreted in new ways and acquire new layers of meanings as a result of being placed in new contexts and used in particular social situations. Through repetition, their new connotations establish themselves through typification and are legitimized.¹⁰ In short, a new process of construction of meaning evolves based on contemporary everyday practice.

Overall, then, my conclusions would be: firstly, that there are, as might be expected, conflicts in the ways in which eastern and western Ukrainians interpret key historical events – due in part to differences in biographical context, life experiences, and family histories (as explored in my 2005–6 research); secondly, that there is a correlation between attitudes to current events and perceptions of historical events, including at the symbolic level; and thirdly, that the meanings of symbols from the past change when they are placed in a present-day context but that, importantly, the former semantic fields continue to exist. The variety of biographical experience involved produces a multi-dimensional conflict of interpretations. This means that, as far as modern-day Ukraine is concerned, the ascription of historical meaning, even at the symbolic level, is likely to exacerbate friction, and that, conversely, to lessen dissension and promote resolution of contemporary Ukrainian conflicts, historical reference should be kept to a minimum.

¹⁰ Numbers in brackets indicate the generation: **Generation 1** – present-day students, whose historical knowledge has been acquired mostly through the discourse of independent Ukraine; **Generation 2** – 'children of perestroika', who were students during the 1990s, studied USSR history at school and got to know Ukrainian history at university; **Generation 3** – the 'Soviet generation', whose school and university studies were dominated by the Soviet discourse; and **Generation 4** – the elderly, eye-witnesses to events before, during, and after World War II.

Anti-corruption Reform in Ukraine: Prospects and Challenges

Oksana Huss

¹ Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer, <http://ti-ukraine.org/en/news/2815.html>, accessed 04.07.2015.

² The figures were 75.1 % and 49.6 % respectively. The survey, involving 1,037 Maidan participants, was conducted on 7 and 8 December 2013 by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. See: <http://www.dif.org.ua/en/events/gvkr/gka-eths.htm>, accessed 07.04.2015.

³ Law 'On the Fundamentals of Anti-corruption Policy in Ukraine (Anti-corruption Strategy) To Be Effective within 2014–2017'.

⁴ Persson, A., Rothstein, B., and Teorell, J. (2013), 'Why Anticorruption Reforms Fail-Systemic Corruption as a Collective Action Problem', *Governance* 26: 449–71.

When the 'Global Corruption Barometer' survey was carried out in Ukraine in 2013, 84 per cent of respondents said they believed the government was run 'by a few big entities acting in their own interests'¹ and one in three declared themselves ready to engage in active protest against corruption. Likewise, in a poll of those taking part in the Maidan protests – a movement dubbed a 'revolution of dignity' in the Ukrainian national discourse – three-quarters named the removal of the corrupt Yanukovich regime as one of their prime demands, whilst a little under half wished to see those involved in political corruption brought to book.²

The revolutionary momentum, combined with strong pressure from international organizations (anti-corruption reforms are a precondition for IMF loans to Ukraine), resulted in the adoption of new anti-corruption legislation by the Ukrainian parliament on 14 October 2014.³ However, this is not the first time such measures have been introduced in Ukraine: new anti-corruption laws have been adopted during every presidency since independence in 1991 – to no avail. We therefore have to ask whether these latest reforms will fare any better, in other words what challenges they are likely to encounter and what prospect they have of success.

In addressing these questions, I focus on two theoretical approaches to the persistence of corruption in post-Soviet countries – the culture-based and the system-based.

The major critiques of international anti-corruption reforms in general,⁴ and of Ukrainian measures in particular,⁵ have taken shape in the context of the debate pitting neo-classical

⁵ Grodeland, Å.B. (2010), 'Elite perceptions of anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine', *Global Crime* 11: 237–60.

⁶ Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013: 453.

⁷ Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013: 458.

⁸ Miller, W.L., Grodeland, Å.B., and Koshechkina, T.Y. (2001), *A Culture of Corruption? Coping with Government in Post-Communist Europe*, Central European University Press.

⁹ Described elsewhere by Miller as the readiness to engage in bribery in concrete situations despite theoretically condemning it: Miller, W.L. (2006), 'Corruption and Corruptibility', *World Development* 34: 371–80.

¹⁰ Karklins, R. (2005), *The System made me do it: Corruption in post-communist societies*, New York: M.E. Sharpe.

¹¹ Miller, Grodeland, and Koshechkina 2001: 15.

¹² Andvig, J.C. (2001), *Corruption: A Review of Contemporary Research, Report*, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Development Studies and Human Rights, Bergen, 11.

against neo-cultural approaches. Most anti-corruption reforms follow the logic of principal-agent theory and 'assume that the problem of corruption lies exclusively with the agent [and that there is always a principal] who will take on the role of controlling corruption'.⁶ A number of major critics, however, point out that this approach cannot work in systemically corrupt societies, where corruption has become a 'collective action problem'⁷ and the supposed principal is also corrupt. Miller et al.⁸ coined the term 'culture of corruption' to describe the regional particularities of post-Soviet corruption, including the legacy of communist-regime corruption and the effects which the transformation-process had on corruption in the region concerned. Based on a study of petty corruption in Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, they pointed to the 'corruptibility'⁹ of both regular citizens and officials. However, in her study *The System Made Me Do It*, Karklins documents the tendency of citizens to blame 'the system' (the term commonly used to describe networks of power in post-Soviet space) for the extent of such 'corruptibility' in their countries.¹⁰

These approaches to explaining corruption face a 'chicken and egg' dilemma: if citizens are corruptible, and there is no 'principal' willing or able to act, there is no way the system can be changed; but the same applies if 'the system' itself promotes the corruptibility of its citizens.

Given this problem, it is important to settle on a definition of the terms 'culture of corruption' and 'system of corruption' when used in relation Ukraine. In what follows, the first will be used to denote a *culture of mutual favours*¹¹ tacitly accepted both by officials and by regular citizens and involving *petty-level corruption*. At issue here is the kind of corruption used mainly in order to bypass bureaucracy and 'get things done' promptly. The high level of tolerance to corruption in transition countries has much to do with the legacy of a communist system that was based on non-monetary privileges, daily reliance on mutual favours, and a lack of clear separation between the public and the private.

By contrast with this institutionalized petty corruption, 'system of corruption' will denote widespread, high-level political – in other words *grand* – corruption. What emerged as the dominant feature of political corruption in Ukraine was the close interdependence between the political system and oligarchic interests. Although petty and grand corruption can exist in parallel, there is often a 'pyramid of upward extraction',¹² in which petty corruption can be reinforced by grand corruption.

Under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich, the system of corruption became highly centralized and a pyramid of extortion was deliberately created in which petty corruption was reinforced and the proceeds of fraudulent activities flowed upwards, delivering gains to a handful of actors – known as 'the

family' – and resulting in the gradual elimination of political competition. The claim that 'the system' forced citizens to be corrupt is thus justified in this case. Ultimately, however, the bare-faced venality pushed citizen dissatisfaction to a critical level, resulting in a 'revolution of dignity' that defied the widespread culture of corruption.

Political corruption did not disappear with the change of regime: it was its quality rather than its quantity that was affected by the revolution. Having become decentralized, it remains systemic but now has no single entity overseeing it. Several pyramids of corruption exist side by side, thus preventing the political leadership from being the sole beneficiary of the illicit activities taking place on its watch.¹³

Against this background, what are the prospects for Ukraine's new national anti-corruption strategy? Although it will be some time before the strategy delivers any results, it has at least three innovative features that mark it out from previous initiatives of this kind and warrant a degree of optimism.

First, the relevant legislation draws a distinction between grand and petty corruption. The strategy for the period 2014–17 focuses on the system of corruption, targeting organized activity rather than individual people and transactions. This focus is reflected in the legislation's overall approach, which aims at transparency (in party funding and state budget-spending, for instance), accountability (with a view to establishing an independent judiciary, for example), and elimination of corruption schemes (of the kind currently prevalent in public procurement and the management of state-run enterprises¹⁴). Although there is a dearth of political will to get these measures implemented, the fact that the 'system of corruption' has been recognized as an urgent problem, and that its role in encouraging corruption at every other level has been acknowledged, is in itself an achievement. The legislation creates a formal framework that precludes the further centralization of corruption and provides a basis for the development of a transparent political lobby-system, to replace the illicit influence of the oligarchs.

Second, the decentralization of corruption, and the concomitant fragmentation of resources, has created the possibility of political competition and bolstered democratic development, producing a situation in which civil society has been able to thrive and begin to play a critical 'watchdog' role in the development and implementation of reforms. The national anti-corruption strategy itself was developed by state institutions and civil-society experts working in collaboration, and the involvement of civil-society in the implementation-process is actually enshrined in the strategy. In addition, Chapter 5 of the strategy addresses the problem of the 'culture of corruption' and includes a list of measures

¹³ Stefes, Christoph H. (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, Palgrave Macmillan, 3.

¹⁴ On this, see the amendments of 15 April 2014 to the Law on Public Procurement.

designed to encourage citizens' rejection of corruption and decrease their 'corruptibility'. The key role in anti-corruption education and awareness-raising is entrusted to civil society.

Third, the new anti-corruption infrastructure includes both a National Anti-Corruption Bureau – an independent body tasked with investigating high-level corruption – and a National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, which, amongst other things, will monitor conflicts of interest. A number of anti-corruption bodies were already in existence in Ukraine prior to these reforms, but being part of 'the system' they could not have functioned effectively and, in a worst-case scenario, could have been used as a tool against the opposition. Effective investigation and control is only possible with a politically independent set of structures and, in this connection, the chief obstacle to the effective operation of the new anti-corruption infrastructure will be Ukraine's continuing lack of an independent judiciary.

History and Gender in the Euromaidan Protests

Olena Petrenko

¹ Ukrainska Povstanska Armia – Ukrainian Insurgent Army, a militant formation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). The OUN was created in Vienna in 1929 with the primary purpose of securing independence for Ukraine – a struggle it often conducted through sabotage, expropriation, and assassination. In 1940, the OUN split into OUN-M (with an older and more moderate membership that supported Andrii Mel'nyk) and OUN-B (with younger and more radical members who backed Stepan Bandera). In June 1941, acting independently of the Nazi authorities, OUN-B declared an independent Ukrainian state, to which the Germans responded by arresting the OUN leaders. After this, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army fought both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – the latter struggle continuing until the late 1950s. The Ukrainian rebel movement became one of the Soviet regime's main enemies and the insurgents adopted a 'deep underground' strategy that came to be known as the 'bunker war'. The struggle of the OUN and UPA was marked by widely practised violence involving terrorist activities, retaliation

against communists and their families, and anti-Polish pogroms. This brutality played a crucial part in shaping the ambivalence that currently prevails in regard to the activities of the Ukrainian nationalist underground in Volyn and East Galicia from 1929 to the 1950s. For a detailed treatment of this, see: Bruder, Franziska (2007), *"Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!" Die Organisation Ukrainischer Nationalisten (OUN) 1929–1948*, Berlin: Metropol; Marples, David (2010), 'Anti-Soviet Partisans and Ukrainian Memory', *East European Politics & Societies* 24 (1): 26–43; Shkandrij, Myroslav (2015), *Ukrainian Nationalism. Politics, Ideology, and Literature, 1929–1956*, Yale University Press.

Despite Ukraine's twenty-year history of state independence, the Soviet past continues to function as a major point of reference for the country and has profoundly influenced its visions for the future. The dramatic events of Euromaidan, and the subsequent war in the Donbas, have lent added importance and relevance to the task of revisiting the national past and identifying heroes – both old and new. Of particular interest to me in my research is the way in which the Euromaidan protesters made use of historical facts, figures, symbols, and meanings to connect with Ukrainian history – indeed, to make themselves part of it – and thus establish their legitimate place in both the past and future of the country. I look specifically at the narratives of two groups of 'heroes' – the Cossacks and the UPA¹ fighters – and consider the gender-related aspects of the current discourse on national identity and hegemonic masculinity.

Why the choice of Cossacks and UPA fighters? At first sight, the level of integration of these two groups into the hegemonic national narrative appears to differ. The Cossack era in Ukraine was mostly glossed over in Soviet historical accounts, for fear of sparking nationalist or separatist feeling among Ukrainians. During the 1930s and 1940s, however, selective rehabilitation of the Cossack legacy took place – prompted, according to Serhy Yekelchuk, by a desire to find positive heroic images amidst the events surrounding the Second World War.² In the post-Soviet period, there has been a new wave of interest in the Cossacks, in celebrating them as national heroes and promoting this image of them in various ways. Cossackhood has been incorporated into social activities (notably sport) and popular and consumer culture. It has permeated both grass-roots Cossack communities and state-level initiatives

and discourse. It has become part of the official symbolism and imagery of Ukraine, featuring in the national anthem, on Ukrainian banknotes, and in a host of other places.³

By contrast, reaction to the idea of UPA fighters as national heroes has been mixed. The change in the political situation in Ukraine, and the opening-up of archives in the early 1990s, led to a boom in the historiography of the OUN and UPA and, as a corollary of this, to a radical revision of the Soviet account of these organizations. In the new national ideology, the view on the role of these erstwhile 'traitors' has undergone a major shift. The pro-independence movement 'Rukh', particularly strongly supported in western Ukraine, was one of the first to raise the issue of OUN and UPA rehabilitation.⁴

Once the violence escalated, however, the situation changed radically. This process began with the forcible dispersal of student demonstrators and the ratcheting-up of anti-Maidan propaganda. Any kind of protest-gathering was portrayed as a Fascist horde or a pack of bloodthirsty nationalists. Hundreds of thousands of people who supported the Maidan movement – some of them coming to take part just at the weekend – were baffled to find themselves being branded as 'nationalists' or given labels, such as *banderivky* ('female follower of Bandera'), or in general *banderivtsi* ('follower of Bandera'), which they had never even heard of.

Another factor in the popularization of these newly revived names from the past – 'real Cossacks', *banderivky*, *banderivtsi* – has been the search for 'true' paradigms of Ukrainian femininity and masculinity in post-Soviet times – and particularly during the Maidan protests.⁵ The rapid and dramatic course of political events in Ukraine in the wake of Maidan and the subsequent war in the Donbas has raised the profile of militaristic masculinity. Ukrainian men have had an opportunity to live out 'in the concrete' a model of the Ukrainian war-hero initially promoted 'in the abstract' as part of the new, post-Soviet, national ideology, and this in turn has reinforced gender-divisions and the gender-hierarchy in Ukraine. For certain sections of society, including many of the male activists of Maidan and Donbas, the continuity with the heydays of the OUN, the UPA, and the Cossacks has endowed the experience of victimhood and bravery with new meaning. This nationalist sentiment, in which celebration of Cossackhood and the UPA merge into one, is no longer confined to the ranks of the 'Svoboda' party. The events of the moment have invested militaristic masculinity with a particular symbolic meaning, the notion of men as defenders and warriors has elicited particular interest and regard, and men have been given an opportunity to emulate, and share in, the glory of Ukraine's bygone heroes.

The figure of the strong, unconquerable, freedom-loving warrior associated with the Cossacks and the fighters of

² Yekelchuk, Serhy (2004), *Stalin's Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press. The hetman Bohdan Khmel'nytskyi was one of those thus heroized (Yekelchuk 2004: 20–3).

³ Bureychak, Tetyana (2009), 'Cossacks in Ukrainian Consumer Culture: New Old Masculinity Model', in Alp Biricik and Jeff Hearn (eds.), *Proceedings from GEXcel Theme 2: Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities. Conference 27–29 April 2009*, Linköping: Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, 215–26; cf. by the same author (2013): 'Zooming In and Out: Historical Icons of Masculinity Within and Across Nations', in Jeff Hearn, Katherine Harrison, and Marina Blagojevic (eds.), *Rethinking Transnational Men: Beyond, Between and Within Nations*, New York and London: Routledge.

⁴ Shevel, Oksana (2011), 'The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine', *Slavic Review* 70 (1): 137–64, esp. 148. UPA glorification began in earnest with Yushchenko's presidency in 2005, with the title 'Hero of Ukraine' being awarded to Roman Shukhevych, the UPA's Supreme Commander, in 2007, and to Stepan Bandera, head of OUN-B, in 2010. The possibility of giving OUN and UPA fighters equal status with Soviet war-veterans was also repeatedly raised in parliament during this period. At a later stage, prior to the Maidan events, the 'Svoboda' party took a leading role in promoting nationalism and tradition as a legitimizing basis for nation-building and cultural renewal. More recently, on 9 Apr. 2015, Rada deputy Yurii Shukhevych (son of UPA commander Roman Shukhevych) brought a new bill 'Concerning the Legal Status and Commemorating the Memory of the Fighters for Ukrainian Independence in the 20th Century' before the Ukrainian parliament. The bill recognized members of the OUN and UPA as 'fighters for Ukrainian independence' and accorded them various 'social guarantees'. The bill passed into law and was signed by President Poroshenko on 16 May 2015.

the OUN and UPA featured prominently in the Maidan protests, where ordinary men had a chance to live out these fantasies of heroic masculinity. One remarkable illustration of the way in which the Cossack and OUN/UPA strands came together symbolically, visually, and transhistorically was a large free-standing poster which was used as a backdrop for souvenir photos (Fig. 1). Positioned inside the Kiev City State Administration building, it depicted a Cossack and a UPA fighter standing shoulder to shoulder over the foe they have just vanquished – a member of the 'Berkut' special police force.



Fig. 1: Poster 'Revolutionary Commandant of the Kyiv City Council', Kiev City State Administration building, 2 January 2014 (photo: Olena Petrenko).

Equally indicative here is the case of Mychailo Havryluik, a Maidan activist and member of the Fourth Sotnya⁶ who attended the protest after learning of the beatings of students on the night of 30 November 2013. Havryluik became widely known after a video was circulated showing him being stripped naked in the freezing cold and tortured by the Berkut riot-police. Through social media, his unshakeable 'Cossack' resolve not only made him into a symbol of protest but also won him the admiration and respect of women as a 'real Cossack' and a 'real man'.

The gender-related expectations that arose in relation to the Maidan protests were strongly binary and hierarchical: men were seen as the nation's 'defenders' and 'driving force'; women were viewed as weak, vulnerable, and in need of male protection. On the night of 11 December 2013, when police surrounded the demonstrators and began to force them out of the square, numerous calls went out over the Internet advising women to stay at home, prompting the formation of a group called 'Half of Maidan: Women's Voice of Protest'. This group set about subverting the hegemonic masculine warrior narrative, which had greatly intensified during the Maidan protests, with slogans such as 'We do barricades as well as bread and butter' and 'Glory to the heroines!'

The masculine narrative emphasized male patriotism and military prowess and lauded motherhood: man's mission

⁵ Martsenyuk, Tamara (2015), 'Gender I natsiia v ukrainskomu suspilstvi: maskulinnosti ta Euromaidan 2013–2014' (Gender and Nation in the Ukrainian Society: Masculinities and Euromaidan 2013–2014), *Ya: gendernyi zhurnal* 1 (37): 4–9.

⁶ Some Maidan protesters organized themselves into quasi-military units based on the 'sotnya' or 'company of one hundred'.

⁷ Philips, Sara (2014), 'The Women's Squad in Ukraine's protests: Feminism, nationalism, and militarism on the Maidan', *American Ethnologist* 41 (3): 414–26, this quote 420.

is to lead, control, and protect; woman's is to ensure the nation's reproduction, physically and symbolically. Beyond this re-traditionalization of gender hierarchies, however, '[a] nother important phenomenon to track is the way women in the national and volunteer armed forces in Ukraine have been sexualized in images circulating in the press and social media'.⁷ A T-shirt currently available in Ukraine (Fig. 2) features a woman with long red hair dressed in tightly fitting clothes and carrying a machine-gun. On the woman's right hip a nationalist-style tattoo is visible and on her cheek is a painting of the red-and-black UPA flag. This *banderivka* combines battle-hungriness and combat-readiness with what are clearly deemed to be quintessentially Ukrainian good looks.



Fig. 2 (left): T-shirt on sale in Ukraine, autumn 2014 (photo: Tetiana Bureychak).



Fig. 3 (right): Black-and-white reproduction of Ihor Pereklita's painting / *Am a Banderivka*, 2007 (photo: Carmen Scheide).

Rather more historical is a painting by Ihor Pereklita (Fig. 3), available at the Maidan protests in the form of black-and-white stickers. Pereklita is actually known for his mockery of nationalist stereotypes and this 2007 picture, depicting a 'real' *banderivka* as she would have appeared at the time the Ukrainian nationalist underground was active, was originally intended as a critique of nationalism. The subject of the painting is a glamorous blonde woman wearing Ukrainian national dress and armed with a gun. In one hand she holds a grenade, in the other a bunch of snowberries (often used to symbolize Ukraine), and at her feet is a skull and a hedgehog with some apples. The picture bears the legend 'I am a *banderivka*. I am Ukrainian. Death to the Muscovite Occupiers.' The image lays bare the disparate notion of femininity at work here: the protagonist is attractive and well-groomed but the identity she projects is primarily one of a woman breaking

through traditional 'beauty queen' perceptions, taking up arms, and raising herself to the status of glamorous and courageous female warrior.⁸

The circulation of these kinds of images amongst the Maidan protesters prompted a wide range of sometimes conflicting comments – from anarcho-nationalist quips to serious observations about the part played by women in the protests and the way they embodied both militant resolve and quintessential Ukrainian beauty. On the whole, however, the message was clear: women were allowed to depart from the roles traditionally ascribed to them and display 'masculine' qualities such as courage but they must remain ultra-'feminine' whilst doing so. National historical narratives thus reinforced the patriarchal social order by granting women temporary admittance to a militaristic male world whilst perpetuating their sexualization.

⁸ Buryechak, Tetiana and Petrenko, Olena, 'Kanapky, Sich ta „Banderivky“' (Sandwiches, Sich and „banderivky"), *Zaxid.net*, 8 January 2014, http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?kanapki_sich_ta_banderivki&objectId=1300428.

Phantom Pain Syndrome: The Ukrainian Nation One Year after the Annexation of Crimea

Milana Nikolko

One year ago, or thereabouts, the history of independent Ukraine changed forever. Today, the country is labouring under a long-term military conflict; despite the Minsk agreements, the sound of artillery-fire continues to be part of daily life in the east; and Ukrainian civil society is torn between chaotic public debate and carefully constructed propaganda, between open political confrontation and backstairs oligarchic warfare. More than twelve months after the annexation of Crimea, neither Ukrainian society nor its political leaders are able to agree on a position to the peninsula.¹ Some openly reject annexation, others – implicitly or explicitly – accept it, and yet others simply ignore the issue, focusing instead on Ukraine's ongoing economic, social, and political problems and the course of military operations in the east. Despite these differences, the annexation and its aftermath are still driving and shaping Ukrainian public discourse. To use a medical metaphor, Crimea is a phantom limb – 'a vivid impression that [an amputated] limb is not only still present, but in some cases, painful.'²

These pressures on Ukrainian society are obscuring one of the main challenges facing Ukraine, namely the lack of understanding of the colonial narrative and 'the Other', notably as a result of the dearth of academic reflection on the emergence of the modern Ukrainian political nation. This brief account seeks to highlight the methodological problems

¹ The only concrete measures have been a handful of controversial laws such as the law of 27 Sept. 2014 'On Establishing Free Economic Zone "Crimea" and Specifics of Economic Activity on the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Ukraine'.

² Ramchandran, V.S. and Hirstein, William (1998), 'The perception of phantom limbs', *Brain* 121 (9): 1603–30, <http://brain.oxfordjournals.org/content/brain/121/9/1603.full.pdf>, accessed 21.05.2015.

that have to be overcome in reaching an understanding of the nation-building process in Ukraine.

Having lived in the shadow of 'Big Brother' for so long, and having acquiesced to Soviet myths about 'brother nations' ('bratskie narody'), the country continued, even after independence in 1991, to be what was, to all intents and purposes, a colony, with a political elite conditioned by colonial-style thinking. Now involved in a dramatic conflict and afflicted by various kinds of social, political, and physical trauma, the country is searching for a new national ideal. Talk of 'the Other', in the guise of Russia/the Soviet Union, has become the dominant narrative in political and social circles. Under the influence of this 'otherness', a political nation is being forged; boundaries of both a physical and a symbolic kind are being created, engendering uniqueness and fuelling differing notions of national sovereignty. Reflection on the role of 'Soviet otherness' has never been carried through to its conclusion and the result has been the emergence of an extraordinary mix of national, Soviet, and global narratives in Ukraine.

Of course, Ukraine's search for a new national narrative is not unique. Battles as to how the past should be depicted and what images are to be carried forward have been underway for many years in most post-Soviet countries. In these places, the culture of memory often operates independently of 'professional' historical accounts, or uses them only as occasions for ideological invective.³ Four types of such culture are distinguishable, depending on the way in which the failures and successes of the communist past are processed and acknowledged.

The first type is most evident in countries in which the former communist regime is considered politically, historically, and ethnically alien to the nation's 'organic' history. Such countries would include Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The second type includes countries which, whilst recognizing that the communist regime was something imposed from without, nonetheless actively engaged with the Soviet past as it relates to the national context and reflect on the part played by their population and elite in constructing that regime. Examples of countries where this type of memory prevails include Poland and the Czech Republic. The third type of memory, whilst acknowledging that communism, having made its entry with the Soviet liberators' tanks at the end of the Second World War, was unarguably an externally imposed phenomenon, moves beyond this and points to the contribution which the socialist order made to economic and social modernization. Remembrance of the victims of communist dictatorship features only to a very modest extent in this configuration. Countries in which this type of culture of memory prevails include Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia. The fourth and last

³ Stefan Trebst [Стефан Требст] (2011), *Какой такой ковер? Культура памяти в посткоммунистических обществах Восточной Европы: попытка общего описания и категоризации*, in *Империя и нация в зеркале исторической памяти: Сборник статей* М.: Новое издательство, 142.

⁴ See e.g. Bershidsky, Leonid (2015), *Nazis Triumph Over Communists in Ukraine*, <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2015-05-19/nazis-triumph-over-communists-in-ukraine>; interview with Serhiy Ekelchik 'Не можна нав'язати Україні єдиний погляд на «географічну УПА» – канадський історик», http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/27024469.html?utm_medium=email; Volodimir Kulik, Про неясні закони та нечутливих критиків. http://krytyka.com/ua/solutions/opinions/pro-neyakisni-zakony-ta-nechutlyvykh-krytykiv.

⁴ De-Sovietization in Ukraine: 871 cities, towns and villages freeing their names from the Soviet legacy, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2015/06/12/de-sovietization-in-ukraine-871-cities-towns-and-villages-freeing-their-names-from-the-soviet-legacy/>.

⁶ Shevel, Oxana (2015), *'De-Communization Laws' Need to Be Amended to Conform to European Standards*, <http://voxukraine.org/2015/05/07/de-communization-laws-need-to-be-amended-to-conform-to-european-standards/>.

'culture of memory' category comprises countries in which the political elite have retained the positions they held in the Soviet *nomenklatura* and make frequent reference to what they perceive as an 'ancestral' link with the Soviet order. They may recognize errors and repressive 'fault lines' but generally assume that the Soviet past was a positive and glorious one. The countries in question here are Russia and Belarus.

Falling outside this fourfold typology, and unsure where it belongs, is Ukraine. Though working to rid itself of 'the Other' by embracing Western economic and social ideas, the country still has various 'phantom limbs' to grapple with. By relinquishing these, Ukraine will move firmly into the Western camp, inexorably severing its links with its Soviet past. Any move to erase the country's communist history, will only reduce the likelihood of reconciliation with Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. One such step is the recent adoption, by Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council), of a package of what are commonly dubbed 'de-communization' laws.⁴ Law no. 2558, 'On Condemning the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes and Prohibiting the Propagation of their Symbols', is entirely toponymic in content, targeting the symbols of the country's former communist regime – place names, street names, company names evoking political figures or parties. The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory recently issued a list of just under 900 towns and villages earmarked for renaming.⁵

With this package of laws, the government is effectively decreeing what does and does not constitute 'true knowledge' about 'the Ukrainian nation'. Politicians are attempting to gain control over political symbolic reality by controlling the dominant symbols and ideas. This is a struggle that seems to wax and wane with internal political opposition. The gamble of rejecting the past in order to embrace an uncertain future may well prove successful for Kiev but will entail squaring up to, or indeed denying, Ukraine's uneasy twentieth-century past.

According to Oxana Shevel,⁶ there are two major problems which these laws will not resolve. The first is Ukraine's adherence to the kind of highly politicized approach to history adopted during the Soviet era, when the government mandated one correct interpretation of history, decided who were the heroes and who the villains, and reduced historical complexities to black-and-white notions of the ideologically good 'Self/ Collective Us' versus the ideologically bad 'Other/ Them'. The second is the legislation's failure to match up to European standards of commemoration, in which civilian victims of political violence hold centre-stage and the murder and brutalization of civilian populations is condemned regardless of the reasons for it.

In sum: Ukraine is evolving in an uncertain, poorly coordinated but dramatic way as its present aspirations clash

with the countervailing influences of the historical 'Other'. As they put their untried nation-building skills to the test, Ukrainian politicians are clearly hampered by 'phantom pain' – reflected, inter alia, in the de-communization legislation. The political 'exercises' underway in the area of the culture of memory are aggravating the social trauma occasioned by the ongoing conflict. This is to be expected, given that Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk are still, symbolically if not actually, part of the body politic. The proposed treatment may be unreal but the pain is not.

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ISSN 2198-1957 (Print)
ISSN 2198-0403 (Online)

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The Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research was co-founded by the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Institute for Development and Peace / Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden (INEF), and the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities / Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI).

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