



The Ukraine List #500

The Ukraine List (UKL) #500
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www.chairukr.com
www.danyliwseminar.com
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#1

****Final Deadline Reminder: 27 June 2019****

15th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, 7-9 November 2019
<http://www.danyliwseminar.com>

CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies, with the support of the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation, will be holding its 15th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine at the University of Ottawa on 7-9 November 2019. Since 2005, the Danyliw Seminar has provided an annual platform for the presentation of some of the most influential academic research on Ukraine.

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

Conflict

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

Reform

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

Identity

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

Society

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

The Seminar will also be featuring panels devoted to recent/new books touching on Ukraine, as well as the screening of new documentaries followed by a discussion with filmmakers. Information on past book panels and films can easily be accessed from the

top menu of the web site. The 2019 Seminar is welcoming book panel proposals, as well as documentary proposals.

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

People interested in presenting at the 2019 Danyliw Seminar are invited to submit a 500 word paper proposal and a 150 word biographical statement, by email attachment, to Dominique Arel, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, at darel@uottawa.ca AND chairukr@gmail.com. Please also include your full coordinates (institutional affiliation, preferred postal address, email, phone, and Twitter account [if you have one]). If applicable, indicate your latest publication or, in the case of doctoral or post-doctoral applicants, the year when you entered a doctoral program, the title of your dissertation and year of (expected) completion. Note that a biographical statement is not a CV, but a written paragraph.

Books published between 2018 and 2020 (as long as near-final proofs are available prior to the Seminar) are eligible for consideration as a book panel proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the book, as well as the 150 word bio and full coordinates.

Films produced between 2017 and 2019 are eligible for consideration as a documentary proposal. The proposal must include a 500 word abstract of the film, as well as the 150 word bio, full coordinates, and a secure web link to the film.

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

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

The Danyliw Seminar website (<http://danyliwseminar.com>) contains the programs, papers, videos of presentations and photographs of the last five years (2014-2018). To access the abstracts, papers and videos of the 2018 presenters, click on “Participants” in the menu and then click on the individual names of participants. The 2018 Program can be accessed at <https://www.danyliwseminar.com/program-2018>. Presentations from previous years can be accessed under menu “Archives.”

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

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

#2

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

Application Deadline: 1 February 2020 (International & Canadian Students)
<https://www.chairukr.com/kule-doctoral-scholarships>

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa, the only research unit outside of Ukraine predominantly devoted to the study of contemporary Ukraine, is announcing a new competition of the Drs. Peter and Doris Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Contemporary Ukraine. The Scholarships will consist of an annual award of \$25,000, with all tuition waived, for four years (with the possibility of adding a fifth year).

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

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

The application for the Kule Scholarship must include a 1000 word research proposal, two letters of recommendation (sent separately by the referees), and a CV and be mailed to Dominique Arel, School of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, Room, 7067, University of Ottawa, 120 University St., Ottawa ON K1N 6N5, Canada.

Applications will be considered only after the applicant has completed an application to the relevant doctoral program at the University of Ottawa. Consideration of applications will begin on and will continue until the award is announced.

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

Students interested in applying for the Scholarships beginning in the academic year 2020-2021 are invited to contact Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca), Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, and visit our web site www.chairukr.com.

#3

Nationalities Papers

Vol. 47, No. 3, June 2019

Special Issue on Ukrainian Statehood

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

Bringing the State Back In: Studying Ukrainian Statehood in the 20th Century

Markian Dobczansky, Simone Attilio Bellezza

Reconciling the Irreconcilable? Left-Wing Ukrainian Nationalism and the Soviet Regime

Christopher Gilley

What Was Soviet and Ukrainian About Soviet Ukrainian Culture? Mykola Kulish's Myna

Mazailo on the Soviet Stage

Mayhill C. Fowler

Rehabilitating a Mythology: The Ukrainian SSR's Foundational Myth After Stalin

Markian Dobczansky

Making Soviet Ukraine Ukrainian: The Debate on Ukrainian Statehood in the

Journal *Suchasnist'* (1961–1971)

Simone Attilio Bellezza

Select Political Affinities and Maneuvering of Soviet Political Elites: Heorhii Shevel and Ukraine's Ministry of Strange Affairs in the 1970s

Political Affinities and Maneuvering of Soviet Political Elites: Heorhii Shevel and

Ukraine's Ministry of Strange Affairs in the 1970s

Olga Bertelsen

#4

Ukrainian Delegation Bolts, Zelenskiy "Disappointed"

In Russia's Reinstatement To PACE

RFE/RL, 25 June 2019

<https://bit.ly/31SSBHP>

Ukraine's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has walked out in protest and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has voiced his "disappointment" over Russia having its voting rights reinstated at the body after a three-year hiatus.

In a June 25 statement on his **Facebook page**, Zelenskiy said he tried to convince French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in separate meetings to not allow Russia back into Europe's main human rights body until it meets PACE's demands on adherence to principles of rule of law and human rights.

"It's a pity that our European partners didn't hear us and acted differently," Zelenskiy said of the lopsided vote from the Council of Europe's 47 member states, where only **62 of the 190 delegates** present opposed a report that made it possible for Russia to return to the chamber.

In his statement, Zelenskiy cited a specific ruling by a UN maritime tribunal to have Russia comply by June 25 to **free 24 Ukrainian seamen** whom it has held since November.

Ukrainian delegation member Iryna Herashchenko, who is first deputy speaker of Ukraine's parliament, said that the "Ukrainian delegation challenged the credentials of the Russian murders."

PACE's decision to reinstate Russia marked the first time that a major sanction imposed on Moscow for its annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region in March 2014 has been reversed.

A total of 118 parliament deputies agreed to welcome Russia back into PACE immediately and to blunt the assembly's ability to impose sanctions similar to those on Russia in the future, while 10 abstained.

Five of the seven Dutch delegates, for example, backed the reversal.

On June 19, a Dutch-led international investigation named three Russians and a Ukrainian as murder suspects in the downing of flight MH17 five years ago in which all 298 people on board were killed from a sophisticated Russian surface-to-air Buk missile.

The assembly said this clarification of its rules was to "ensure that member states' right and obligation to be represented and to participate in both statutory bodies of the Council of Europe is respected."

The assembly also invited the parliaments of Council of Europe member states "which are not represented by a delegation" to PACE to present their credentials during the ongoing annual session.

That means Russia can present a delegation to PACE on June 25, paving the way for the country to participate in the election of a new secretary-general for the Council of Europe the next day.

The head of the Ukrainian delegation to PACE, Volodymyr Ariyev, said the assembly's decision sent "a very bad message: do what you want, annex another country's territory, kill people there, and you will still leave with everything."

The head of the Russian State Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, Leonid Slutsky, said PACE "made a huge step toward defending the rights of national delegations."

Russia's delegation will not tolerate "any more sanctions, no matter how insignificant," Slutsky also said.

In 2014, Russia was stripped of its voting rights in PACE following Moscow's takeover of Crimea and its backing of militant separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine in a conflict that has killed some 13,000 people since April 2014.

Russia responded in 2016 by boycotting the assembly, and has since 2017 refused to pay its annual contribution of 33 million euros, roughly 7 percent of the council's budget. The country had threatened to quit the body altogether if its delegation isn't reinstated and it can't vote on the next secretary-general to succeed Norway's Thorbjorn Jagland. Germany and France have supported Russia's reintroduction to PACE, arguing that it's better to have Russia included to promote dialogue even if there are disagreements on issues.

#5

A High Human Rights Price if the Council of Europe Capitulates to Russia

By Halya Coynash

Human Rights in Ukraine, 21 June 2019

<https://bit.ly/2IIL7zA>

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [PACE] is due to vote on 24 June on new rules which would effectively remove sanctions imposed upon Russia after its annexation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine. The vote comes just days after Russia's direct involvement in the downing of Malaysian airliner MH17 was once again confirmed. It is also the day before Russia is obliged to show that it has complied with the UN's International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea [ITLOS] and released 24 Ukrainian servicemen whom it illegally imprisoned in November 2018. Moscow is refusing to release the men and is continuing to deny the undeniable with respect to MH17 and the deaths of 298 people on board. These are only two of multiple examples of human rights violations and war crimes since the sanctions were originally imposed.

Russia is not demanding that its rights be reinstated at PACE because it has removed the reasons for these sanctions. Quite the contrary. On 20 June, Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed any suggestion that the sanctions against Russia were over Crimea or

eastern Ukraine, claiming that they were instead because of “the growth in Russia’s economy”. Moscow’s demands are powered by its threat to withdraw from the European Court of Human Rights and its refusal since 2017 to pay its 33 million euro dues to PACE. Indeed, having succeeded in getting the Rules Committee to draw up draft amendments, it has increasingly spoken in terms of ‘ultimatums’ and ‘demands’. It has also made it quite clear that a reinstated Russian delegation could include ‘deputies’ who entered the state дума as the result of elections illegally held in occupied Crimea.

If PACE gives in to Russia’s ultimatum on 24 June, it will have no mechanisms to combat a situation where Russia forces effective recognition of people linked with its invasion and illegal occupation of Crimea.

It will also be sending a message to all the political prisoners held in occupied Crimea and Russia, to the families of victims of torture and killings, of abductions and other crimes, that their rights and their suffering are of less worth than ‘improved’ relations with Russia.

What ‘dialogue’?

The purported reason behind moves to quietly dispense with sanctions against Russia is the need for ‘dialogue’. This sounds very nice, yet what kind of dialogue are we talking about when Russia is already refusing to comply with rulings from the UN’s International Court of Justice and ITLOS, as well as numerous international resolutions, including those from PACE? Even the fact that a Russian delegation to PACE could contain Crimean ‘deputies’ is in direct breach of PACE Resolution 2132 (2016) ‘On Political Consequences of the Russian Aggression in Ukraine’ which declared the so-called elections in occupied Crimea illegal, and therefore null and void.

Dialogue is surely also lacking in Russia’s stubborn denial of its role in the downing of MH17 and killing of the 298 people on board, in the nerve gas attack on Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, UK and in attempts to influence many elections in the USA and Europe. Rather than engaging in dialogue, the Russian state is spending huge amounts of money on financing disinformation on all of the above subjects, on Crimea, the conflict in Ukraine and many other subjects.

It is just as difficult to engage in dialogue when Russia is effectively denying that it invaded and annexed Crimea, and stating categorically that “Crimea is a closed subject.” The Council of Europe must either accept this annexation and abandon the human rights and democratic principles which it has always espoused, or emphatically reject Russia’s position. Attempts by the Rules Committee to avoid any direct mention of Russia in the Draft Resolution cannot change the fact that this is capitulation to Russian blackmail.

The cosmetics will not work for two reasons. One is that Russia itself needs a ‘triumphant return’ and will certainly use it for propaganda ends.

The second is the unacceptably high and ever-mounting human rights cost. While the following examples are from occupied Crimea, the deterioration in the human rights situation in the Russian Federation since PACE imposed its sanctions, the increase in political prisoners and of men and women imprisoned for their faith, has also been dramatic.

Russia is now holding a minimum of 115 Ukrainian political prisoners, with at least 63 of these Crimean Tatars. 55 Crimean Muslims are imprisoned on fatally flawed ‘terrorism’ charges based solely on alleged and unproven involvement in the peaceful Hizb ut-Tahrir movement which is legal in Ukraine. These cases are especially shocking for two reasons. While Russia declared Hizb ut-Tahrir ‘terrorist’ in a secret ruling in 2003, it only began imposing horrifically long sentences (up to life imprisonment) from 2014.

It is especially noticeable in occupied Crimea that Hizb ut-Tahrir charges are being used against civic journalists and activists, especially from the Crimean Solidarity initiative, which arose to both support political prisoners and their families and to provide information about arrests, torture and other rights violations (examples here). Having driven out or prosecuted independent journalists and silenced all but Kremlin-loyal media, Russia is now using ‘terrorism’ or ‘extremism’ charges to imprison those who refuse to be silenced. This has been repeatedly condemned by the Memorial Human Rights Centre.

Even where the victims of such persecution are not civic activists, it is clear that they are facing huge sentences solely for their faith and peacefully held views.

In April 2017, Russia resorted to Soviet repressive measures and banned the Jehovah’s Witnesses. At least 200 believers are now imprisoned or facing prosecution for their faith, with a number of armed searches and arrests having already taken place in occupied Crimea.

It should be stressed that many of the arrests, as well as of armed searches generally, appear aimed at presenting Crimean Tatars or any Ukrainians who do not support Russia’s occupation as ‘extremists’, ‘terrorists’ or ‘saboteurs’. A large percentage of these prosecutions, starting with the arrest of Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov and three other opponents of annexation, were based solely on ‘confessions’ extracted through torture. Since the 2017 UN’s International Court of Justice ruling that Russia must reinstate the banned Mejlis (or representative assembly) of the Crimean Tatar people and allow Ukrainian language education, Russia has resorted to a number of arrests which appear aimed solely at trying to discredit the Mejlis and respected members of the Crimean Tatar movement (example here). In the case of one of these political prisoners, Edem Bekirov, it is currently flouting a direct European Court of Human Rights order that the gravely ill 58-year-old be hospitalized.

Freedom House’s latest report rates Crimea’s record on human rights as not much better than that of North Korea, and significantly worse than that of mainland Ukraine (8/10 for

Crimea against 60/100). This is indisputably the result of Russia's invasion and ongoing occupation.

Russia may not be alone among Council of Europe members in its disturbing level of human rights violations. It is, however, the only country within this renowned structure which invaded and annexed another country's sovereign territory, caused a catastrophic deterioration in human rights and may now be granted full reinstatement.

This will be a triumph for Russia, a bitter betrayal for all its victims.

#6

Interview with Ukrainian President Zelensky

“I Will Tell Putin: Crimea is Ukraine”

Bild (Germany), 18 June 2019

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

As Ukraine's new president Volodymyr Zelensky greets the reporters from BILD, he recalls a private trip to Berlin two years ago: „The Tiergarten was great“, he says in English. On Tuesday, he will meet Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, for the first time in his function as president.

BILD: Mr. President, you are meeting German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin. How do you explain to her that Zelensky the “television president” could become the real president of Ukraine?

Volodymyr Zelensky: “There is a huge demand for change in Ukraine. The old political elites who have been in power since Independence in 1991 failed to provide Ukrainians with the standard of living that they deserve. We have the biggest land mass in Europe and are nearly 45 million strong, we have inherited great economic and intellectual potential, but we are ashamed to be one of the poorest nations on the continent and the people came to the conclusion that the root of the problem is with the management of the State. When the ‘Television President’ showed people hope which they embraced and believed, the real Zelensky realized that he could not stand aside anymore and had to try his best to become the real President. Now, here I am struggling to turn this hope into reality.”

In your opinion what is the difference between the “fictional president” Holoborodko and the real president Zelensky?

Zelensky: “We are different in how we have lived our lives but are similar in our values. I want for Ukrainians everything that I have promised as a Servant of the People – to stop corruption, to bring honesty and transparency in the Ukrainian politics, to unify the

country, to deliver peace, and to improve lives of ordinary people. With these objectives, I am as sincere as Vasyl Holoborodko.

But I don't ride a bicycle to work, especially now, when I am in a position where it can be dangerous. I am proud to have had a successful business in the sphere of creative economy that I love. And also, what is important to underline, as a real politician I will collaborate with the international partners of Ukraine. Our urgent goal now is to develop the good relations of the new government with the IMF, as well as with the European Union, and NATO. Our economic priorities are the establishment of the rule of law, currency liberalization and privatization, land reform, tax administration and coping management, reducing the administrative burden on business and creating incentives for small and medium businesses."

As an actor, have you taken benefit from the global election trend in which people no longer want "classic politicians"?

Zelensky: "Every good actor, like every good politician, must listen to people and sense their mood and aspirations. But still I am the one to choose the path of changes and to take the responsibility."

Your predecessor has demanded from Germany in the past that arms deliveries and sanctions should be tightened against Russia. What do you want from the Chancellor?

Zelensky: "Chancellor Merkel has a strong personality, undisputed credibility, and tremendous experience. Ukrainians hope that Angela Merkel, as a powerful European and global influencer, will help my country stand against the challenges we face. We are sure that sanctions policies must stay until the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine is restored. We will also need assistance in the deep structural reforms we are launching. We also see threats in the energy sector because of North Stream 2, that will damage Ukraine's and Europe's energy security."

Do you believe that Ukraine will join the EU and will you refer to this topic with Merkel?

Zelensky: "Ukraine is already a part of the European family. Ukraine seeks for European integration as the major demand of our people. But we understand that we need to deliver compelling results to be able to join the common economic, legal, customs, and digital space of the EU. I would like to see Ukraine at such a level of development that the EU countries will see us as an equal member of the Union. And we will do everything to reach this."

Do you consider Ukraine's accession to NATO realistic?

Zelensky: "NATO enlargement proved to be a powerful tool to ensure security in the region. Almost all our neighbors are members of the Alliance, as well as France and Germany. Ukraine has officially declared its aspiration to join NATO too. First, what I want

to do is to implement NATO standards in the Ukrainian armed forces and our security sector. Ukraine is already a reliable partner of NATO and in the future, we can become a reliable member of the Alliance.”

The Saxon Prime Minister Kretschmer met Putin and spoke in favor of easing the sanctions. How will you deal with that?

Zelensky: “This is not the first time when discussions of lifting sanctions have been launched amidst the continuing war. Most probably, these envoys should be reminded why these sanctions were introduced in the first place. My position is clear and simple. Sanctions are the only leverage to free the occupied territory, restore our territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to return our people.”

Soldiers are still dying in Ukraine. Do you think the sanctions should be tightened from your point of view?

Zelensky: “Sanctions are a diplomatic tool to achieve results, I mean a cease-fire and the restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. If this tool does not work, then the mechanism needs to be expanded.”

Will the war never stop in the East?

Zelensky: “All wars come to end. We will do everything to implement a ceasefire and stop the killing and suffering of our people in the nearest future. We have to give diplomats the chance to talk again while the guns stay silent. This is what I count on. And hope this will be heard in Moscow.”

When you meet Putin for the first time, what will you tell him?

Zelensky: “Let us start from the point that the Donbas and Crimea are Ukraine.”

But isn't Crimea already lost for Ukraine?

Zelensky: “Crimea is Ukraine. And we hope that soon it will be returned. I love Crimea very much. I have been there many-many times. This is a unique place in Ukraine with its nature and history. For me, Crimea has always been and still stays a part of Ukraine.”

You recently said that you want to protect the game from the old elite. However, several people associated with oligarchy like Kolomoisky are part of your presidential team now. Why?

Zelensky: “My presidential team consists of professionals with no corruption background and ties to the old elites. They are people whom I trust because I worked with them in business and during the political campaign, people who had proved that they can be trusted. They are not influenced by oligarchs or any part of the old elites. They are

committed to the future of Ukraine that we aim to build together. They know my position. And if anyone of my team falls under the suspicion of being involved in murky deals or compromises me, our paths will immediately split.”

When it comes to Eastern Ukraine, some Ukrainian activists accuse you of “surrendering Donbas” to the occupiers while western leaders are afraid, you will choose to be a part beyond the “Minsk” process. How do you plan to solve the conflict during your presidency?

Zelensky: “My goal is to bring peace to Ukraine using diplomatic means, not populism. Let me underline again that neither the sovereignty, neither territory, nor the Ukrainian people’s destiny will become a negotiating token in any peace deal. I’ll do my best and I’ll seek the support of my fellow citizens and international partners in this difficult endeavor. We trust in the Minsk process, so far. We hope it is a solution. We are relaunching it to negotiate a ceasefire and the release of prisoners. But we can’t wait for another 5 years, because the Ukrainians die every day. If we have to, we will explore any other way for negotiations, either in ‘Normandy’ or another format.”

There is a debate that is ongoing in Germany, weather we should lift Crimea and Donbas related sanctions in Russia because they do not have any effect on the Kremlin’s behavior. What is your take on this?

Zelensky: “This question is very closely connected with the one I have already answered earlier. The only thing I can add that the sanctions can also be reinforced if their effect is not satisfactory.”

#7

Who’s Laughing Now?

What Volodymyr Zelensky’s Presidential Win May Mean for Ukraine Studies

by William Jay Risch
Newsnet (ASEEES Newsletter), June 2019
<https://bit.ly/2Fv1Cjs>

William Jay Risch is Associate Professor of History at Georgia College. He is the author of The Ukrainian West: Culture and the Fate of Empire in Soviet Lviv (Harvard University Press, 2011)

[The footnotes appear in the online version –UKL]

It was not supposed to happen this way in Ukraine.

Comedian and entertainer Volodymyr Zelensky, a man with no political experience whatsoever, defeated incumbent President Petro Poroshenko, a prominent figure in Ukrainian politics for the past two decades. He defeated Poroshenko despite Ukraine being five years in a hybrid war with Russia that has cost at least 13,000 lives by late February 2019 and has led to as many as 1.8 million people still being registered as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as of July 2018.

It was not a defeat. It was a blowout. In the second round of voting held April 21, 2019, Zelensky defeated Poroshenko by an astonishing 73.22 percent to a mere 24.45 percent. On the electoral map, Zelensky led in all regions of Ukraine where voting could take place, except for western Ukraine's Lviv Region.

Television Crusader

Despite no political experience, nationwide television had made Zelensky famous. Zelensky started his television company, *Kvartal 95* (Block 95), in 2003. Zelensky's company has produced television programs, films, and live shows for not just Ukraine, but the post-Soviet sphere and Eastern Europe. Their television comedy show, *Vecherniy Kvartal* (Evening Channel), has been a hit with audiences since 2008. The television series *Svaty* (The In-laws), which has completed six seasons, had the highest ratings for three of them in Ukraine. In 2012-14, the Monte Carlo Television Festival considered it among the top three comedy series viewed worldwide, next to *The Big Bang Theory* and *Desperate Housewives*.

The show that gave Zelensky the most political clout was the television series *Sluga Naroda* (Servant of the People), which premiered on Ukrainian television in 2015. *Servant of the People* is about a struggling high school history teacher in provincial Ukraine who, frustrated with his country's political system, delivers an impromptu speech against corruption that a student films in class. The student's video goes viral on YouTube and gets Zelensky's character, Vasyl Holoborodko, elected president. *Servant of the People* is about more than just a novice president battling corruption. The series portrays ordinary Ukrainian citizens complicit in this culture of corruption, from housewives urging their husbands to accept bribes so that they can buy fur coats to neighbors who abuse one another yet will go out of their way to please government ministers.

Zelensky Hysteria

At first it looked like Zelensky had no chance of winning. Out of 40 candidates for president, Zelensky's campaign strategy was bizarre. As he began his campaign in January 2019, Zelensky, going by the brand name of "Ze," said idea crowdsourcing and popular referendums would determine his political program. Zelensky held few live political rallies. He did not engage in any ambitious billboard campaign. Instead, he performed with his comedy team. His campaign team used the social networks and YouTube to broadcast campaign messages. The television network hosting Zelensky's shows, 1 + 1, gave Zelensky a venue for appearing as a president on *Servant of the*

People, narrating a documentary on the life of Ronald Reagan (another actor who became a president), and greeting viewers with the New Year at midnight, during a spot traditionally reserved for the President of Ukraine.

Due to his amorphous campaign rhetoric and his past comedy acts, Zelensky seemed like a clown, someone else's puppet. One suspected puppet master was Ihor Kolomoisky. Kolomoisky, owner of 1 + 1, Privatbank, and other assets, was a prominent oligarch who supported the Euromaidan protests and, after Russia's military intervention, funded volunteer battalions to defend Ukraine. While this led to him becoming governor of the Dnipropetrovsk Region in Ukraine's southeast in 2014, his relations with President Poroshenko soured, and he was out of office the next year. Kolomoisky allegedly embezzled some \$5 billion from Privatbank, causing the Poroshenko administration to nationalize the bank in 2016. Kolomoisky left Ukraine and claimed that the forced nationalization of his bank was illegal. Kolomoisky not only gave Zelensky air time through 1 + 1. The 1 + 1 channel provided security and logistical support to Zelensky's campaign team. Andriy Bohdan, Kolomoisky's personal lawyer, became Zelensky's legal counsel.

Russian president Vladimir Putin became Zelensky's second suspected puppet master, largely through a subtle smear campaign. Euromaidan Press claimed that Zelensky's campaign program bore an eerie resemblance to that of the Russian Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. A website known for intimidating journalists and political opponents, *Myrotvorets'* (Peacemaker) – called simply a “non-governmental organization” by some media – claimed that it had intercepted emails proving that a former pro-Russian Donbas militant, owner of a crypto-currency trading platform, had organized the transfer of cash from Russia's FSB to the Zelensky campaign. Euromaidan Press reported this news, while being unable to verify the information completely. Yet at least some suggested, rightly, that this kind of Russian support was negligible, given the enormous resources Kolomoisky and his 1 + 1 television channel provided.

Still, experts warned that Zelensky's victory would doom Ukraine, because Putin would take advantage of his lack of political experience. Alexander Motyl claimed that *Servant of the People* episodes suggested Zelensky was “dangerously pro-Russian.” He argued that Zelensky's show treats Ukrainian nationalists, not Russia, as the main threat to the country. Zelensky, if elected, may make all kinds of concessions to Putin, including ceding the country's sovereignty. Such experts stressed the importance of Poroshenko winning reelection. Adrian Karatnycky of the Atlantic Council said this would protect Ukraine from Russian interference, running rampant during the elections, and would keep it safe from further Russian military aggression. Quoting Ukrainian historian and public intellectual Yaroslav Hrytsak, Karatnycky concluded that it was just a matter of time before Ukraine's educated elite backed Poroshenko and thus guaranteed his victory at the polls: “The main decision for liberals today is whether to support Poroshenko in the first round or wait until the second.”

Day of Reckoning

Hrytsak's liberals did not determine the outcome of the presidential race. Zelensky's electoral victory was a direct indictment of them and the blinkered view of Ukraine that they and their Western partners shared.

Educated elites most active in the Euromaidan protests of 2013-14 tied that revolution's fortunes to the Poroshenko presidency. Poroshenko himself played an active role in supporting the protests, through his television channel, Channel 5, and through his own intervention in key events that led to the toppling of President Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014.

The Poroshenko presidency, despite attempted reforms, ushered in yet another cycle of systemic corruption. Rather than breaking with a system of bribes, graft, and embezzlement at all levels of state administration, it perpetuated it. A 2018 Gallup poll found 91 percent of Ukrainians claimed government corruption was widespread. Ukraine's national government was the least trusted in the world (9 percent), far below the median for former Soviet republics (48 percent) and the global average (56 percent). Even the Yanukovych administration, overthrown by protests in February 2014, did not have such a low rating, though admittedly confidence in that government was also extremely weak (no higher than 24 percent). Rather than overcoming the arbitrariness and lawlessness of past regimes, Poroshenko's encouraged a "culture of impunity" where crimes remained unpunished or uninvestigated, security organs detained and tortured citizens, and far-right vigilante groups freely intimidated and assaulted their opponents. In late February 2019, investigative journalists claimed the son of one of Poroshenko's close business partners extorted millions of dollars from the state's military industries by selling them parts smuggled from Russia at grossly exaggerated prices.

Despite greater openness with the European Union, including visa-free travel, continued economic decline and the Donbas war had ruined people's standard of living. The value of the hryvnia to the US dollar plummeted from 8 to 27 (as of 2018). In 2015, the average salary of Ukrainians was 190 US dollars a month (a little over 6 US dollars a day). From 2014 to 2017 (before even visa-free travel with EU countries began), over 25 percent of all working age, economically active citizens (those not students, pensioners, mothers on maternity leave, or those disabled and unable to work) left Ukraine for employment abroad. The sharp drop in Ukrainians' living standards, made worse by austerity, has hardly been the prosperity of the "European dream" shared by Euromaidan activists and their supporters more than five years ago.

Ukraine's cultural and intellectual establishment, while grumbling about such corruption and economic hardships, chose to side with Poroshenko to the end. Poroshenko's presidency reinforced myths they shared and perpetuated (sometimes with Western help) about the Euromaidan protests and Ukraine's war with Russia. The Euromaidan protests were about a civilizational choice. They were a contest of wills between the "tolerant ones" (*tolerasty*), those who adhered to human rights, rule of law, democracy,

and European values, and the “Soviet ones” (*sovky*), those who blindly followed their post-Soviet leaders and feared change. Marci Shore and her husband, Timothy Snyder, have been the most fervent Western perpetrators of such myths. The protests represented a “rebirth of metaphysics” for not just Ukraine, but Eastern Europe, where the values of Europe acquired real meaning in acts of resistance on Ukraine’s Independence Square. The Ukraine crisis occupied center stage in a global war for the “truth” and liberal democracy. Such myths transformed those who were indifferent to the Euromaidan protests, who refused to support the protests, or who openly opposed them into people who were culturally, intellectually, and even spiritually deprived. This was especially true for residents of the Donbas region, who, according to Hrytsak, were allegedly too skeptical, too materialist, and too spiritually deprived to appreciate the altruism of the Euromaidan protesters. Such myths ignored the fact that the Euromaidan protests never gained support from half of the country – mostly residents of the east and south – and that the violence that eventually brought down the Yanukovich regime only polarized public opinion further. Only the threat of Russian military aggression ensured national unity.

As it failed to produce reforms that benefited ordinary citizens, the Poroshenko administration used the threat of Russian military aggression, and nationalist tropes, to bolster Poroshenko’s reelection bid. “Army, language, faith” (*Armiia, mova, vira*) became his key campaign themes. Poroshenko guaranteed strong defense against Russian military aggression. When Russian naval forces seized three Ukrainian naval vessels and 24 sailors in November 2018 and closed the Sea of Azov off to Ukrainian shipping, Poroshenko with Parliament’s approval temporarily imposed martial law in 10 regions along Ukraine’s east and south, claiming that Russian forces threatened to seize those territories as well. The move was viewed as politically motivated, given that nearly all of these regions were least supportive of Poroshenko’s presidency. In early January 2019, the Poroshenko administration succeeded in obtaining independent status for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, removing it from the control of the Moscow Patriarchate. Poroshenko later went on a tour across Ukraine with the document, known as the *Tomos*, claiming that Ukraine had achieved spiritual independence from the Russian world at last. Poroshenko voiced support for a law strengthening the use of the Ukrainian language in education and government. Parliament passed the law shortly after Poroshenko’s electoral defeat.

Ukrainian cultural and intellectual figures lined up behind Poroshenko. At a late January 2019 rally in the Kyiv International Exposition Center, writers, actors, musicians, and politicians joined Poroshenko to express their support for his slogan, “Army, Faith, Language.” They claimed that Zelensky, former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and other rival candidates threatened to undermine Ukraine with empty populist rhetoric, authoritarianism, and a return to the days of Yanukovich’s “pro-Russian” regime. The rally offered an even more stark slogan on display: “Either Poroshenko or Putin,” with portraits of the two leaders facing one another. Once it became clear that Poroshenko was most likely to lose to Zelensky in the first round and even in the second, Ukrainian intellectuals warned that a Zelensky victory would be a disaster for Ukraine. As many as 26 representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia – mostly writers, academics, and former Soviet dissidents – claimed Zelensky’s election would make a mockery of Ukraine.

Western champions of Ukraine and the Euromaidan protests joined in the jeremiads against a possible Zelensky win. Bernard-Henri Lévy, who had spoken to the Maidan in early February 2014 and claimed that the Europe he was proud of stood before him, warned a Kyiv audience in late March 2019 that Zelensky was a “leap into the unknown.”

Fear and Loathing of the 25 (Or Less) Percent

The jeremiads did little more than echo among the faithful. When the results of the first, and then the second, rounds of voting came in, intellectuals and public figures who supported the Euromaidan were furious. They took out their anger against the vast majority who had voted for Zelensky.

Volodymyr Viatrovych, director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, whose work included the passing of controversial laws in 2015 banning Communist symbols and commemorating controversial nationalist figures who had collaborated with Nazi Germany, highlighted the dangers of “the majority” to his readers on Facebook one week before the second round of the elections. “The majority does not read books,” he wrote April 14, 2019. “The majority does not know a single foreign language. The majority has not seen the world not just beyond Ukraine, but even beyond their own televisions. The majority did not come to the Maidans [public protests in 2004 and 2013-14], they did not stop the ‘Russian Spring’ in the south and east, did not fight at the front, did not form volunteer groups to help soldiers.” He claimed that “the majority” quickly changes its loyalties, and that it was “the majority” that brought to power such odious figures as Lenin, Hitler, Putin, and Yanukovych (a claim that clearly went against the historical record regarding Lenin and Hitler).

The second round of voting coincided with the beginning of Holy Week for the Eastern rite in Ukraine, and commentators were quick to add Biblical language to express their contempt for the majority. “It is I not beating (him), but the mob [*iuba*] is,” wrote political scientist Volodymyr Kulyk, referring to Palm Sunday and the fickle crowd that greeted Jesus and then betrayed him. “On the day of [Christ’s] arrival in Jerusalem they decided to return to Egypt...” Writer Yuri Andrukhovych, who had already warned readers of *Zbruch* that Zelensky’s victory would mean the return to power of a more subtle version of Yanukovych’s Party of Regions, compared Poroshenko’s resounding defeat to Jesus Christ’s betrayal by the mob on Good Friday.

Other intellectuals opposed to Zelensky looked for signs of victory amid defeat. Facebook users affixed the number “25” to their profile photos, proudly identifying themselves as critically-reflecting members of civil society. Poet, critic, and essayist Mykola Riabchuk claimed that Zelensky’s presidency would be such a disaster that those supporting a modernized, Ukrainian future connected with Europe, free of the influences of the *sovky*, could win in a future political struggle.

There was no soul-searching at all among the 25 percent or less. One exception could be art curator and former Euromaidan activist Vasyl Cherepanyn. Cherepanyn compared Zelensky’s victory to a popular uprising like that of the Yellow Vests in France, only within

the legal system, voting against such issues as the war in Donbas (namely politicians' exploitation of that war to benefit themselves), corruption, and the divisive nationalism that Poroshenko had turned to in order to maintain popular support. Still, as Cherepanyn admitted, what had united the 73 percent of Ukraine's voters behind Zelensky was not voting for Zelensky but voting against something.

While Zelensky's victory bridged regional divides, such divisions remain highly salient for the most important problems facing Ukraine. One survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology indicates that in February 2019, around 62-65 percent of residents of Ukraine's west and center said that Russia bore responsibility for starting the war in Donbas, 10-12.5 percent said Ukraine was responsible, and 25 percent could not answer the question. In contrast, in Ukraine's south, as many as 47 percent could not answer the question, while 23 percent blamed Ukraine and only 30 percent blamed Russia. In the east, the contrast with the west and center was even starker. Most, a total of 55 percent, could not answer the question, while 31 percent blamed Ukraine and only 14.5 percent said Russia was responsible for starting the war.

Zelensky's presidential win thus is no laughing matter for either his opponents or his supporters. Ukraine remains in dire economic straits. The corrupt system in Servant of the People pervades Ukrainian society and involves ordinary people who, regardless of their individual qualities, matter in any representative democracy that claims to live by its ideals. Russia remains a military threat, though far from all Ukrainians agree who is to blame for the war it continues to direct and support in the Donbas region. The gulf between educated elites and "the majority" bears resemblance to the Russian Empire of 1905-1917, where, Leopold Haimson wrote long ago, dual polarization between educated elites [*obshchestvennost'*] and the state and between educated elites and the masses threatened to topple the entire system. While this latest drama in Ukraine's history could end as comedy, farce, or tragedy, it is clear that "the people" deserve better treatment than that given to it by the pundits, the experts, and some scholars over the past five years.

#8

Was the Downing of Flight MH17 State-Sponsored Murder?

Editorial

New York Times, 19 June 2019

<https://nyti.ms/2ItnM4R>

In Vladimir Putin's Kremlin, lying — willfully, methodically, shamelessly — is the default response to any accusations of wrongdoing. Russia did not meddle in American elections. Accusations of systematic Olympic doping are malicious foreign inventions. The Novichok nerve agent killers in Salisbury, England, were there only to admire the cathedral's spire. Russia has nothing to do with the secessionists in eastern Ukraine.

Shaping reality to fit political maneuvering has a long tradition in the Kremlin, and unfortunately the practice is gaining popularity in the White House and among would-be authoritarians the world round. That makes it all the more important that institutions dedicated to the rule of law, to reliance on fact and to the primacy of truth should resolutely push back.

And that's why the murder charges announced by international prosecutors on Wednesday against three Russians and a Ukrainian over the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 five years ago, with the loss of 298 lives, are very important even if Russia refuses to surrender the suspects or acknowledge their culpability, as it will. Even if there are no defendants in the dock, Moscow's lies will be.

Russia's involvement has long been clear. A day after MH17 was shot down over Ukraine's warring eastern provinces on July 17, 2014, the United States government concluded from available evidence that the plane had been brought down by a Russian-made surface-to-air missile launched from rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine. American officials said at the time that they believed the missile battery had most likely been provided by Russia to pro-Russian separatists.

Subsequent findings by a Joint Investigation Team of prosecutors from Ukraine and four countries whose citizens perished in the disaster — the Netherlands, Malaysia, Belgium and Australia — and by private agencies like the online investigative site Bellingcat meticulously documented how a Russian missile launcher belonging to an active Russian military unit was driven into eastern Ukraine and used to fire a Buk missile at the Malaysian jumbo jet. At the time, Ukrainian separatists had been targeting government aircraft at altitudes only slightly lower than those used by commercial jetliners.

The charges announced Wednesday went beyond declaratory accusations and linked actual faces and crimes to the crash. The destruction of MH17 was not collateral damage in some nasty conflict, declared Fred Westerbeke, the chief prosecutor of the Netherlands, but murder committed by men acting on Moscow's orders in a proxy war against Ukraine. And they will be tried in a Dutch court beginning on March 9, 2020 — Dutch, because 193 of the passengers were Dutch — whether they're present or not.

The four men, for whom international arrest warrants were issued, have figured in previous reports, including intercepted telephone calls in which they discuss movements of the missile launcher and the actual missile firing. One, Igor Girkin, had been a colonel in Russia's F.S.B. spy service; two, Sergey Dubinsky and Oleg Pulatov, had served with the G.R.U. military intelligence agency; and the fourth, Leonid Kharchenko, was a Ukrainian who led a rebel combat group in Donetsk under the Russians.

The accused did not actually fire the missile, the investigators said, but they "formed a chain" linking the breakaway "Donetsk People's Republic" directly with Russia. They were

responsible for bringing the Russian missile system into eastern Ukraine, and so could be held criminally responsible for murdering 298 people.

And therefore so could Moscow. “We now have proof Russia was involved in this tragedy, this crime,” Mr. Westerbeke declared. “One day after 17 July they were in a position to tell us exactly what happened. They knew. The Buk was used in eastern Ukraine and they knew this. They didn’t give us this information.” Moscow, of course, denies it all, and will continue to act as a victim of Western intrigue, trusting that Western governments will make noise for a time and then go back to doing business with Russia.

That must not happen. These are not some political shenanigans that Moscow stands accused of; these are murders by the Kremlin’s agents in a dirty war. An open trial is how just societies judge those who violate the rule of law, and it is a response to Moscow’s crimes and lies that should have the full and public support of all law-abiding nations.

#9

Four Faces of Sviatoslav Vakarchuk, the Rockstar Running for Ukrainian Parliament

by Olena Makarenko
Euromaidan Press, 18 May 2019
<https://bit.ly/2J4gGTt>

[The latest has Vakarchuk’s party “Voice” at a little over 6 percent (8 percent in other polls), which would be sufficient for parliamentary representation –UKL]

On 16 May, Sviatoslav Vakarchuk, the famous frontman of the highly popular Ukrainian rock-band Okean Elzy, finally officially entered politics. On Thursday morning, in a picturesque corner of central Kyiv, he introduced his own political force – Holos (“the Voice” in Ukrainian).

Now, it is too early to estimate its rating. So far, political experts have polar opinions on the chances of Holos to enter Parliament, either in the regular elections in October or earlier, in case snap elections are held. But before they happen, let’s take a look at who Sviatoslav Vakarchuk is.

A singer, an opinion leader, ex-MP, and even a prophet – it’s all about him.

Vakarchuk the rockstar

The singer was born in western Ukraine in the family of the famous Lviv scientist Ivan Vakarchuk, who in 2007-2010 held the position of Minister of Education and Science and who also for many years headed the Ivan Franko Lviv University.

In 1994, Vakarchuk junior created the Okean Elzy rock band. In 1998, it released its first album and immediately rose to fame. By its 20th anniversary in June 2014, the band set a record – it gathered more than 70 thousand people at the Olympiyskyi Stadium in Kyiv. According to the press-office of the stadium, no western musician had managed to do the same. Okean Elzy can gather stadiums in other Ukrainian cities easily. It repeated the 2014 success of filling Olympiyskyi in Kyiv also in 2016 and 2018.

Its lyrics are often patriotic and sometimes even prophetic. In spring 2013, Okean Elzy released an album called Zemlia (the Land). Many songs predicted the events which happened later, during the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014, and afterwards, with the war in eastern Ukraine. For example, one song called “Stina” (the Wall) calls for an imaginary wall which exists between Ukrainians to fall down. The song Obiymy (Hug Me) says:

“The day will come when the war ends...”

His songs are motivating. Vyshyvankas (traditional Ukrainian clothing) and national flags are quite common at his concerts.

From 2013 to 2016, Vakarchuk was a judge of the famous musical TV Show “Holos Krayiny” (Ukrainian adaptation of the world format “The Voice”). The show is a product of the 1+1 channel, the same one which broadcasts all the shows of the Studio Kvartal 95 of the newly elected President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Vakarchuk the failed presidential candidate

Whether Vakarchuk will run for presidency was one of the main intrigues of the pre-campaign period in 2018. The scale of the suspense can be compared only to the intrigue of whether Zelenskyy would run or not.

“Slava [Sviatoslav] are you yes or no [going or not]? Because if you are for sure yes, or for sure no, then me too... Because if there is you and me, there are us,” these are the words from Zelenskyy’s Instagram post from June 2018. In it, he hinted that they both should run for Presidency.

The 2018 sociological polls showed Vakarchuk being supported by around 5-7% of respondents, which put him in 5th place.

However, he kept the suspense until the very last moment. At Okean Elzy’s concert at Kyiv Olympiyskyi on 24 August 2018, Ukraine’s Independence Day, all ears were tuned in to hear Vakarchuk’s important announcement. As usual, he mentioned important political topics and made a special emphasis on the need to release Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia. However the expected announcement didn’t follow. Instead people heard that the country deserves changes which start from each Ukrainian.

Still, his announcement of running for president was expected until the very last moment.

Despite Zelenskyy's Instagram post suggesting a unity between him and Vakarchuk, the rock star has been no supporter of the comedian-turned-president. Before the first round, he released a video on his YouTube-channel calling to vote "not for laughs" – a thinly veiled jab at Zelenskyy. In an earlier statement, Vakarchuk said that it is unfair to speak about the fight against oligarchs if you are connected to an oligarch yourself – hinting at Zelenskyy's ostensible connection to oligarch Ihor Kolomoyskyi.

And when it wasn't clear if he would run for presidency, Vakarchuk's political affiliation wasn't clear at all.

Some said that the sociological polls included him in his questionnaires to take the votes of Petro Poroshenko's opponents. Other journalists assumed him to be supported by Viktor Pinchuk, an oligarch, media mogul and husband of ex-president Leonid Kuchma's daughter, Mihail Fridman, a Russian oligarch and head of the supervisory board of the Alfa-Group, and the US billionaire George Soros.

Vakarchuk the future politician

On 16 May, the Social Monitoring Centre, Ukrainian Institute for Social Research, and Rating Sociological Group released the ratings of the political parties. The poll was conducted from 30 April to 10 May. According to it, these political forces would pass the needed 5% threshold and enter the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament):

Sluha Narodu – 39.9%
Opposition Platform – Za Zhyttya – 10.9%
Petro Poroshenko's Bloc Solidarnist – 10.6%
Batkivshchyna – 9.1%
Chest i Syl'a of Ihor Smeshko – 5.1%
Hromadyanska Pozitsiya of Anatolii Hrytsenko – 5%.

So far, Vakarchuk's political force gained 0.9%. But this research was conducted before the rock star announced he was entering politics.

Some experts believe his force can become the main competitor to Zelenskyy's Sluha Narodu. Others say that he was keeping the suspense and delaying his decision for such a long time that it's too late for to gain the needed support.

The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation collected some opinions.

"He had delayed his determination for too long during the presidential campaign, was unconfident, and as a result lost a big share of his rating... He can try to create a liberal-reformist power, but one should understand that the competition is very high. He will be playing on the field of the post-Maidan, pro-state electorate which already has lots of political forces. There will be Poroshenko, Tymoshenko, Hrytsenko, and

Smeshko,” estimated Oleksandr Haran, professor of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, and research director of the Democratic Initiatives Foundation.

Iryna Bekeshkina, the Head of the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, believes that Vakarchuk’s party can overcome the 5% threshold to get to the Parliament, but not by much.

“There have to be two preconditions for success: whether there will be famous and authoritative people in his team and whether he will have maximum of opportunities to appear in media,” said Bekeshkina.

Political expert Maria Zolkina does not see any chance for Vakarchuk’s party. According to her, society’s request for new faces have already been fulfilled by Zelenskyyy’s party Sluha Narodu.

On the contrary, Yuriy Solovey, an MP from the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, is confident that, having a competitive team, Vakarchuk’s force can become an alternative to the Sluha Narodu.

During the announcement on Thursday, Vakarchuk said that the list of names on the party list will appear when the campaign officially launches.

“We’re interested in principles first of all. Actually, we even have thoughts that current MPs might not be in our list, even though there are a few respectable people in the Rada whom we are interested in,” Vakarchuk said.

Vakarchuk the ex-MP

In 2007-2008, Vakarchuk had already been an MP. He got into Parliament on the list of Nasha Ukrayina-Narodna Samooborona Bloc, the political force of then President Viktor Yushchenko. At that time, he was a member of the Committee on the Freedom of Speech and Information and member of groups of inter parliamentary relations.

He hadn’t drafted any bills and submitted only two amendments, one of which was taken into consideration. In December 2018, he decided to leave the Parliament. This is how he described it at that time:

“Never-ending inter-party and intra-party disputes which those who are supposed to lead Ukraine are so concerned about, demoralize society within the country, and undermine its authority internationally. The political life of the state has narrowed to a ruthless struggle for power. Its victims are not only moral principles, but also national interests, about which politicians of all colors and camps often talk,” Vakarchuk said at that time.

In these circumstances, he said, “the only way to be yourself is to leave.”

In numerous interviews afterward, he has distanced himself from politics.

The new waves of expectations from him started appearing in society in 2017 when he went to participate in a leadership course at Stanford.

It seems that nowadays his views have changed.

#10

Unlearning the Lessons of Chernobyl

by Anne Applebaum

Washington Post, 21 June 2019

<https://wapo.st/2RxwIsV>

Five years after the Chernobyl disaster, in the summer of 1991, the last summer the Soviet Union was still in existence, I visited Ukraine. I trekked out to the 20-mile exclusion zone — it had been cleared of all people after the accident — together with some local environmental activists. We brought Geiger counters, which indeed ticked upward as we got nearer to the reactor, but not in any way that was conclusive. We also talked to a local doctor, whom I remember as not very forthcoming. Some people told us of two-headed pigs and mutated cows, but others dismissed them as rumors.

In fact, it wasn't possible to learn that much about Chernobyl when you were at Chernobyl five years after the accident. The number of deaths was disputed, even then, and it remains so now. As I wrote at the time, the official number then was 31; the scientific director of the exclusion zone thought the number was closer to 7,000; other Soviet nongovernmental organizations used much higher numbers, speculating that early deaths as a result of the accident would hit 300,000. Those figures have changed, but the range hasn't. There was no way to be certain of the fatalities then, and there still isn't now. Nobody had measured the radiation at the time of the explosion; nobody kept track of the people who had been evacuated to new homes all over the country; nobody even knew the fate of the soldiers and plant employees who had taken part in the cleanup.

Anyone who has watched HBO's recent brilliant five-part series, "Chernobyl," or read Serhii Plokyh's prize-winning 2018 book, "Chernobyl: The History of a Nuclear Catastrophe," knows that there were deeper problems, too. Layer upon layer of lies and falsehoods surrounded the accident from the beginning. First the reactor's leadership, then the Soviet leadership, covered up the explosion. Later, they tried to cover up the human errors that led to the disaster. That was why measurements were not made, assessments were not completed, victims were not informed.

In due course, the extent of the lying created a further problem: Trust in Soviet institutions — medical, scientific and political — plunged, especially in Ukraine. Rumors replaced information. Conspiracy theories replaced explanations. As a result, Chernobyl

became an important inspiration for the nascent Ukrainian independence movement; Chernobyl also persuaded the last general secretary of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, to launch his program of glasnost, or openness. He thought that if Soviet institutions began to tell the truth, other Chernobyls could be avoided, and the Soviet Union would remain intact. Instead, it melted down, too.

Although more than three decades have passed since the explosion sent waves of radiation into the atmosphere, there is now no shortage of people who want to talk about it, read about it, watch dramatizations of it. A Chernobyl fan subculture thrives online. But this is unsurprising because we live at a moment when the lessons learned from Chernobyl are being unlearned. Inside Russia, the culture of official lies has returned: There have been calls to ban the HBO series on the grounds that its portrayal of Soviet incompetence, mendaciousness and venality is somehow an insult to modern Russia and to the memory of the Soviet empire. Because national honor is more important than truth, a Russian television station, NTV, has commissioned its own series. This one will not tell the actual story, of course. Instead — surprise! — it will claim that the whole thing was the fault of the CIA.

But Russia is not the only country in which science is suspect, conspiracy theories multiply and politics is a series of coverups. In President Trump's Washington, scientific advisory panels are being cut. Environmental rules designed to protect the public from dirty air and pollution are being rolled back. Positions at environmental regulatory agencies, once held by people with scientific expertise, are now routinely held by people who come from the industries being regulated; once they are done with government service, they are almost certain to go back to those industries and reap their rewards.

Most of this happens not in secret but in silence. The president does not advertise what he is doing but instead distracts the public with his attacks on actresses and foreign mayors while he retweets conspiracy theorists. We don't live in a culture of censorship, such as the Soviet Union's; we live in a culture where there is too much information, where words are drowned out, not banned, and important ideas and events are ignored. We are lucky, very lucky, that no catastrophe, nuclear or otherwise, has yet blighted the country. Because if one does, we may discover the collapse of trust is so great that we are no longer prepared.

#11

Chernobyl: Anatomy of Disaster

by Peter Rutland

Transitions Online, 21 June 2019

<https://bit.ly/2X262GR>

Peter Rutland is a professor of government at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.

Some historical events are so momentous that the human mind finds it hard to comprehend their scale and complexity. The nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl falls into that category.

Until the hugely popular HBO/Sky TV series Chernobyl first aired, most people outside the former Eastern bloc had probably vaguely heard of Chernobyl, but few had ever pondered what exactly happened there in that spring of 1986.

The series does a tremendous service in bringing the event back into the public eye, and introducing a new generation to the risks of nuclear power and the nature of the Soviet system. A gripping drama of colossal visual power, it takes a few liberties with the truth for dramatic effect.

As someone who wrote a dissertation on the pathology of Soviet central planning, and spent months living in Moscow in 1982 and 1988, I was deeply impressed by the show's ability to convey the logic and feel of Soviet bureaucracy and daily life.

The appeal of the series comes in part because it follows a tried-and-tested Hollywood narrative formula: ordinary people face extraordinary challenges and overcome them. The viewer experiences the events through the eyes of three sympathetic central characters – scientist Valery Legasov, Deputy Prime Minister Boris Shcherbina, and a fictional physicist Ulana Khomyuk, played by Emily Watson.

Some Kremlin-friendly media have dismissed the series as American propaganda, aimed at discrediting the Soviet past or undermining Russian efforts to export nuclear reactor technology. Director Aleksei Muradov, fresh from shooting a 12-part spy drama about Chernobyl which will air on the major Russian network NTV later this year, dismisses the HBO film as full of Cold War cliches, and compares it to the 1988 film Red Heat, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a Russian police officer.

Chernobyl writer Chris Mazin explained in an interview that “the villain in this story is the Soviet system. But the hero of this story, collectively, are the Soviet people. I hope that they find pride in watching this.” His hopes seem to have been realized: most responses in Russian newspapers and social media are strongly positive. For example,

Vladimir Mikhailov, a chemical warfare reservist from Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, who was drafted in to help with the clean-up, says that the series rings true, notwithstanding a few departures from the factual record. Major General Nikolai Tarakanov, the head of the civil defense response, told RT that he liked the way his character was portrayed in the film. Some Russians have expressed their embarrassment that it took a British-American film crew not only to tell the story but also to extol the heroism of ordinary firemen, residents, and soldiers.

Bravery and Hubris

While the film effectively blames the Soviet system for the disaster, in portraying the heroism of many individuals willing to sacrifice themselves for the common good, it also (perhaps unwittingly) reinforces one of the central tenets of the Soviet regime. The same gargantuan state which caused the accident by building an unstable reactor in the first place was also able to mobilize the resources to contain its effects. Eighty heavy-lift helicopters were available within 24 hours, and 600,000 soldiers and workers were drafted in to carry out the containment and cleanup operations. This “positive” side of the Soviet leviathan is represented by the figure of Shcherbina, played by Stellan Skarsgard.

We now know that many of the efforts to extinguish the fire and prevent another explosion were brave, but ineffective – the vast majority of the material dropped by the helicopters missed the core, and the fire burned itself out before it reached the refrigeration chamber built by the miners.

The film also shows how the Soviet bureaucracy tried to suppress news of the accident and – crucially – delayed evacuating the nearby city of Pripjat for 36 hours, exposing its 35,000 residents to potentially lethal doses of radiation. One episode that the film does not recreate is the official May Day parade that went ahead in Kyiv, just 100 kilometers away, five days after the explosion – a decision for which Mikhail Gorbachev must bear responsibility. In a few hours, some people may have received a dose of radiation dozens of times higher than the maximum annual limit for nuclear workers.

The accident was a result of human error and a fatal combination of arrogance and ignorance – but also systemic flaws. These included both problems in the design of the reactor and structural pathologies of the Soviet system, such as the pressure to meet plan targets and unwillingness to question orders. The Soviet state preferred to have giant plants (because they were easier to plan), but building reactors that were 20 times the size of a U.S. reactor made it harder to control the fission processes within the core, and meant that once an accident did occur it would be even more terrible.

In a climate of pervasive secrecy, the operators in the control room had not been informed about previous accidents at RBMK-type reactors, including one at the Chernobyl no. 4 unit itself. There was no way that the operators could have known that pushing the emergency shutdown button might cause the reactor to explode. These design flaws to some degree exculpate the main “villain” of the piece, deputy chief engineer Anatoly Dyatlov, who

pushed ahead with a scheduled test of the backup power system, in violation of some of the protocols. The authorities covered up the design flaws and blamed the accident on human error, sentencing three of the engineers to long jail terms. This explanation was accepted by most of the international community, including the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Explaining how a nuclear reactor works and why the RBMK reactors installed at Chernobyl were inherently unstable is no easy matter. Indeed, one of the main lessons of the HBO film is that this technology is so complex, and so powerful, that it is beyond humanity's ability to understand and control all of its ramifications. But in a brilliantly scripted speech in the final courtroom episode, Legasov (Jared Harris) succinctly explains why the reactor melted down, with use of a hokey visual aid. Pop scientist Scott Manley argues that "The TV show is better than practically any documentary I have seen on the subject" (and check out his video if you want to learn more about xenon poisoning and the positive void coefficient).

Why Chernobyl Still Matters

The success of the series is all the more remarkable given that neither the writer nor the director had any background in historical or documentary film. Mazin was a comedy screenwriter and the Swedish Johan Renck was a former rock star and music video producer who directed three episodes of the hit TV show *Breaking Bad* (showing a penchant for the dark side). Mazin was inspired by the interviews with survivors in the book *Voices of Chernobyl*, by Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich, and she has praised the series.

Two important new books on the Chernobyl disaster, by journalist Andrew Higginbotham and Harvard historian Serhii Ploky, came out too late to be used by Mazin, but they are invaluable for viewers who want to learn more. Ploky puts the accident into its historical context, while Higginbotham digs deeper into the human tragedy. For example, Higginbotham relates that Leonid Toptunov, the 25-year-old control panel engineer, did not get any sleep during the day before the explosion because his son was sick and his wife had to go to work. He went back to the plant for the night shift having been awake for 36 hours. At 1:30 a.m., during the safety test, he failed to set the correct power level and the system defaulted to zero. These details did not make it into the TV series.

Ploky has said about the HBO film that "it's probably as close as anyone ever got to the reality of Chernobyl," though Higginbotham has cautioned that "there is a lot of fictionalization and exaggeration for dramatic effect."

Some of the initial reviews in the Western press were skeptical, criticizing relatively trivial aspects such as the use of actors speaking British-accented English. The *New York Times* television reviewer dismissed the show as a "reductionist" and "melodramatic" disaster movie; one of the paper's science writers picked at the factual errors. For

example, the real Legasov did not give a speech in the trial denouncing the Soviet system, and he never uttered the phrase “What is the cost of lies?” that Mazin sees as the show’s motto.

The explosion at Chernobyl’s no. 4 reactor released 400 times more radiation than the Hiroshima atom bomb, and 10 times more than the Fukushima accident. Officially, only 31 people died as a direct result of the explosion, but the real number will never be known in consequence of the official efforts to suppress data collection.

The accident spawned a new genre of “Chernobyl literature,” with many of the liquidators writing memoirs to capture their life-changing experiences. The best Russian cinematic treatment is the 2011 movie *Innocent Saturday* by Alexander Mindadze: most of the film depicts the 16 weddings that took place in Pripyat on the day after the explosion. There are a number of popular video games set in the evacuated zone, and they have contributed to the boom in international tourism to the location, with 100,000 visitors expected this year. The Chernobyl disaster is no laughing matter, though memes are helping viewers process the enormity of its implications.

Chernobyl was a political and psychological turning point. Soviet citizens became more afraid of a nuclear accident than they were of the KGB. The accident accelerated Gorbachev’s policy of glasnost or press openness. That led to an upsurge of political mobilization (especially in the Baltic states and the Caucasus) which culminated in the collapse of the Soviet Union just five years later.

The HBO series will enter the select group of films that indelibly captured an event and themselves became part of history, such as NBC’s *Holocaust* series (1978), which had a profound impact in both the United States and Germany, and ABC’s *The Day After* (1983), about nuclear war. For Russia, the closest equivalent would probably be Sergei Eisenstein’s patriotic blockbuster *Alexander Nevsky*, which established the medieval prince as Russia’s all-time hero.

#12

The Orthodox Churches in Ukraine in the Wake of the Election Campaign

by Regina Elsner

ZoiS Spotlight, 29 May 2019

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

Securing recognition for an independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine was a key issue in Petro Poroshenko’s election campaign. When Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presented the tomos of autocephaly – the decree of ecclesial independence – to the new Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) in Istanbul on 6 January 2019, this was celebrated by

many of the faithful, the President himself and indeed by many non-believers as a historic event in Ukraine's journey as an independent nation.

But as Poroshenko's defeat in the April 2019 election showed, this achievement had no impact on voter opinion. The election result made it clear that Ukrainian society would not be manipulated by the politicisation of the faith issue and that the prevailing mood was one of disillusionment with the slow progress of social and economic reforms. In fact, the massive politicisation of the issue over previous months did the new Church no favours at all, for rather than building unity, it precipitated a deep crisis in world Orthodoxy. Recognition of the OCU by the universal Church is likely to take several years and involve difficult negotiations on matters of theology and church politics. In Ukraine, two permanent Orthodox Church structures will henceforth exist. Soon after the election, the incoming President Volodimir Zelenski met with representatives of all the faith communities and made it clear that he had no interest in continuing the politico-religious conflict. Criticised on social media for his failure to attend church for the Orthodox Easter celebrations, he retorted: "Don't look for me in church – look for God!" For the churches themselves, the end of politicisation has various implications.

UOC: Local harassment subsides

Several representatives of the Department of External Church Relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which is affiliated to the Moscow Patriarchate, have confirmed during interviews with the author that while local authorities had been exerting considerable pressure in recent weeks in an effort to persuade as many parishes as possible to join the new Church, this is already noticeably subsiding. Previously, as many as five cases of direct or indirect harassment of local parishes were reported each week, but these are now isolated incidents. In most of the 500 or so localities where parishes have joined the new Church, part of the congregation is still loyal to the UOC, meaning that in practical terms, the total number of UOC parishes has scarcely decreased. Numerous lawsuits relating to illegal "occupations" of churches and parish rooms are being processed, and recent news reports indicate that the local courts are now less zealous in proceeding against the UOC: here too, it seems that the pressure from above is subsiding. The legal process of renaming the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to include a clear reference to its affiliation with the Russian Orthodox Church has been halted for now by a first-instance court as it conflicts with the principles of religious freedom. And believers hope that daily life will become a little easier if there is less polarisation and less public discussion of the issue of religious affiliation. Students, for example, had reported that they deliberately kept quiet about which church they belonged to in order to avoid stigmatisation. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of a "persecuted church" that has become entrenched in recent months also blocks any self-critical appraisal of the pastoral and ethical failings that have led to a large-scale loss of trust and confidence within Ukrainian society.

OCU: A focus on internal challenges

With the end of political support and instrumentalisation, the OCU now needs to focus on its own internal development. In fact, the new Church faces immense challenges. First and foremost, it must attempt to integrate highly diverse groups which, for decades, have regarded one another as heretics. These largely emotional misgivings are reinforced by the lack of clarity, under canon law, concerning the validity of the ordination of priests and bishops in the previously unrecognised churches. There are also delays in the registration of new parishes and dioceses, caused not only by administrative issues but also by widespread mistrust among priests and parishes and the reluctance to submit to a structure previously regarded as hostile.

The “Group of Ten Theses for the Orthodox Church of Ukraine” is an initiative group of intellectuals who switched from the UOC to the OCU and are keen to share their proposals on its future agenda. They face a challenge, however: their progressive theological ideas conflict with the institutional limitations of the new Church. There is a sense of disillusionment among group members at the OCU’s entrenched hierarchies, although they recognise that it offers more freedom than the UOC. Conflict may also be brewing over the issue of church leadership, with Metropolitan Epiphanius elected as primate of the Church and Filaret designated “honorary Patriarch”. The latter is attempting to hold on to his leadership role and assert his influence through a show of power. In mid-May, he caused uproar with his call for the statutes of the new Church to be amended to bolster his position of power, contrary to the provisions of the tomos. It is a testament to the maturity of the Ukrainian believers and bishops that they showed their unequivocal solidarity with Metropolitan Epiphanius and rejected Filaret’s demands. An escalation of this power dispute would discredit the OCU in the eyes of the faithful and make it more difficult to secure recognition from the rest of world Orthodoxy.

Overshadowed by the church conflict

The calm after the storm of the election campaign shifts attention to two other issues. Firstly, the churches are at risk of developing the same amnesia about the Eastern Ukrainian territories as society at large. “No one needs us,” says a priest from the “Grey Zone”: as he sees it, neither the old nor the new church structure is a source of genuine support for the people of Eastern Ukraine. But if even the churches have no interest in forging a bond of solidarity with the people of Eastern Ukraine, it will be increasingly difficult to achieve mutual understanding and reconciliation within Ukrainian society. Meanwhile, overshadowed by the conflict within Orthodoxy, numerous Protestant churches, an “All-Ukrainian Council” led by Oleksandr Turchynov and the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches chaired by the numerically small Roman Catholic Church have, in recent months, called for a stronger focus on so-called traditional family values. It is likely that against the backdrop of European integration and the Istanbul Convention – a yet-to-be-ratified Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – no effort will be spared to progress this issue as a “true Ukrainian” counter-strategy not only to the imperialist Russian variant but also to liberal European values. However, there is plenty of evidence from elsewhere in Europe that the concept of “traditional values” is unlikely to promote unity and reconciliation in a pluralist society and more likely to increase the lack of trust towards the churches.

How Did Members of the Rada Discuss Ukrainianization?

by Nicholas James

Vox Ukraine, 18 June 2019

<https://bit.ly/2Lf6tX7>

[The footnotes appear in the online version –UKL]

Ethnicity and language are among the most apparent obstacles for nation-building in Ukraine due to its multiethnic and multilingual character. Kulyk notes that contradictory policies during the Soviet period produced a wide discrepancy between identity and language practice. This discrepancy remains in place today. For instance, a 2017 Razumkov Center survey finds a discrepancy in ethnolinguistic identities between Ukrainophone and Russophone (only Russian-speaking) Ukrainians: 92% of the population self-identify as “ethnic” Ukrainian, yet only 72.2% speak Ukrainian as a mother-tongue.

Discrepancies between national attachment, ethnicity, and language introduce normative issues which have surfaced in salient political debates on language policy such as the repeal of the largely sardonic Kivalov-Kolesnichenko regional languages law, and Poroshenko’s signing of the new Law on Education. Ironically, while attempting to create a European-style nation-state framework, the latter law has alienated Ukraine’s European neighbors who have shown concern for their national minorities residing in the country. However, this should be considered alongside regional elites’ cynical self-legitimation strategies for domestic politics.

All of this languages policy posturing may be unnecessary because the events of the past five years have influenced much of the Russophone population to opt in using more Ukrainian rather than speaking their mother-tongue. Policy-makers and Western establishment should be acutely aware of these dynamics when crafting and analyzing policies, mainly because configurations of these identities are strong predictors of political attitudes.

The language of educational instruction is a vital instrument of national development: it helps facilitate communication between citizens and the state. It also can help create a common framework for citizens to act as co-equals in the marketplace of ideas, culture, and society.

Importantly, policy-makers themselves have been underexplored regarding identity dynamics, and their influence on policy is still yet to be fully understood. Analyzing the development of the new Law on Education may clarify lawmakers’ visions for Ukraine regarding language and ethnicity, and the extent to which these beliefs shape substantive

reforms. However, the context which these policymakers are in, is extremely specific and their words can only help describe this context (i.e., education policy) rather than generalize on the entire Rada policy community.

Methods, Data, and Theory

I first collected data by web-scrawling round tables and hearings which discussed the Law on Education (2015-2017) on the Rada Committee on Education and Science (KNO) website. In total there were three texts from the time period that were large enough to warrant further analysis and which only discussed the Law on Education. The texts averaged 23,900 words each, and the final corpus included 71,700 words. The meetings averaged 140 minutes and 23 speakers. The data was compiled into three separate text documents, and then organized and prepared for machine-learning analysis and hand-coding discourse analysis. Select sections are translated by me into English for this article.

It is not easy to understand the exact meanings of this massive amount of words and information. So, I employ a machine-learning algorithm to cluster these words into similar topics. Topic modeling (via latent Dirichlet allocation) assumes that documents consist of a mixture of topics and that these topics consist of high frequencies of particular words. It clusters these words into similar topics and reports the frequencies of words per topic and of topic per document. This technique is excellent for clustering textual data and for classifying legislative discourse by topics. Clustering topics in legislative discourse helps establish what policymakers are latently discussing in a given text.

Topic modeling helps establish the given topics of a text, but it cannot distinguish between semantic devices nor can it analyze rhetoric. Instead, discourse analysis is then used to go further into the texts and qualitatively analyze these clusters by giving a personal evaluation on the structure of policymakers' rhetorical devices. The analysis explores different categories of semantic devices pertinent to identity construction: contents of speech, discursive strategies which underlay rhetoric, and the dialectical means in which a strategy is used.

Results and Analysis

The topic model found six main topics. Tracing the probabilities of these topics by year shows essential shifts in the discourse. 2015 saw the highest mixture between topics with the conversation centered on education in general, opinions, standards, and the law itself. 2016 focused chiefly on the new Law on Education as well as funding and standards. Yet, the discussion on minorities occurs only in 2017. The graph below highlights these results by comparing topic probabilities by year.

With this rough road map, we can begin to analyze national understandings as well as legitimate aspirations and fears within the policy-making community. Across the three years, the discourse analysis qualitatively identified three particularly salient contents

spread across each topic except for funding: European integration, ethnocultural criteria of national membership, and an idea that Ukraine is (and should be) the modern Western frontier against the unmodern east and Russian aggression. These contents can be thought of as “conversations” within the topics outlined above, and they underscore how policy framing appropriates each topic differently.

2015: Europe, Democracy, Modernity

In 2015, the emphasis of the discourse surrounded Europeanization, modernization, and democracy. For instance, one committee member states that the education system should respond to the needs of a modern European Ukraine, a democratic Ukraine, and Ukraine in the war. Lawmakers express the need to integrate with Europe in terms of modernizing pedagogical standards. Moreover, there is a sense of civic duty and nationhood found among the speakers. When talking about educational standards, policymakers evoke civic duty and nationhood as a core value for the educational system:

“Therefore, the Law on Education should clearly state the need for the formation of value orientations, valuable skills, a new culture in the educational sphere and, most importantly, the formation of a Ukrainian identity of citizens and should reflect their European affiliations and promote understanding of this belonging” (Rada KNO 2015 [Vasyl Hryhorovych Kremen]).

There is also an intense focus on building a modern European Ukraine and for constructing a future which is different from the present. At the same time, however, there are typical nationalistic appeals to the past to justify present policy positions insofar as a nationalized history is used to promote policies of the present especially when policymakers discuss education in general or their opinions on education:

“Ukrainian education also has its peculiarities; its legal norms were laid down in the collection of ‘Ruska Pravda’ by Yaroslav the Wise and Volodymyr Monomakh’s writings. Therefore, on the one hand, we need to preserve the foundations of national education, and on the other to integrate with the world, perhaps even bring to the European educational system our pedagogical heritage” (Rada KNO 2015 [Leonid Vasylovych Gubersky]).

This quote reveals a discursive strategy which perpetuates national mythologized histories and justifies the need to create a Ukrainian education system in the interest of maintaining tradition and innovation. 2015 opens the window of opportunity for the debate on education to widen from increasing the standards of education into the Europeanization of the standards of education.

2016: Civilizational War

Rather than focus on standards and education in general, in 2016, policymakers focus more on the wording of the law itself and the Russian threat. These constructions took

on a literal Huntingtonian form with a member quoting from Clash of Civilizations while giving an opinion on the general state of Education:

“When I read this book, I had in my hands the book of ‘Ukraine and Russia’, and it was written in black and white that we are different, but there will never be war. But the ink has not dried, and the war has begun” (Rada KNO 2016 [Ivan Hryhorovych Kyrylenko]).

This sort of discursive strategy implicitly compares Ukraine to Russia and by considering Russian civilization as threatening to Ukraine’s national identity rather than the Russian state. The speaker is rhetorically warning against Russian aggression and the need for Ukrainian sovereignty. Interestingly, none of the discourses in 2016 see the European Union as a force of globalization poised to pool Ukrainian sovereignty. Therefore, the law is implicitly about a heightened need for security vis-a-vis the Russian state rather than specifically maintaining national identity as such: lawmakers see European institutions as essential for establishing substantive sovereignty.

2017: Patriotism, Fear, and Language

The discursive constructions found in 2017 shift the focus from the eastern Other onto Ukraine and its minorities. The majority-minority question becomes particularly salient and policymakers begin to more explicitly address the place of national minorities rather than generalized calls for homogeneity.

“We have the Ukrainian state, and in our country the only [state] language is Ukrainian. There can be no other [state] languages. We do not want to sow further separatism in the future as the misunderstandings of the past 25 years have since as the honorable chairman of the committee has said, there are schools in the previous 25 years that prepare students who, after graduation, do not speak Ukrainian” (Rada KNO 2017 [Oleh Stepanovich Musiy]).

This straddles the line between ethnic and civic nation-building. On the one hand it stresses an ethnolinguistic Ukrainian identity as essential for the functioning of the state, and on the other hand, it treats Russophones as co-citizens who are in a vulnerable position and ripe for exploitation. The example above may be problematic insofar as it reduces non-Ukrainophones as persons susceptible to foreign influence (e.g., because they are not Ukrainian). However, this rhetoric diverges from the reality that Russophones have only become more Ukrainian after the war. This divergence calls to attention the complexities of civic nation-building. One such issue is that policy-makers who tacitly aspire to produce integrative policies may endorse homogenizing policies in the name of state harmony. These policies can be problematic in multi-ethnic and multilingual contexts, and often drive tensions among minorities’ “national homelands.”

Further examples illustrate the nuance of how discursive strategies to build a civic conception of Ukraine use destructive language:

“I absolutely consider the situation unacceptable, especially in the minority schools of other groups; other language groups, like Hungarian, for example, the minority children, earning state-financed education, at the end of school cannot speak Ukrainian” (Rada KNO 2017 [Liliia Mykhailivna Hrynevych]).

Here, even minority language groups which are not Russophone are considered somehow contra-Ukrainian since they cannot ‘contribute’ to the functioning of society or government in the same language. This is a shift in the discourse away from the Russian threat and against the Other within. This strategy seeks to detract from other groups’ legitimacy within the polity by presupposing a national difference between them and Ukrainians which legitimizes an ethnolinguistic version of Ukrainian identity.

Speakers also express surprise at dissenting deputies:

“Ukraine always provides everything to everyone. And will she provide the Ukrainian language to Ukrainians, please tell me, dear people’s deputy?” (Rada KNO 2017 [O. S. Musiy]).

“...The right of national minorities to learn their native language, but not to replace the Ukrainian state language with their native language” (Rada KNO 2017 [V. H. Kremen]). The speakers place primacy on Ukrainian through portraying other groups’ languages as somehow foreign and thus native to different nationalities. Policy-makers here seem to be conflating language practice, ethnicity, and nationality.

2017 also saw the return of Eurocentric language. However, some of the rhetoric blends Europeanization with “patriotic” elements when talking about educational standards: “The core idea is a competitive, modern patriot and innovator, a well-developed personality who will build a modern European Ukraine. This is the key idea of this bill” (Rada KNO 2017 [L. M. Hrynevych]).

This all points to an apparent shift in rhetoric and discourse. While this quote underscores civic elements of a Ukrainian nation (e.g., patriotic love for the state and European ideals) it also infuses Ukrainophone patriotism a necessary requisite of a European Ukraine. All of which paints a complex portrait of civic nation-building in Ukraine. On the one hand, policymakers are keen to promote a nation which is competitive, integrative, European, and “modern,” but on the other hand, ethnic and linguistic identities and linguistic practices are viewed and acted on in ethno-nationalistic terms since policymakers often conflate ethnic, national, and linguistic identities. Therefore, nation-building in Ukraine fluctuates between ethnolinguistic demarcations and hopeful Europeanization efforts.

Further Analysis: Concluding Thoughts

The topics which policymakers discuss indicate that Ukrainian education policy runs deeper than ethnic divisions. The machine-learning algorithm detected a change

in topic from a mix of standards, opinions, and education in general to the subject of national minorities, and the nation-building rhetoric seems to have qualitatively changed alongside this trend. Even when they use language which is essentializing and destructive, lawmakers focus on creating a Ukrainian civic identity much in the classical French fashion: the nation as a daily voluntary act or plebiscite of memories and amnesia. Policymakers, thus expect to build a unitary and centralized nation-state, which depends—much like in the historical French fashion—in part on a shared language of prestige. In this view, non-Ukrainophones need to adopt the common linguistic framework of Ukraine while limiting their own mother-tongue usage in state contexts. The rhetoric between 2015-2017 shows that a modern European Ukraine is contrasted against the eastern and unmodern, which is a result of policymakers acute awareness of interstate politics: a security crisis underpins their perspective.

The shift from gradual to radical Ukrainization (at least in parliamentary discourse pertaining to education) is the result of two overarching themes: a security threat and need for national unity, and the desire to join the European community. Policymakers generally follow trends in the polity regarding national identification but need to be wary of the pitfalls of populist ethnonationalism. This sort of patriotism rejects other realities of Ukraine which include rich sources of culture, information, and dialogue across a multitude of languages and histories. Donald Tusk's recent speech commemorating the fifth year since Euromaidan states just that: beware of populist nationalism and embrace the civic identity of Ukraine which makes it a part of the European community. In the face of a rising language of prestige, educational reform, and long-term conflict with a larger nuclear neighbor, Ukraine must trust in its citizenry and dispel the balancing act between ethnic and civic Ukrainization.

#14

The Last Donbas Outpost

What Do Residents of Mariupol Think About European Integration

By Tetiana Levoniuk

New Europe Center, 14 June 2019

<https://bit.ly/2X6ll0Z>

[The footnotes appear in the online version –UKL]

The East of Ukraine has traditionally been one of the most euroskeptic regions of the country. Five years after Euromaidan and the beginning of Russian aggression, the number of supporters of the pro-European agenda has not changed significantly. For instance, in 2013, 18.4% of the respondents in the East supported the accession to the EU, while by 2019, the level of support for the accession to the EU amounted to 25%. Moreover, while the capital is focused on its own agenda, the views of the residents of the regions still remain far from Kyiv's attention.

According to a poll conducted by GfK Ukraine at the request of the New Europe Center, 54% of Ukrainians agreed on the need to continue the European integration processes in Ukraine. Ukrainians are aware of the expediency of reforms in the country, even without the prospect of membership in the European Union. However, in the East of Ukraine, less residents agree with this statement (slightly over 30%). By the way, in the East, only 9% of the respondents feel a positive effect of Ukraine's rapprochement with the EU, and this figure is twice as low as the nationwide one.

This paper, prepared on the basis of a public discussion held in Mariupol, as well as a series of interviews with representatives of the local community, analyzes the political, security, and economic aspects of the development of Donetsk region in the context of the European integration. However, it should be noted that the residents of Mariupol have their own peculiarities in terms of the attitude toward political and economic processes in Ukraine and also perceive themselves as part of the Azov, not the Donetsk region.

This perception exists partly due to the fact that there was competition for leadership between Mariupol and Donetsk historically. Local residents can complain that Mariupol has been financially deprived for a long time since the funds have been directed to the regional center. As the residents of Mariupol believe, while Donetsk was being built, their city has been degrading.

Attitudes Towards the EU

The East and South of Ukraine are the most skeptical about the reforms and the European integration, even after Ukraine managed to contain Russia's offensive and start a series of reforms. Half of the residents of Donetsk region do not consider Russia as an aggressor (according to a research conducted by the sociological group Rating, the actions of Moscow are considered as aggression by 32% of respondents).

According to the same research, 48% of Donetsk region's residents would vote against Ukraine's accession to the EU at a possible referendum. These figures, as we see, actually coincide with the level of assessment of the aggressive actions of Russia. At the same time, there is a fairly high number of those who share a neutral position. When choosing among the three foreign-policy options/directions, only 22% of the residents of the region prefer the European Union, 21% support the Customs Union, and the largest group (42%) consists of those who stand for the equidistance from both the EU and Russia. Our previous researches conducted in Kharkiv, Odesa, and Kherson have already drawn attention to the numerous "neutralists" that either actually remain within an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty or represent latent pro-Russian attitudes.

It is possible that the poll did not take into account all the nuances at the local level; perhaps, a sociological research in Mariupol itself would be somewhat different from the regionwide figures. Although the observations of leaders of public opinion in Mariupol are based on the conclusion that in the last five years, the number of supporters of the pro-

Russian vector has not changed significantly, as well as the number of those who support the European integration.

In Mariupol, a single political force is dominating, and the city administration consists of former employees of Metinvest, an international mining and metal production group. The structure of the group includes mining and metallurgical enterprises in Ukraine, Europe, and the USA. Six of the eight Deputies of the Mayor of Mariupol, including the Mayor himself, had previously collaborated with Metinvest. In general, Mariupol is currently called Rinat Akhmetov's political and economic turf. There is also an impact on the media space of the city: most of the local media outlets are owned by Metinvest.

In the Transparency International's Transparent Cities Rating of November 11, 2018, Mariupol took 2nd place among the 100 largest cities of Ukraine. The report notes that reporting at the local level has become transparent, and the level of trust of foreign donors to local administrations is increasing.

In Mariupol, as well as in Kharkiv or Odesa, there is a lack of visual marking of projects and accomplishments achieved through EU funding; thus, the improvements are often perceived as deeds of local administrations and individuals. A successful example of effective communication is three trolleybuses donated to Mariupol marked with the symbols of the European Union.

After the beginning of Russian aggression, Mariupol, like Kramatorsk, turned into one of the "political tourism" destinations often visited by foreign delegations (foreign diplomats sadly dub this phenomenon as "a kind of safari"). In this sense, another city of the Azov region, Berdyansk, can be considered a forgotten one.

The Role of the Community

After 2014, a relatively influential core of public activists has been formed. At the same time, local civil society is generally disparate.

According to the results of the European Union Anti-corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI), in 2019, the actual number of active operational civil society organizations (CSOs) in 5 cities of Ukraine, including Mariupol, differs significantly from the total number of registered ones. For example, 650 CSOs have been registered in Mariupol but only several dozen can be considered active at the best.

For instance, the Skhidna Brama (Eastern Gate) NGO has been a volunteer center that helped military personnel with supplies since 2014. In addition, it had conducted a series of mediation and negotiation master classes, has been a partner of the Kyiv Dialogue project, etc.

The Mariupol Development Fund, in its turn, is the only organization that cooperates with donors and the city administration to implement infrastructure projects. Certain public

activists criticize this organization for excessive dependence on local authorities, but the Fund itself considers such criticism unsubstantiated.

Our interlocutors in Mariupol cited a case of March this year as an example of an effective community engagement. Mariupol authorities decided to disassemble a kiosk-cafe owned by an ATO veteran. After a sharp community reaction, the authorities quickly solved the problem by finding an alternative location for the kiosk. It should be noted that the majority of such cases are being put to the discussion on Facebook, which allows the activists communicate local problems outside of Mariupol and attract attention.

Representatives of civil organizations emphasize a number of challenges for the development of the city: in particular, they favor discussing reconstruction projects and creating venues for the CSOs to communicate with each other and with other organizations and city authorities.

Representatives of local authorities emphasize in their public speeches the importance of adherence to the standards of accountability and transparency in the context of the European integration. There is an understanding that openness is a guarantee of trust both from the city's residents and investors who could invest in the region. Local opinion leaders consider decentralization a positive phenomenon: as a result of it, the local budget has increased (UAH 5.04 billion as of 2018). Representatives of the public also consider the possibility of influencing individual lines of the budget ("participation budget") a positive sign. However, the opponents of the authorities also criticize them: they claim that an increase in the budget is a real chance for the city to develop, but also a chance for the rise of corruption according to one of the residents, "now the money will settle in the pockets of local authorities, not in Kyiv") The active part of the city residents shows a considerable level of distrust toward the actions of the city leadership.

The environmental situation in Mariupol is another problem that causes waves of protests (in 2012, one of the demonstrations has been attended by more than 10 thousand people). According to the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, in 2017, two Mariupol-based companies have been included into the list of top 10 air pollutants: Ilyich Iron and Steel Works and Azovstal. By the way, the local community already has a solid experience of "environmental friendliness enforcement" imposed on industrial giants. For example, environmental activist and city council deputy Maksym Borodin had purchased equipment to measure air pollution not only for Mariupol, but also for a number of other cities. The protection of the environment could become one of the key components of the European integration process in Mariupol.

Elections and the EU

The European integration has not become a part of the agenda of the presidential campaign in the region (the Opposition Bloc, with its critical attitude toward the EU, enjoys the highest level of support here). Among the local deputies, the Opposition Bloc

dominates (45 mandates), while the rest of the seats is occupied by the representatives of Nash Krai (Our Land) and Syla Liudei (People's Power).

For the local residents, the problem of resolving the conflict in the East is more urgent than the European integration. Thus, political forces that promote the idea of "compromise" can gain more electoral points.

It is interesting to compare the electoral situation in Mariupol. For example, in 2014, the voting turnout in the presidential election was as low as 15% (at that time there were significant problems with the organization of elections in Donbas caused by the aggression of Russia), while this year the respective figure was almost 60%. Five years ago, Petro Poroshenko had won in Mariupol (with 38% support). This year, the first round has been won by Yuriy Boyko with a slight advantage (30%). Volodymyr Zelensky has taken the second position, having received two percent less. It should be also noted that Oleksandr Vilkul received 20% support. It is obvious that the electorate of Boyko and Vilkul (in general, 50%) is unlikely to be attracted to the intensive advancement of the pro-European course. Petro Poroshenko received only 6% of the votes of Mariupol residents this time.

In the second round, 90% of the residents of Mariupol supported Volodymyr Zelensky[20]. These results allow us to predict the outcome of the parliamentary elections: the majority of the residents of Mariupol will vote for the parties that do not prioritize the European integration.

Security and Support of the EU

Mariupol is often called the last outpost of Donbas. This city has a strategic value and is a potential showcase, which in the long run may be attractive to the residents of the occupied territories if they see positive changes in the neighboring region.

A certain part of local population still lives in the Russian information field: Russian TV channels are still broadcast in half of the territory of the Donetsk region, and Ukrainian television is not available in many areas. Moreover, sometimes even Ukrainian mass media resort to manipulations, accusing the activists of attracting attention to issues beneficial to Russia (such as increase of public transport fares).

After Russia's aggression against Ukrainian ships, Mariupol found itself at the center of global attention. The European Union Mission, led by Thomas Mayr-Harting, Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia in the European External Action Service, and Peter Wagner, Director of the European Commission's Support Group for Ukraine, arrived in Mariupol to study the situation in the region this winter. Subsequently, EU Foreign Ministers approved a package of assistance for the region, including 10 strategic projects (effectively, it combined the already existing EU initiatives). The city itself knew little about the approved package, which underlines the importance of an appropriate communication. It should be emphasized that the EU will probably be practicing a kind of more decentralized approach to cooperation with Ukraine in the future, as it is

expected that the implementation of projects at the regional level will be more visible and perceptible to the ordinary Ukrainians.

The demonstration of political solidarity with Ukraine in general and the Azov region in particular against the backdrop of Russia's aggressive policy in the region is an important security factor. Western diplomats note that Russian diplomacy is showing increasing interest in any visit of a Western politician to the region. Such visits or the activities of long-term diplomatic missions involving representatives of the West is one of the possible safeguards against the aggressive actions of Russia. However, it should be taken into account that the EU avoids supporting any projects related to security or law enforcement. Instead, the EU countries predominantly prefer implementing infrastructure projects. A vivid example is a French loan of EUR 64 million to build a modern water purification and decontamination complex in Mariupol.

The representatives of the previous government expressed the hope that Western countries (referring to the NATO) would provide their observers to be on board of Ukrainian military vessels passing through the Kerch Strait to the Azov ports. Such an idea needs further development under the new President.

Economy and Infrastructure

Despite security, humanitarian, and environmental challenges facing the Donetsk region, it still manages to keep pace with others in terms of exports to the EU. During 2018, the subjects of the economic activity in the region had carried out international economic operations with partners from 125 countries. The main markets for the goods of the region's businesses were the EU states (50.4% of total exports), the CIS (16.6%), Asia (15.9%), America (11.1%), and Africa (5.4%) Among the most significant trade partners for the export of goods in 2018, were the following countries: Italy (25.6% of total exports), the Russian Federation (12.5%), the USA (9.4%), Poland (6.7%), and Turkey (6.6%). The largest imports of goods came from the Russian Federation (31.4% of the total imports of the region), the USA (32.9%), Canada (6.2%), China (5.2%), Germany (3.8%), the Czech Republic (2.9%), and Kazakhstan (1.8%).

First and foremost, Mariupol is associated with the metallurgical industry. The share of metallurgy export products in the international trade turnover is about 70%. Over 50 countries purchase products of Mariupol-based metal and iron works.

According to official data, the level of registered unemployment in Mariupol is low (4.5 thousand persons last year)[24]. However, there is a considerable number of those who do not register at the Employment Center: according to local respondents, low wages force the most active citizens leave the city and to move to either larger Ukrainian cities or abroad. The EU-funded investments in new production pipelines and business conditions, for instance, through the EU-funded business incubators, and project banks for investors are among the scenarios anticipated by a part of the residents of Mariupol.

Within the framework of the EU EU4Business program, an agreement has been signed between the EU and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to establish 15 support centers for small and medium business in the regions of Ukraine. The first of such centers have been opened in Lviv, Kyiv, Odesa, etc. to a larger extent through local chambers of commerce. Such a center exists in Kramatorsk; therefore, it is possible to open a virtual office in Mariupol through Kramatorsk (given that the EBRD does not fund projects within 30 km in the military zone, which includes Mariupol). On the other hand, this example also illustrates the problem of shifting responsibility. Both local business and the state authorities are hoping for donors and sometimes lack their own lead.

In 2018, the share of small and medium businesses (SMEs) in the total tax revenues to the city budget amounted to 598 million. The number of SMEs in Mariupol is gradually increasing (in the 4th quarter of 2018, the number of SMEs exceeded the respective figure of the 1st quarter of 2017 by 12%); however, Mariupol still lags behind the nationwide average number of SMEs per 100,000 population (as of 2017).

The development of better transport links with the EU could also affect the perception of the European integration. However, it should be noted that 80% of the population of the Donetsk region had never left the region, while some had never even left their home city.

The development of infrastructure, particularly railways, autoroutes, and, possibly, air links between Mariupol and the rest of Ukraine should be one of the important objectives. The residents of Mariupol see their city as an island cut off from the rest of the country. Before the war, they could get to Kyiv in 6 hours, while today, it takes 10-12 hours at best. The duration of a trip between Kyiv and Mariupol by train is 18 (!) hours. A new night express has been launched recently; however, a reduction of travel time to 15 hours is not a significant change. The residents of Mariupol are counting on reconstruction of the autoroute to Zaporizhzhia, and ideally, on improvements in communication with Kyiv and Odesa.

It should be noted that during the last year's visit of Chancellor Angela Merkel to Ukraine it was declared that the funds for the reconstruction of the autoroute Zaporizhzhia-Mariupol will be taken from EUR 500 million loan granted by Germany to Ukraine in 2015, namely, for the reconstruction of Donbas.

This year the Government has announced the allocation of UAH 1 billion for the reconstruction of the autoroute between Zaporizhzhia and Mariupol. The plans also include a complete modernization of a part of the railway in the same direction.

Since 2016, Mariupol has received 113 new public transport units: trams, trolleybuses, and buses. This funding includes not only the budget funds of the city and the region, but also financial assistance from the European Union within the framework of technical assistance. On February 5, an agreement has been signed with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which provides for a targeted loan of EUR 12.5 million. In addition, with

the support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the city will procure another 72 trolleybuses.

During the discussion, it has been noted that today, the European Investment Bank's credit program to restore Ukraine, aimed at overcoming the consequences of Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine, is being implemented in the Donetsk region. By that time, 146 projects with total value of over 2 billion UAH have been approved. These projects mostly focus on addressing the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and reconstruction of houses, healthcare facilities, and other social infrastructure. This was critically important for the city, as only in 2014, Mariupol with population of 480 thousand residents took in 17.5 thousand IDPs.

The multidimensional nature of the information about processes related to the EU makes communication about the European integration in Ukraine a rather difficult and long-term task. In the East and South of Ukraine, where a narrative of the "negative consequences of the European integration" remains strong, explaining the advantages of the European integration and convey the essence of reforms is more difficult than in other regions of the country.

In general, Ukrainians often ask about personal benefits when it comes to the European integration. In the East, in particular, people are interested in concrete economic prospects of the membership in the EU and requirements that Ukraine should meet. This means that the majority of people do not understand what the accession to the EU means and what the program of European integration reforms should be, and this is a misstep of the executive power, including its local branches.

The European integration is not only about business but also a wide range of opportunities for the development of science and education, in particular through the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 projects, which also engage the universities of Mariupol. The Mariupol State University, for example, has signed about 30 agreements with European higher education institutions, under which its professors and students have the opportunity to exchange experience abroad through the EU budget.

In addition, Europe Days are held in Mariupol. The information center of the European Union operates on the basis of the Mariupol State University. It is vital that a relatively small camp of supporters of the European integration does not feel abandoned by Kyiv and the EU representatives. There should be more public events devoted to the EU and the European integration. And there should be even more real evidence of concrete success.

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