*Non-O*bjective Conflicts: Political practices of sharing the common past

RUSSIA, UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND TRANSNISTRIA

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Political practices of sharing the common past

Russia, Ukraine,
Moldova and Transnistria

**COLLECTION
OF ANALYTICAL ESSAYS**

Edited by Sergey Rumyantsev

C I S R
B E R L I N

Auswärtiges Amt

Within the three analytical essays presented in this publication, authors from Russia and Ukraine consider specificity of impact of conflicts in Transnistria and Donbass on the policy of memory and historical policy in the post-Soviet states.

C I S R
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CONTENT

PREFACE

This collection of analytical essays has been prepared as part of two projects, "Peaceful Conflict Transformation in the Post-Soviet Space" and "Mass Media and Conflict Transformation: The Creation and Development of Dialog Platforms for Young Journalists." Both were implemented in 2016–2017 by the Center for Independent Social Research – CISR Berlin in collaboration with the Center for Independent Social Research – CISR St. Petersburg, the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation in Tbilisi and the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. Both projects were supported by the German Foreign Ministry and involved citizens of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and the countries of the South Caucasus.

Both of the projects sought to achieve several key goals. For one, they hoped to create a transnational network whose members were supposed to be young journalists, civic activists, and social researchers at the first step of their career, seeking to make their own contribution to the peaceful transformation of armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space. In addition, participants sought to create an atmosphere of open dialogue and to support collaborative work with the purpose of fostering mutual trust. As part of the projects, participants produced joint publications that were presented through various media platforms. These publications brought together project members from opposite sides of post-Soviet conflicts to discuss various aspects of these conflicts. This approach created space to cultivate discourses outside ones of mobilization and militarism that tends to prevail in these conflict situations.

This publication is, in fact, a continuation of that work through another genre, namely the analytical essay. We chose this format in order to facilitate the further goal of creating a platform for collaborative work among researchers and journalists from different countries, and to that end the main authors of the essays in this collection are professional social researchers from Russia and Ukraine.

The three essays are preceded by a common introduction and share a common critical analysis of the commemorative practices, discourses, and historical policies that formed in the post-Soviet period, under the influence of, among other things, the conflicts in Transnistria, eastern Ukraine, and in the annexation of Crimea. The authors conclude their analyses with recommendations that may be of interest to international organizations and foundations, as well as to employees of various European political institutions.

SERGEY RUMYANTSEV

*Non-O*bjective Conflicts. Introduction

Armed conflicts in the territory of the former USSR were not only accompanied by numerous victims and refugees, the emergence of new borders and unrecognized states, and the annexation of territories. They also contributed to the creation of new sites of memory, generated their own traditions for commemorating the heroes and victims of these confrontations, and led to the reconstruction of historical narratives and the construction of new national myths[1].

The politics of memory, the commemorative practices, and the rituals that were formed during the Russian Empire were later more forcefully implanted by Soviet power. On the one hand, they aimed at holding together the territories which had been accumulated as a result of military expansion[2]. They also sought to suppress differences that were inconvenient for authorities and to create, to the extent possible, a homogeneous memory space. Official historical policy served the same goals[3].

It was not only by virtue of force and repressive practices that Moscow and Petersburg substantiated their right to imperial rule over the immense Soviet Union, "the greatest country in the world."[4] They also derived their authority through a belief in their civiliz-

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[1] Following Aleida Assman, it can be said that national and historical myths are a model of the world viewed through the prism of identity and the "affective understanding of one's own history." To refute such a myth is impossible. It can only be explored as an independent and significant phenomenon of "national" and "political" memory. Assmann A. (2006), Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik. München: C. H. Beck, s. 40–43.

[2] This list can also include practices of Russification as well as Soviet cultural and nationalities policy. See, for example: Franklin S., Widdis E., eds. (2004), National Identity in Russian Culture, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Miller A. (2006), Imperiya Romanovykh i natsionalizm, M.: NLO; Martin T. (2001), The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939, Cornell University Press: Ithaca & London.

[3] The term "historical policy", as it is understood today, was formulated in Germany in the 1980s. In the most general terms, according to Stefan Berger, it is the practice of "adjusting history to the needs of politics." As Alexey Miller rightly points out, one can now observe a "global trend towards politicizing history." See: Berger Sh. Istoricheskaya politika i national-sotsiolistichekoye proshloye Germanii, 1949–1982, 33–64; Miller A. Istoricheskaya politika v Vostochnoy Evrope nachala XXI veka, 7–32 // Miller A., Lipman M., red., (2012), Istoricheskaya politika v XXI veke, M.: NLO.
   The novelty of the term does not call in to question the fact that various practices of using history for political purposes can be observed in the Russian Empire and even more frequently in the USSR. In post-socialist states, especially those that are faced with armed confrontation, historical policy has become one of the most crucial and most popular ideological practices used in the service of conflicts to defend "one's historical truth," and to create images of a "historical enemy."

[4] These epithets are widespread in discourse of the "Land of the Soviets". See: Mikhaylov N. (1949), Nad kartoy rodiny, M.: Molodaya gvardiya, p. 4–5.

A monument to the founders of the city in Catherine Square in Odessa.
The central element of the composition is a statue of Empress Catherine II.
Initially installed in 1899, the monument was dismantled by the Bolsheviks in
1920 and was rebuilt in 2007, October 2016. Author: Sevil Huseynova

ing mission[5], dynastic and historical myths[6], and the ideological projects of uniting the proletariat of all countries and fostering the "friendship of peoples"[7]. The memories, historical myths, and the narratives of various subordinate or repressed social groups and national imagined communities were often denied public exposure. All the contradictions of this policy became apparent during the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which was accompanied by the rapid nationalization of the ex-Soviet republics and the implementation of similar and competing national historical policies, which, for the most part, served to construct differences and divide the space of the common past[8].

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

It would seem that the fall of the USSR would lead to the emergence of an opportunity to openly reflect on the state's imperial heritage. And indeed, the myths and discourses of "fraternal peoples" "joining" empires almost voluntarily and the images of the Soviet people's

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[5]   This "mission" was primarily applied to territories that were considered to be "eastern", and as a result backward. According to Seymour Becker: "It was in the East where Russia could act as a bearer of Western education and civilization." Bekker S. (2002), Rossiya mezhdu Vostokom i Zapadom: intelligetsiya, natsional'noye russkoye samosoznaniye i aziatskiye okrainy // Ab Imperio, № 1, 443–464, p. 447.
      According to Jörg Baberowski, "The origin of the civilizing mission [...] should be sought in the prejudices of the European enlightenment, which also captured the minds of Muslim intellectuals in the late nineteenth century." Baberowski J. (2003), Der Feind ist Überal: Stalinismus im Kaukasus, München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, s. 590.

[6]   The reign of Empress Catherine the Great (1762–1796) was one of the most active periods of dynastic myth-making, and the many monuments she installed are still a matter of ceaseless discussions in post-Soviet Ukraine. See, for example: Proskurina V.(2006), Mify imperii: literature i vlast' v epokhu Ekateriny II, M.: NLO.

[7]   The discourse of the "friendship of peoples" was constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. See: Suny R. G. (2012), The Contradictions of Identity: Being Soviet and National in the USSR and After // Bassin M., Kelly C., eds., Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 17–36, pp. 26–29.

[8]   The nationalization of the public space in Soviet republics was also largely conducted in the context of Soviet nationalities policy. In the early years after the fall of the USSR, it often consisted more of overthrowing Soviet symbols and sites of memory – dismantling monuments, discouraging the use of the Russian language, and renaming streets, squares, and cities – than the creating new ones. Symbols of Soviet power were destroyed everywhere in the USSR, although with varying degrees of intensity. However, one can say that these processes were often understood differently in Russia than in the national republics. In Russia, the contradictory tendencies of the early 1990s resulted in a return to the various ideas and symbols of Russian nationalism, the popularization of a discourse of the "great" imperial heritage, and a simultaneous refusal to "support" the national [non-Russian] borderlands in a renunciation of the "burden" empire. In the following years, these trends were complemented by a quest for new ways to dominate the post-Soviet space. In the national republics, however, the rejection of the Soviet legacy implied a liberation from Moscow as the center of power, and was accompanied by the growing popularity of a discourse revolving around an unwillingness to "feed" the imperial center, along with the development of local nationalist ideologies. In the following years, not only did the discourse of a struggle against Russia for independence continue to be significant, but it was frequently drawn on, especially in republics involved in conflict such as Georgia or Ukraine.

common enemy, the collective "West", quickly lost their influence in many post-Soviet states. And indeed, a number of ex-Soviet republics, each in their own way, have managed to preserve this increased openness and pluralism along with traditions of public and critical reflection, not only on the past, but also on contemporary official historical narratives and memory politics. This assertion can certainly be applied to Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. The essays and recommendations presented in this publication can serve as proof of the possibility of openly discussing even the most acute problems.

At the same time, some contemporary political regimes continue to exert control over public spaces. This is true in both Ukraine and Moldova and to an even greater extent in Russia. In all cases, the government limits access to critical or simply alternative forms of mass media and education. Except for fleeting, though important, bursts of destructive "revolutionary" mass enthusiasm[9], in most cases the government continues to decide what monuments to install where, how to name city streets, as well as what holidays to celebrate and what ritual practices should accompany them[10]. These post-Soviet regimes produce institutions intended to create new heroes and historical myths[11], raise modern patriots in a militarist spirit, develop state ideologies, "restore and preserve national memory,"[12] and "counteract attempts at distorting" history[13]. The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory

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[9] The destruction of Lenin monuments in Ukraine, the so called Leninopad [LeninFall], in the winter of 2014, is only the latest example of the reconstitution of memorial spaces "by the masses." Similar situations occurred during the years of perestroika and following the collapse of the USSR. "The Leninopad began with the destruction of the monument opposite the Bessarabian market in Kiev on December 8, 2013, culminated in the center of Dnepropetrovsk on February 22, 2014, and continued in the center of Kharkov on September 28, 2014. However, if in the early 1990s, the monuments to Lenin in Western Ukraine were mainly dismantled by local municipalities, in 2013–2014, this was accomplished at night, by groups of activists (usually, right-wingers) without the intervention of the security forces." Portnov A. (2014), Maydan posle Maydana // Ab Imperio, № 3, 209–217, p. 214.

[10] One of the most famous cases of government intervention involved the renaming of the city of Kirovohrad (previously Yelisavetgrad) to Kropyvnytskyi despite the objections of most of its residents. President Petro Poroshenko described the concept of limited freedom of choice as follows: "[We must] rid the map of Ukraine of names of executioners, this is not up for discussion. As for the new name, the community should choose it for itself because this is its future. The only warning is not to return to imperial names. I will not allow for the map of Ukraine to once again be stained with new Russian toponyms." See: The president honored the memory of victims of political repression: The interests of national security require the completion of decommunization, http://www.president.gov.ua/ru/news/glava-derzhavi-vshanuvav-pamyat-zhertv-politichnih-represij-37105

[11] See, for example: S. Yekelchyk (2015), National Heroes for a New Ukraine: Merging the Vocabularies of the Diaspora, Revolution, and Mass Culture // Ab Imperio, № 3, 97–123.

[12] This is how its first director, Igor Yukhnovsky, described the reason for establishing the UINM. For more, see On the ideology and policy of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, https://zn.ua/SOCIETY/ob_ideologii_i_politike_ukrainskogo_instituta_natsionalnoy_pamyati.html

[13] The decree establishing the RMHS, signed by President Vladimir Putin, speaks of "Russian military history" and, it is worth mentioning, the most important sites of memory associated with it. See: Decree No. 1710 "On the Establishment of the All-Russian Public and State Organization "Russian Military Historical Society"", http://rvio.histrf.ru/officially/ukaz-1710

Created by the Institute of National Memory headed by Vladimir Vyatrovich as part of the public project "Warriors. History of the Ukrainian Army", a visual narrative consisting of 24 portrait photos is aimed at demonstrating the centuries-old phenomenon of Ukrainian belligerence to contemporaries. There has been no place for the Russian-imperial and Soviet Ukrainian warrior among these images, Kiev, Andriyivsky (Andrew's) Descent, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

(UINM) and the Russian Military Historical Society (RMHS) are two of the best-known examples of this sort of state ideological institution[14].

A decade and a half ago, Andreas Kappeler noted that, "on the one hand, elements of historical memory that were destroyed during the Soviet era are being revived, and formerly taboo fields of history are being worked through. On the other hand, some historians have shifted almost painlessly from the old ideology to ethnocentrism and have begun to construct historical myths according to the desires of a new political elite."[15] Across Russia and the other ex-Soviet republics, the previously dominant myths and ideologies have been replaced with new national narratives. However, these new discourses are frequently the obvious successors to the ones they have replaced. Over the last few years, these trends have not only gained strength rhetorically, but structurally as well.

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[14] Direct control by the authorities is supplemented by self-censorship, a practice that is continuously on the rise thanks to the growing popularity of nationalist ideologies and, especially, in the persistence of armed conflict.

[15] Kappeler A. (2000), Rossiya – mnogonatsional'naya imperiya: Nekotoryye razmyshleniya vosem' let spustya posle publikatsii knigi // Ab Imperio, № 1, 9–20, p. 17.

Sculptural elements of the Friendship of Nations Arch opened in Kiev in 1982, November 2016. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

In the end, the "Friendship of Peoples" has been replaced by narratives of lost national independence and identity as well as discourses of colonial trauma and an uncompromising, centuries-long struggle for national independence. The ranks of "historical enemies" have increased and now even include some who were previously considered "brothers". And if Russians, having once been touted as the "leaders" among all Soviet peoples[16], have not been completely relegated to the status of a "universal enemy", they are at least the most maligned.

The reasons for this state of affairs are obvious, and each of the parties involved in the process of reconstruction and separation of their common past have their own motives. Russia, for example, is engaged in an unintelligible attempt to distance its modern state identity from the imperial past by, among other things, constructing a discourse of "Russians" [rossiiyane] as a civic, rather than ethnic, national identity[17]. At the same time, in Russia as in all post-Soviet states, there is a simultaneous desire return to "its roots", coupled with memories of a "lost greatness." This inevitably leads to attaching a series of positive connotations to the imperial past, just as the growing popularity of a discourse of "ungrateful" neighbors

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[16]   Here I cite Stalin's famous toast. See: Hosking G. (2006), Rulers and Victims: The Russians in the Soviet Union, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 211.

[17]   *Rossiskii* refers to the Russian state, whereas *russkii* refers to the Russian ethnicity.

displaces the older concept of "fraternal" republics and nations[18].

Finally, Russia has been involved, either directly or covertly, in all of the nationalist armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space, and this is precisely the context to which this collection of essays is mainly dedicated. Both of the confrontations in Transnistria and in eastern Ukraine can be viewed, in terms of content and chronology, as the two ends of a series of armed clashes that occurred as a result of the collapse of the USSR and the rearrangement of its borders.

NON-OBJECTIVE CONFLICTS: PRACTICES OF ETHNICIZATION AND HISTORICIZATION

In the fall of 2015, two public intellectuals working for a well-known Moscow-based NGO, having visited eastern Ukraine just before our meeting, assured me that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict was profoundly different from the South Caucasian conflicts in Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. According to them, the key difference was that the conflicts in the South Caucasus were "ethnic", while in the case of eastern Ukraine, there were no "objective" factors behind the confrontation. Instead, they asserted, it was caused by the "evil" will of politicians led by President Vladimir Putin. In the summer of 2017, talking to two different intellectuals who are both well-known in Ukraine, I heard much the same thesis: there are no objective, that is to say ethnic, factors behind the conflict. I happened to hear similar thoughts many times when talking to ordinary people in Russia and Ukraine, and in the South Caucasus, people would certainly agree with my interlocutors by recognizing "their" conflicts as "ethnic".

How should the popularity of these opinions be interpreted, and what are the meanings behind the reification of ethnic differences as the cause of armed conflicts? One aspect of the issue lies in the fact that the most popular modern theories of nationalist conflicts describe them as clashes between internally united, homogeneous ethnic groups[19]. Put another way, the problem lies in the language

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[18] In this case, this refers to the publicly dominant discourses promoted by the political regime, state-run media outlets, and educational institutions. At the same time, Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova, albeit to varying degrees, have retained a certain pluralism. Some academic circles and media outlets continue to present alternative points of view to the public. For discussions of the use of the imperial past in Russia, see, for example: Malinova O. Y. Tema imperii v sovremennykh rossiyskikh diskursakh, 59–102; Tikhonova N. E. Naslediye imperii v obshchestvennom soznanii rossiyan, 102–138 // Naslediye imperiy i budushchee Rossii (2008), red. A. I. Miller, M., NLO.

[19] See, for example: D. L. Horowitz (1985), Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Berkeley: University of California Press; T. R. Gurr, Harff B. (1994), Ethnic Conflict in World Politics, Boulder: Westview Press; L Drobizheva, R. Gottemoeller, et.al., Eds. (1996), Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World: Case Studies and Analysis. London, Routledge; S. E. Miller, Ed., (1997), Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict, Cambridge: The MIT Press; G. Schlee (2008), How Enemies are Made: Towards a Theory of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts, New-York: Berghahn Books; Hanlon Q. (2009), The Three Images of Ethnic War, London: Westport, 2009.

of "groupism", which Rogers Brubaker identifies as being widely used to analyze nationalist conflicts[20]. My interlocutors thought in precisely these terms and used ethnicity – a category of practice – as a category of analysis. Ethnicity, however, cannot be accepted as an explanation for the emergence of political, nationalist, or territorial conflicts. In the case of the South Caucasus, we can speak, rather, of ethnically framed conflicts in which the ideas of irreconcilable ethnic differences formulated by the language of groupism become a powerful resource for deepening contradictions.

Undoubtedly, the images of "oneself", the "enemy", and the "other" in the conflicts in Transnistria and eastern Ukraine are largely regional in nature. The opposing sides of the conflicts, after all, need to draw on the internally diverse identities of Transnistria, the Donbas, and Crimea on the one hand, and on Moldavian, Romanian, or western Ukrainian identity on the other[21]. The main external markers of differences are the language of everyday communication (Russian, Romanian, and Ukrainian) and political loyalties to either Russia or the "West". In a certain sense, the regional boundaries and identities that are described using the same language of groupism have been a "successful" substitute for ethnic markers in the discourses that surround these conflicts. At the same time, ethnicity has also been mobilized as a resource to explain the causes, as well the deepening, of these confrontations, albeit to very different degrees. For example, in the official and everyday discourses of memory in Tiraspol, the "international", Russian-speaking Transnistrians confronted the Moldovan/Romanian ethno-nationalists. On a similar note, Crimean Tatars have actively mobilized along ethnic lines to assert their own interests in the conflict with Russia.

At the same time ethnicity and orientalism have been used as strategies to marginalize enemies and political opponents. The strongly European and "Western" Ukraine is opposed to an "Asian" Russia, populated by an "eastern" "predatory horde." All the while, it is possible to see the Russian *kosovortki* and *kokoshniki* poking out from underneath the embroidered Ukrainian *vyshyvanka* shirts worn by members of the right-wing nationalist opponents of the authorities

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[20] According to Brubaker, 'groupism' is "the tendency to take bounded groups as fundamental units of analyses (and basic constituents of the social world). Grounded in what Pierre Bourdieu called "our primary inclination to think the social world in a substantial manner", this tendency has proved surprisingly robust". Despite the huge progress in development of social theory and methodology "ethnic and other groups continue to be conceived as entities and cast as actors." Brubaker R. (2004), Ethnicity without Groups, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 2–3.

[21] See, for example: Portnov A. (2016), "Donbass" kak Drugoy. Ukrainskiye intellektual'nyye diskursy do i vo vremya voyny. // Neprikosnovennyy Zapas, № 06 (110), 103–118.

in Kiev[22]. It can be assumed that attempts to further ethnicize of the conflict in the eastern Ukraine will continue, resulting in the establishment and strengthening of ethnic boundaries and identities where they would have been difficult to identify before the conflict.

The other side of the issue are the meanings attributed to ethnicity. In the leading Western European and American sociological and anthropological tradition, it has long been customary to consider ethnicity to be a socially constructed category. In the post-Soviet space, however, there is still little demand for such a concept of ethnicity. In political, academic, educational, and everyday discourses, ethnicity is most often used as a synonym for the categories of ethnos, nation, or people[23]. In this sense, it is not only Russia or Transnistria but also Ukraine and Moldova that have failed to escape their Soviet heritage[24].

The meanings attributed to ethnicity in the Soviet tradition can tell a lot about the specificity of post-Soviet nationalist conflicts. It was through the implementation of the Soviet nationalities policy that ethnicity became to be considered an integral, essential, basic characteristic of every person in the USSR[25]. According to Vladimir

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[22]   Russian and Ukrainian folk clothing. "Vyshyvanka" has become in Ukraine increasingly important symbol and metaphor for ethnic and political allegiance since the start of the conflict. See: Poslannya Prezidenta Ukrajiny do Verhovnoi Rady Ukrajiny України "Pro vnutreshnye ta zovnishne stanovyshche Ukrajiny v 2017 roci". 7 veresnya 2017 roku, http://www.president. gov.ua/ru/news/prezident-nashe-spilne-zavdannya-yevropa-maye-buti-privnesen-43090; The Speech by the Ukrainian President. October 6, 2017, http://www.president.gov.ua/ru/ videos/zvernennya-prezidenta-ukrayini-474

[23]   The situation is slowly but surely changing when it comes to sociological studies and, to a much lesser extent, education. But very often, behind the constructivist language, there is an only slightly altered version Bromley's theory of ethnos and ethno-nationalist ideas.

[24]   It is more important to talk about the deep cultural, institutional, and discursive Soviet heritage that cannot be dismantled along with some monument to Lenin. However, it is also worth noting the nostalgia for the Soviet past that is widespread in the post-Soviet space. In Moldova, Transnistria, Ukraine, or Russia, as elsewhere in the world, this desire for the past is mostly connected to dreams of solving social problems and myths about a previous economic and political stability. Intimate memories of a time when "sausage cost one ruble and eighty kopeks" can be heard from middle-aged and elderly people in Chisinau, just as often as in Bender, Kiev, or Moscow. The Soviet myth exists largely in these "Doktorsko-Lubitel'skii" images that conjure up, for instance, memories of the well-loved Soviet sausage bands. These are banal everyday discourses rather than passionate feelings that would drive someone to fight for the restoration of the USSR. Much like the nearly quelled Transnistrian conflict, the USSR remains in the past for the vast majority of post-Soviet citizens, and it is remembered only on dates specially designated for official commemoration or during a warm conversation over shots of vodka.

[25]   According to Seymour Becker, while compared to reforms in the Habsburg Empire, the Bolsheviks created a "more thoroughly thought-out and ethnic-based federation [...] it served mainly to covertly revive the centralized Russian empire. At the same time, the structure of the Soviet Union and Soviet policy substantially strengthened national identities." Bekker S.(2004), Rossiya i kontsept imperii // Gerasimova I. V., Glebova A. P., i dr., red., Novaya imperskaya istoriya postsovetskogo prostranstva (Biblioteka zhurnala Ab Imperio), Kazan': Tsentr Issledovaniy Natsionalizma i Imperii, 67–80, p. 79. See also: Y. Slezkine (1996), The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism // E. Geoff, R.– G. Suny, eds., Becoming National. A Reader, New-York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 202–238.

Malakhov, "Ascribed 'ethnicity' (that is, one determined by the authorities and not a self-conscious individual) – was internalized by people and gradually evolved from an external identifier to a part of one's (self) identity. This gave rise to such aspects […] of political thought as methodological ethnocentrism – a view of society as a conglomerate of "ethnoses" ("nations"). Today, this type of thinking is shared among both the masses and a significant part of the intellectual and political elite. It is difficult to explain to a former Soviet citizen that his or her ethnicity is not something inherent."[26]

A poster of the Russian Military Historical Society dedicated to the Day of National Unity – a new public holiday celebrated since 2005 and referring to the events of 1612 and the Time of Troubles, Moscow, September 2016. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

Using Michel Foucault's categories, we can say that the ownership of national and ethnic discourses has not been firmly appropriated by "an exactly defined group of individuals."[27] Not only everyday people, but also the majority of politicians, writers, journalists, and recognized experts are more than comfortable analyzing various processes and expressing value judgments in which the phenomena

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[26] Malakhov V. (2007), Ponayekhali tut. M.: 2007, p. 50.

[27] According to Foucault "the rules and processes of appropriation of discourse" as "the right to speak, ability to understand, licit and immediate access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices". Foucault M. (1972), The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language, New York: Pantheon Books, p. 68.

The specific character of public education prevalent in the USSR (such as the detailed history courses that were mandatory for all schoolchildren and university students) combined with the rapid inflation of trust in the humanities during the fall of the Soviet Union, (when history was constantly being "revised") have contributed to the fact that everyday people feel very confident arguing about any given social phenomena, including ones of exceeding complexity.

of nation and ethnicity serve as widely understood categories of explanation. In other words, returning to Brubaker's idea, people are used to "adopting categories of practice as categories of analysis." [28]

The attempts to construct a general civic identity in Transnistria, Ukraine, and even in Russia, give cause for some optimism. However, these efforts often appear to be inconsistent and contradictory. What is more, given the shadow cast by armed conflicts and the increasingly popular militaristic discourses, they seem to have little chance success. On the contrary, an imperial nationalism based around the "leading role of the Russian nation" or attempts to Ukrainize the southeast of the country seem to be the more likely outcomes. Either way, these trends will certainly contribute to the transformation of this conflict into yet another "objective" one.

Ultimately, the last thing to mention is that the influence of the language of groupism and ethno-nationalist ideologies are connected with another prevalent methodological approach – historicism. According to Karl Popper, "the historicist method supposes an analogous sociological theory according to which society changes, but only along a predetermined, unalterable path, through stages that are outlined by inexorable necessity." [29] In the context of this approach, "historical boundaries" are defined through the visualization of the original ties between an ethnos/ethnicity and a "historical territory" which can allegedly be traced back to the deepest antiquity. "Historicism constructs a single event where there have been numerous different events. Louis Althusser has felicitously called this intellectual procedure a 'retrospective teleology'." [30]

All the parties mentioned in this publication are actively taking measures to historicize these conflicts. The concept of an eternally unchanging relationship, whether "fraternal" or "antagonistic", is a powerful method to reify and essentialize a conflict. Both the myth of a "people's century-long struggle for independence" as well as the myth of the "ungrateful fraternal people" are widely used in political, media, and educational discourses and narratives. Modern conflicts turn into historical ones and so again become "objective". Similar approaches are can also be seen in the politics of memory.

MILITARISM AND MOBILIZATION NATIONALISM

Competition between the myths of the *Banderites* and the *vatniks* has only been exacerbated by the ongoing conflict between Russia

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[28] See also: R. Brubaker (2000), Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 15.

[29] Popper K. (1993), The Poverty of Historism, Moscow: Progress-VIA, https://evolkov.net/PopperK/Poverty.of.Historicism/

[30] Malakhov V. (2005), Natsionalizm kak politicheskaya ideologiya, M.: KDU, p. 54.

and Ukraine[31]. As the authors of the essays presented in this volume show, armed and ideological confrontation inevitably impacts all the parties involved in it. Discourses of mobilization and military rhetoric have become extremely popular in Russia, where the authorities are using them to increase the degree of groupness of the "Russian nation". At the same time, these authorities also prevent contacts with the "West" and suppress ideological dissent through the discursive stigmatization of dissenters as a "fifth column".

In Ukraine, the discourse of mobilization that has been dominant since 2014 requires politicians and public intellectuals to deny any sort of divide within the country, including a regional one. There has also been a rise in the popularity of a dubious sort of dark irony that takes the form of expressing gratitude to Putin, who finally gave Ukrainians a sense of a unified national community when he annexed Crimea and invaded the eastern regions of the country.

Certainly, many researchers are right in asserting that framing Ukrainian's problems in terms of an east-west divide is often oversimplified. As it always happens, regional boundaries are largely invisible and far from obvious. The active and mobile part of the post-Soviet generation moves back and forth across them more easily than middle-aged people. The fears of the Ukrainian authorities are also understandable, as there is a great deal of truth in the fact that the politicization of regional differences has become a powerful obstacle to internal stability. But will the denial and concealment help to overcome this divide?

The myths and discourses of memory which dominate in the two territories that became part of Ukraine later than others, demonstrate the depth of the regional contradictions. On the one hand, there is the Ukrainian-speaking "west" that became part of the republic after the Second World War, with its tradition of nationalism and the myth of Bandera. On the other hand you have Russian-speaking Crimea, with its most important site of heroic memory – Sevastopol – "the city of Russian sailors". The existence of regional cultural differences representing the richness and diversity of culture is a normal situation in any large country. The problem arises not from these differences as such, but from their interpretation. In 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and again after 2014, the Ukrainian government had the opportunity to conduct a broad and open public dialogue aimed at depoliticizing regionalism and to turn something

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[31] These are two pejorative terms that have become popular in contemporary Russia and Ukraine. Banderites refers to followers of Stepan Bandera, the extreme right-wing political activist in western Ukraine in the first half of the twentieth century. Vatnik is derived from the word for the cheap quilted jacket that has become a symbol of the stereotype of a boorish Soviet or Russian man.

that was considered to be a weakness into a strength of the national civic community. But in one instance the sin of silence proved more attractive and in the other the regime lacked legitimacy. In recent years, Viktor Yanukovych's governance and Russia's aggression have significantly undermined, and even marginalized, the positions of the "south-east" within the country. Under the conditions of war, many intellectuals either lean to the right or simply do not want run the risk of voicing unpopular criticisms.

In the end, the myth of Bandara, which has become the dominant national myth, does very little to speed Ukraine's political and cultural integration. This myth is ultimately embedded into a broader narrative of modern nationalism built on the total denial of Ukrainian participation in the creation of the Russian Empire and the USSR. Many representatives of the post-Soviet generation are convinced that their country was only a colony, and that the Bolsheviks, as a kind of wholly external force, occupied independent Ukraine. In turn, years of celebrating the Soviet victory in the Second World War coupled with a rediscovery to their "great" imperial roots, have convinced many Russians of the purely positive, liberating, and civilizing mission of the state created by their ancestors.

A monument to prominent Bolshevik Pavel Tkachenko (Antipov) in the center of Bendery (the internationally unrecognized Transnistrian republic), July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

In the context of post-Soviet nationalism, it has proved impossible to normalize the contradictory currents of Ukraine's imperial heritage, and the country's authorities have not managed to integrate

the country's history any more than they have managed to integrate its population. That being said, the attempts which are currently being made in this direction may ultimately lead to positive changes. In this respect, Ukraine is in a far better position than Russia and Transnistria, both of which seem to be living in the wholly ideological world of their imperial history and putting off an open dialogue about their past until some murky point in the future.

Despite the fact that the conflict continues to be "hot", it is already being marked with commemorative ceremonies[32]. In Kiev, one can bow before the monument to the ATO heroes. The second and third anniversary of the liberation of Slaviansk was celebrated both in the city itself and on Karachun Mountain where the main forces of the Ukrainian army were located. Even though the discourse of trauma is very prevalent, commemoration tends to be triumphant in nature, glorifying victories over the "Russian occupiers" and "terrorists". At the official level, the national discourse affirms that it is necessary to fight for the country, the territory, the nation, and the people. While it is acknowledged that there can be no war without losses, including among the civilian population, just as in the Soviet era, the misfortune and pain of any given individual is presented as paling beside these "supreme" goals.

Celebration of the third anniversary of liberation of Slavyansk on Karachun hill where the main forces of the Ukrainian army were located, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

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[32] June and July 2017 saw yet another flare of hostilities the line of contact.

NON-OBJECTIVE CONFLICTS AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THEIR PEACEFUL TRANSFORMATION

Moldova and Transnistria have so far managed to avoid such a development of events. As elsewhere in the post-Soviet space, this conflict could have been framed ethnically. The Transnistrians were deeply worried by Romanian nationalism, while the participation of Russia and Russian-speaking people in the conflict raised the concerns of Moldovans. But historicizing discourses and discourses of ethnic solidarity did not become dominant on either side of the conflict. Instead, the problems of poverty and discussions about the prospects for a better life quickly relegated the conflict itself to the margins.

Both in Moldova and, in particular, in Transnistria, commemoration of the conflict has become an important part of post-Soviet memory policy. Discourses of memory, however, are not, for the most part, tinged with revanchism and militarism. Even in the absence of serious political investments in peaceful transformation, the conflict has, by and large, lost much of its acuteness long ago. If none of the parties involved see a reason to stir it up again, it seems that there is every chance for the situation to transform peacefully.

Does such a development threaten the conflict in eastern Ukraine? One cannot help but notice both attempts to ethnicize the conflict and the availability of the necessary raw material to accomplish this. For one, the external force – the "occupying troops" – are labeled as Russian or "Moscali"[33]. But so far, politicians have been deterred from declaring war on everything Russian. Such a development risks inviting another catastrophe for the east and south of Ukraine. At the same time, the authorities, public intellectuals, and Crimean-Tatar nationalists are seeking to incite a confrontation in Crimea by playing the card of Tatar patriotism. However, if this scenario were realized, it could easily become another tragedy for the Crimean Tatars, and for Crimean population as a whole, which retains *de jure* Ukrainian citizenship.

In the context of modern Russian and Ukrainian nationalism and the mobilizing and revanchist discourses popular in the two countries, a peaceful transformation of the conflict is being put off into a murky future. If these trends prevail during the next twenty or thirty years, something which remains quite possible, it is likely that the conflict will continue to deepen. One resource which may have the ability to confront this trend can be found at the level of everyday resistance. It is obvious that many residents of Russia and Ukraine are not prepared to mobilize and are instead more concerned with social problems. In addition, ties between Russia and

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[33] A derogatory Ukrainian term for Russians.

Ukraine remain close, and many intellectuals are ready to devote their energy to the peaceful transformation of the conflict. This publication, which is the collective work of experts from Russia and Ukraine who present critical overviews of the memory and historical politics surrounding the conflicts and offer their recommendations to correct the situation, is yet another testament of that.

NIKOLAY POSELYAGIN
ARTEM ELIMOV
YARYNA ZAKALSKA

State Ideology in Russia as a Generator of International Conflicts

INTRODUCTION

The proposed analysis is devoted to the peculiarities of state ideology in Russia in the 2010s. The main hypothesis formulated in this work is that since 2012, there has been a sharp turn to right-wing conservatism in the state policy of the Russian Federation, and that the concepts of active militarism and isolationism have become the prevailing ideology of official discourse. Initially, this ideology was used more as an effective tool to mobilize the population, but since 2014, it has begun to drive Russia's foreign policy and Russian politicians relied on it to "justify" both the annexation of Crimea and the wider Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

In our opinion, after examining the internal logic of this ideology, one can understand the basic program of the domestic and foreign policy that Russian political elites have been following since 2012. We see this program as an outgrowth of this ideology. It creates a picture of the world according to which this sort of conflict-generating behavior is not only *justified* but *unavoidable.* As it becomes a social fact, this ideological rhetoric transforms into a plan of action which is implemented by the political elites who adhere to it.

In addition, we will show that although this ideological project still appears to be dominant in both the official and public spheres, it would be reductive to exclude other trends from an analysis of the political situation in Russia. Although the alternative points of view that exist are still not strong enough to develop into full-scale political structures and ideological concepts, they have the potential for growth. At the same time, the dominant ideology of active militarism and isolationism is too rigid to occupy a leading position in federal policy for long.

SCIENCE, CONSPIRACY THEORY, AND STATE IDEOLOGY

On September 30, 2015 Mikhail Kovalchuk, the Director of the Kurchatov Institute – one of the largest natural-science research universities in Russia – spoke at the Federation Council[34]. The next day, the news section of the website of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which the Kurchatov Institute is not part of, featured a brief synopsis of a number of the key theses from his speech[35].

Kovalchuk did not talk about physics or chemistry, which are the main areas of research at the institution under his authority. Instead he painted a conspiratorial picture of the world which it is worth examining in detail.

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[34] Watch his speech "The Cell War, Colonies, and "servant humans" of the United States" which was uploaded to YouTube on the same day, www.youtube.com/watch?v=63nyxhbkp3I

[35] The cell war, colonies and "servant humans" of the United States // The Russian Academy of Sciences. 2015. October 1 www.ras.ru/news/shownews.aspx?id=3de3096d-88a3–415e-8d04-cc57fa96dd5b

Kovalchuk begins with the fact that there is a war for resources in the modern world, and that, unlike the wars of previous generations, it does not depend on military strength, but rather on the latest scientific technologies including "nature-mimicking" [*prirodopodobnyi*] ones. According to Kovalchuk, modern science makes it possible to "purposefully interfere in the life processes of a person, even in the process of evolution."

He singles out for special attention, *first*, biogenetic threats such as those based on nanotechnology. According to him, genetics allows for "the creation of artificial living systems with predetermined properties," in particular, a self-developing artificial cell "ethnogenetically-oriented to a specific ethnos that can be safe for one ethnos and harmful, or even lethal, to another one." And s*econd*, cognitive research (which, according to Kovalchuk, includes both the study of consciousness and medical research on the brain), that, among other things, enables the management of individual and collective consciousness through, for example, the internet. The civil and military applications of such innovations are "nearly indistinguishable", and, moreover, these biotechnologies can essentially be produced in one's home, which renders the current international system of monitoring and preventing such threats ineffective. Kovalchuk then names the major creator of these biotechnological weapons, which is, predictably, the United States.

According to the speaker, the United States not only develops hazardous technologies domestically but also harvests the achievements of global science by:

> 1) *drawing on publicly available scientific research posted on the internet.*

> 2) *actively developing international cooperation among institutions and encouraging the international migration of scientists.*

> 3) *placing US "representatives on all the steering committees" of scientific research institutions around the globe.*

He asserts, for example, that Germany has already turned into a US colony. "They have no strategic goals of their own, but serve the United States' global interests using funds from their national budget." In fact, he contends, the United States pursues the same policy towards Russia. However, in 2009, a special presidential program was launched in Russia to create a "fundamentally new technological basis for the economy based on the products of nature-mimicking nanobiotechnologies," and the Kurchatov Institute plays an important role in this process.

At the end of the speech, Kovalchuk again returns to the idea of influencing human evolution, this time as an urgent threat emanating, once again, from the United States: "Today there is a real technological opportunity [to interfere] in the process of human evolution, and the goal is to create a fundamentally new subspecies of Homo Sapiens – a service human" that is primitive, obedient, and lives off cheap GMO produce. As examples of this trend, he cites the "absolutization of personal freedom", the concept of "a person's supremacy over a sovereign state", and "children's supremacy over their parents."

For him, this is the "slogan for the destruction of the sovereign state and the sovereignty of states, which is the only tool that can protect both society and values, and that can strike a balance between a person's rights and freedoms." Without the state, citizens turn into crowds of people who struggle with each other and at the same time are easily controlled by outside actors. Another example is "the real reduction in birth rate that results from introducing unnatural ideas into the collective consciousness such as LGBT and childless families." Kovalchuk pessimistically notes that while no one can prevent creation of "service humans", "we should understand what place we can occupy in this civilization." The speech ends with applause.

For the most part, this looks like a typical conspiracy theory, and it is distinguished from similar theories only by the context of its delivery – Kavalchuk is the director of a major research institute speaking in front of the upper house of parliament. The final applause makes it clear that the federal legislators welcomed the picture of the world presented by Kovalchuk. This applause is perhaps even the most important moment in the whole story, as it shows that the speaker is quite accurately reproducing some important elements of the state ideology.

Kovalchuk's speech manages to combine quite disparate elements. First of all, he invokes the *ideologeme of a besieged fortress* – the idea that this society is surrounded by enemies and that the only path to salvation lies in the complete closing of its borders – presumably against external threats – and the total mobilization, or even militarization, of all members of society.

Another element is *a combination of Malthusianism with Hobbes's conception of the Leviathan:* a merciless global struggle for resources and the state (in this case, the Russian Federation) as the only defender of humanity. This is the emotionally saturated matrix that supports Kovalchuk's entire theoretical construction, protecting it from collapsing under the weight of its internal contradictions. It simply blocks all possible objections.

The third element of this ideology is *a strict moral assessment of political phenomena*. Thus, in and of itself, the United States theoretically could be viewed (according to the logic of the previous paragraph) as an extremely effective Leviathan which is probably capable of coping with the chaos of the struggle for resources better than Russia (they "colonized" Germany after all!). But such a pragmatic version is unthinkable in this system of *a priori* moral coordinates. The United States is an unequivocal evil, and the image of the external enemy besieging the homeland-fortress backs this assessment. Accordingly, as an antagonist to the United States, Russia is on the side of good form the start.

Last but not least, this ideology has another, fourth element that cements all its other components – *essentialism*. All of the events described in the speech are postulated as objective and factual occurrences that are independent of any individuals. Their existence is real and self-evident. In principle this is not surprising, since it is extremely difficult to create a belief system that can work to efficiently mobilize a society if it contains internal doubts about its own objectivity and reality[36].

However, the essentialism of this Russian ideology is extremely pragmatic. The creator of the ideological concept believes that, while his addressee must submit entirely to the essentialist imperative, the ideologist himself can act as a constructivist-experimenter – he assembles his product from different blocks and does not intend to become captive to his own creation.

This manipulation of tropes and prejudices is very convenient for an ideologist[37]. Drawing only on the trope of a besieged homeland-fortress, one can build ideological constructs of any complexity and improbability. Listeners will perceive them as a necessary surplus element that confirms, and therefore justifies, the basic ideological scheme. The scheme, in turn, legitimizes these constructs by imbuing

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[36] In this regard, see the reasoning of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who tried to understand the reasons for the strong attractiveness and efficacy of ideologies, concluding that, whatever else they are, they offer models for explaining the surrounding world, making it comprehensible to an addressee and therefore much more comfortable. Geertz's idea can be developed even further. An addressee sees a well-formed matrix of categories into which he is completely integrated. It helps him to navigate the surrounding space while at the same time exonerating him from a significant share of the responsibility for his own decisions and actions. See: Girts K. (2004), Ideologiya kak kul'turnaya sistema // Girts K. Interpretatsiya kul'tur, M.: ROSSPEN, p. 250.

[37] Kovalchuk's work fashioning popular stereotypes, prejudices, and fragments of old political and philosophical concepts into his own product resembles the manner in which myths function according to Roland Barthes. In fact, Barthes's "myth" is the same as an ideology, and the main principle by which it functions – the adaptation of any element of culture that it comes in contact with "for itself" – can also be found in Kovalchuk's work. This implies that the author of a myth or ideology acts quite rationally and consciously. Therefore, despite its essentialism and conspiratorial pathos, Kovalchuk's speech can be viewed as a product of conscious ideological creativity. See: Bart R. (2008), Mifologii M.: Akademicheskij proekt.

them with a part of its own "self-evidence". Thus, the general theory appears to be real in the eyes of a recipient due to the use common stereotypes, while these stereotypes appear to be real due to the fact that they are embedded in this generalizing, "all-encompassing" theory. A self-maintaining ideological system arises.

FOSTERING MILITARISM

This *militaristic and isolationist ideology* is, in fact, the only narrative which has been more or less extensively and consistently presented in the Russian public sphere in recent years (2012–2017). While Kovalchuk's report is the most revealing episode, as it brings together most of the features of this narrative, there are other vivid examples that demonstrate how this state ideology is implemented.

Between 2000 and 2010, ultra-conservative columnist Vladimir Medinsky, who was both a journalist and deputy of the State Duma in those years, published a series of books under the title Myths about Russia. It was a large series, including, among others, books On Russian Drunkenness, Laziness, and Brutality (2008); On the Violence of Russian History and the Long-Suffering People; On the Russian Threat and the Secret Plan of Peter I; On Russian Thievery, Russia's Special Path, and Its Long-Sufferance; On Russian Democracy, Filth, and 'the Prison House of Nations'; On Who Wrote the Myths about Russia and When; On the Russian's Affinity for a 'Strong hand' and Their Incapacity for Democracy (all 2010); Myths of the USSR, 1939–1945; Scoundrels and Geniuses of PR: From Rurik to Ivan the Terrible (both 2011). It should be noted, however, that many of these books are only slightly modified copies of the same texts published under different titles.

In this series, in the name of combating negative stereotypes about Russia, Medinsky set out a new system of patriotic stereotypes that result in a full-scale picture of a great, thousand-year-old state with immutable foundations – one that is constantly surrounded by a ring of enemies but resists them due to its solidarity, strength of spirit, and state ideology.

As for criticism leveled by the scholarly community who accused the author of misinterpreting and even falsifying historical facts, Medinsky brushed them off by saying that his book was "not even pop scholarship, but pop-pop scholarship," adding, "I write not so much about what really happened or did not really happen as about what we think about it and how these ideas affect our worldview and behavior." [38] The Kremlin appreciated Medinsky's ideological output, and in May 2012, he was appointed as the Minister of Culture.

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[38] Kashin O. The Shield and Myth // Kommersant. 2009. February 16, www.kommersant.ru/doc/1116086

THE (RE-)CREATION OF THE RUSSIAN
MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In December of the same year, Medinsky became the head of the newly created Russian Military Historical Society (RMHS), while another well-known radical right-wing Russian nationalist ideologist, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, chaired its Board of Trustees[39]. The society's main activities are aimed at propagandizing Russian military history in a manner resembling the *Myths about Russia* series, installing monuments to Russian and Soviet military figures in various cities in Russia and Europe, and staging historical reenactments of military battles. Among these is the annual Crimean Military History Festival, held since 2014, where Crimea's history from antiquity to World War II is reconstructed at several sites[40].

In addition, the RMHS organizes children's military-patriotic camps together with the Ministry of Defense, where it conducts "young fighter courses" for teenagers that range from military topography and first-aid treatment to simplified firearms trainings. In addition to Russian teenagers, children from the unrecognized Donetsk People's Republic also participate in these camps[41].

In the autumn of 2016, Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu decided to go beyond joint camps with RMHS and launched his own, larger-scale youth project, the military-patriotic movement *Yunarmiya* [YouthArmy][42]. As he has stated, with this project he decided to unite various state youth-patriotic organizations with the Suvorov military schools and cadet corps. In many ways the project, with its strong national-patriotic bias, is actually analogous to the Scout Movement.

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[39] The leaders of this organization, established by the decree of President Vladimir Putin, are trying to construct a direct lineage with the Imperial Russian Military Historical Society, which was created by the decree of Emperor Nicholas II in 1907. See further, Istoricheskaya spravka // Rossijsskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo, rvio.histrf.ru/history/historical-information; Ukaz № 1710 Prezidenta Rossijskoy Federatsii "O sozdanii obshcherossijskoy obshchestvenno-gosudarstvennoy organizatsii "Rossijsskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo"", rvio.histrf.ru/officially/ukaz-1710

[40] Coverage of the first festival was broadcast on Pervyi Kanal, see: Germanova A., Crimea hosts a military history festival //The First Channel. 2014. September 13, www.1tv.ru/news/2014–09–13/33067-v_krymu_prohodit_voenno_istoricheskiy_festival. See coverage of the fourth festival held in 2017 on the special website: The Crimean Military History Festival at Fedyukhin Heights // Ratobortsy. 2017. September 15–16, ratobor.com/calendar/voenno-istoricheskij-festival-2

[41] Povago A., Ready to serve the Motherland: The military-patriotic camp was launched // Evening Moscow. 2015. June 13, http://vm.ru/news/2015/06/13/vospitanniki-voenno-patrioticheskogo-lagerya-uchatsya-bit-nastoyashchimi-grazhdanami-svoej-strani-289091.html

[42] The military-patriotic movement "Yunarmiya" was created in Russia, // Interfax. 2016. August 3, www.interfax.ru/russia/521787

The first meeting of the All-Russian military-patriotic social movement "Yunarmia" in Patriot Park. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu hands over the flag to the Chief of the General Staff of the Movement, Dmitry Trunenkov[43]

The Yunarmiya, in turn, was included in an even larger structure that had been established a year before in October 2015, the Russian Movement of Schoolchildren, which, according to the plan of its founders, hoped to revive the traditions of the Soviet Pioneer Movement[44]. Almost a year after the creation of the Yunarmiya, Deputy Defense Minister Nikolai Pankov said that about 140,000 schoolchildren had already joined the organization[45].

In an interview with the newspaper *Kommersant*, when asked why patriotic education should be military and why they want to bring back Soviet methods of raising young people given that the Soviet Union promoted a perception that the outside world was potentially dangerous, the athlete Dmitry Trunenkov, who leads the movement as its Chief of the General Staff answered:[46]

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[43] Source: Mil.ru, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category: Yunarmiya#/media/File:1st_meeting_of_the_youth_military-patriotic_movement_%C2%ABYunarmiya%C2%BB_02.jpg

[44] Lyalikova A., Solopov M., Putin created an analogue of the pioneer organization // RBC. 2015. October 29, www.rbc.ru/politics/29/10/2015/5632253a9a7947a084313544

[45] About 140 thousand schoolchildren joined the Yunarmiya throughout Russia // Zvezda (Star) TV channel. 2017. July 13, tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/715c3493822d1f18c6c77487af-5521d46e70d23fcc3c5b913ab62bd3db56cd22

[46] The military-patriotic movement "Yunarmiya" was created in Russia, // Interfax. 2016. August 3 www.interfax.ru/russia/521787

> *"As for the fact that the world is full of dangers, Soviet propaganda was not so wrong. And today, we cannot turn a blind eye to the threat of international terrorism, to local conflicts, and other problems. [...] The military fundamentals will help boys in their military service. Moreover, many young soldiers aspire to commit themselves to military service and other law enforcement agencies as well as enrolling in military universities. But we do not focus only on the military aspect. The main goal of the Yunarmiya is to raise young people with values of patriotism and respect for their ancestors and their homeland."[47]*

So far, the Yunarmiya's most notable action has been a reenactment of the Soviet assault on the Reichstag in 1945, which was held in the Moscow suburbs on April 23, 2017, and timed to coincide with the 72nd anniversary of the event[48]. As for the rest, a year after it was established, on the one hand this movement somewhat resembles the RMHS camps, and on the other, it partly resembles a bureaucratic initiative by the organization to expand its personnel and project its power more widely. The schoolchildren who join the Yunarmiya voluntarily consider it to mainly be a social ladder in their future military career[49]. In some of Russia's regions, there was forced enrollment into the organization, which further strengthens the impression that although this initiative was conceived as a militaristic ideological project, it has turned into a purely administrative one[50].

The issue is not even that the movement, which was organized as a manifesto of emotional military patriotism, is stuck in an organizational rut. This sort of administrative activity exists in any given social initiative, and usually it does not undermine it, instead reinforcing its vitality. The issue is more that members themselves, even those who voluntarily join the organization do not consider it to have a patriotic mission. For them, the organization is a potential springboard to a new career that offers possible benefits when entering military schools. It is not so much an ideological choice but something more like a career training course.

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[47] "The Yunarmiya can become a good school of life" // Kommersant – Ogonyok. 2017. October 2, www.kommersant.ru/doc/3408578

[48] "Attack on Berlin" in the vicinities of Moscow: frames of a large-scale reconstruction of the 1945 storming of the Reichstag // Zvezda TV Channel. 2017. April 24, tvzvezda.ru/news/photo_gallery/content/201704241220-hnd6.htm

[49] I. Sharafiev, They will make men out of them: A year ago, the Ministry of Defense launched a patriotic movement for schoolchildren "Yunarmiya". What is happening to it? // Meduza. 2017. October 5, meduza.io/feature/2017/10/05/budut-nastoyaschih-muzhchin-delat

[50] Ibid.

CRIMEA AND TELEVISION

Among other resonant national-patriotic ideological projects, two films about the Russian annexation of Crimea stand out. The first, *Crimea: The Way Back Home,* presented by Andrey Kondrashov was filmed by the media company VGTRK shortly after the annexation. It premiered on the station *Perviy Kanal* on March 15, 2015[51]. It tells the story of the Euromaidan and the Anti-Maidan, and of how the Russian intelligence agents evacuated Viktor Yanukovych to Crimea. In short it demonstrates the official Russian version of how Crimea joined the Russian Federation.

The ideologeme of a besieged fortress is also on clear display in a description of an incident in which a US Navy destroyer was supposedly approaching the Crimean coast but was intercepted by the radar of the coastal anti-aircraft complex. The film also includes fragments of several interviews with key participants of the Crimean events that took place in the spring of 2014, such as Sergey Shoigu, President Vladimir Putin, Prosecutor General of Crimea Natalia Poklonskaya, and Sergey Aksenov, who became the head of the Republic of Crimea after it was included in the Russian Federation[52].

The interview with Putin proves to be particularly charged, as he allows for the possibility of bringing the nuclear forces to full combat readiness if a certain third party were to interfere with the situation in Crimea. Thus, the militaristic ideology created by political elites as a convenient mobilizing narrative turns into a real program of concrete actions in the hands of the executive power. These ideas were devised by an ideologist as a set of rhetorical figures to exert influence on the population. But in the minds of the representatives of the political elite, such as the politicians who make the final domestic and foreign policy decisions, these ideas form a picture of the world that they believe in and are ready to act in line with.

At the same time, the second film about Russian Crimea presents

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[51] It is possible to view the full version of the film on the YouTube channel of the TV station Rossiia 24 where it was uploaded on the same day as its television premiere. See: Krym. Put' na Rodinu. Dokumental'nyi fil'm Andreia Kondrashova, YouTube. March 15, 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42–71RpRgI

It is interesting to note that on October 13, 2017 the video had 11,224,040 views, 135 thousand likes and 29 thousand dislikes.

[52] Natalia Poklonskaya would later become a member of the State Duma and an active propagandist of monarchism, primarily personified for her by the last ruler of the Russian Empire, Nicholas II. Due to this, in 2017, she supported a religiously biased extremist organization The Christian State – Holy Rus [Khristianskoe Gosudarstvo – Sviataia Rus'], which is tried to prevent the rental of the feature film Matil'da (2017, directed by Alexey Uchitel) in a number of Russia's regions through blackmail and threats of arson. The film depicts a love story between Nicholas II and the ballerina Mathilde Kshesinskaya. The scandal around Matil'da has been so clamorous and has caused such heated public debates that a separate large article about the controversy has even been published on Russian Wikipedia, ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Скандал_вокруг_фильма_"Матильда"

a far less impressive ideological declaration than VGTRK's project. *Crimea* is a 2017 drama and action film directed by Alexei Pimanov that presents a love story between a Russian man and Ukrainian woman unfolding against the backdrop of the Crimean events in the spring 2014. The film interprets them as a confrontation between the positive forces of the Russian troops on the peninsula and negative forces of Ukrainian nationalists.

The film tanked at the box office, and the largest Russian-language film database KinoPoisk was hacked in order to artificially inflate the movie's rating[53]. This is yet another case of an ideological project transforming into an administrative one. *Crimea* has to be artificially maintained, and the militaristic ideology which was intended for the masses completely breaks down. At the same time, the political elite turns from being the cynical producer of this ideology into its main uncritical consumer.

IDEOLOGY OR IDEOLOGIES?

However, this is not to say that the Russian state elite have only one ideology. Instead, it is more likely that there is a constant struggle for real and symbolic power between several elite groups in Russia, and each of them uses one or more ideological framework to justify their actions.

Thus, in the second half of the 2000s, during Dmitry Medvedev's presidency, two discourses fought for leadership in the official and public sphere: the national-patriotic discourse outlined above, and a liberal one represented by a rhetoric of the accelerated technological modernization of Russia and its active partnership in large international scientific and business projects. Since 2016, the ideology of active militarism and isolationism has increasingly stood in contrast to an ideology, if it can even be considered as a coherent ideology, which can be described as technocratic – a pragmatic approach oriented to the practical needs of the present moment and offering not a vivid worldview and an interconnected system of values, but, on the contrary, a rejection of any overarching views of the world in order to solve current practical problems.

The personnel reshuffling that took place in the presidential administration in the fall of 2016 can be considered a marker of ideological changes. Technocrat Sergei Kiriyenko was appointed as

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[53] Surganova Y. The rating of the film Krim by Alexei Pimanov has been artificially inflated on KinoPoisk. For this tens of thousands of accounts were hacked // Meduza. 2017. September 28, meduza.io/news/2017/09/28/na-kinopoiske-nakrutili-reyting-filmu-krym-alekseya-pimanova-dlya-etogo-byli-vzlomany-desyatki-tysyach-akkauntov Currently, the film Krim has a rating of 2.481 out of 10 based on 50,587 user ratings on KinoPoisk, www.kinopoisk.ru/film/krym-2017–984364/votes

the first Deputy Head of the Administration, a position traditionally responsible for setting ideology. Kirienko's predecessor Vyacheslav Volodin was, in fact, the chief curator of all of the national-patriotic ideological movements in Russia in the first half of the 2010s. At the same time another technocrat, Anton Vaino became the Head of Administration, replacing Sergei Ivanov.

The technocratic approach is more flexible, and it allows adherents to avoid conflicts and maneuver among the most diverse political forces. However, it is not as capable of mobilizing either the masses or the elite as the ideology of militarized isolationism. Probably, that is why militarized isolationism still carries considerable weight, and the technocratic approach has not completely replaced it.

Thus, throughout 2014–2016, the framework that Kovalchuk presented in a compressed form to the upper house of the Russian parliament was dominant, and it still retains significant influence. The recent political conflicts Russia has participated in are directly related to the worldview represented by this national-patriotic ideology of militarized isolationism.

THE SPECTER OF REVOLUTION

As far as we can judge, the ideology of militarized isolationism has existed on the political horizon during almost all of Russia's post-Soviet history; although it often occupied a more or less marginal position. However, in the winter of 2011–2012, many large Russian cities (especially Moscow and St. Petersburg) saw mass protests against the political regime. The Russian political elites regarded these movements as a direct threat to their existence. A radical ideology capable of mobilizing the masses around the elite and emotionally setting them against certain external and internal enemies turned out to be very popular, and since 2012 this has become the basis of Russian domestic policy. In 2014, it also contributed to the direction of Russia's foreign policy, as is readily visible in Russia's policy in Crimea and the Donbas. However, that same ideological framework has neither provided a way out of the conflicts unleashed by Russia in 2014 nor a plan for their peaceful settlement.

According to its internal logic, any weakening of the conflict is un-equivocally treated as a defeat in the face of a strong external enemy, and its moral component depicts this imaginary defeat as a national disgrace fraught with the threat of the total disintegration of a single monolithic country. In this situation, there is no question of settling any political conflicts either inside the state or outside it. Instead, a conflict can only "freeze" in some intermediate state if that part of the elite entitled to make a decision views its escalation as unfavorable

at the moment. This can take the form of unmoving trench warfare or of drawn out political trials that are often dismissed only to be resurrected again. However, any given conflict can also intensify if its escalation would be momentarily beneficial for this elite group. Despite all of the material and symbolic losses Russia has suffered, and all damage its reputation has taken in the international arena, it has proved extremely difficult and painful to break out of the militarized isolationist worldview and start a policy of detente.

However, isn't there is a contradiction in the sketch we have made? In fact, if the elite reserves the right to disobey its own ideological schemes, whenever the need arises, and to construct an ideological picture that is more pragmatic and convenient, why can it not simply replace this ideology with another one which is better suited for new conditions? Why not just abandon the incendiary ideology of militarized isolationism and focus entirely on the non-ideological technocratic approach? After all, this actually happened in the middle of the 2000s when it was even claimed that there was absolutely no ideology in Russia?

In our opinion, there is no contradiction. In this case, constructivism and essentialism are much more intertwined, and even if one or another elite group sees advantages in weakening the militaristic ideology, it is afraid of the possible social upheaval. In this context, the idea of a social upheaval that would occur as soon as the ideological pressure were released also serves as a kind of essentialist construction, only now it is directed at the elite itself. As a result, the imaginary revolution is no less real in its consequences: it blocks any possible attempts to retreat from militarism and isolationism, while portraying any attempts at finding a common language to pursue dialogue with the other side as socially dangerous[54].

Conversely, many forms of escalation – from repressive laws and politically motivated court judgments to the participation of the Russian military in the conflict in the Donbas – are perceived as a necessary defense against the specter of the imaginary revolution. According to this logic, if everyone, both within Russia and along its borders, can be strictly controlled, the revolution will not be able to "grow" anywhere as it simply will not have enough "soil" to do so in.

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[54] However, the situation is somewhat more complicated. In the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Russian political elites see two, if not three, enemies: Ukraine itself and conditionally the West, which is often split into the United States (the "main enemy" is a persistent stereotype since the Cold War) and "all the rest". In this case, dialogue is possible with any of the enemies, if this enemy is ready to agree unconditionally with the position of the Russian side. At the same time, the technocratic approach does not rule out more flexible schemes, where opponents can also be partners and concessions can be reciprocal. The only thing that remains unchanged in any of the approaches that Russian elites use is the position that Ukraine should remain in Russia's sphere of influence.

But where – outside of the thoroughly mythologized history of the socialist revolution of 1917 – does this fear of a social upheaval come from? In our opinion, in the short term it stems from the experience of the mass opposition protests in the winter of 2011–2012. Certainly, this is not the only source. It can, however, be seen as the main catalyst in the adoption of the isolationist direction in Russian policy, and for this reason it makes sense to dwell on it in detail.

THE BOLOTNAYA SQUARE

Between December 2011 and May 2012, mass protests took place in Moscow – on the Bolotnaya Square, Sakharov Avenue, and elsewhere – and in a number of other large cities. According to unofficial information, the most numerous of these involved 100,000 people. The protests were formally provoked by the large number of falsifications in the elections to the State Duma on December 4, 2011. One of their features was that most of their participants could not be defined as a unified political force. They were not, for example, activists from any one party. This was a crowd without clear leaders, unified systems of values, or a well-defined internal structure. It was an extremely dynamic and basically non-political group that had been abruptly politicized, at least for a while.

The "March of Millions" protest on Bolshaya Yakimanka Street, Moscow, May 6, 2012. Author: Nikolay Poselyagin

Undoubtedly, many opposition parties of almost every orientation (anarchists, communists, socialists, liberals, the greens, nationalists, libertarians) participated in the protest movement, bringing their programs and slogans along with them. Protest often ended with rallies where the rostrum was shared by the leaders of these parties, well-known public figures and various media personalities. However, most participants in the mass protests did not identify with any particular political platform: the mere fact of how easily they incorporated such diverse political movements speaks to their own political indifference.

Although their statements were quite political – they advanced anti-Putin slogans and protested against the ruling United Russia party and electoral fraud – they did not offer any coherent projects for political reorganization. Instead, their agenda was extremely negative: they were against the existing regime, for profound change, but not for any other, new regime. The crowds supported opposition politicians only as long as they did not begin to nominate themselves as leaders of the movement, speak as representatives on its behalf, or try to reconstitute the multitude of protesters into a kind of uniform political party.

Both the opposition and the political elite were witnessing the birth of a new social phenomenon – an unstructured plurality of people, only united by their simultaneous presence in a single place and a shared emotional disposition. It was unclear what terms should be used to define this phenomenon and what kind of negotiations could be conducted with it. Further it was even unclear if such a negation was possible, given the fact that the crowds were not offering any comprehensible political program in the traditional sense. It was also unclear how this plurality could be structured. The idea of a single well-organized nation, or an electorate who voted unanimously for the "party of power" on December 4, had suddenly been traded for a diverse crowd united only in a situational way, only by general emotions and a general negative agenda.

This could very well have reminded the ruling elites of Hobbes's "state of nature", a general condition of total disunity [55]. After a period of confusion which lasted until early May, the elites began to suppress this phenomenon of social negativity by force: disbursing

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[55] Compare this with the description of this phenomenon given by the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno who theoretically elaborates the notion of a social plurality. Virno P. (2013), Grammatika mnozhestva: K analizu form sovremennoy zhizni, M.: OOO "Ad Marginem Press", p. 13–14.

While it is unlikely that in 2012, Russian political elites were thinking in terms of Virno and his older colleague Antonio Negri, but it appears that they similarly were able to detect the subversive potential of the winter 2011–2012 protests in a way that the people directly participating in the protests could not.

protests (which nonetheless persisted in one form or another more than a year, until the summer of 2013, although they decreased in size and intensity) and initiating high-profile criminal cases such as the Bolotnaya Square case[56] and the Pussy Riot case[57], against individual participants in the protests.

For a while it might have seemed as though these methods of suppression produced results: the protests in Russia gradually amounted to nothing, the incomprehensible, amorphous plurality of protestors seemed to have disappeared from the political stage, and the internal structure of the Russian society again began to appear ordered, controlled, and intuitively understandable.

RUSSIA AND EUROMAIDAN

However, between November 2013 and February 2014, the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine demonstrated that such a plurality had the potential to turn into a real political force. Further, they showed that such a force could displace the ruling elites and actively change the political landscape of the state. Russian political elites perceived this as a direct challenge to them and reacted by supporting an armed conflict with Ukraine and intensifying the isolationist ideology within Russia.

These elites saw the Euromaidan as a dynamic that could have unfolded at Bolotnaya Square in 2011, one which theoretically could repeat unless it was immediately broken, demonstratively and through the use of extreme force. By annexing Crimea to Russia and participating in the military conflict in the Donbas, at first covertly and then semi-officially, isolating themselves in foreign policy, and exposing themselves to international sanctions, the ruling political elites were furthering the internal political task of suppressing domestic political protest. In our opinion, this is precisely the reason that Russia opted to participate in one of the most complicated armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space. As a result, solutions to the conflict

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[56] The criminal case filed against participants in the 2011–2012 protests. Officially, the case was only against the participants of one of the actions, the March of Millions held on May 6, 2012 and timed to coincide with Putin's inauguration. There were investigations opened for public disorder against more than 30 people. Some of them received a suspended sentence, others were sentenced to prison. Some protesters emigrated from the country. Within the big Bolotnaya Square case, there was a separate trial of the leader of the radical left-wing Levyi Front movement Sergei Udaltsov and his two followers. They were also sentenced to prison.

[57] This was a criminal trial against Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina and Yekaterina Samutsevich, three members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. They were accused of chanting the punk prayer service "Virgin "Mary, Drive Putin Away!" at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral on February 21, 2012, and thus offending the sensibilities of believers. The case was deemed an act of hooliganism, and the participants of Pussy Riot were sentenced to prison.

need to be pursued within the realm of Russia's internal politics, and not in Ukraine, at least from the point of view of the Russian side.

COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

In recent years, an important part of the ideological work in Russia has been focused on collective memory – the historical narratives that transmit it as well as on the ritual practices, symbolic objects, monuments, and places that embody it. As a result, a heroic-patriotic narrative about Russia has become mainstream again. According to this narrative, Russian history represents a centuries-old string of military victories which begins in the depths of history with the foundation of the state on present-day Russian territory and is crowned with victory in the Great Patriotic War in the 20th century.

This narrative is utterly mythologized and ritualized. It is a space of cultural memory that excludes rational analysis and has been transformed into a canon. It is composed from a plethora of quasi-historical portraits of two types: heroes who fearlessly sacrifice their lives for the fatherland, or the wise military commanders who lead these heroes. The first embodies an ideal nation or people, the latter is the embodiment of the ideal Russian state. Within this narrative, the extremely complex and intricate history of Russia, with all its contradictory historical figures and multicomponent systems of political interactions and conflicts is transformed into a simple and clear linear highway of progress.

The narrative depicts the progress of a monolithic, immutable Russian state, beginning with Rurik's arrival in Russia in the ninth century (although it is incorrect to speak of Russia in the modern sense when it comes to that period) and continuing to the present day. At the same time, this narrative is openly nationalistic. The path that Russia travels is a "special path", enclosed within Russian state and cultural boundaries and isolated from the outside world, especially from the "West", which is equally mythologized as representing an eternal threat to the integrity and uniqueness of the Russian state.

This specialness consists in a specific conservative system of values based on a quasi-religious moral quality embodied of the concept of "spirituality". It is because of this "spirituality" that Russia was chosen to play its symbolic and religious role in world history: it is Russia that continues to uphold an authentic morality and the divine word while all other states and cultures have strayed. Accordingly, the political integrity and immutability of the state structure ensure the preservation of this authenticity.

This concept dates back, on the one hand, to late-medieval religious and political discussions in Muscovy, while in its modern form

it was first formulated in the first half of the nineteenth century by the Slavophiles, a group of nationalist-oriented Russian philosophers. Since then it has been repeatedly reproduced in rightwing conservative ideologies.

In the late USSR under Brezhnev, the Great Patriotic War began to be seen as the key event in such a historical messianic narrative, at least in the rightwing conservative circles of the late Soviet elite. In the post-Soviet period, already under new historical conditions, this narrative once again became current and was once again redefined. It turned out to be very convenient in terms of mobilizing the masses under the auspices of a state ideology. On the one hand, the memory of the war continued to be relevant, veterans who went through the war are still alive, and the people's emotional response to it is much stronger than, for example, to the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380. On the other hand, the chronological distance means that the overwhelming majority of people do not have their own, individual memory of the war. They know it through the mediating narratives of films, books, and the stories of older relatives. In other words, it is much easier to transform the war into a myth and an ideologeme than it would be for an event they had experienced themselves.

Ultimately, the Second World War is a source of giant collective trauma, which, in turn, is also mediated through narratives, rendering it convenient material for ideological manipulation[58]. As a result, in the official ideological interpretations propagated in recent years, the Great Patriotic War has turned into the pivotal event of all of Russian history. Modern Russia lives in a kind of "post-history", in the shadow of its own great recent past.

Within the framework of the heroic-patriotic ideological narrative, any aspect of the Great Patriotic War can be turned into a myth, and the only legitimate type of attitude towards them is full and unconditional acceptance of their official assessment as the only possible truth. For example, the myth of Panfilov's twenty-eight men, who in November 1941 stopped the full-scale tank offensive of German troops to Moscow at the cost of their own lives, was officially and personally approved by Minister of Culture Medinsky. What is more, he appeared to be wounded when researchers of the Second World War suggested that this plot was contradicted by real historical facts[59].

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[58] Actually, any collective trauma has the same effect on a historical memory. Read about this in the work of one of the leading modern theorists of trauma studies, American historian Ron Eyerman. Eyerman R. (2001), Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[59] "My deepest conviction is that even if this story were invented from the beginning to the end, even if there were no Panfilov, even if there were nothing, this is a holy legend that should not be touched. And those who do this are complete scum." Medinsky called those, who do not believe in the exploit of Panfilov's 28 men, "scum" // BBC, Russian service, 2016. October

COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AND STALIN

Within the framework of this same narrative, even Stalin becomes a wise military leader – even the key one due to the high semiotics of 1941–1945 in Russian and world history – preempting any critical reflection on him[60]. The very memory of the Great Terror and mass repressions, not to mention the scholarly and public institutions professionally engaged in the study of these events, have come under suspicion. It has even become possible to install new monuments to Stalin, something which had been unthinkable in Russia since Khrushchev's efforts to dismantle the cult of personality.

НАЗОВИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, ДЕСЯТЬ САМЫХ ВЫДАЮЩИХСЯ ЛЮДЕЙ ВСЕХ ВРЕМЕН И НАРОДОВ? *(открытый вопрос; респонденты сами называли имена)* *

	1989	1994	1999	2003	2008	2012	2017
1. СТАЛИН	12	20	35	40	36	42	38
2. ПУТИН	–	–	–	21	32	22	34
3. ПУШКИН	25	23	42	39	47	29	34
4. ЛЕНИН	72	34	42	43	34	37	32
5. ПЕТР I	38	41	45	43	37	37	29
6. ГАГАРИН	15	8	26	33	25	20	20
7. ТОЛСТОЙ Л.	13	8	12	12	14	24	12
8. ЖУКОВ	19	14	20	22	23	15	12
9. ЕКАТЕРИНА II	–	10	10	11	8	11	11
10. ЛЕРМОНТОВ	5	5	9	10	9	8	11
11. ЛОМОНОСОВ	20	13	18	17	17	15	10
12. СУВОРОВ	17	18	18	16	16	12	10
13. МЕНДЕЛЕЕВ	13	6	12	13	13	12	10
14. НАПОЛЕОН	6	19	19	13	9	13	9
15. БРЕЖНЕВ	–	6	8	12	9	12	8
16. ЭЙНШТЕЙН	9	5	6	7	7	7	7
17. ЕСЕНИН	–	2	3	5	6	5	7
18. КУТУЗОВ	10	11	11	10	11	12	7
19. НЬЮТОН	6	3	4	6	6	6	7
20. ГОРБАЧЕВ	–	10	4	8	6	6	6

The Levada-Center survey, "Outstanding People", conducted April, 7–10 2017, published on the Centre's website on June 26, 2017[61]

4, www.bbc.com/russian/news-37557282

[60] The results of several sociological surveys are noteworthy. In the survey on "Outstanding People" conducted by the Levada Center among 1,600 adults from 48 regions of the country on April 7–10, 2017, and published on June 26, Stalin received 38 % of the first-place votes. What is more, these results came as answers to the open-ended request to "please name the ten most outstanding people of all time", www.levada.ru/2017/06/26/vydayushhiesya-lyudi
Putin tied for second place with 34 %, and Pushkin took third place with the same percentage of votes. The same material compares these results with those of a similar survey conducted by the Levada Center in 2012, when Stalin won with an even greater margin at 42 %. At the same time, in another Levada Center survey on "Stalinist repressions" (conducted April 21–24, 2017, and published on May 23) a representative sample – again 1600 adults from 48 regions – revealed that the majority of respondents, 39 %, would rather agree with the statement: "It was a political crime, and there can be no justification for it," while 25 % of respondents voted for the answer "It was a political necessity, they were historically justified", www.levada.ru/2017/05/23/stalinskie-repressii

[61] A screenshot of the table on the website: www.levada.ru/2017/06/26/vydayushhiesya-lyudi

However, the problematic character of attitudes towards Stalin was also present before 2012. For example, in 2008, a few years before the conservative turn in Russian state ideology, he almost took first place in the *Imia Rossiia* [Name of Russia] TV contest. In the end, came in third after Alexander Nevsky and Pyotr Stolypin, two other figures who have great symbolic significance among conservative Russian political elites. While the integrity of the voting process was disputed, Stalin's popularity among the people was hardly questioned publicly. At the same time, the fact that *Stalin's popularity was not cultivated by the official state historical policy but, on the contrary, by growing public discontent fraught with the possibility of social upheaval, was ignored* [62].

After 2012, the image of Stalin as a "favorite of the Russian people" turned out to be particularly in demand among political elites. They, in turn, gave the necessary legitimacy to the ideologeme of "Stalin is a wise commander in the greatest war ever." Even if this ideologeme contradicted the historical facts, the main thing is that it was allegedly based on the people's faith. Thus, once again, these two myths supported each other in tandem.

However, the political elites are not only interested in the mythologized figure of Stalin because it conveniently supports their historiographical scheme. For them, Stalin is also the chronologically closest and most impactful example of an imperial ruler who, using the so-called "manual control", created a geopolitical map of the world as he wished, both in the territory immediately available to him and beyond, through active expansion into neighboring regions. Not only did he bring almost all the regions that had been part of the Russian Empire (except for Finland and Poland) back within the state borders of the USSR, but after World War II, he even expanded the area of Russia's direct foreign policy influence to encompass Eastern and part of Central Europe.

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[62] As a typical example, see one of the most recent collections of articles on de-Stalinization and what exactly is behind Stalin's popularity in sociological surveys: "Even Stalin's admirers would not want to live in those times": Experts talk about whether Stalin's myth has been debunked in Russia // Meduza. 2017. July 30, meduza.io/feature/2017/07/30/dazhe-pochi-tateli-stalina-ne-hoteli-by-zhit-v-te-vremena

Sociologist Ella Paneyakh's comment seems to us to be especially important here: "For his followers, the mythic Stalin represents a social order in which there is much less inequality (and, first of all, less demonstrative luxury among the upper classes) than in the reality they live in today. [...] They do not want to say: 'We want repressions. We want more people to be imprisoned. We want a planned distribution system. We want repressed nations. We want our government to unleash another world war.' They want to say: 'We want less inequality. We want less corruption. A somewhat more social state than we have. And we really do not like what we have. It hurts. That is why we choose the cruelest and most frightening figures among others to make a statement about it.' This is, more or less, what they mean when they declare that Stalin is the best ruler of Russia."

It was Stalin's pre-war expansion that resulted in the entry of Western Ukraine into the USSR, an action which created a source of interethnic conflict for many decades to come. Today's political elites are impressed with the colonialist pathos that stood behind this expansion. Many of the ideologemes that are included in contemporary official discourse also go back to him. For example, the same ideologeme of the "besieged fortress" is adopted by the current state ideology, not directly from Alexander III (1881–1894), but from Stalin's discourse.

In this, even far-left opposition parties find themselves in proximity to Russian political elites, thanks to their interest in Stalin as the creator and leader of an empire. For example, almost immediately after the beginning of the military conflict in the Donbas, many members of Eduard Limonov's *Drugaia Rossiia* [Other Russia] party went to participate in it as volunteers on the side of the self-proclaimed, pro-Russian Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). Sergei Udaltsov, the leader of another opposition party, the *Levyi Front* [Left Front] – was an active participant in the mass protest rallies of 2011–2012 and one of the defendants in the Bolotnaya Square case. A few years later, he actively supported the annexation of Crimea and the Russian presence in the Donbas conflict. This may be the only decision of the authorities which he has ever supported[63].

In this regard, parties on the far left of the political spectrum find a common language with the parties of the extreme right. Thus, one of the most famous radical right-wing Russian ideologists, Alexander Dugin, had been developing a scenario of the possible Russian annexation of the Donbas as far back as the 2000s, long before 2012 when Russian state ideology took a conservative, and it could even be said imperial, turn[64]. Both the extreme left and far-right

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[63] See, for example, Udaltsov's interview, which was given almost immediately after his release from his imprisonment in the Bolotnaya Square case, or more precisely, in a separate case within the big Bolotnaya Square case: "The nuances have changed. We will adapt to them": Sergei Udaltsov's interview about the first days of freedom and the events occurred while he was sitting // Meduza. 2017. August 11, meduza.io/feature/2017/08/11/izmenilis-nyu-ansy-budem-k-nim-prisposablivatsya

[64] See, in particular: Laruelle M. (2016), The Three Colors of Novorossiya, or The Russian Nationalist Mythmaking of the Ukrainian Crisis // Post-Soviet Affairs, Vol. 32, № 1, 55–74. On the role of Russia in the political crisis in Ukraine including the seizure of Crimea and its participation in the Donbas conflict, especially its ideological aspects, including the creation of a full-scale myth of Novorossia, see: Karagiannis E. (2016), Ukrainian Volunteer Fighters in the Eastern Front: Ideas, Political-Social Norms and Emotions as Mobilization Mechanisms // Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 16, № 1, 139–153; Malyarenko T., Galbreath D. J. (2016), Paramilitary Motivation in Ukraine: Beyond Integration and Abolition // Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 16, № 1, 113–138; Wilson A. (2016), The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but not Civil War // Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 68, № 4, 631–652. See also: Kipen' V. (2014), Travmovana svidomist' jak naslidok i faktor nestabil'nosti: (Doslidzhennja masovyh nastrojiv zhyteliv Donec'ka) // Shid, № 2 (128), 5–9;

exclude the possibility of a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Donbas. Or rather, they assume that the only possible, and the only desirable outcome to the conflict would be, if not the transfer of the Donbas to Russia, then at least giving it the status of a protectorate. In other words, there exists colonial-imperial idea that, beyond the official borders of the Russian state, there are regions where it retains predominant influence. This leads to the creation of spaces where Russia's direct and full-scale political participation makes it extremely difficult to conduct a dialogue in which some other country's interests would also be represented.

In some ways this scenario recalls Russia's earlier imperial ambitions, such as the 2008 war with Georgia. Nevertheless, the ideological overtones of that conflict were much 0weaker and much less coherent. As for the Donbas, the far-left and far-right ideologists already did all the myth-making beforehand – there was nothing to do but set it to use, transferring it from the category of marginal geopolitical theories to the scenario of an actual foreign policy.

CONSTRUCTIVISM BEHIND THE MASK OF ESSENTIALISM

In this final part of our analysis, we would like to return once again to the structure of Russian official ideological discourse – a structure which is capable of combining essentialism and myth-making with deliberate and pragmatic constructivism. Let us describe yet another case by way of demonstration.

In 2011, Vladimir Medinsky, who was not yet the Minister of Culture, defended his doctoral thesis in the field of Domestic History titled "Issues of Objectivity in the Interpretation of Russian History from the Mid-Fifteenth Century to the Seventeenth Century". A short time later, a number of historians criticized this work[65]. It was criticized for both numerous cases of plagiarism and for Medinsky's own conceptual frameworks, which did not meet scholarly standards. In fact, instead of a historical analysis of the historical records of Russia of the early modern era left by foreigners visiting the country, he built a tendentious narrative, in which he blasted foreign "enemies" for, according to him, deliberate slander against Russia.

In 2016, three scholars officially demanded that his doctorate in

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Shcherbak A. N., Komin M. O., Sokolov M. A. (2016), "Otverzhennye": Sravnitel'nye biografii ukrainskikh i "novorossiyskikh" polevykh komandirov // Politiya, № 1 (80), p. 73–89.

[65] See: Lobin A., Cave source study // Polit.ru. 2012. March 13, polit.ru/article/2012/03/13/medinsky; Penskoy V. Without the skills of a historian / / Polit.ru. 2012. April 1, polit.ru/article/2012/04/01/medinsky; Kozlyakov V. The review of the thesis by V. R. Medinsky "Problems of objectivity in the coverage of Russian history from the mid-15th century to the 17th century" (M., 2011) submitted for a doctoral degree in history – 07.00.02 // Dissernet. [2014], wiki.dissernet.org/tools/Medinsky.html; etc.

history be revoked[66]. The text of the thesis was transferred to another dissertation committee, and in July 2017, the day before the meeting of the committee, Medinsky published an article with the title "An Interesting Story", in which he lay out his historical credo[67]. In the article, the author did not so much refute his opponents' arguments as demonstrate his principles for working with historical sources and collective memory.

Based on Medinsky's previous texts, it could be concluded that their author was simply a rightwing conservative historio-sophist, interpreting historical documents in accordance with some objective and singularly reliable truth in which he believes unconditionally. In other words, both his publication and thesis were written in a consistently essentialist manner. However, according to the article in *Rossiyskaia Gazeta*, it turns out that Medinsky is closer to the values of postmodernism than the ideology that he propagates.

First, he is a relativist since he does not believe in a single historical truth. Instead he contends that any reading of a historical document is only a culturally conditioned interpretation. As he says, "there is no 'objective Nestor'. There is no 'absolute objectivity' at all. Maybe only from an alien's point of view. Any historian is always the bearer of a certain type of culture, the ideas of his circle and his time." For Mendinsky, this applies not only to the average reader but also to the professional historian, who also depends on the socio-cultural framework within which he works.

> *"A historian is always a hostage trapped in his convictions. Yes, professional ethics and rules require a scholar to strive to be objective. However, alas, any humanities scholar, no matter how hard he tries, is a product of his upbringing, his school. He is dependent on theoretical frameworks, on the methodology he chooses, and even on the language he is accustomed to using. He himself constructs the object of his research based on the knowledge and the ideologemes of his time."[68]*

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[66] "[…] the fact that in the introduction to his dissertation he […] declares 'weighing in on the side of Russia's national interests' as the absolute standard of truth and reliability in a historical work and explicitly recognizes the 'positive or negative assessment' of events from this point of view as the task of historical scholarship speaks for itself. A text written in accordance with similar principles can obviously be recognized as anything but scholarly research, and all further claims of the author to 'objectivity' do not change a thing. Historical scholarship differs from propaganda in that it does not evaluate events positively or negatively depending on their conformity to any country's national interests but is limited to an impartial analysis." Kozlyakov V. N., Yerusalimsky K. Y., Babitsky I. F. The petition of deprivation of Vladimir Rostislavovich Medinsky of the doctoral degree in history, Dissernet, 2016. April 25, wiki.dissernet.org/tools/vsyakosyak/MedinskyVR_ZoLUS.pdf), p. 4–5

[67] Medinsky V. An Interesting Story // Rossiyskaia Gazeta. 2017. No. 145 (7311). July 4 (rg.ru/2017/07/04/vladimir-medinskij-vpervye-otvechaet-kritikam-svoej-dissertacii.html). The committee, ultimately, did not revoke his academic degree.

[68] As a matter of principle, such relativism assumes a democratic approach and tolerance to other

Of course, such radical relativism does not imply scientific objectivity either. As he says, "in history, there is no 'impartial approach' It is always partial and personified."

Second, Medinsky himself admits that he works as a pragmatic ideologist. "In other words, any history, to be honest, is modern history. Because everyone views the past from the position of their day." Accordingly, history is simply a convenient tool for solving modern social and political problems. A historian works with collective traumas and collective memory in the way the current situation requires. "We are well aware that a real historian does not just study the past, does not just try to understand, comprehend, extract, and systematize the lessons of the past. He interprets the present through the prism of past experience. He offers a program for the future."

If the requirements of the current situation contradict the historical data, these data can be ignored or even distorted. At the same time, when recalling the dispute over the myth of Panfilov's twenty-eight men – Medinsky unexpectedly agrees with his opponents who proved the discrepancy between the myth and the facts, and immediately contrasts these facts to the question of ideological expediency:

> *"What had greater influence on the course of the Great Patriotic War? The battle of political officer Klochkov's 4th Company near Volokolamsk, the 17 (or 10?) – yes, what the hell difference does that make! – Fascist tanks destroyed by 28 (or 128?) fighters? Or the mythical image of the same event created by the journalists of the Red Star? The image of Panfilov's twenty-eight men that was forged in the minds of millions? This legend became a material force which is more terrible and beautiful than any fact of any real battle. Because it embodied all the pain and the whole dream of a Soviet man – the defender of his family and his land."*

Third and finally, Medinsky is a radical constructivist, which, in fact, follows logically from the tenants of relativism.

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historical concepts. If no concept is any more true or false than your own, any value-based dispute becomes meaningless. This is incompatible with dogmatism and essentialism. Realizing this, Medinsky employs the following rhetorical device: he redirects accusations of intolerance towards his opponents and presents himself as an ordinary bearer of an alternative view and a victim of professional bullying. "The classical liberal idea in the modern Euro-Atlantic world has long been transformed into its antipode – into absolute intolerance towards dissidence, and a readiness to extirpate any other opinions with the determination of the Crusaders – by fire and sword. [...] Those who now have arrogated to themselves the right to be called the "liberal intelligentsia", the "liberal press", or "liberal scholars" like to talk about freedom of opinion, but they mean freedom only for themselves. They talk about tolerance and are absolutely intolerant of others' viewpoints. They talk about protection of rights and property, but they only mean their rights and only their property." It is curious that he simultaneously uses an essentialist move similar to that used by Kovalchuk. Namely the threat comes from the outside, from the Western "Euro-Atlantic world". Since 2012, an anti-liberal discourse has also become very typical for official and semi-official rhetoric.

> *"History does not exist without facts. But facts are not only events, not only cultural artifacts – burial mounds, fragments of pottery, and pyramids. Ideas and myths are also facts. The ideas and myths that captured the masses are historically more powerful than some coliseum or viaduct. [...] No historical fact exists on its own. We did not personally participate in the Battle of Kulikovo, and we did not witness many other things. That is to say, as far as our consciousness is concerned, history is not an event we directly observe but always a reflection in the perception of other people. All historical facts exist for us as already refracted through the consciousness and social interests of our class, nation, and time – our religions, worldviews, and ideologies. That is to say, history is always subjective and indirect."[69]*

Thus, behind the tendentious essentialist worldview that the Russian propagandist constructs, whether it is Medinsky, Kovalchuk, Dugin, or someone else, there are not essentialist views at all. The postmodern idea of the relativity of truth and a lack of objectivity is combined with the constructivist line, according to which the collective identity is composed from texts that only reflect the subjective views of their authors. Nevertheless, these texts are capable of reformatting the surrounding reality if there is a sufficiently influential social group that will unite around them and decide to translate their values into reality. Unlike sociologists and anthropologists with similar viewpoints, constructivist ideologists move beyond an analysis of ideological constructs and strive to translate them into practice, to experiment with them as potentially working political programs. They reserve the essentialism for their audience, the objects of the propaganda, so that it is easier for them to unite into a monolithic group, whose collective identity will become the propagated ideology.

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[69] This position can easily be compared with the position of one of the constructivist classics, American sociologist Benedict Anderson. In his classic work Imagined Communities, he shows how ideological constructs, which were originally just texts expressing certain philosophical ideas and the preferences of their authors, later turn into social and political programs and are embodied in specific political decisions of ruling elites. Starting as the product of someone's subjective imagination, they eventually become as real as the facts of the material world. Anderson B. (2001), Voobrazhaemye soobshchestva: razmyshleniya ob istokakh i rasprostranenii natsionalizma, M.: Kanon-Press-Ts: Kuchkovo pole.

CONCLUSION: NOT ONE STEP BACK FROM IDEOLOGICAL DOGMA

Nevertheless, at a certain point, these ideologists themselves become objects of their own ideological influence. A recipient postulated as the bearer of an essentialist consciousness is exactly the same construct as all the other ideologemes they refer to. But this is the only construct which state propagandists cannot disregard. As we briefly showed above through the example of perceptions of Stalin, real recipients can ascribe a completely different meaning to the ideologemes offered to them, and this meaning can remain unperceived by the authors of the propaganda narratives.

As a result, cognitive distortion occurs. It seems to the ideologist that all public support for the construct he creates (and, consequently, for himself as a member of one of the ruling groups of the political elite) is based on the fact that a recipient believes dogmatically in the concept he propagandizes. He also believes that the abandonment of the dogma can trigger a social upheaval of any degree of intensity and unpredictability. Therefore, all that remains for the ideologist is to further propagate his conception, to the extent possible, without abandoning it and without reducing (or, better yet, while increasing) the intensity of its impact on the recipient.

From an outside perspective, such an escalation of ideological tension resembles an economic bubble. The ideologist offers the society an increasingly tendentious and aggressive product and simultaneously increases the intensity of transactions in an attempt to earn even more symbolic capital. In this case, this capital belongs first and foremost to the elite and reflects someone's own rootedness in the ruling elite group, although it is often associated with a real financial interest as well. The ruling elite group imagines that it will be able to control the bubble long enough, and, if it is in danger of bursting, that it will have time to suppress this process through the use of force.

As a result, neither the conflict represented in the current Russian state ideology with the allegedly aggressive world outside the "besieged fortress" nor with internal enemies can be settled from within. This possibility is blocked off so long as the bubble continues to grow on the Russian domestic ideological market. Attempts at a dialogue with the participation of a third force, an external arbitrator, run into difficulties. At any moment, another round of ideological intensity can turn an arbitrator into a new enemy, if the suppliers of ideology feel that the influence of the former ideologemes, including the gallery of officially sanctioned "enemies", is waning. The only possibility to peacefully settle the conflicts arising under the influence of the bubble is to move beyond it before it bursts, and to seriously restructure the entire political and ideological landscape in Russia.

P. S. PUTIN?

As the reader of this work has certainly noticed, we tried to minimize the use of the surname "Putin" in the text. It is not a coincidence but a conscious decision. In our opinion, undue significance is attached President Putin's individual role in Russian politics. The most important levers of real power are certainly concentrated in his hands. This means that he is the one who make the final political decisions, lobbies for the adoption of laws beneficial to the current elites, and determines the political and economic course of the country. In other words, he is the main executor of decisions taken by political elites. But we do not think that all Russian politics can be reduced solely to his personal will. On the contrary, if today someone else from the group of the elite closest to state power replaced him, Russia's politics would hardly change at all. Unlike the agents of ideological politics – Medinsky, Kovalchuk, Dugin, Rogozin, Shoigu, Volodin, and others – he is not so much a subject as an object of ideology who himself probably largely believes in the worldview it offers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What conclusions can be drawn from the current situation to formulate a number of recommendations? First, *the ideology of militarized isolationism is a hermetically sealed construct that it is difficult to move beyond.* This concept is largely responsible for the international conflicts that Russia has entered into since 2014, and for the level of internal social tension that has been steadily increasing since 2012. In addition, a significant part of the elite continues to believe in it.

It is also responsible for the fact that, in recent years, many public non-profit organizations that propose alternatives to the official ideology, and even those which are completely apolitical but also do not publicly support the official worldview, have been declared "foreign agents". This is an exceedingly ambiguous status, and it jeopardizes the existence of an NGO that receives it. These organizations can be closed for any formal reason following unannounced inspections, and its employees can be branded "national traitors" in the eyes of official ideologists and right-wing radical activists. Further, eleven international political organizations including the Open Society Foundation and the Open Russia Civic Movement have been added to the list of "undesirable organizations" which constitutes a complete ban on their activities in Russia[70].

However, as we have tried to show, this is not the only ideology which political elites are oriented towards. On the one hand, the *technocratic approach*, gives some hope that aggressive isolation and the hunt for internal enemies will be replaced by a search for dialogue and partnership. On the other hand, this approach is so focused on solving immediate pragmatic tasks and, in fact, has been so de-ideologized, that any ideology, including an isolationist, militaristic, and national-patriotic one, can absorb it. Dialogue and partnership in the technocratic approach are impermanent because they depend on too many personal factors.

Nevertheless, it seems to us that there is gap between the state ideology (even if it has invaded most of the public sphere, including most Russian mass media) and the sentiments of the main part of Russia's population. This is clear from how the two assign completely different meanings to the use of the same symbols, for example, the name of Stalin.

The Russian public sphere today is much more differentiated and open than in Soviet times. The internet continues to offer alternatives to the official view, despite efforts to the contrary such

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[70] For the list of foreign and international non-governmental organizations whose activities are considered undesirable in the territory of the Russian Federation, see: minjust.ru/ru/activity/nko/unwanted

as pretrial site blocking and politically motivated extremism cases filed for reposting materials from information resources banned in the territory of the Russian Federation. Social networks, blogs, and YouTube channels are serious and quite influential platforms for cultivating alternative ideological projects that have the potential to evolve into full-fledged political programs[71].

Alternative points of view are also conveyed in the academic environment including large educational institutions and are unofficially supported in the business community[72]. Major independent media outlets continue to exist, including *Vedomosti, Kommersant, Meduza, Republik, Dozhd TV*, and others. Scientific and cultural elites are also largely oriented towards openness, readiness for social and political reforms, and dialogue with the outside world.

Large cities see the formation of a large intellectual class which is also open to dialogue and does not consider the outside world to be a threat[73]. All this creates a social environment in which, while political protests are unlikely in the near future (the memory of failed protest movements and the Bolotnaya Square case is strong enough, while reflection on these failures is still very weak) deeper social changes have already been occurring. All this creates fertile ground for the formation of new ideologies, new political elites, and consequently new political projects that are more prone to dialogue and the mutually beneficial resolution of political conflicts.

From inside the hermetically sealed construct of the ideology of militarized isolationism it seems that all alternative spaces have already ceased to exist, of that they will in the near future. But all the examples listed above allow us to assert that such a conclusion is a significant simplification. Post-Soviet Russia has seen its

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[71] The brightest of them is undoubtedly Alexey Navalny's anticorruption project and his Anti-Corruption Foundation (fbk.info). Launched as a cycle of vivid private anti-corruption investigations and investigations into other kinds of criminal offenses committed by certain officials, it has become a political platform criticizing the ruling elite. At the moment, the most talked about example is the investigation into alleged corruption by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, which was made public on March 2, 2017 in the form of a documentary called "He Is Not Dimon To You" on Navalny's personal YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrwlk7_GF9g) as well as in text form on a special subsection on his personal website (dimon.navalny.com). As of October 13, 2017 the film had 24,966,923 views, 713,000 likes, and 64,000 dislikes. Besides Navalny, there are other examples of such political initiatives gathering audience primarily through the internet. These include the activities of the opposition parties Yabloko [apple], the People's Freedom Party, PARNAS [Partiia narodnoi svobody] and the Left Front as well as Mikhail Khodorkovsky's Open Russia whose activities, however, have been extremely complicated after it was added to the list of the "undesirable organizations".

[72] It should be noted that the European University is currently in the process of having its license revoked on extremely dubious grounds. See the chronicle of this process in the special section on the official website of the university: eu.spb.ru/news/18050-litsenziya-khronika.

[73] This is similar to what Richard Florida describes as the "creative class" in: *Florida.R.* (2011), Kreativnyi klass: Lyudi, kotoryye menyayut budushchee, M.: Klassika-XXI.

alternative spaces, such as media outlets, universities, and non-governmental organizations, develop with a certain degree of stability and influence. It took almost three decades and the serious efforts of international funds were needed for them to reach their current state. In the present situation, they must, at a minimum, be supported and maintained. This support should come from large Russian business, various international organizations and funds, European universities, and non-governmental organizations.

1. Regarding organizations that have been labeled as "foreign agents", it is still possible to finance various projects directly from universities, funds, and state institutions in the EU. If the politicians and scholarly communities in the EU consider it important to preserve alternative spaces in Russia, the support of the "foreign agents" trying to survive in Russia needs to continue.

2. Direct financial support to various independent media outlets or university centers that facilitate international dialogue in the form of conferences, forums, public lectures, and discussions can be substituted for the more intensive development of educational programs and various formats specifically targeted at Russia. There is a need for a constant exchange of ideas and opinions. Russian journalists, public intellectuals and scholars can be invited more often to EU countries to deliver lectures and speeches. Conversely, it is necessary to support more frequent visits from EU scholars and journalists to Russian universities and encourage their participation in the work of alternative media outlets.

3. Currently, in the European Union, there are intellectuals who left Russia but are ready to work in media and analytical publications oriented to their homeland. It would be important to support the creation of new media platforms and research centers where not only migrants, but also researchers and journalists who continue to work in Russia, can be employed. One of the big projects could be an attempt to create a Russian-language television channel that could become an alternative not only to *Russia Today* but to all official Russian television.

4. In the current situation, it is necessary to maintain and develop channels of exchange, connections, and programs that will not allow the Russian regime to shut the country off from the outside world by drawing closed a new ideological iron curtain.

GEORGY KASYANOV
SVETLANA OSIPCHUK

Historical Politics in Ukraine in the Context of Conflict with Russia, 1990–2017

Part 1.
The historical context and topics of conflict

This analysis focuses on the politics of history in Ukraine in the 1990s and the 2000s and its impact on the domestic and international political development of the country. The central topic is the relationship between Ukraine and Russia in the context of their historical politics and their conflicts. In the proposed analysis, we attempt to provide the most revealing examples of conflicts over the past and the instrumentalization of history to achieve political and geopolitical goals.

The text explores the political conditions that led to these conflicts between Ukraine and Russia as well as examining how historical arguments were deployed in support of a war and an annexation. It also includes data on the development of historical politics in Ukraine after the "Revolution of Dignity" took place in the winter of 2013–2014[74]. Furthermore, there are practical recommendations for developing policy in the fields of history and memory that are aimed at consolidating the academic community in the European region with a view to preventing and neutralizing the negative consequences of historical politics.

BASIC CONCEPTS

"Historical memory" is a purposefully designed and relatively stable set of interrelated collective perceptions of the past shared by a particular community or group, codified and standardized in public, cultural, and political discourses, as well as stereotypes, myths, symbols, and mnemonic and commemorative practices.

Historical politics are pursued in the interests of political, cultural, ethnic and other social groups in a struggle for power, for its retention, or for its redistribution. *Historical policy* is a specific policy that seek ensure the political, cultural, or other forms of loyalty from large social groups as well as retaining ideological and political control over them.

A national or *nationalist narrative* of historical memory is based on the idea of the uniqueness, identity, and independence of a community referred to as a nation. The exclusive model of such a narrative

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[74] The Revolution of Dignity is the official Ukrainian name for public protests against President Viktor Yanukovych and his "regime". It began on November 23, 2013, on Independence Square, or the Maidan, the central square of Kiev, with a protest against Yanukovych's decision to postpone the procedure of signing of an association agreement with the EU. After special police forces forcefully dispersed the peaceful protesters, the protests entered a violent phase and spread to the cities of western, central, and partly to southeast Ukraine. The revolution ended on February 22, 2014.

presupposes the identification of a nation with a homogeneous ethnic, cultural, or linguistic community: an ethnos. A distinctive feature of this narrative is its tendency towards archaic cultural forms and representations of historical experience. In Ukraine, the *nationalist* narrative sometimes takes radical forms and is cultivated by organizations that themselves claim to be nationalist.

The narrative of Soviet nostalgia does not have a clear central idea because it has lost the basic principle of the Soviet model of history – a class-based approach. It includes stories related to the "leading" role of Russian culture and the Russian language. This narrative insists on the supranational unity of historical experience as common to the "peoples of the USSR". As part of its political instrumentalization, it has been repurposed as a negation of nationalist ideologies and, above all else, their radical manifestations.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian-Russian interstate relations were characterized by the "persistence of instability", which manifest in frequent conflicts between the political and cultural elites of the two countries. The following areas of conflict can be clearly defined:

1) Territorial disputes – Crimea, the status of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet, the exploitation of the Kerch Strait and the island of Tuzla.

2) Trade and economic problems – "gas" and "trade wars", customs and tariff disputes.

3) Political problems – the existence of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), conflicts over geopolitical projects such as the Common Economic Space and the Eurasian Union.

4) The humanitarian sphere – problems relating to the use of the Russian language in Ukraine, issues of interpreting the common past.

When analyzing the reasons for, and the development and consequences of Ukrainian-Russian confrontations over the past, we should take into account a number of peculiarities relating to how the political and cultural elites of the two countries perceived their neighbors.

Let's begin with Russia. First, it must be remembered that Russia's elites and ruling class did not consider Ukraine to be their historical Other – unlike, for example, how they viewed the Baltic countries. Linguistic, cultural, and religious affinities, a long common history, and innumerable family ties – all meant that Ukraine and Ukrainians were perceived as part of a larger Russian world that possessed certain

regional peculiarities. The aspirations of Ukrainians to "separate" themselves from this world, to have a separate cultural identity, to affirm their character as an Other – especially when it came to their orientation towards the political and cultural space of the "West" – generated "cognitive dissonance", irritation, and rejection on the part of Russia's elites. The very fact of the Ukrainian state's self-determination is seen as a mistake, or even as a cruel joke of history. The most radical version of this thesis holds that Ukraine's very statehood is both unnatural and artificial.

This is maintained, despite the fact that the State is considered to be a fundamental, systemic factor in the historical consciousness of the Russian elites. The Ukrainian elites claims of the independence of Ukrainian history are perceived as both absurd and provocative precisely because Ukrainians and Ukraine are not perceived as a national Other. The fact that Ukraine has been part of the "Russian state" for centuries is held up as proof that it is incapable of existing as an independent state. In this context, the absence of continuity in the history of Ukrainian statehood is presented as evidence of the inferiority of a Ukraine without Russian as a structuring factor, and vice versa. Ukraine and Russia, it is claimed, are parts of a single historical body, which the separation of one part disfigures, crippling the entire body.

In addition, Ukrainian claims to cultural and state independence are traditionally considered to be a byproduct of intrigues of external forces that have been active since the nineteenth-century. One can see a consistent sequence of myths about a Polish, Austrian, or German plot behind the process of Ukrainian national self-determination. These days, they have been replaced by plot by America or the European Union or, more generally, an intrigue on the part of the "West"[75].

Ultimately, it is worth paying attention to the deep contradiction in attitudes towards how the "common past" is evaluated. For Russian political and cultural elites, the imperial and Soviet past is an important element of their historical legitimacy[76]. For Ukrainian elites, the central argument in the historical justification for the existence of their state and nation is the denial of the imperial and Soviet past as something alien that was carted in and imposed on them from the outside.

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[75] In 2014, the most representative of these clichés were collected in the journalistic-propaganda film created by the state-affiliated channel Russia-1, with the eloquent title of "The Ukraine Project" in 2014. See: https://russia.tv/brand/show/brand_id/58921/

[76] Of course, we should distinguish between the late 1980s –1990s, when the Soviet past in Russia was also the subject of condemnation and denial, and the 2000s when it became the object of "normalization".

It is worth noting that the Ukrainian political and cultural elites are less unanimous in their attitudes towards the ambitions of their Russian colleagues and towards Russia itself. One can single out two poles: one openly anti-Russian, promoted by right-wing and center-right parties, and one candidly pro-Russian, or even assimilationist, held by the Communist Party of Ukraine, which is currently banned, and the Party of Regions. Between these two extremes, there have been political forces advocating for a sort of Slavic unity (which would also includes Belarus), and also those who promote Ukraine's place in a Eurasian civilization, in which the leading role is assigned to Russia. Following the annexation of Crimea and the war in the east of the country, all the pro-Russian forces have become politically marginalized and scattered. However, this does not mean that they will not consolidate and mobilize in the near future.

One should also take into account the fact that the content of historical politics in the two countries has differed significantly. In the 1990s, Ukraine saw the establishment of a standard national ethnocentric narrative which separated the history of the country from a previously common narrative and turned Ukrainians into an independent subject of history. In Russia, ethnocentric narratives of this kind arose in various spheres within the federation. However, the federal center continued to advocate for a unifying "statist" narrative which presupposed a common the past within a single state. For the Russian elites of the federal center, their main task was to maintain a single, integrating historical narrative within the country. The official Ukrainian version of history which emerged in the 1990s rejected the imperial and Soviet past as a period of oppression, assimilation, and suppression of the national aspirations of Ukrainians. The official Russian version, which was finally formed in the 2000s, represented the imperial and Soviet past as a time of greatness, outstanding victories, and world achievements.

Currently in Ukraine, both in the public consciousness and in representations of the past, Russia is predominately seen as eternally enslaving and oppressing, while Russians are regarded as carriers of an imperial syndrome. Surveys conducted between 2014 and 2017 show a steady decrease in the number of respondents who have a positive attitude towards Russian citizens from 44.9% to 28.8%, while the share of those who have a negative attitude has increased from 16.6% to 20.7%[77].

Such a situation creates a permanent conflict over the evaluation, interpretation and representation of the past, one that quickly escalates into a war of memories when contentious issues arise.

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[77] These surveys, which are referred to by the authors here and after, encompassed only residents of the Ukrainian-controlled territories. See: Negativne stavlennya do Rosiji dosyaglo svogo apogeyu v Ukrajini – opytuvannya, http://uapress.info/uk/news/show/163886

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

First announced in 2003, the list of controversial historical issues came together gradually, first at scholarly conferences and then more formally when the Russian side initiated a joint intergovernmental commission on school history textbooks. Official Kiev reacted positively to this proposal while the national intelligentsia, both democratic and nationalist, interpreted it as an encroachment upon Ukrainian sovereignty[78].

A monument to the legendary founders of Kiev established in the early 2000s, Maidan Nezalezhnosti [Independence Square], November 2016. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

The list of controversial issues can be presented as follows:

1. The issue of affiliation with Kievan Rus[79]. This issue was mostly discussed by medievalists but from time to time it came to the fore in political life and became the subject of public debates. In Ukraine, Kievan Rus is considered to be the beginning of Ukrainian statehood as a matter of official historical policy. In Russia, in the early 2000s and again the end of Dmitry Medvedev's presidency, attempts were made to find a new center

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[78] In this case we are talking about political parties and movements that refer to themselves as "nationalist".

[79] Kievan Rus is the generally accepted name for an early medieval conglomerate of principalities subordinated to the prince of Kiev that existed in the 11th and early 12th centuries. The question of the legacy of "Kievan Rus" has existed since the 16th century. In the 19th century, Kievan Rus was "grabbed" by Russian historiography as the beginning of Russian statehood. Since the late 19th century, the right to the historical heritage of Kievan Rus has been disputed by Ukrainian historiography.

of ancient Russian statehood – either in Staraya Ladoga or in Novgorod[80]. Nevertheless, the history of Kievan Rus continues to be presented in school textbooks as part of Russian history.

2. Interpreting past conflicts:

   a. *The Battle of Konotop, 1659 – Cossack troops in alliance with Crimean Tatars fought against the Moscow army which culminated in the defeat of the Muscovites. This Battle is presented in modern Ukraine as a victory of Ukrainian arms over Russia. The official celebration of the anniversary of this event in Ukraine in 2009 was interpreted by Russia as an unfriendly development.*

   b. *The Baturyn Massacre, 1708 – The destruction of the city of Baturyn, the capital of the Ukrainian Cossack hetmans, by troops led by Alexander Menshikov during the Northern War[81]. A significant part of the city's civilian population was exterminated. During the commemoration of the anniversary of the event in 2008, which took place during Viktor Yushchenko's presidency, this event was presented at the official level as a "genocide of Ukrainians". On this occasion, Russia's discontent was also officially declared.*

   c. *The Battle of Poltava, 1709 – In Ukraine, this event, in which Hetman Ivan Mazepa's supporters allied with the Swedish King Charles XII against Russia, is represented as a tragic episode that resulted in the loss of a possibility to gain independence. In Russia, the Battle of Poltava has traditionally been one of the most striking episodes attesting to the country's greatness and might, as well as the heroism of the Russian army and Peter the Great personally.*

   d. *The Battle of Kruty, January 1918 – Bolshevik troops, advancing on Kiev near Kruty railway station, defeated a militia unit composed mainly of cadets and students. Initially, this episode was presented as a tragedy and proof of the inability of the Ukrainian Central Rada [parliament] to organize military resistance. In the 1920s-30s, nationalists created a myth about the "300 Ukrainian Spartans" who died in an unequal battle for Ukraine's independence. Since Yushchenko, laying flowers on the grave of the Heroes of Kruty on the anniversary of the*

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[80] For more details, see A. Tolochko's material in: G. Kasyanov, V. Smoliy, O. Tolochko. Ukrajina v rosiys'komu istorychnomu dyskursi: problem doslidzhennya ta interpretaciji/ NAN Ukrajini. Instytut istoriji Ukrajini, K, 2013, p. 109–124.

[81] The Northern War (1700–1721) was a dynastic conflict that escalated into a large-scale war between the Kingdom of Sweden and the Union of Northern and Eastern European states. Russia took an active part in the war. Military operations took place in the territory of modern Ukraine, including a major battle between the Swedish and Russian troops near Poltava in 1709.

event has become a mandatory state ritual. During the "Revolution of Dignity", participants in the revolts and clashes with government forces wrote on their barricades: "Here is our Kruty". Currently, the myth of the Heroes of Kruty is seen as a precedent for a heroic struggle against Russian aggression and has been made to seem all the more urgent by the ongoing war in the east of the country.

e. *The military actions of Soviet Russia against the Ukrainian People's Republic, 1918–1920 – Modern official representations in Ukraine refer to the correlation between events of that period and Russia's current aggression against Ukraine.*

4. The famine of 1932–1933 (the Holodomor) in the Ukrainian SSR and the general assessment of the Soviet period – Since 2003, attempts by the Ukrainian political leadership to achieve recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people at the level of international organizations (the UN, UNESCO, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) have been consistently blocked through Russian diplomacy. The issue of interpreting the Holodomor as genocide of Ukrainians was the central topic of the memory wars of 2007–2009. Assessments of the Soviet period radically differ between the two countries. In Russia, following the radical criticism of Stalinism in the 1990s, the emphasis has shifted. The Soviet period has been recognized as a tragic but important period in the development of the country, and Vladimir Putin has repeatedly called the collapse of the Soviet Union the largest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth-century. In Ukraine, the official historical discourse mainly presents the Soviet period as one of Ukrainian loss, tragedy, and suffering. This trend became part of official policy after the official process of "decommunization" began in April 2015.

5. The Second World War and the Ukrainian Nationalist Movement, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), 1939–1954[82] – The official Russian position holds that the Great Patriotic War was the greatest event of the twentieth-century, and the myth of

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[82] **The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)** was established in 1929 as an alliance of right-wing radical Ukrainian organizations of Western Ukraine and the diaspora. The organization adhered to the idea of a permanent national revolution, understood as an armed underground struggle for the liberation of the Ukrainian nation and the creation of an independent state. In its activities, the OUN used methods of political terror. **Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)**, a partisan army established under the leadership of the OUN in Western Ukraine in October 1942. The UPA proclaimed the goal of creating an independent Ukrainian state. During the Second World War, the UPA fought against the Polish underground and the Home Army [Armia Krajowa] and periodically opposed the Germans. With

the "Great Victory" shapes the whole system of the historical politics of the Russian ruling class. In Ukraine, this type of commemoration still remains attractive for a large part of the population, especially in the eastern and south-eastern regions. Since 2015, at the official level, the focus has been restricted to the "victory over Nazism in the Second World War", while pointing out that Ukraine was at the epicenter of the struggle between the two totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin.

In a continuation of the traditions of Soviet propaganda, the OUN and the UPA are represented in Russia as collaborators and allies of the occupying regime responsible for crimes against humanity. In Ukraine, the myth of the OUN and UPA presents them as irreproachable fighters for Ukraine's freedom and independence, battling against those same totalitarian regimes. Initially, this myth was nourished in western Ukraine but since the mid-2000s, it had been transmitted to central and even eastern Ukraine, where it has created serious cultural and political conflicts. Since 2014, promoting the heroic myth of the OUN and UPA at the national level has become part of state historical policy.

6. Individual personalities, the most vivid examples of which are Ivan Mazepa, Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevych.

   a. In the Russian historical mythology, Hetman Mazepa is the traitor who went over to the side of the enemy, the Swedish king Charles XII. Mazepa has been subject to anathema reaching as far back as the imperial period, but a tradition that sees him as an anti-hero survived the Soviet era and has been inherited by modern Russian elites. By contrast, in modern Ukraine Mazepa is one of the main figures of the national Pantheon. His portrait is on the 10 UAH banknote and streets are named after him.

   b. Stepan Bandera, the leader of the radical faction of the revolutionary OUN and Roman Shukhevych, a member of the OUN and the commander-in-chief of the UPA in 1943–1950, are the stock villains of Russian historical politics. These names symbolize all the worst things associated with the activities of the OUN and UPA. In Ukraine, these two were made into cult figures in the western regions, and in 2007–2010, there were some largely unsuccessful attempts to turn them into national-scale figures. After 2014, the myth of Bandera and Shukhevych, who encapsulate the struggle of Ukrainians for independence, has been largely supported by the central bodies

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the advent of Soviet rule in Western Ukraine, it also took part in hostilities against the Soviets. It operated actively until 1949.

of Ukrainian state power. It should be noted that the promotion at the national level of the myths of the OUN, the UPA, Bandera, and Shukhevych provokes conflicts beyond Russia – although in this case the conflict only serves to strengthen the influence of the myth. Poland and Israel both take issue with these figures, as the two countries consider these organizations and people to be involved in genocide and crimes against humanity. All-European organizations have also expressed "regret" over honoring the OUN figures[83].

Part 2. Examples

In this section, we will provide examples of the genealogy and development of conflicts between Russia and Ukraine over the interpretation and representation of the past and will also assess attempts at cooperation in the field of "common history".

THE HOLODOMOR

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Ukrainian political and cultural elites developed a representation of the famine of 1932–1933 in the Ukrainian SSR as an act of genocide committed by Stalin's regime against the Ukrainian people. This commemorative strategy, enacted both domestically and internationally, has been a major irritant for Russia. The approach contains latent and sometimes outright accusations against Russia, conforming as it does to the general trend of representing Ukrainian-Russian relations as a practice of domination, colonial exploitation, and assimilation of Ukrainians by Russia. In addition, recognizing the Holodomor as the main Ukrainian tragedy of the twentieth-century is central to denying the legitimacy of the entire Soviet experience. In Russia, the correct interpretation sees the famine in the USSR as an all-Union phenomenon. Launching accusations against Moscow by isolating the Holodomor as a specific "genocide of Ukrainians" is viewed as a political, anti-Russian, and manipulative.

The Russian leadership, with a nostalgia for the USSR that it shared with a significant part of the population, perceived the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to internationalize the Holodomor and emphasizing its status as a genocide. Russians asserted that this was a ploy to, *first*, obtain a special international status as the nation that had suffered the most during the Soviet era while at the same time

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[83] The European Parliament's resolution of February 25, 2010, on the situation in Ukraine expressed "deep regret" over Viktor Yushchenko's decision to award Stepan Bandera the title of Hero of Ukraine. European Parliament resolution of 25 February 2010 on the situation in Ukraine, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef= –//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010–0035+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

denying Ukraine's "common historical heritage" with Russia. *Second*, it was viewed as a step towards a further separation from Russia, an attempt to escape its political and cultural influences. *Third*, the effort was seen as an anti-Russian action aimed at discrediting Russia as the heir to the USSR. This last aspect was especially sensitive given that, in the 2000s, Russia's top leaders were striving to promote a positive image of Russia in the West and to restore the country's image as one of the world's leading powers.

Russian officials and politicians at all levels, as well as the over-whelming majority of public intellectuals and scholars, were deeply dissatisfied with the statements by Ukrainian politicians (mostly from the "national-democratic" and right-wing groups) about Russia's special historical guilt towards Ukraine. These speakers frequently demanded an apology and in some cases even required reparations for losses caused by the Soviet Union[84].

Russians find the ethnically negative stereotypes and anti-Russian motives to be extremely hurtful, not only in the statements about the Holodomor by politicians, but also in studies that claim to be scholarly, textbooks, and various kinds of visual representations[85].

Yushchenko, who initiated the campaign to turn the Holodomor into a symbol equivalent to the Holocaust, repeatedly stressed in

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[84]   The most telling examples of such rhetoric follow: Addressing the parliamentary hearings dedicated to the victims of the famine of 1932–1933, Ivan Drach, the famous Ukrainian poet from the "sixties" generation, a member of the Our Ukraine faction, said, "and when it comes to all this, this terrible tragedy of the last century, which has so broken the back-bone of the Ukrainian nation, that it has still not been able to recover, first of all we should talk about one state – Russia. It has always sent waves here, from Peter's Menshikov to the same Muravyov who shot our students at Kruty and who shot Grushevsky's house. If we do not understand all this, but conceal it and wrap it all in pieces of paper, we will not understand anything. And we should know that this 349th year of Russia in Ukraine, and not for the first time, is also the anniversary of the famine of 1932–1933. [Applause] And it is understandable that before holding its Year of Culture, the state should extend some kind of apology, some kind of repentance for all that has taken place over the centuries, because these are the kinds of relations that existed between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. And we have not heard this repentance. Unfortunately, we also did not hear it ten years ago from Yeltsin, although attempts were made to do this. This has not happened. Of course, Putin, who is more militant and chauvinistic than his predecessor, also has not done this. And we must understand it. If we do not understand all this, my dear friends, how can we talk about normal relations between Russia and Ukraine? [Applause]. See: Par-laments'ki sluhannya shhodo vshanuvannya pam'yati zhertv golodomoru 1932–1933 rokiv (Stenografichnyj zvit).: http://lib.rada.gov.ua/static/LIBRARY/povni_text/parlament_sluhan/golodomor.html#ДРАЧ

        Further, Yaroslav Kendzor, a parliamentary deputy, who was a participant in the dissident movement of the 1960s and 1970s, a co-author of one of the draft laws on the criminalization of the denial of the Holodomor as a genocide, and a member of the presidential faction in the parliament, remarked in August 2008 that "the Ukrainian authorities require the legal successor of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, to bear moral and material responsibility for this terrible act of mass human death. Our neighbor should be taught to build relations in a civilized way." See: NUNS: yesli OON nazovyot Golodomor genotsydom, s Rossii mozhno trebovat' deneg, https://www.segodnya.ua/ukraine/nunc-ecli-oon-nazovet-holodomor-henotsidom-c-roccii-mozhno-trebovat-deneh.html

[85]   A few examples follow: On can find plenty of polemic essays from the second half of the

his speeches and public statements that neither he nor Ukraine as a state made any claims against Russia. On November 24, 2006, in an interview with Russian media outlets, Yushchenko stated explicitly that Ukraine was not condemning Russia for the famine of 1932–1933. "It is not a question of assigning blame," he said, "because the state and the regime that caused this tragedy do not exist anymore. The Ukrainian and Russian peoples are both the victims of this tragedy."[86] On July 8, 2008, at a press conference held during his visit to Austria, he reiterated that Ukraine does not condemn Russia for the tragedy of 1932–1933. When speaking at the general debate of the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2008, he said that Ukraine's desire to commemorate the victims of the famine of 1932–1933 "is not directed against any people or state."

Russian politicians expressed great concern over the attempts of Ukrainian leaders to internationalize the "genocide" narrative of the Holodomor. In early November 2006, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Ukrainian media outlets that there are two acute problems in the Russian-Ukrainian relations: the status of the Russian language and the Holodomor[87]. Three weeks later, the Ukrainian parliament, through the combined vote of the opposition and Socialist deputies, passed a law designating the Holodomor as a genocide of the Ukrainian people.

1990s and the early 2000s in publications such as, for example, A. Kulish. Kniga pam'yati ukrainciv: Ukrajina 1932–1933 rr. Korotkyj perelik zlochyniv moskovs'kogo imperializmu v Rusi- Ukrajini. – Harkiv, 1996. One popular scholarly publications, with a circulation of 3,000 copies, indicates, without reference to general factual data, that the majority of urban workers who "headed to Ukrainian villages to find bread" were ethnic Russians – and that the "military units and other security forces that consisted mainly of ethnic Russians, were employed as forced collectivization, dekulakization, and food requisitioning detachments in Ukraine during the Holodomor." See: Panchenko P., Vivcharyk M., ta in. (2003), Smertyu smert' podolaly: Golodomor v Ukrajini 1932–1933, Kiev: Ukrajina, p. 48.

In the section of the 10th grade textbook devoted to collectivization and the famine of 1932–1933, you can read that "the smell of rotting flesh has not yet disappeared in the empty Ukrainian houses when trains full of settlers were already being sent from the other republics of the USSR, especially from Russia". See: Turchenko F.G (2002), Novitnya istoriya Ukrajini (10 klas). ch.1., Kiev, p. 282.

The commentary to the photo exhibition displayed on the wall of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, near which there is a memorial plaque dedicated to the victims of the Holodomor, contain explicit reminders of the fact that Ukrainian villages deserted during the famine of 1932–1933 were repopulated with settlers from Russia. As a side note, at the time, the policy of resettlement to villages affected by the famine was not ethnically oriented, and it was pursued in all of the regions of the USSR. Finally, the documentary-journalistic film "The Holodomor: Ukraine's 20th Century, the Technology of Genocide" (2005), which is shown as part of the curriculum in secondary schools, contains many statements that can certainly be described as Russophobic.

[86] Yuschenko: The country responsible for the Holodomor does not exist, http://www.rbc.ru/politics/24/11/2006/5703bd079a7947afa08cb1ff

[87] Lavrov: Ukraine and Russia have two problems – Holodomor and languages, http://podrobnosti.ua/365437-lavrov-u-ukrainy-i-rossii-dve-problemy-golodomor-i-jazyki.html

Memorial to the victims of the Holodomor, built in 2008–2009. Kiev, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

2007 saw the preparations for a large-scale campaign to commemorate the Holodomor held under the slogan: "Ukraine Remembers, the World Recognizes". At the first meeting of the international Coordinating Council for the preparation of the campaign, Yushchenko said, "our goal is to gain world recognition for the Holodomor as a genocide. Above all else, this refers to the adoption of the relevant resolutions or decisions by the United Nations, the European Parliament, the European Union, and the OSCE." On March 28, 2007, in his decree "On Events Related to the 75th Anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine", Yushchenko demanded we "take additional measures to ensure the recognition by the international community, in particular the General Assembly of the United Nations and the European Parliament, of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as a genocide of the Ukrainian people." [88]

In 2007–2010, a real diplomatic war unfolded between Ukraine and Russia. On November 1, 2007, the 34th session of UNESCO's General Conference, which included 193 participating countries, responded to the initiative of the Ukrainian delegation and unanimously adopted the resolution to memorialize the victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine. However, Ukrainian efforts aimed at integrating the term "genocide" into the resolution failed. The first version of the

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[88] See, for example: Prezident Ukraini obratil'sya k mirovomu ukrainstvu po sluchayu 75-y godovshchiny Golodomora, https://www.ostro.org/general/society/news/40954/

resolution did not contain this term, mentioning only the "Great Famine in Ukraine."[89] Moreover, the resolution mentioned other famine-affected regions of the USSR. Adjustments had been made to the resolution as a result of the efforts of the Russian delegation. All the same, Russia did not sign the document.

On November 30 of the same year, at a meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid, a Ukraine-initiated joint statement was issued on the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor, which again did not contain the term "genocide"[90]. The Russian delegation did not sign this statement but instead issued its own, which stated that millions of Soviet citizens of different nationalities were victims of the famine, and that it would be unfair to claim that only ethnic Ukrainians had been exterminated[91].

Later in April 2008, during the preparation for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA), the Ukrainian side proposed adopting a document that designated the famine as a genocide[92]. Again, the document was opposed by representatives of the Russian Federation. In May, the Preparatory Commission adopted a compromise version of the OSCE PA statement. Ultimately, in August 2008, the OSCE PA adopted a resolution expressing sympathy for the tragedy Ukrainians had experienced in 1932–1933 as well as supporting Ukraine's efforts to popularize knowledge about the famine. In addition, the OSCE PA called on the parliaments of different countries around the world to take measures to recognize the Holodomor. One of Ukraine's Russian-language online media outlets commented on this resolution as by asking, "has the Holodomor been lost?"

In May 2007, Yuri Sergeyev, the permanent representative of Ukraine to the UN, spoke at the informal thematic debates of the 61st session of the UN General Assembly. He called to for the UN to respond to the 75th anniversary of the Great Famine [the Holodomor] by adopting the "relevant document". He did not specify the desired status of the document but noted that Ukraine was not raising accusations against any particular country, and that instead this was a question of accusing a totalitarian regime[93].

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[89]   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Item 14.3 of the provisional agenda. 34 C/50, 8 October, 2007. Remembrance of victims of the Great Famine (the Holodomor) in Ukraine, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001538/153838e.pdf

[90]   Statement by the delegation of Ukraine, http://www.osce.org/mc/33180?download=true

[91]   Ibid.

[92]   More than six months before, Ukrainian President Yushchenko asked OSCE PA President Goran Lennmarker to assist in recognizing the Holodomor as an act of genocide. See: Goran Lennmarker "In the political history of Ukraine there has been enough involvement from outside."

[93]   "Ukraine calls upon the United Nations," http://women.lucorg.com/news.php/news/2441/

In October 2007, Peter Dotsenko, the representative of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry to the UN, said that Ukraine would seek the recognition of the famine of 1932–1933 as a genocide against the Ukrainian people[94]. On September 22, 2008, the Ukrainian delegation withdrew this issue from the agenda "given that this issue is being considered in other world forums."[95] According to the Russian side, however, the issue was withdrawn due to a total lack of support from other delegations. On September 24, 2008, at the end of his speech addressed during the general debate of the 63rd session and mostly focused on the worsening political conditions around the world, the Ukrainian president recalled the famine of 1932–1933 and, claiming that it had 10 million victims, noted that "it had the characteristics of a genocide". He also mentioned other affected nations and called on the UN to commemorate "every national tragedy".

The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that the draft resolution "Remembrance of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine" had been withdrawn by the Ukrainian delegation due to lack of support from other countries. "The Russian Foreign Ministry stresses again," the statement said, "that the attempts by the Ukrainian leaders to internationally formalize the interpretation of the events of 1932–1933 in the territory of the former USSR as a genocide of the Ukrainian people are politicized and aim at sowing discord between the fraternal nations of Russia and Ukraine. We consider it blasphemous that that Kiev is exploiting the memory of millions of victims of the tragedy that befell the peoples of the former Soviet Union."[96]

The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs then presented its version of what was happening: "The Russian Federation," the ministry said in its statement, "using the levers of influence afforded by its permanent membership on the UN Security Council, is attempting, through blatant pressure and blackmail, to deprive a UN member state of its right to include an issue important to it on the agenda of the UN – the most representative organization in the world [...]. The unconstructive position of the Russian Federation contradicts the attempts of the world community to assess the nature of the Holodomor."[97]

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's refusal to attend official events held in Kiev on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the

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[94] Prezident Ukrajini zaklykav chleniv OON vyznaty Golodomor genocidom, https://gazeta.ua/articles/politics/_ukrayina-prosit-oon-viznati-golodomor-genocidom/187482

[95] MZS glyboko oburyvsya, shho Rosiya znevazhlyvo posmiyalas' z jih dobroty, https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2008/09/25/3568450/

[96] MID Rosii: Ukraina otozvala iz OON rezolyutsiyu po Golodomoru, http://news.bigmir.net/world/51941

[97] MZS zvynuvachuye Rosiyu u pereshkodzhanni rozglyadu Golodomoru v OON, www.pravda.com.ua/news/2008/10/24/83412.htm

famine can be considered the apotheosis of the Ukrainian-Russian confrontation over the internationalization of the Holodomor, and this act has been viewed as an extremely telling political action. The Russian president not only refused the invitation, but also issued a "message" to President Yushchenko. The text of this document can be considered a kind of compendium of all the standard statements of the Russian Foreign Ministry concerning the all-Union character of the tragedy. It also includes the corresponding rhetoric, making use of expressions like "cynical and immoral" and indicating that the position of the highest Ukrainian leaders sows discord between the "fraternal nations". In this vein, the commemoration of the Holodomor was explicitly mentioned in the context of Ukraine's efforts to enter the "NATO preparatory class." [98]

The conflict over the Holodomor ended in 2010 when Viktor Yanukovych, who superseded Yushchenko as president of Ukraine, publicly abandoned the idea of recognizing the famine as an act of genocide against Ukrainians. On April 27, 2010, at the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, Yanukovych said that "to recognize the Holodomor factually as a genocide against a particular people would be wrong and unjust." [99] The statement was made the day before the PA was scheduled to consider a report on the famine of 1932–1933 and adopt a resolution that remained under discussion between the Ukrainian participants in the session and their Russian opponents thanks to the use of the term "genocide". In May of the same year, Medvedev paid an official visit to Kiev and together with Yanukovich laid flowers on the memorial to the victims of the Holodomor.

OUN, UPA AND "UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM"

The theme of Ukrainian nationalism, and the organizations and individuals representing this movement, is the most acute and controversial point in Ukrainian-Russian relations. In Ukraine, as far back as the early 1990s, the OUN and UPA had been included in school textbooks as a positive example of the struggle for national liberation. In the 1990s and the early 2000s, the myth of the heroic sacrifices of the OUN and UPA was dominant in the memorial spaces of Western Ukraine. In all of the regional centers in this part of the country, toponyms and memorials associated with the nationalist movement have arisen, and twenty-five museums dedicated to the movement and its leaders have been created [100].

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[98] Medvedev napisal poslaniye Yushchenko, https://forum.md/ru/837594

[99] Yanukovich skazav deputatam PASE, shho Golodomor – ne genocid, http://eunews.unian. net/ukr/detail/193461

[100] Harhun V. (2016), Radyans'ka spadshhyna yak ob'yekt polityky pam'yati v Ukrajini (muzejnyj aspekt), Agora, Vyp. 17, p. 86.

A monument to Stepan Bandera, Lviv, October 2016. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

The rise of Yushchenko to power coincided with attempts to bring the myth of the OUN and UPA to the national level. The anniversaries of leaders of the OUN and UPA began to be celebrated based on the initiative of the president and with the active support of nationalists and national democrats. Both Roman Shukhevych and his son Yuri Shukhevych were awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine. This state order was also given to Yaroslav Stetsko, who headed the Bandera faction of the OUN in 1991–2001. In addition, there are also stamps and commemorative coins dedicated to figures of the OUN. On January 1, 2008 in Kiev, the far-right political party, the All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda" [freedom], organized the first torchlight procession commemorating Stepan Bandera. Since then, this ritual has been held annually. In addition, there have been attempts to equate the status of the OUN and UPA veterans with the status of veterans of the Second World War, and legislation has been drafted on the "participants in the national liberation movement." All these attempts run into resistance from the bearers and promoters of the narrative of Soviet nostalgia, primarily the Communists, the Party of Regions, and their external ally, Russia.

In the 2000s, Russian political and cultural elites chose the myth of the Great Patriotic War and the "Great Victory" as the central constitutive arena of memory. Inherited from the Soviet past, this myth became an important component of the evaluation of all historical experience of this period. In its context, the OUN, UPA, and the leaders of the Ukrainian nationalist movement have been represented exclusively as Nazi collaborators, traitors to the Ukrainian people, backstabbing champions of Nazism, and war criminals. As in the case of the Holodomor, efforts in Ukraine to promote the myth of the heroic sacrifices of the OUN and UPA as if they were fighters against two forms of totalitarianism, Hitlerite and Stalinist, were represented by Moscow as an attempt to "drive a wedge" between Russia and Ukraine, between Russians and Ukrainians. And just as with the Holodomor, the institutions of the Russian state, primarily the Foreign Ministry, took a pro-active stance on the issue.

On December 14, 2007, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on "anti-Russian manifestations in Ukraine." Examples included the renaming of streets in Lviv, anti-Russian statements at the opening of the monument to victims of the Holodomor in Zaporozhia, acts of vandalism directed against monuments to Soviet soldiers in the western regions of the country as well as the bust of Pushkin in Lviv, and an arson attack on the Russian cultural center in Lviv[101]. The statement, presented a nearly-ten-year chronicle of

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[101] In 1996, Lermontov Street was renamed after Dudayev and Pushkin Street after General

"anti-Russian manifestations", which it represented as an escalation of "frankly nationalistic, anti-Russian, and Russophobic sentiments and manifestations in Ukraine." The statement contended that this was "actually about attempts to use difficult periods of our common history to obtain momentary political benefits for dubious ideological attitudes." The statement mentions "certain political forces in Ukraine, which deliberately encourage such actions and thereby aggravate Russian-Ukrainian relations." There was an expectation that "not only the authorities but also the Ukrainian intelligentsia, veterans, and young people should weigh in on the debate. It is time to stand up to such nationalistic antics." [102]

In June 2008, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued an even lengthier "commentary" that claimed it was motivated by a desire to "protect the rights of its fellow country-men." The statement concerned an appeal to the president by the head of the Russian community of the Ukrainian district of Ivano-Frankivsk. However, this appeal was addressed, not to the president of Ukraine, but to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. It concerned a ceremony honoring veterans of the Nazi SS Galicia division, which had been held at the local music and drama theater in late May.

In the Russian Foreign Ministry's commentary, the incident in Ivano-Frankivsk was called a "sacrilegious act" by Ukrainian radical nationalist organizations, a gross insult to the Russian residents of Ivano-Frankivsk "who had paid in blood for the liberation of Ukraine from the Nazi invaders." The statement expressed extreme surprise at the position of the local officials who actually supported honoring "ex-SS men, who had executed hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Belarusians, and people of other nationalities."

In addition, a whole series of complaints were lodged against Ukraine's official historical policy. These included the conferment of the title of Hero of Ukraine to Shukhevych, who was a "captain of SS troops," wars waged against the monuments to "our common history, the graves of Soviet soldiers-liberators", the intention to place "Nazi criminals and militants of the OUN-UPA" on the same footing as veterans of the Great Patriotic War, and the initiatives of

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Chuprynka. The arson attack on the doors of the Russian Cultural Center occurred in May 2001. Responsibility was assumed by an organization called the "Galician wolves", which has never appeared anywhere else, neither before nor after the incident. A report on alleged anti-Russian and anti-Semitic statements made by a representative of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists at the opening of the monument to Holodomor victims in November 2007 turned out to be disinformation. According to information from the prosecutor's office, no such representative was present at the ceremony. In 2005 and 2007, the bust of Pushkin placed on the facade of the Russian Cultural Center in Lviv actually was attacked by vandals.

[102] Foreign Ministry in connection with anti-Russian manifestations in Ukraine, http://www.mid.ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/-/asset_publisher/t2GCdmD8RNIr/content/id/354198

"Ukrainian nationalists and their promoters" to cancel celebrations of the victory over "fascist Germany."

The document went on to say that "in Russia, we hope that Ukraine's official authorities, which declare adherence to democratic European values, will realize all the harmful effects that result from the glorification of SS men and put an end to attempts to reevaluate the results of the Second World War."[103] The statement also contained an appeal to international organizations (UN, PACE). It was at this time that the Russian Foreign Ministry initiated the long-standing saga of drafting and promoting a resolution against the glorification "Nazi collaborators". A draft of such a resolution that was submitted to the UN in November 2008 was eventually approved in December 2012. The resolution itself was adopted in 2015[104].

The document even specified a specific object: "On the official website of the president of Ukraine, there are a growing number of decrees drumming into the minds of Ukrainian citizens a radically updated list of 'significant dates' from the history of Ukraine." These dates were listed below: the decree "On Additional Measures to Recognize the 20th Century Ukrainian Liberation Movement", which included the Ukrainian Military Organization (one of the precursors of the OUN), the Carpathian Sich (the armed formations of Carpatho-Ukraine), the OUN, the UPA, and the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (USLC). The proposed list ended with the following statement: "It is strange that they have not yet issued a decree in support of Ivan Demjanjuk, given the fact that the Lviv regional council has officially advocated on the side of this war criminal, who is awaiting a verdict in Germany on a charge of the exterminating Jews in Hitler's concentration camps."[105]

In the winter of 2010, high-level Russian political leaders gained

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[103] The commentary of the Russian MFA Information and Press Department in connection with the message from Alexander Volkov, the head of the Russian community of the Ivano-Frankivsk Region, Ukraine, to President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev on June 23, 2008, http://www.mid.ru/kommentarii/-/asset_publisher/2MrVt3CzL5sw/content/id/333128

[104] Glorification of Nazism: inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, http://www.un.org/en/ga/67/resolutions.shtml

[105] In August 2009, the Lviv regional council asked Yushchenko to speak in defense of John [born Ivan] Demjanjuk. In the 1980s, Demjanjuk's case was representative of the search for Nazi criminals who had committed crimes against humanity. He was accused of participating in the extermination of Jews as a guard in the Treblinka death camp. In 1988, Demjanjuk was deported from the United States and sentenced to death in Israel. However, in 1993, the Israeli Supreme Court overturned the verdict as there was evidence that Demjanjuk had been mistaken for another person, and in 1998, his US citizenship was restored. However, in 2001 he was again accused of committing crimes against humanity in the Sobibor, Majdanek, and Flossenburg camps. In 2009, he was extradited to Germany and sentenced to five years in prison. Demjanjuk filed an appeal but died at the age of ninety-two before he could see the result. In this regard, his sentence was annulled.

another opportunity to comment on Ukraine's historical policy. Prime Minister Putin described the decision to award the title of Hero of Ukraine to Bandera as leaders of the "color revolution" spitting in the face of their sponsors. This was a clear reference to his assertion that the Americans and the European Union had been behind Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution[106].

The theme of "Ukrainian nationalism" in the context of the memory wars even remained on the agenda after the rise to power of Viktor Yanukovych and the Party of Regions, otherwise a period of relative warming in Russian-Ukrainian relations. Yanukovych had managed to somewhat ease tensions between the two countries, both through concrete efforts, such as the Kharkov agreements on the Black Sea Fleet of Russia and the adoption of a new law on language, and symbolic actions.

In March 2010, Yanukovych publicly promised to "make a decision" on Yushchenko's decrees on conferring the title of Hero of Ukraine to Bandera and Shukhevych. Soon after the Victory Day celebrations, he did in fact make a decision, although not the one that was expected of him. On May 14, 2010, addressing a meeting of the Public Humanitarian Council under the President of Ukraine, he said that it was necessary to reach mutual understandings in relation to historical figures who had caused conflicts in society. He spoke further in favor of a "gradual and delicate approach" to dealing with such issues[107]. It proved easy to adhere to a gradual and delicate approach, particularly as the Donetsk courts had already abolished the aforementioned Yushchenko decrees in April.

Part 3. After the Revolution of Dignity: history as practice

The Euromaidan protests, which started in November 2013 as a protest against Yanukovych's unwillingness to sign association agreements with the EU, escalated into a broader protest movement against his authority in December 2013. His all too clearly pro-Russian policy was one of the main irritants. A significant part of the Ukrainian population saw the Kharkov agreements and the unsigned association agreements as an instance of Russia undermining their national sovereignty[108]. Already in December 2013, anti-government

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[106] "Putin Calls Naming Bandera a Hero "Spit in the Face," http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/life/_putin-nazval-quotplevkom-v-licoquot-ob-yavlenie-bandery-geroem/327384?mobile=true

[107] Yanukovych was named the "greatest destructive force" in Ukraine, www.unian.net/rus/news/news-376684.html

[108] Agreements between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the issue of the Black Sea Fleet being stationed in Crimea. They were signed on April 21, 2010 in Kharkov and denounced by Russia in April 2014 after the annexation of Crimea.

and anti-Putin slogans coexisted on the central square of Kiev, Independence Square or simply the *Maidan*.

HISTORY ON THE MAIDAN

Participants in the protests turned to historical experience as a means of ideological support, and a transition from a narrative of sacrifice to one of heroism was an important outcome of the Maidan. The famine of 1932–1933, previously dominant in the representations of the past performed by the opposition, was rarely mentioned, and elements connected with military mobilization and active struggle came to the fore.

The Cossack myth turned out to be one of the most popular. It contended that the Maidan's self-defense forces had inherited Cossack traditions. Its participants were divided into "hundreds", which was the term for military units of the Cossack army, and they called each other "sworn brothers" – another Cossack term[109]. The practices of representation of the hundreds were full of Cossack symbolism. Actual Cossack hundreds also participated in the protests, and Cossack Gavrilyuk, one of the most famous people to come out of the Maidan, was a member of this group. One of the barricades on the Khreshchatyk street was called the "Cossack redoubt", and some hundreds were called the "Sich", a reference to the historical military and administrative centers of the various Cossack hosts.

The nationalist myth played an equally important role. Nationalists were represented on the Maidan by various organizations, such as Svoboda, Bandera's OUN, Stepan Bandera Trident (Tryzub) (the organization founded the Right Sector), Ukrainian National Self-Defense, and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists. In December 2013, a large portrait of Bandera was installed in the central part of the Maidan, and the OUN motto – "Glory to Ukraine, Glory to Heroes!" – was accepted by the protesters as a general slogan of the movement. Another nationalist slogan, "Glory to the nation! – Death to the enemies!", referring to the experience of the UPA's guerrilla war, was announced almost daily from the Maidan stage.

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[109] In this case, the word "hundreds" does not necessarily mean the presence of a hundred people, there could be more or less of them. By the end of protests in late February 2014, there were 42 hundreds on the Maidan.

The base of the Lenin monument on Bessarabskaya Square, Kiev, July 2017.
Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

A distinctive feature of Ukrainian historical policy during Yanukovych's term involved the intensive promotion of the discourse of Soviet nostalgia in public spaces. Therefore, part of the protest was a direct criticism of him. The most significant manifestation of this process was the destruction of monuments to Lenin. The "Leninopad", meaning the fall of Lenin or "Leninfall", was provoked by right-wing organizations, primarily Svoboda, which had taken an active part in vandalism against monuments to Lenin in the years preceding Maidan. For example, it was Svoboda activists who led the crowd in on December 8, 2013, when the monument to Lenin was torn down in Kiev. This act became a model for those that followed. According to unconfirmed data, from December 2013 to February 20, 2014, 142 monuments were demolished. Isolated cases of demolition were recorded in Volhynia and in the south of the country. The most massive outbreak was recorded after Yanukovych's flight, and between February 21 and 23, 158 monuments were pulled down [110].

HISTORY AS A GEOPOLITICAL ARGUMENT: CRIMEA AND "NOVOROSSIA"

On April 4, 2008, Russia's top political leaders referred to historical arguments for the first time at a NATO summit, when prospects for bringing Georgia and Ukraine into the alliance were being discussed at a meeting in Bucharest. The main points of Russian Prime Minister Putin's speech concerning Ukraine can be summarized as follows: 1) Ukraine had received lands from other states, namely Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and "huge territories" in the east and south came from Russia. 2)"Crimea had been received by Ukraine based merely on the decision of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee. In fact, there had been no state procedures for transferring this territory." 3) Ukraine was a "complex state formation". If "NATO issues" and "other problems" were introduced into it, it might push this "formation" to the brink of collapse. 4) Finally, he reminded the summit that "seventeen million Russians live in Ukraine. Who can tell us that we do not have any interests there? The south of Ukraine, in its entirety, has only Russians." [111]

It is easy to see that all the themes he mentioned were later developed in 2014–2015. On March 18, 2014, when delivering his so-called "Crimean speech" in the State Duma, Putin, in fact, gave a lecture on the history of Crimea and Russia in which he outlined

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[110] Geografiya ta hronogiya "Leninopadu" v Ukrajini u 2014 roci: infografika, http://4vlada.com/rivne/33700

[111] Vladimir Putin's speech at the NATO summit in Bucharest on April 4, 2008, http://www.unian.net/politics/110868-vyistuplenie-vladimira-putina-na-sammite-nato-buharest-4-aprelya-2008-goda.html

his vision of past and present events. Having called the Russian people, as a consequence of the collapse of the USSR, the world's largest divided nation, he said that in 1991, Crimea was transferred to Ukraine "like a sack of potatoes", and that it was "a flagrant act of historical injustice." He went on to describe the 1954 decision as illegal. The speech was, in fact, an introduction to the procedure for signing the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Crimea on the Accession of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation and on Forming New Constituent Entities within the Russian Federation.

In August 2014, Putin turned to the Crimean theme again. At the 2014 Seliger Youth Forum, he said that the annexation of Crimea to Russia had restored "historical justice."[112] At a concert on Red Square dedicated to the anniversary of the annexation, officially called "reunification" in Russia, President Putin told the audience that Crimea was not just a strategically important territory but a place where millions of our fellow countrymen live and where the springs of Russian spirituality and statehood are found[113]. A year later he reiterated the thesis that millions of Russians had been waiting for years for the restoration of historical justice in the form of the reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia.

These historical exercises were not limited to Crimea. In his "Crimean speech" on March 18, 2014, Putin mentioned that after the revolution, the Bolsheviks had incorporated "significant areas of Russia's historic south into the Ukrainian Union Republic. All this was done without regard to the national composition of the inhabitants, and today, that area forms the south-east of Ukraine." Soon this passage about the "historic south" was transformed into the idea of "Novorossia".

Less than a month after this speech, the so-called "Russian spring" unfolded in the Donbas. This included the armed seizures of administrative buildings, state institutions, and the offices of law enforcement agencies. In some cases, they were carried out by well-organized and well-equipped professionals. Some of them came from Crimea. There were rallies and demonstrations under the slogans of "Putin, come!", and "Ukraine is Rus!"

On April 7, 2014, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) was proclaimed in Donetsk. On April 17, 2014, during the live-broadcast program *Direct Line with Vladimir Putin*, the Russian president first

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[112] Putin called the annexation of Crimea "restoration of historical justice", http://www.unian.net/politics/956925-putin-nazval-anneksiyu-kryima-vosstanovleniem-istoricheskoy-spravedlivosti.html

[113] Putin delivered a speech at the concert in honor of the anniversary of the annexation of Crimea, http://www.interfax.ru/russia/430798

voiced his ideas on "Novorossia", which, according to him, included Kharkov, Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Odessa and Nikolayev[114]. The President of Russia stated that these lands had been given to Ukraine by the Bolsheviks, and he expressed concern about the rights of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens living in these territories. Regarding his readiness to help them protect their rights, Putin recalled that the Federation Council had endowed him with the right to use armed forces in Ukraine.

On April 24, 2014, the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) was proclaimed. In early May 2014, the DPR and LPR held referendums on independence. The Ukrainian authorities and the international community labeled them as illegitimate. On May 24, the leaders of the DPR and LPR announced the establishment of a federation with the telling name of "Novorossia". They even elected a "parliament" headed by Oleg Tsarev, the Deputy Chairman of the Party of Regions, who was living in Moscow at the time. Convened on May 24, 2014, the congress in Donetsk, where the People's Front of Novorossia was created, was attended by delegates from Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhia, Odessa, Luhansk, Nikolayev, Kharkov and Kherson. Only Dnepropetrovsk stood apart from the geography of the region proposed by Putin.

It is possible to judge what historians and public figures close to the authorities thought about Novorossia based on the speeches delivered at a round table organized by the Russian Historical Society titled "The History and Culture of Novorossia". Opening the meeting, Valery Fadeyev, the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Ekspert*, said that although "the name Novorossia has recently been made known to many people, it actually has a 250-year history." According to him, it was impossible to understand "the deep-seated causes of the reluctance of people today residing in the southeast of Ukraine to live as a part of Ukraine" without referring to the history of the region[115]. Vitaly Tretyakov, the Dean of the Higher School of Television at Moscow State University, said that Ukraine was an artificial formation where the Ukrainian minority in the southeast imposes its will on the Russian majority.

Yuri Petrov, the director of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, announced plans to write a "great work" on the history of Novorossia by late 2015. In an interview with a BBC correspondent, he stressed that this work would become the basis for a history textbook "for teachers of the region."

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[114] The Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20796

[115] The round table "The History and Culture of Novorossia" was held in Tsaritsyno, http://rushistory.org/sobytiya/kruglyj-stol-istoriya-i-kultura-novorossii-v-tsaritsyno.html

He explained that these plans stemmed from a "purely academic interest" while mentioning, however, that they were initiated by the war in the "region". The historian also explained to the correspondent that "Novorossia objectively exists as a historical and cultural phenomenon." [116]

Devoting his work to an "objectively existing phenomenon", historian Alexander Shubin wrote the "History of Novorossia" in a month [117]. As he himself put it, the book covered everything "from Targitay to Boroday", that is, from the Scythians until September 2014. The book had been written at the commission of the Russian Military Historical Society, and despite the obvious political situation surrounding the work, the historian insisted that he had done everything possible to remain within the framework of an academic study. "I was given a reason," he wrote, "not only to talk about a long historical path but also to speak about the events of 2014 in the language of a historian, not a propagandist." [118] The language of a propagandist, however, is clearly present in the preface to this book prepared on behalf of the Military Historical Society.

Ukrainian historians fully appreciated both the aspirations and the achievements of their colleagues, as well as the politics underpinning the resurrection of the term "Novorossia" in the first place. Shubin's book was harshly criticized, not so much for its content but rather for the context it appeared in [119]. Fedor and Galina Turchenko criticized the Novorossia project in a sharply polemic manner, calling it "the last manifestation of Russian imperialism." [120]

However, it was not possible to organize "mass support" for the project on the models of the referendums in Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk. In April 2014, in Kharkov, there was an ineffective attempt to repeat the Donbas scenario by seizing offices belonging to the authorities, which was accompanied by the proclamation of the Kharkov People's Republic. This attempt, however, was forcefully suppressed with the support of pro-Ukrainian forces. The tragic events that took place in Odessa on May 2, 2014 are another example of an unsuccessful attempt to implement the Novorossia project [121]. After

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[116] The Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences revives the concept of "Novorossiya", http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2014/07/140716_russia_ukraine_history_paper.shtml?print=1

[117] Shubin A. (2015), Istoriya Novorosii, M.: OLMA Media Grupp.

[118] On December 19, my book "History of Novorossia" was published, http://shubinav.livejournal.com/65433.html

[119] Ukrains'kyj naukovec' vidreaguvala na vydannya v RF "Istoriji Novorosiji", http://www.5.ua/suspilstvo/ukrainskyi-naukovets-vidreahuvala-na-vydannia-v-rf-istorii-novorosii-71517.html

[120] Turchenko F. Turchenko G. (2014), Proekt Novorossiya: 1764–2014. Yubiley na krovi, Zaporozh'ye: ZHN, p. 136.

[121] Street clashes in Odessa between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian demonstrators killed more

reaching agreements in Minsk, top Russian officials switched to the tactic of keeping the DPR and LPR within Ukraine as territories with a special autonomous status but fully controlled by Russia. Since then, the Novorossia project has lost its appeal. In May 2015, Tsarev said that the activities of the "authorities of Novorossia" had been frozen[122]. The "Novorossia" episode was weakly echoed in the recent statements of Alexander Zakharchenko, the leader of the self-proclaimed DPR, referring to plans to create the state of "Malorossiya", another pre-revolutionary term for parts of present-day Ukraine[123]. This "project", however, has not been supported by the Kremlin.

HISTORICAL POLITICS AFTER 2014

The annexation of Crimea and a wider set of Russian actions relating to the "Ukrainian issue", such as propaganda campaigns both in Russia and abroad, material support for separatists, including weapons, equipment, food, and direct military aid, and support of zones of instability in Ukraine and the war in the Donbas, have solidified a number of issues of historical policy in Ukraine. The main trends are as follows:

a. *A state policy of the "decommunization" of symbolic spaces, which in some cases is perceived as "de-Russification".*
b. *The expedited promotion of the nationalist historical narrative at the nationwide level.*
c. *The commemoration of new memorial dates drawn from contemporary history, including the Revolution of Dignity.*

Until 2014, historical politics in Ukraine had largely been determined through competition between two narratives of historical memory: the national/nationalist and the narrative of Soviet nostalgia[124]. After 2014, the bearers and promoters of the narrative of Soviet nostalgia were either politically marginalized or localized in territories beyond Kiev's control. These were favorable conditions for the marginalization of the narrative itself. Organizationally and technically, this trend was reinforced by changes in legislation and in the institutions of state power. The government body responsible for developing and implementing state historical policy, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM), was headed by Volodymyr Viatrovych. Alina Shpak was appointed as his deputy. Both of them were the founders

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than fifty people.

[122] V. Dergachev, D. Kirillov. The Novorossiya project is on hold, https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/05/19_a_6694441.shtml

[123] Zakharchenko announced the creation of Malorossiya, https://lenta.ru/news/2017/07/18/maloros/

[124] Here we mean that the national narrative is a standard version of ethnocentric history. The nationalist one, for its part, is the section of this narrative that focuses on the mythologization of the nationalist movement – the OUN, UPA and related movements and organizations.

and leaders of a public organization – the Lviv-based Center for the Study of the Liberation Movement (the Ukrainian abbreviation is CDRD) which has close ties with the Bandera sympathizing part of the Ukrainian diaspora in North America, and which is notable for its apologia of the OUN and UPA.

The UINM initiated and coordinated the development of four memorial laws that were adopted by the parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, on April 9, 2015 [125]. Development of the laws took about six months, and they were adopted as a "package" during a forty-minute meeting that more closely resembled a rally. The laws introduced significant changes in state historical policy.

1. *Decommunization became the official policy of the Ukrainian state. Positive public assessments of the Soviet period and its figures were banned, among other things, under the threat of criminal prosecution.*

2. *The glorification of organizations and individuals that participated in the "national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people" became state policy. The list of such organizations includes the OUN and its structures as well as the UPA. "Disrespectful attitudes" towards the participants of this struggle have been declared unlawful and are subject to administrative punishment.*

3. *The name and content of the main commemorative date of the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, Victory Day (May 9), have been changed. "The Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945" has turned into the "victory over Nazism in the Second World War of 1939–1945". The content of Victory Day has also been changed. Specifically, the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation (May 8) was introduced, which was meant to demonstrate that Ukrainian historical policy is coming in line with European practices.*

4. *At the level of the law, new legislation has been passed that guarantees access to the archives of "the repressive bodies of the communist totalitarian regime." The law also stipulates the creation of a specialized archive under the UINM which will contain the documents of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, Security Service of Ukraine, Foreign*

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[125] Zakon Ukrajiny Pro uvichnennya peremogy nad nacizmom u Drugij svitovij vijni 1939–1945 rokiv, vid 9 kvitnya 2015 r., № 315–19, http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/315–19; Zakon Ukrajiny "Pro pravovyj status ta vshanuvannya pam'yati borciv za nezalezhnist' Ukrajiny u XX stolitti", № 314–19, vid 9.04.2015, http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/314–19; Zakon Ukrajiny "Pro zasudzhennya komunistychnogo ta nacional-socialistychnogo (nacysts'kogo) totalitarnyh rezhymiv v Ukrajini ta zaboronu propogandy jihn'oji symvoliki", vid 09.04.2015, № 317–19, http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317–19; Zakon Ukrajiny "Pro dostup do arhiviv represyvnyh organiv komunistichnogo totalitarnogo rezhymu 1917–1991 rokiv, vid 09.04.2015, № 316–19, http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/316–19

Intelligence Service, Prosecutor General's Office, State Court Administration, State Penitentiary Service, and the Administration of the State Border Guard Service. Currently, access is only available to the archival materials of the Ukrainian Security Service, which was headed by Andrei Kohut, another ex-CDRD employee.

Victory Day (May 9) remains one of the most important sites of memory despite the policy of decommunization. "The Motherland Monument" at the Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War, Kiev, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

In essence, the decommunization policy focused on two main points: the actual ban on the Communist Party of Ukraine and the large-scale reformatting of symbolic space, which relied on renaming topographic objects and removing the sites of memory of the "communist regime". In July 2015, Minister of Justice Pavlo Petrenko signed orders excluding the CPU from the electoral process, and in December 2015, the CPU filed a lawsuit with the European Court of Human Rights [126].

The "decommunization" of public space was mainly completed by the end of 2016. According to the UINM report, in 2016, the names of 987 villages, towns, and cities, 25 regions were changed, along with 51.5 thousand toponyms. In addition, 2389 monuments and commemorative signs containing "propaganda of the totalitarian regime"

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[126] V Ukrajini oficijno zabororonyly KPU, http://tsn.ua/politika/v-ukrayini-oficiyno-zaboroni-li-kpu-462089.html

were dismantled[127]. These largely consisted of monuments to Lenin.

Attitudes toward "decommunization" in society have been ambiguous. It began under conditions when at least a third of the population, according to a sociological survey conducted in May 2014, regretted the collapse of the USSR. Furthermore, nostalgia for the Soviet Union is especially prevalent in the east: in central Ukraine, 33 % of respondents expressed regret, along with nearly half of respondents in the eastern and southern regions, and 60 % in the Donbas[128]. In August 2015, according to surveys conducted by the FAMA sociological agency, almost 90 % of respondents expressed a negative attitude towards "decommunization". Discontent was caused mainly by the administrative nature and "inappropriate timing" of the process (respondents believed that there were more pressing problems), as well as the lack of public discussion[129].

Changing the name of May 9 was supported by 57 % of respondents in Western Ukraine and 42 % in the central regions. In other regions, 47–50 % of respondents did not support this idea. 82 % of respondents in Western Ukraine and 58 % in the central part of the country support the condemnation of the "communist totalitarian regime" and the ban on its symbols. In the eastern and southern parts, 34 % and 30 % of respondents, respectively, expressed their support, while 36 % and 38 % did not support these actions. 76 % of respondents in the West and 46 % in the center supported the recognition of organizations specified in the text of one of the de-communization laws as fighters for independence, in particular OUN and UPA. In the east, 26.8 % supported this idea, 39.6 % did not support it. In the south, this ratio was 20.1 % to 24.4 %, and in the Donbas it was 21.1 % to 37.5 %.

In November 2016, another sociological survey confirmed the presence of notable regional discrepancies in regard to the "decommunization" policy. According to a survey conducted by the

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[127] Zvit ukrajins'kogo instytutu Nacional'noj' pam'yati z realizaciji derzhavnoj' polityky u sferi vidnovlennya i zberezjennya nacional'noj' pam'yati u 2016 roci, http://memory.gov.ua/page/zvit-ukrainskogo-institutu-natsionalnoi-pam-yati-z-realizatsii-derzhavnoi-politiki-u-sferi-vidn

[128] Pro rozpad SRSR dosi zhalkuje tretyna ukrajinciv, http://eu-bridge-ua.org/pro-rozpad-srsr-do-si-zhalkuye-tretina-ukrayintsiv/
    It is worth noting that nostalgia for the USSR was unlikely to be associated with ideological motives. This nostalgia was related primarily to a certain ideal image associated with stability, social justice, and a sense of perspective. Regret over the collapse of the USSR did not automatically mean a desire to restore it. The evidence is that the number of people supporting the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) steadily declined throughout the 2000s. According to a survey conducted by the Razumkov Center in September 2016, the creation of a union state consisting of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine as equal subjects was supported by 18 % and opposed by 69 %. See: Ukrajinci vyznachylysya shhodo chlenstva v NATO, JES, SND ta majbutnih vidnosyn z RF – opytuvannya, http://tyzhden.ua/News/174867

[129] Konflikt v media i media v konflikti, http://journalism.ucu.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Konflikt-v-media-i-media-v-konflikti-Fama-Serpen-Veresen-2015.pdf

sociological group Rating, 35 % of respondents across Ukraine expressed support for changing town and street names, while 57 % did not. If in Western Ukraine, supporters of renaming amounted to 63 %, in Central Ukraine this number dropped to 32 %, with 45 % opposed, in the southern regions, 19 % with 54 % opposed, and in the east, 18 %, with 65 % opposed [130]. At of the end of 2016, groups in both the central and south-eastern regions were attempting to challenge renaming efforts in court [131]. In the meantime, according to the results of another survey conducted in Ukraine by the Institute for Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the National Center for Culture in Poland, 58 % of respondents expressed a negative attitude toward "decommunization", while only 34 % of respondents viewed the policy positively [132].

"Decommunization" has been accompanied by an increasingly intensive promotion of the nationalist narrative which had previously been localized in the western regions of the country. For example, in 2015–2016, streets and avenues named after Bandera appeared in Bila Tserkva, Kiev, Sumy, Brovary, Zhitomir, Korosten, Khmelnitsky, Shepetivka, and Uman [133]. In the last city, the residents of the street in question opposed its renaming. The "Banderization" of streets is currently being discussed in Poltava and Cherkassy. In 2016, memorial signs to Bandera were erected by representatives of Svoboda in Cherkassy and Khmelnitsky without the consent of local authorities [134].

October 14, the symbolic date of the foundation of the UPA, was established by a decree of President Poroshenko as Defender's Day and replaces the "Soviet" date, which had been February 23. In February 2017, the UINM announced the launch of a "national information campaign in memory of the UPA." [135] It was aimed at promoting an idealized image of the UPA members as fighters who struggled against the two totalitarianisms of Stalin and Hitler. On social

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[130] Stavlennya do okremyh istorychnyh postatej ta processu dekomunizaciji v Ukrajini, http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/otnoshenie_k_otdelnym_istoricheskim_lichnostyam_i_processu_dekommunizacii_v_ukraine.html

[131] Zvit Ukrajins'kogo institutu nacional'noj polityky u sferi vidnovlennya i zberezhennya nacional'noj pamyyati u 2016 roci, http://memory.gov.ua/page/zvit-ukrainskogo-institutu-natsionalnoi-pam-yati-z-realizatsii-derzhavnoi-politiki-u-sferi-vidn

[132] Ukraińcy o historii, kulturze i stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich. Raport. Narodowe Centrum Kultury, http://www.nck.pl/projekty-badawcze-nck/318944-raport-ukraincy-o-historii-kulturze-i-stosunkach-polsko-ukrainskich/

[133] Zhytomyr proved to be pretty much the city in central Ukraine that was most "loyal to OUN". In the winter of 2016, in addition to the Bandera street, it saw the appearance of the streets named after O. Teliga, E. Konovalets, V. Kuk, M. Stsiborsky, and R. Shukhevych. See: http://zt-rada.gov.ua/news/p5840

[134] The information of Swiss historian Oksana Myshlovskaya.

[135] Ljutogo startuje nacional'na informacijna kampaniya v pam'yat' pro UPA, http://www.memory.gov.ua/news/8-lyutogo-startue-natsionalna-informatsiina-kampaniya-v-pamyat-pro-upa

networking sites and on YouTube, users have been sharing a video which shows the military march of the Bandera's OUN performed by popular rock musician Oleg Skripka and a military orchestra. The march is presented as a new anthem for the Ukrainian army[136].

Just like decommunization, there are many contradictory opinions about the promotion of the nationalist narrative. According to another survey conducted by Rating, 48 % of respondents across Ukraine had a negative or "rather negative" attitude toward Bandera. 31 % expressed a positive or rather positive attitude. However, it is worth noting that the share of this group has increased by 9 % over two years. In central Ukraine, a negative attitude towards him was expressed by 39 % of respondents, while 28 % held a positive one. In the southern regions, these figures were 69 % and 15 %, respectively. In the eastern regions (excluding the Donbas), 70 % viewed Bandera negatively and only 8 % held a positive attitude of him. Opinions were polarized not only along geographical lines but also along ethnic ones. The positive attitude toward Bandera was expressed exclusively by ethnic Ukrainians[137].

Decommunization has largely been conducted through administrative and bureaucratic methods. In many cases it has been implemented without regard for the opinion of the local population, and is often even contrary to it. For example, under the pressure from Svoboda deputies in Kiev City Council, two of the capital's major traffic arteries – Moscow Avenue and Vatutin Avenue – were renamed Bandera and Shukhevych avenues without any public discussion. In addition, many towns in Ukraine have been renamed by the parliament. Sometimes this occurred because local authorities and a significant part of the population refused the name change, or offered names deemed unacceptable by the central government[138]. Any new names for towns, cities, or administrative units are first approved by the parliament. From November 2015 to July 2016, the Verkhovna Rada adopted thirteen resolutions on the renaming of 987 populated places and 25 administrative districts[139].

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[136] Muzykanty zapysaly novyj gimn ukrajins'koj armiji, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDDDx-FVv8rA; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfgVmSv7mlU; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kRTi-yvfqA

[137] Za dva roki pozytyvne stavlennya do Bandery zroslo, http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?za_dva_roki_pozitivne_stavlennya_do_banderi_zroslo__opituvannya&objectId=1307967

[138] A classic example is Kirovograd. In a local referendum, most residents voted in favor of returning the historical name of Elizavetgrad to the city. However, the name, which was reminiscent of the Russian Empire, proved to be unacceptable to the UINM. The city was renamed Kropyvnytskyi after the Ukrainian playwright who had lived there. Another well-known example is Komsomolsk. This city had been originally built with this name in the 1960s, and residents and local authorities refused to rename it. The parliament has since renamed it Horishni Plavni.

[139] Dekomunizaciya nazv naselenyh punktiv ta rajoniv Ukrajiny: pidstavy, process, pidsumky,

The area of resistance to decommunization, or at least discontent with it, quite clearly coincides with the southeast regions, where the Russian-speaking population is concentrated and support for the current government is not so high. It is easy to predict that the administrative and bureaucratic excesses of decommunization will be used by its opponents at the earliest opportunity. The street clashes occurred on May 9, 2017 in a number of Ukrainian cities can be considered the first obvious symptom of this process.

In fact, "decommunization" is symbolic in nature. It contains an anti-Russian component to the extent that Russia is regarded by the initiators of this policy as the citadel of the narrative of Soviet nostalgia. The fact that the leaders and a significant part of population of the unrecognized republics really do cultivate the Soviet model of the past only adds further fuel to the fire. They have even used Soviet practices and discourses as ideological provisions in the war. The central ideological platform here is the myth of the Great Patriotic War.

From the very beginning of military operations in the Donbas, representatives of military formations drew on the rhetoric of the Soviet era. The Ukrainian armed forces and volunteer formations were referred to as "death squads" and "Banderites". The experience of 1941–1945 was also used in the symbolic practices. For instance they wrote "To Kiev!" on tanks and other military equipment, the same way the Red Army used the phrase "To Berlin!" in 1945. Donetsk even saw a "parade" of Ukrainian army prisoners of war – in its own way a copy of the parade of German prisoners of war in Moscow in 1944.

Among the adopted Soviet symbols, the most expressive one was the guard ribbon which used the same black and orange bands as the Order of Glory and the Order of Saint George. This symbol was created in 2005 by the news agency RIA Novosti and became very popular among the Russian population and part of the Ukrainian citizenry[140]. Since 2014, and throughout the war in the Donbas, the ribbon has become an ideologically important symbol for the separatists. In contrast, in Ukraine it began to be perceived as a sign of support for the self-proclaimed republics. Its ubiquity has led to practice of dehumanizing the enemy by referring to them as *kolorads*, the word for the Colorado beetle whose colors resemble those of the ribbon. Attempts to wear the St. George ribbon on Victory Day have even provoked public scandals, usually at the provocation of right-wingers.

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http://memory.gov.ua/page/dekomunizatsiya-nazv-naselenikh-punktiv-ta-raioniv-ukraini-pidstavi-protses-pidsumki

[140] For more details, see: A. Miller. On the St. George ribbon and other symbols in the context of historical politics, http://carnegie.ru/proEtContra/?fa=49074

In May 2017, the Ukrainian parliament issued a special law banning the St. George ribbon in Ukraine. This law was an amendment to the Code of Administrative Offenses. Wearing the ribbon, except in certain cases specified in the text, incurs an administrative fine. Those who repeatedly violate the law will face a double fine or an administrative arrest of 15 days. In commenting on the parliament's decision, President Poroshenko stressed that the St. George ribbon is not a symbol of the Second World War for Ukraine, "it is a symbol of the aggression against Ukraine in 2014–2017. In fact, militants wearing these ribbons are killing our soldiers every day, even right now." [141]

To sum up the development of historical politics in Ukraine in the context of Ukrainian-Russian relations, the following conclusion can be drawn: memory wars between the two countries have become an integral part of an armed conflict in which Russia acts as an aggressor and Ukraine is forced to look for a symmetrical response. Symmetry, among other things, has meant resorting to a historical experience associated with the struggle against Russia and the Soviet Union. As a result, it has become increasingly popular to refer to those narratives in which Russia features in the most obvious form as an aggressor who invades and enslaves. Commemorative events dedicated to the centenary of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1920 are held precisely in the context of the struggle against contemporary Russian aggression and the hundred-year-old struggle of Ukrainians against Russia and for freedom [142].

[141] Poroshenko poyasnyv, chomu v Ukrajini zaboronyly georgijevc'ku strichku, http://ukr. segodnya.ua/politics/pnews/poroshenko-obyasnil-pochemu-v-ukraine-zapretili-georgiev- skuyu-lentochku-1022786.html

[142] Institut nacional'noj' pam'yati rozpochynaje informacijnu kampaniju do 100-richchya Ukrajins'koj' revoljuciji 1917–1921 roki, http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/arti- cle?art_id=249805754&cat_id=244276429

The Memorial to the Heaven's Hundred Heroes, Kiev, November 2017.
Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

Historical politics in Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity have not been limited to looking backward to the distant past. Efforts are also being made to memorialize the Revolution of Dignity. Currently there are streets named after Heaven's Hundred Heroes in 41 towns and cities[143]. A number of cities also have streets bearing the name of the Maidan Heroes. Monuments to Heaven's Hundred Heroes are being installed, and the creation of a memorial complex dedicated to Heaven's Hundred Heroes as well as a Revolution of Dignity Museum has been initiated under the auspices of the UINM. This project is being financed through the state budget[144]. Finally, November 2014 saw the establishment of a new state award, the Order of Heaven's Hundred Heroes.

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[143] Heaven's Hundred Heroes is the collective name used for those killed during the Revolution of Dignity from December 2013 to February 2014.

[144] Zvit ukrajins'kogo instytutu Nacional'noj' pam'yati, http://memory.gov.ua/page/zvit-ukrainsk-ogo-institutu-natsionalnoi-pam-yati-z-realizatsii-derzhavnoi-politiki-u-sferi-vidn

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the last 30 years, historical politics in Ukraine has centered on topics of conflict. Since these politics have been part of the process, as well as a tool in the struggle for power or its retention, they will continue to be very controversial. Post-Soviet historical policy has been a source of not only internal but also external conflicts. The history of Ukrainian-Russian relations in the fields of interpretation and representation of the past can serve as a classic example of a difficult "divorce" and its consequences [145].

Ukrainian society is currently exhausted from socio-economic crisis and war. The state of the Ukrainian-Russian relations has significantly narrowed the window of opportunity for a calm and balanced discussion on issues of the past. Historians, social researchers, and analysts also come under the pressure of this political conjuncture. Those of them who want to treat the past as a subject of research, or who are inclined to ensure a balanced dialogue with foreign colleagues, can be publicly ostracized and bullied by right-wing radical elements in Ukraine, or subjected to pressure by the state in Russia. Nevertheless, opportunities for interaction remain.

1. **Leave history to the historians** – This standard formula needs to be clarified: which historians? In both countries, there are historians trying to act within the margins of analytical historiography and avoid participation in propaganda and counter-propaganda. They are easy to identify, and they themselves find opportunities to cooperate with each other. The latest examples include the publication of a Russian-Ukrainian historical phrase book and a big meeting of Ukrainian and Russian historians in Helsinki in early September 2017, initiated by Historians Without Borders [146].

2. **Create a permanent forum or platform in a neutral territory** – Under current conditions, visits of Ukrainian historians to Russia and of Russian ones to Ukraine are hampered both technically and politically. It is also unacceptable to finance joint projects with public funds. There needs to be a third party that will offer a platform, financing, and a framework for dialogue that will be acceptable to both sides.

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[145] Ukrainian-Polish relations are a separate topic, one that is constantly overshadowed by the war of memories between right-wingers and populists of both countries.

[146] Aristov V., Bakanov A., i dr. (2017), Russko-ukrainskiy istoricheskiy razgovornik. Opyty obshchey istorii, M: Novoye Izdatel'stvo. As a successful example of individual cooperation and dialogue, one can recall a project: Kasyanov G., Miller (2011), Rossia – Ukraina: kak pishetsya istoriya. Dialogi, lektsii, stat'yi. M.: RGGU

3. **Create transnational or international projects** – It is necessary to implement international projects focused on the problematic issues of the past that will involve scholars and experts, not only from Russia and Ukraine, but also from other countries. Such projects will neutralize the undesirable political contexts in the two countries and take the problem from the level of "confrontation" to the level of comprehensive analysis. They also help to create a favorable psychological and social environment. In addition, they contribute to the *consolidation* of those actors who are interested in dialogue, mutual understanding, and the neutralization of conflicts over the past.

4. **Encourage interdisciplinary work** – Problems related to discussing the past should not be a matter only for historians. Discussions should involve political scientists, sociologists, political philosophers, psychologists, and competent journalists.

5. **Change media representation** – As a rule, media outlets focus on the negative, scandalous aspects of historical politics. Any conflict, even the most insignificant, immediately receives wide media coverage. Any positive experience of dialogue or discussion is usually, in the best case scenario, ignored. It may be necessary to work out a media strategy which includes the development of an algorithm for representing positive experiences such as discussions, forums, and publications that can readily describe, not only a conflict as such, but also methods to address the conflict as part of a dialogue.

6. **Facilitate the unity and coordination of the power and activities of the non-state actors in historical politics** – These include NGOs interested in the adequate description and representation of the past. Such organizations exist, but they are scattered and often operate in different arenas without intersecting and with little knowledge of each other's activities.

7. **The scholarly community and public organizations, in cooperation with state and transnational institutions, should take a proactive stance on issues of historical policy and collective memory.** Countries in the EU and post-Soviet space have accumulated considerable experience in analysis and public discussions on issues related to the past. This experience is sufficient to identify trends and to form an agenda for decision makers in a timely manner.

ANDREY DEVYATKOV

A Generation Later:
What is Remembered and Forgotten about the Transnistrian Conflict
on the Two Banks of the Dniester

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, both the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria marked a tragic anniversary – the 25th anniversary of the armed conflict in the Dniester region. Between 1989 and 1991, the conflict had mostly been political. In early March of 1992, the first armed clashes occurred near the town of Dubossary. The conflict culminated in June-July during the battles over the control of the city of Bendery, which could serve as a springboard for a possible attack by Moldovan forces against Tiraspol. Finally, on July 21, 1992, the Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region of the Republic of Moldova was signed, and a demilitarized zone was established between the conflicting parties. The tripartite peacekeeping forces, composed of Russia and the parties to the conflict themselves, were introduced into the "security zone". This form of peacekeeping operation, including military observers from Ukraine deployed at a later stage, remains in effect today. Since the end of 1992, the Transnistrian conflict has lost its intensity. There are no shots fired on the Dniester. Transnistria and Moldova are open to each other. Pridnestrovians freely visit the right, or west bank[147] to receive medical treatment in Moldovan hospitals, to study in Moldovan educational institutions, and to shop. The residents of the area even have free access to the Chisinau International Airport. All this is facilitated by the large number of agreements between the parties that regulate the relatively free movement of people and vehicles. Nevertheless, despite the long negotiation process, there is still no political resolution to the conflict, and Transnistria has declared the formation of its own state, although it remains unrecognized by the international community.

Since the conflict, the commemoration of the events of 1989–1992 has become an important element of state-building, both Chisinau and Tiraspol. In Moldova, these events are associated with the struggle for the country's independence and territorial integrity. In Transnistria, they are the struggle of the "Transnistrian people" for the right to speak their native language and, ultimately, for freedom and survival. The objective of this analysis is threefold: First, to understand the extent to which the discourses of historical memory on both banks of the Dniester are intrinsically homogeneous and mutually exclusive. Second, to examine to what extent these discourses fit into modern political and socio-economic contexts, and how they developed in the period following the armed conflict. And finally, to analyze how discourses of memory can facilitate or hinder the peaceful transformation of the conflict.

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[147] Counterintuitively the term "right bank" refers to the *west* side of the river Dniester, or the Republic of Moldova. Conversely, "left bank" refers to the territory of Transnistria, located on the *east* side of the river.

An exhibition dedicated to the Transnistrian conflict at the Tiraspol Local History Museum, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

The process of forming a memory policy in Chisinau and Tiraspol is divided into at least two main periods: from the 1990s until the first half of the 2000s and from second half of the 2000s until the present. Each of these stages was determined by the nature of the internal political situation, the dynamics of the relationship between Moldova and Transnistria, and the international political context. The first stage, both in Tiraspol and in Chisinau, is characterized by the absence of a consistent political policy of historical memory in relation to the conflict which could have served to completely separate the two banks of the Dniester. Since the mid-2000s, however, political circumstances have gradually led to the emergence of two symmetric, hermetically sealed, historical-political narratives. This, in turn, implies that mutually exclusive memories of the conflict have developed in Chisinau and Tiraspol.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, 1992–2008:
FROM A DIALOGUE WITH TRANSNISTRIA
TO A DISCOURSE OF NATIONAL SECURITY

The Bendery tragedy of the summer of 1992 started a process that discredited of the Popular Front of Moldova and, more broadly, the political parties and movements associated with the division of the country, not only around the context of the Transnistrian question but the Gagauz one as well. Moldova saw a marginalization of

unionism – the movement for reunification with Romania. Power shifted to the forces that supported the construction of independent "Moldovan statehood" in the form of either an independent national project or a "second Romanian state".

The main political imperative at the time was the aspiration to peaceful reunification of the two banks of the Dniester populated by people who were thought to belong to "one nation". Dialogue and mutual concessions were almost always considered to be acceptable mechanisms for settling territorial conflicts. Largely as a result of this approach, the Gagauz problem was resolved through the creation of the autonomous territorial unit Gagauz-Yeri in 1994[148]. Petru Lucinschi, President of the Republic of Moldova in 1997–2001, publicly stated that:

> *"We need to begin with the restoration of trust between the parties. Especially since the state of suspicion between the two Transnistrian banks did not arise in 1990, it has historical roots and a highly branched crown [...]. Since we will not resolve anything if we dig into this political dispute again, in order to begin, we must bury this political bone of contention still deeper. We will begin the dialogue anew with trade, the economy, and social problems."*[149]

As far back as 1996, the Moldovan authorities agreed to grant Transnistria freedom of foreign economic activity through its own customs stamps. In 1997, Petru Lucinschi signed a "Memorandum on the Principles of Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria", which, in particular, said that "the parties are building their relationships within the framework of a common state within the borders of the Moldavian SSR as of January 1990."[150] Initially, Vladimir Voronin, who succeeded him as president, continued this line by, in May of 2001, signing a protocol on the mutual recognition of a large variety of official documents (certificates of civil registration, passports, etc.). This step greatly simplified the affairs of ordinary citizens and businesses.

As for the Russian military presence in Transnistria, namely the units of the former 14th Soviet Army, in October of 1994, Chisinau

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[148] Gagauzia is a territory in the south of Moldova densely populated by Gagauzians – a Turkic-speaking Orthodox ethnic group. Gagauzia declared itself an autonomous republic within the USSR even earlier than Transnistria – in August of 1990. It proved possible to avoid bloodshed, first of all, due to the timely intervention of the Soviet central authorities, who, among other things, directed the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR to the region. It is also worth noting that the economic potential of agrarian Gagauzia is much weaker than industrially developed Transnistria.

[149] Luchinskij P. (2011), Moldova i moldovane, Chișinău: "Biblion" SRL, p. 354.

[150] Memorandum on the Principles of Normalization of Relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria, http://polit.ru/article/2006/03/23/memorand/

and Moscow signed an agreement on the legal status and a proce-
dure for their withdrawal[151]. Article 2 of this agreement stated that
"practical steps to withdraw military units of the Russian Federation
from the territory of the Republic of Moldova [...] will be synchro-
nized with the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict and
the determination of the special status of the Transnistrian region
of the Republic of Moldova."[152] Therefore, looking forward, it can
be noted that unlike today's demands, in those years, Chisinau
agreed in principle that the Russian troops should be withdrawn
only after progress had been achieved in the final settlement of the
Transnistrian conflict.

By the mid-2000s, the situation began to radically change due to
several key events and processes. The Republic of Moldova began
to transform into a zone of geopolitical competition between Russia
and the collective West. One of the first manifestations of this was
the situation surrounding the so-called Kozak Memorandum. This
document, which generally appeared to be Moscow's response to
Brussels' proposal to replace Russian peacekeepers with an interna-
tional contingent, envisaged the creation of an "asymmetric feder-
ation" and the deployment of exclusively Russian peacekeepers in
the region until 2020. The political and intellectual elite of Moldova
perceived this plan to be an instrument to subordinate the country
to Russia's interests. As a result, in November of 2003, Moldovan
President Voronin refused to sign the Kozak Memorandum which
led to the deterioration of the Russian-Moldovan relations. For the
first time, in 2005–2006, Moscow banned the import of all wines
from Moldova which caused serious damage to Moldova's wine
industry. Gradually, trade and economic restrictions imposed by
Russia became the norm. This is one of the main reasons for the
spreading the conviction in Chisinau that Moscow does not fully
recognize Moldova's independence and is ready to exert political
and economic pressure on the country to further its own interests.

At the same time, Moldova pinned great hopes on the increased
influence of the EU and the US. Under Voronin, integration into
Europe, albeit only at a declarative level, started to be represented
as a national idea. Moldovan elites, sensing a lack of support from
the West throughout the 1990s, began to perceive the presence of

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[151] The Russian military presence in the region has two components. Firstly, these are peace-
keeping troops deployed in the region under the 1992 Russian-Moldovan agreement on
the settlement of the conflict. Secondly, these are the troops and armaments of the former
14th Soviet Army, which have no legal status and are anyway subject to withdrawal.

[152] The agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation on the legal
status, procedure and deadline for the withdrawal of military units of the Russian Federa-
tion temporarily located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, http://www.mid.ru/
foreign_policy/international_contracts/2_contract/-/storage-viewer/bilateral / Page-309/48270

the EU and the US in the region as their main foreign policy resource. Many politicians and public intellectuals, among others, believed that with help from the West one could achieve the reintegration of the country and, what is more, without any concessions to Tiraspol and Moscow.

In the early 2000s, President Voronin, the leader of the Party of Communists, advocated for Moldova's participation in the Union of Russia and Belarus as well as granting official status to the Russian language. Following the 2005 election, when Moscow demonstratively failed to support Voronin's candidacy after the failure of the Kozak Memorandum, he joined the coalition with the unionist Christian Democratic People's Party. His main opponent – Serafim Urechean, the Mayor of Chisinau – took an even more radical line, advocating, among other things, for Moldova's departure from the CIS, the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers, and the announcement of a course towards integration into the EU and NATO[153]. Thus, Moldovan policy gradually became imbued with anti-Russian sentiments.

After a little while, the impact of these events on the memory of the conflict became obvious. On March 2, 2006, for the first time during his presidency, the Moldovan president, who generally preferred to appear with veterans of the Second World War or the Afghan War, attended a rally dedicated to the 14th anniversary of the beginning of the armed conflict on the Dniester. In his speech, he said: "Today it is already clear that the military actions were planned by forces foreign to [our] national interests, and that the main goal of the regime *"exported"* to the eastern regions of the Republic of Moldova is to undermine the power of the state by any means necessary."[154]

In July of 2005, the Moldovan parliament passed a law "On the Main Provisions of the Special Legal Status of Settlements on the Left Bank of the Dniester (Transnistria)". For Moldova, this document is in fact still a legislative basis for the settlement of the conflict as it implies that the Transnistrian issue should be resolved under the Gagauz scenario[155]. However, within the framework of a special resolution, the Moldovan Parliament set forth a number of conditions regarding the early withdrawal of Russian troops, the transformation of the military peacekeeping mission into civilian one, the dissolution of the Ministry of State Security of Transnistria, the reformation of

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[153] I. Yartsev. The most Christian Communist, http://politcom.ru/868.html

[154] The head of the state took part in the rally organized on the occasion of the 14th anniversary of the beginning of the armed conflict on the Dniester, https://point.md/en/novosti/politika/glava-gosudarstva-prinyal-uchastie-v-mitinge-organizovannom-po- Sluchayu-14-j-godovschi-ni-nachala-vooruzhennogo-konflikta-na-dnestre

[155] Law No. 173 of 22.07.2005 "On the main provisions of the special legal status of settlements on the left bank of the Dniester (Transnistria)", http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=313004&lang=2

the judicial system of the region, and the participation of Moldovan parties in Transnistrian political life[156]. These demands froze the settlement process for an indefinite period.

Another notable document of that period is the National Development Strategy for 2008–2011 adopted by the Moldovan Parliament in late 2007. It states that "the major threat in the realm of security is the foreign military presence in the territory of the Republic of Moldova (in the Left Bank regions of the Dniester), which undermines the status of Moldova's neutrality set forth in the Constitution as well as the existence of paramilitary troops in the region."[157] Later, President Voronin tried to soften this tough approach after he saw Brussels's unwillingness to grant Chisinau any guarantees of possible EU membership and the huge economic losses from the Russian wine embargo. As a result, Voronin revisited the idea of a "strategic partnership" with his eastern neighbor. Between 2008 and early 2009, he intensified negotiations with Moscow to try to agree on reunification with the left bank. In the end however, these attempts did not lead to anything. Voronin had already lost credibility both in Moscow and in Tiraspol, and the expectations in Transnistria were much so high that Moldovan president could not satisfy them without being accused of betraying Moldovan "national interests".

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AT THE CURRENT STAGE: THE IMAGE OF THE CONFLICT AS AN EPISODE OF IMPERIAL POLICY

In April 2009, Moldova saw the Twitter Revolution that brought to power the parties that later formed the Alliance for European Integration. This was a new generation of Moldova's political elite. If the first presidents of Moldova – Mircea Snegur, Petru Lucinschi and Vladimir Voronin – came from the Soviet party nomenclature, were native-born Transnistrians (like Voronin), or had good connections in Moscow based on their past work, the Moldovan politicians of the 2010s had none of these backgrounds. In contrast, they had studied in Chisinau and Bucharest and built a political or business career in what was already an independent Moldova. Even Igor Dodon, the main opponent of the "pro-European" parties, did not have any personal connections with Moscow or Tiraspol.

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[156] Decision No. 117 of 10.06.2005 "On the Ukrainian Initiative Concerning the Settlement of the Transnistrian Conflict and Measures for Democratization and Demilitarization of the Transnistrian Zone", http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=307472&lang=2

[157] Law No. 295 of 21.12.2007 "On the Establishment of a National Development Strategy for 2008–2011", http://lex.justice.md/ru/326734/

It would seem that Vlad Filat's government formed by the Alliance came to power with pragmatic slogans declaring its number one priority would be EU integration and the creation of a strategic partnership with the European Union, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and the United States[158]. Rather quickly however, it became apparent that the various parties of the Alliance were trying to advance their own agendas and seeking to increase their own electoral resources.

The Unionist Liberal Party headed by Mihai Ghimpu paid special attention to the politics of memory. As interim president in 2010, Ghimpu signed a decree declaring June 28 to be a memorial day to the Soviet occupation. It was on this day in 1940 when Soviet troops entered Bessarabia after the departure of Romanian troops[159]. The Party of Communists, which is currently in the opposition, also placed an emphasis the politics of memory but with the opposite valence. Defending a positive version of the Soviet past, the Communists preferred to remember not repressions, or isolation from "mother Romania", but the Day of the Great Victory in the Second World War, and the heyday of Moldovan industry and agriculture.

Both parties actively used the politics of memory to split Moldovan society. Vlad Filat, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party and Prime Minister, tried to reconcile the two opposing discourses. In 2010, on the eve of the May 9 holiday, the head of government convened a group of veterans who had fought in both the Romanian and the Soviet armies and suggested that they forgive each other, awarding the same crosses to all of them[160]. A similar event was held on May 9, 2011[161].

After a while however, he had to make a choice between the two positions. In particular, Filat stated that he considers Romanian to be the state language, not Moldovan[162]. On June 28, 2010, the Prime Minister laid flowers on the memorial stone for the victims of deportation and stressed that he considers it necessary to honor the victims of Stalin's regime[163]. Finally, in 2011 on the eve

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[158] Programul de activitate al Guvernului Republicii Moldova "Integrarea Europeană: Libertate, Democraţie, Bunăstare", 2009–2013, http://www.austria.mfa.md/img/docs/programul-activitate-guvernului.pdf

[159] On June 28, Moldova will mark the Day of Soviet Occupation, http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2010/06/100625_moldova_soviet_occupation.shtml

[160] May 9 divided the Moldovan society and politicians, https://goo.gl/i1jh8j

[161] The Moldovan authorities took part in a memorial rally dedicated to Victory Day on May 9 http://ru.interlic.md/2011–05–09/vlasti-moldovy-prinjali-uchastie-v-pamjatnom-mitinge-posvjacshennom-dnju-pobedy-9-maja-20975.html

[162] Filat lobbies for the Romanian language in the Constitution, http://www.vedomosti.md/news/Filat_Za_Rumynskii_Yazyk_V_Konstitutsii

[163] Prime Minister Vlad Filat laid flowers to a memorial stone in memory of victims of deportations, http://www.allmoldova.com/ru/news/premer-ministr-vlad-filat-vozlozhil-cvety-k-memorialnomu-kamnyu-v-pamyat-zhertv-deportacij

of May 9, Liliana Palihovici, the deputy speaker of the parliament from Filat's party, stated that the ribbon of Saint George is incompatible with Moldovan national traditions. Her statement caused a great scandal and elicited wrathful rebukes from supporters of the "Great Victory" narrative [164].

As for the Transnistrian conflict, a significant shift also occurred in how the conflict was memorialized. In 2010, the Moldovan parliament declared March 2 the official "Day of Remembrance of the Dead in the Armed Conflict of 1992 for Protecting the Integrity and Independence of the Republic of Moldova and the Victims of this Conflict."

All these historical battles contributed to the formation of Moscow's negative attitude to the ruling parliamentary majority in Moldova. The situation could hardly have been resolved by Vlad Filat's visit to Russia where he signed the 2011 CIS Free Trade Zone Agreement, but relations deteriorated completely after Moldova concluded an EU association agreement. Moscow reacted by imposing an embargo on the supplies of wine products and by excluding Chisinau from the CIS free trade zone. This led to the corresponding increase in customs duties on key Moldovan exports and the freezing of the settlement process in the Transnistrian conflict. Chisinau, in turn, responded with selective bans on entry to Moldova for journalists working for state-owned media outlets, pro-Kremlin experts and, most importantly, several dozen Russian military personnel who had been on rotation in Transnistria. The Ukrainian crisis and the sharply heightened tension in relations between Russian and the West also had a negative impact on the situation.

At the same time, Filat's government yielded strong results in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. On the one hand, he initiated the official commemoration of the "national heroes" who fought for Moldova's integrity in 1992, and his government regularly issued statements about the need to withdraw Russian troops from Transnistria in accordance with the 1999 Istanbul commitments. However, at the same time, Filat understood the importance of settling the Transnistrian problem for Moldova's integration into Europe. With this is mind, he took advantage of good personal relations with Transnistrian leader Evgeny Shevchuk and made use of the German-Russian Meseberg Memorandum of 2010 which proposed deepening Russian-European dialogue based on progress in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict [165]. Having set geopolitical

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[164] The Parliament Deputy Speaker from LDPM refused to apologize for her statement that the ribbon of St. George is alien to the Moldovan traditions, http://moldnews.md/rus/news/36611

[165] German Diplomacy Tilts Toward Russia On Transnistria Negotiations, http://www.moldova.

disputes aside, Chisinau and Tiraspol agreed to resume the train service and made a great deal progress on other confidence-building measures. However, the deterioration of Russian-Moldovan relations against the background of the rapprochement between Moldova and the EU led to a curtailment of the dialogue between the two banks of the Dniester.

Following Vlad Filat's arrest in October 2015 and prolonged domestic political instability, the Democratic Party headed by oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc came to power in Chisinau in January 2016. Initially, the Democratic Party reiterated that EU integration remained a priority for Moldova while relations with Russia should also be maintained. However, the new Moldovan authorities, who had never agreed with Moscow, decided to bet on Igor Dodon, the leader of the Socialist Party elected president at the end of 2016. In response, the Democratic Party relied on a discourse of the "Russian threat" to overcome the negative attitude of the West and the pro-European electorate in Moldova that had developed in reaction to their attempts to remain in power by any means through, among other things, changing election laws for their own gain.

The culmination of the plot of the "Russian threat" was the expulsion of five Russian diplomats and the announcement that Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who had been overseeing Moldovan affairs, was persona non grata. These developments occurred in May and August of 2017 respectively. What is more, the decision to ban Rogozin, who was headed to Transnistria to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Russian peacekeeping mission on the Dniester, can be considered symbolic. In fact, for the first time Chisinau openly banned Moscow politicians from participating in any events in Transnistria without prior approval. In connection with this, on July 28, 2017, the Moldovan government issued a special statement on the 25th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities on the Dniester. In particular it said that the Russian "peacekeeping operation, which some people praise, has become a factor contributing to the freezing of the Transnistrian conflict, seeing as the prejudiced attitudes and sympathies of Russian peacekeepers to the separatist regime in Tiraspol are obvious." [166]

Accordingly, within the contemporary Moldovan discourse, the Russian military presence is considered to be the main obstacle to the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. According to the Moldovan side, as long as Russian troops, weapons, and peacekeepers are deployed in Moldova, there can be no question of any compre-

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org/en/german-diplomacy-tilts-toward-russia-on-transnistria-negotiations-221612-eng/

[166] Kommentarij pravitel'stva Respubliki Moldova k 25-letiyu prekrashcheniya voennykh dejstvij na Dnestre, http://moldpres.md/ru/news/2017/07/28/17005870

hensive settlement for this conflict. Given that Russia is not going to leave the region, according to Moldovan experts, this means that the Transnistrian conflict will remain unresolvable even in the long term. All Chisinau can do is conduct democratic reforms and draw closer to the European Union to increase its attractiveness for residents of the Left Bank[167]. Additionally, any negotiations on a "special status" or "federation" are considered harmful to the national interests of the Republic of Moldova.

In sum, the present political conditions in Moldova are ripe for a narrative about the Transnistrian conflict as an episode of Russia's imperial policy to dominate public discourse. In Chisinau, this discourse already existed in the 1990s but its dissemination was limited to academic and educational spheres. Thus, the 1997 textbook *The Modern History of the Romanians*, which is the national history curriculum studied in Chisinau's educational institutions, states the following:

> *"The parade of sovereign states which spread across the USSR after the August putsch temporarily paralyzed the Russian authorities. But a little later, the empire began to return, choosing several key strategic points – Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Baltic countries, Moldova, etc. – and beginning to act, made use migrant populations, primarily Russians. It was not difficult for Moscow to turn the Russian-speaking population against the national liberation movement... The Russian population could not psychologically accept the loss of their dominant status, especially when it came to economic power... In 1984, only 8.6 % of directors of industrial enterprises in the Moldavian SSR were Moldovans."[168]*

Similar arguments can be found in the textbook *The History of the Romanians and General History* published in 2013:

> *"Besides geopolitical considerations, the unleashing of the conflict in Transnistria had great emotional and psychological components that led to the intervention of pro-imperial forces, especially during accession of the Republic of Moldova to the UN... The pro-European orientation of the Republic of Moldova's foreign policy in the first year of independence and the intention of its leaders to be on an equal footing in the CIS clearly irritated Moscow, which decided to "punish" this "rebellious" republic."[169]*

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[167] Octavian Ticu: The Transnistrian conflict has no solutions in the long term, http://ipn.md/en/dosar-transnistrean/82498

[168] Vizer B. (1997), Istoria contemporana a Romanilor. Chișinău, p. 141–142.

[169] Mistryanu T. Dragnev D., sost., (2013), Istoriya rumyn i vseobshchaya istoriya. Posobiye dlya sdachi ekzamenov za gimnazicheskij kurs, Chișinău: Civitas, p. 135.

The two narratives differ only in that in the second there is no mention of "migrants". This geopolitical discourse, which used to be mostly produced in the educational sphere, being shared by only some politicians and experts, has come to dominate public discourse since the Alliance came to power in 2009. It is based on the conviction that two main causes underlie the Transnistrian conflict.

The first cause was that the Russian-speaking population living on the Left Bank constituted a large part of the administrative elite of the Moldavian SSR. As a result, they perceived the "national revival" of 1989–1990 not as the restoration of "historical justice" towards Moldovans, who, according to the official discourse, were Russified and discriminated against in Soviet Moldova, but, on the contrary, as a process which undermined their dominant status. *The second* reason is the desire of the Soviet central powers – and eventually Russia – to retain control over Chisinau by way of military, political, and diplomatic support for Transnistrian separatism. Ion Stavila and Gheorghe Balan, high-ranking Moldovan diplomats responsible for the Transnistrian conflict settlement, believe that:

> *"The corresponding circumstances were just a pretext for the administrative nomenclature from the left bank of the Dniester, which saw a threat to its dominant position in the emerging trends, to escalate the conflict... It is obvious that outbreaks of the conflict in the territory of the 'rebellious' republic were inspired, sparked and used by the Center, which was interested in maintaining effective control over all the republics of the former USSR to frustrate their aspirations for sovereignty, freedom, and national revival."[170]*

Mainstream Moldavian historians see the Transnistrian conflict as an episode in the regional confrontation between Russia and Romania. According to this rendition, the origins of the conflict date back to 1791, when the Russian army reached the Dniester and began to build the fortress of Tiraspol which became the starting point in Russia's imperial strategy in the Balkans. In the 1920s, the Bolsheviks began to create a "Moldavian nation" and established the Moldavian ASSR within the Ukrainian SSR. This policy was conducted solely for the purpose of taking over Bessarabia from Romania. The events of 1992 are seen in this context as a continuation of what happened in 1812 and 1940, part of the same scenario generated by Russia's desire to create a springboard for influence on the Balkans, the Romanian principalities, and Constantinople.

As part of the Moldovan discourse, the main Russian actors in the

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[170] Stăvilă I., Bălan G. (2010), Conflictul transnistrean: eşecul reglementării unui conflict care poate fi soluţionat // Revista Militară. Studii de securitate şi apărare, nr. 2 (4), p. 5–6.

events of 1989–1992 were Anatoly Lukyanov, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the deputy group *Soyuz* [Union]. It is widely accepted that they supported Transnistrian and Gagauz separatism to encourage Moldova to sign a new union treaty. Tiraspol also received direct support from the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and later from units of the 14th Army on the Left Bank[171].

In Moldova, the armed conflict is considered to have begun on March 2, 1992. This version contends that on that day the Transnistrian guardsmen together with Cossacks attacked the local police post in Dubossary and disarmed its employees. It is commonly believed that this post was the last one of those controlled by Chisinau on the Left Bank[172]. The Bendery events in June 1992 – the main episode in the war on the Dniester – are not mentioned in most cases or are represented as a legitimate operation to restore the constitutional order which had been disrupted by open Russia's military intervention[173].

TRANSNISTRIA IN THE 1990s AND EARLY 2000s: POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF HISTORICAL-POLITICAL DISCOURSES

In the 1990s – early 2000s, Tiraspol also hoped for a compromise with Chisinau. In his interviews, the first president of the self-proclaimed PMR said that the model of Tatarstan within Russia or Crimea within Ukraine would suit Tiraspol perfectly. The Transnistrian elites were not initially convinced about the need to build their own state. For the first 10 years of Transnistria's existence, Tiraspol was maneuvering between the interests of Chisinau, Kiev, and Moscow, and as a result, the breakdown of economic, infrastructural, and information ties with Moldova did not occur immediately.

The rejection of the ambitious idea to build a separate state can be explained by the fact that the central Soviet power to which Tiraspol appealed, ceased to exist over the course of the conflict. In the 1990s, it was also difficult to rely on Moscow as a dependable geopolitical ally. Igor Smirnov, for one, openly criticized Russia for its position in the Transnistrian conflict. "I always remember," he stated in his memoirs, "how I shouted into the phone, when dozens and hundreds of people were dying in Bendery: 'How many dead

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171 Conflictul transnistrean: trecut, prezent, viitor, comentariu de Octavian Ţâcu, http://radiochisinau.md/conflictul-transnistrean-trecut-prezent-viitor-comentariu-de-octavian-tacu—-46681.html

172 The war between the two banks of the Dniester began from the attack of the separatist paramilitary forces on March 2, 1992, https://point.md/ro/noutati/politika/vojna-mezhdu-dvumya-beregami-dnestra-nachalasj-napadeniem-separatistskih-nevoenizirovannih-formirovanij-2-marta-1992-goda

173 Ţăranu A., Gribincea M. (2012), Conflictulul Transnistrean: Culegere de documente şi materiale (1989–2012) // Introducere, Vol. 1 (1989–1993), p. 24.

bodies, how many corpses do you still need to stop this massacre?' [...] It just makes me sad for great Russia, which can allow its sons and daughters to die as an experiment. Only then does it begin to engage in peacekeeping activities."[174]

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Moscow was gradually withdrawing its troops from the region. It reduced the contingent from ten to two thousand people and at least halved the amount of arms of the former 14th Army that were stored in the depots in Kolbasna. Igor Smirnov struggled against these reductions in every way possible. He organized numerous pickets of public organizations. Smirnov also demanded that Moscow, in the event of withdrawal, leave most of the weapons to the Transnistrian authorities. To top it all off, the Transnistrian authorities had a large-scale conflict with the commander of the 14th Army, Lieutenant-General Alexander Lebed, who was in Tiraspol in between 1992 and 1995. Apparently, this happened because of the question of who was to make key decisions on the management of the unrecognized republic[175]. While Lebed was in Transnistria, the authorities wrote the following about him and his contribution to the conflict settlement in 1992: "General A. I. Lebed played an exceptional role in ending the massacre in Bendery and curbing Moldova's aggression [...] It was General A. I. Lebed who initiated the separation of conflicting forces. His honest, unequivocal, precise, and clear position of "armed neutrality" demonstrated to the aggressor that the period of impunity is over."[176] However, since 1996, following Lebed's departure from Tiraspol, which occurred in a large part due to the efforts of the Transnistrian leadership, his name has only been mentioned in passing in the regional historical journals. This situation changed only after I. Smirnov had left office. According to the official Transnistrian historiography and statements by Transnistrian statesmen, the "Transnistrian people" defended independence and opposed "Moldova's aggression on their own."[177] They acknowledged the great support received from the Cossacks, "patriotically" minded journalists from other countries, as well as the contribution of Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi in drawing attention to the war on the Dniester. Russia's role is covered in a very concise way. It is mentioned that Moscow joined the settlement only in July 1992, when General Lebed made a series of tough statements

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[174] Smirnov I. (2005), Zhit' na nashej zemle, Tiraspol: Litera, p. 80.

[175] Devyatkov A. (2012), Pered vyzovom evropeizatsii: politika Rossii v pridnestrovskom uregulirovanii, Tyumen: Izdatel'stvo tyumenskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, p. 39–42.

[176] Babilunga N., Bomeshko B. (1993), Bendery: rasstrelyannye, nepokorennye, Tiraspol: Pridnestrovskij gosudarstvennyj universitet.

[177] See, for example, A. Z. Volkova. The Leader. Chapter 6, http://olvia1.idknet.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=67:—qq&id=8820: lider6

to exert pressure on the Moldovan leadership. And then, on July 21, following the continuation of firefights after the agreement had been signed, he decided to temporarily deploy his units along the line of separation of the Moldovan and Transnistrian troops around the city of Bendery before the arrival of the Russian peacekeeping force's military contingent[178].

The bust of General Alexander Lebed in the Local History Museum in Bendery, July 2017. Author: Andrey Devyatkov

Under conditions where Tiraspol could rely mainly on its own forces, the question became on what basis Transnistria would be ready to conduct a dialogue with Chisinau. In March of 1993, it became known that the parliamentary commissions from both banks of the Dniester had agreed on a draft of the "Basic Principles for the Settlement of the Social and Political Conflict in the Transnistrian Region", whose content resembled the Gagauz model. But the United Council of Labor Collectives and some other public organizations in Transnistria took a sharply negative stance on this document. According to Alexander Karaman, the Vice-President of Transnistria who was the chairman of the Transnistrian commission that developed the mediation document, the negotiations with Moldova were

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[178] Grosul V. Ya. (2001), red., Istoriya Pridnestrovskoj Moldavskoj Respubliki. T. 2, Chast' 2, Tiraspol: RIO PGU, p. 174–175.

disrupted by "supporters of the war party" who "saw the desire to find common ground with the PMR's leaders in the peaceful settlement of the conflict as a betrayal of Transnistria's interests."[179] Since that moment, the Transnistrian authorities officially adhered only to the confederative approach to resolving the conflict. According to this logic, Moldova first had to recognize Transnistria's statehood, and only then could the two states establish a confederation. This approach complicated the negotiations with Moldova, although it did not make them less active.

The twists and turns of the negotiation process directly impacted the policy of historical memory. On the one hand, in the 1990s, public discourse evolved around the idea that Chisinau had committed an aggression against the "Transnistrian people", and Transnistria's very statehood became a tool of self-defense against "Romanizing" Moldova. On the other hand, due to the fact that bridges of the dialogue with Moldova were not yet been burnt, a pluralism of opinions was acceptable in the Transnistrian scholarly community. In this way, it became widespread to view the conflict as a civil war unleashed by the "Romanizers", who deliberately fomented tensions over ethnic and linguistic issues in order to redistribute power in Moldova for their own benefit. Authors holding this view specified a number of "mechanisms of suppressing" the Transnistrian conflict. Thus, according to them, Moldovans had tried to preserve their national identity against the background of strengthening pro-Romanian sentiments. They assert that there was massive desertion of Moldovan servicemen in the course of the conflict which indicated people's unwillingness to fight. Supporters of the "civil war" concept believe that the "Romanizers" were ultimately defeated, and that the forces of "Moldovan statesmen" eventually consolidated in the Moldovan parliament. This, in turn, can serve as the basis for further negotiations between Tiraspol and Chisinau[180].

TRANSNISTRIA: THE GRADUAL SOLIDIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF ITS OWN STATEHOOD

By the mid-2000s, the situation began to change drastically. Having not achieved progress in the settlement through dialogue, President Voronin adopted an extremely rigid position towards Transnistria. In 2001, under the pretext of Moldova's commitments to the WTO,

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[179] Living with good-neighborly relations // Dnestrovskaya Pravda. 1993. May 14.

[180] Shornikov P. (2003), Pridnestrov'ye v kontekste grazhdanskogo konflikta v Moldavii: vzglyad iz Kishineva // Fenomen Pridnestrov'ya, Tiraspol: RIO PGU im. T. G. Shevchenko, 187–226; Bomeshko B. (2007), Moldovo- pridnestrovskij konflikt i politicheskoye protivostoyaniye v Respublike Moldova (1989–1992 гг.) // Babilunga N., Bomeshko B., Shornikov P. (2007), Gosudarstvennost' Pridnestrov'ya: istoriya i sovremennost', Tiraspol: Poligrafist, 145–177.

Tiraspol was deprived of its own customs stamps. Kiev did not support this decision, but it was approved by Moscow. In Transnistria, these actions were referred to as an "economic blockade". In a new episode of this "blockade", in 2006 Ukraine changed its customs regime for Transnistrian exports which became subject to registration in the Moldovan customs office. In this way, Chisinau began to pursue a policy which sought the gradual transfer of all Transnistria's foreign trade under its jurisdiction. Currently, the Moldova–European Union Association Agreement is applied as the legal framework. Under this agreement, Transnistria is considered as part of the Republic of Moldova, and must adhere to the appropriate customs regulations, certification systems, etc.

Together with Kiev, Chisinau established joint customs-border posts on the Transnistrian section of the Ukrainian-Moldovan border. By means of these posts, Moldova sought to control all Transnistrian imports, population movement, and, ultimately, the entire Transnistrian system of communication with the outside world. Tiraspol considered these actions to be hostile.

Transnistria, Tiraspol, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

Russian policy was another important part of the equation. After failing to sign the Kozak Memorandum, the deterioration of Russian-Moldovan relations, and the introduction of the EU and the US into the region, Russia began to treat the Dniester as its own geopolitical frontier. The issue of the "economic blockade" of Transnistria in

March 2006 was particularly politicized in Russia. Moscow even sent a humanitarian convoy of 24 trucks to the region[181]. Since 2008, Russia has transferred funds to Transnistria which are intended, first of all, as additional payments to Transnistrian pensioners. Furthermore, since 2008, Transnistria has completely stopped paying Gazprom for any gas supplied to the region. As a result, mirroring Moldova in its relations with the West, Transnistria felt increasing external support.

Under the influence of these events, Tiraspol's position became more rigid. In September 2006, the Transnistrian authorities organized a referendum, which asked: "Do you support the course towards independence of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and the subsequent free annexation of Transnistria to the Russian Federation?" Almost all of the locals who took part responded positively to the question. The results of this referendum are held up by the Transnistrian authorities as the final decision of the "Transnistrian people". In short, they contend that Tiraspol will not build any common state with Moldova, that the region itself is part of the "Russian world" and that, sooner or later, it will become a subject of the Russian Federation.

In the Transnistrian public sphere, there is complete consensus on this issue and no meaningful discussions have been conducted for more than 10 years. No Transnistrian politician can raise doubts about the "course towards independence and annexation to the Russian Federation." In 2015, Yevgeny Shevchuk, President of Transnistria, even stated that it is better for Moldova and Transnistria to follow the path of a "civilized divorce"[182]. The current president, Vadim Krasnoselsky, in turn confirmed his commitment to this interpretation of the "Transnistrian idea".

The political shift also determined significant changes in the politics of memory in Transnistria. In that regard, it is worth noting the following statement made in November 2008 by Anna Volkova, a well-known Transnistrian social and political figure and adviser to presidents Smirnov and Krasnoselsky: "Some authors of historical research have used the terms "civil war", "civil conflict", or "Dniester war". However, in the framework of the conference dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the repulsion of the aggression of the Republic of Moldova, Transnistrian historians came to a single conclusion: the term "Dniester war" made it impossible to determine the side responsible for unleashing it; the term "civil war" is inapplicable

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[181] The aid has arrived in Transnistria, http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=77005&tid=34149

[182] Yevgeny Shevchuk proposed a civilized divorce with Chisinau, https://point.md/ro/noutati/politica/evgenij-shevchuk-predlozhil-kishinyovu-civilizovannij-razvod

because in 1992, the basis of state power already existed in the PMR, two states already existed. Historians evaluated what happened in 1992 to be an armed aggression of the Republic of Moldova against the people of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic. The chronological framework of aggression was agreed to be considered November 2, 1990 – July 31, 1992." [183]

These days, a discourse about the resistance to Chisinau as a "fair war" and a "people's war" prevails in Transnistria. It is believed that those who came to power in Chisinau on the wave of the collapse of the USSR did not hide their desire to annex the territory of the Moldavian SSR to Romania and to liberate this region from the "invaders" and "migrants" for the Romanians – "the true owners of this land". The adoption of laws on the state language and Moldova's national symbols are viewed as discriminatory initiatives that triggered the conflict.

Within this narrative, the public use of any language other than Moldovan (Romanian) was forbidden in Moldova. The republic, despite the presence of a large number of Russian-speaking citizens, was declared "the second Romanian state" when it adopted state symbols associated with Romania. In the Transnistrian historical discourse, the possible annexation to Romania is considered as the prologue to a new "tragedy", seeing as it was the "Romanian-fascist invaders" who committed the genocide of the Jews, Gypsies, Russians and other non-Romanian peoples, and who viewed Moldovans as "second-class citizens" in this territory during the Second World War [184].

Transnistrian historians believe that when the Republic of Moldova condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, it actually ceded its right to the Transnistrian territory. In turn, 1990 marked the revival of the Transnistrian statehood that had existed from 1924 to 1940 in the form of an autonomous republic within the Ukrainian SSR. By creating the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and preserving the Moldovan (and not Romanian) language based on the Cyrillic script, these historians contend that Tiraspol contributed to the preservation of the true Moldovan nation in contrast to the "Romanization" of Moldovans that took place on the right bank of the Dniester [185].

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[183] Volkova A. K voprosu o politicheskoj fal'sifikatsii istorii agressii Respubliki Moldova protiv Pridnestrovskoj Moldavskoj Respubliki // Beril S. I., Galinskij I. N., Blagodatskikh I. M. (2007), Politicheskaja fal'sifikatsiya istorii kak bar'er na puti demokraticheskogo reformirovaniya mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenij na postsovetskom prostranstve, Tiraspol: Litera, p. 57–58.

[184] Babilunga N., Istoriya PMR v kratkom izlozhenii // Matsuzato K. red. (2008), Pridnestrov'e v makroregional'nom kontekste chernomorskogo poberezh'ya, Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University: p. 52–58.

[185] The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic is a chance to save the Moldovan nation. An interview with the head of the National History Department of the Taras Shevchenko Transnistria State University, Professor Nikolai Babilunga to the newspaper "Adevarul Nistryan", https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/16–08–16/pridnestrovskaya-moldavskaya-re-

The beginning of the armed conflict in Transnistria as well as in Moldova is considered March 2, 1992. But the interpretation of the events is different. According to the Transnistrian version, on that fateful day Moldovan policemen disguised in civilian clothes fired from a crowd at local militiamen and killing one of them. This "provocation" caused an outbreak of "popular anger". At midnight, outraged residents of Dubossary gathered at the square near the city executive committee, went to the police administration, and demanded that Moldovan officials leave the city. As a result of negotiations, about 30 policemen left the building[186].

The main emphasis in the Transnistrian historical narrative is on the Bendery tragedy, which "demonstrated the genocidal nature of the regime in Moldova to the whole world." The "tragedy" confirms that talks about peace were nothing but "deceit" because about 500 Transnistrians died during the one and a half months of fighting for Bendery. Among them were more than 130 civilians[187].

The assessment of the Russian intervention in the conflict remains ambiguous. On the one hand, the Transnistrian narrative is critical both of the role of Soviet leaders in the late Gorbachev era and of Russia's peacekeeping efforts until early June 1992, when the process was led by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Commander of the 14th Army Yuri Netkachev. They are criticized for their indecisiveness and even their support for Moldova. On the other hand, modern Transnistrian historians are increasingly reporting on Russia's role in ending the 1992 armed conflict. They stress that official Russia not only took a position of "armed neutrality", forcing Moldova to peace with firm messages, but also took a number of more serious measures to stop the war. In particular, this narrative points to the preventive deployment of the 14th Army, demonstrations of force, and preventive surgical strikes[188].

Politicians and historians do not omit the role of the "people's militia", but at the same time, they stress that peace on the Dniester was established and is being preserved thanks to Russian peacekeepers. Eventually, as it is said today in Transnistria, the only guarantee of peace is the permanent presence of Russian peacekeepers in the region.

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spublika-shans-na-spasenie

[186] On March 2, 1992, the large-scale aggression of Moldova against Transnistria was launched, https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/16–03–02/2-marta-1992-goda-nachalas-shirokomasshtabnaya-agressiya-moldovy

[187] Memories of the Bendery tragedy..., https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/13–06–18/vospominaniya-o-benderskoy-tragedii

[188] Bomeshko B. (2017), 19 iyunya 1992 g. // Pridnestrovskij universitet. Vojna i mir na Dnestre: 25 let mirotvorcheskoj operatsii v Pridnestrov'e, № 11–12, p. 3.

THE STATE AND CONFLICT COMMEMORATION PRACTICES

Each side of the Dniester has its own memorial traditions that have been developing in the 25 years since the end of the armed conflict. They have both common features and significant differences. In both cases, the historical policy is under government control, and no opposition forces or public organizations try to offer alternative interpretations of the events of 1989–1992. For example, in Moldova in 2017, all of the country's political leaders, including the "pro-Russian" President Dodon, took part in the flower-laying ceremony at the "Eternity" memorial complex on March 2[189]. Perhaps some of the Transnistrian veterans, who believe that they fought not so much for Moldova's independence as for the "reunification of the Romanian people", present an alternative to official Moldovan discourse, but many of these people moved to Romania, occupied public positions there and lost the opportunity to exert a significant influence on Moldovan politics[190].

The "Eternity" [Eternitate] Memorial Complex, originally built as a Victory Memorial, Chisinau, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

Every year on officially observed dates, it has already become common to see a set of commemorative rituals that have been approved

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[189] The country's leadership has laid flowers in memory of the victims of the Transnistrian conflict (PHOTO), http://golos.md/rukovodstvo-strany-vozlozhilo-cvety-na-memoriale-vechnost-v-pamyat-o-zhertvah-voyny-na-dnestre-foto—-88667.html

[190] See, for example, Munteanu A. (2014), Eroii de la Nistru, Bucuresti: Favorit.

by the authorities[191]. The obligatory commemorative program includes a ceremony in which of high-ranking officials and veterans lay flowers on memorials, light candles, and give speeches. These events are held in the capitals Chisinau and Tiraspol as well as in provincial cities and the sites where hostilities took place. As a rule, every such ceremony is attended by several hundred people. For example, in Moldova on March 2, 2017, veterans, active duty police and military officers, and local heads of government all took part in memorial events like these in Chisinau where participants of the rally came with portraits of combatants killed in the conflict as well as in Balti, Soroca, Causeni, Telenesti and other cities[192].

In addition to the ceremonies and rallies held along the Dniester on public days of remembrance, it is also common to organize religious services, award ceremonies, meetings with veterans in schools, conferences for both scholars and the general public, and small exhibitions devoted to the Transnistrian conflict. All these events are widely covered by the media[193].

Television channels in Transnistria broadcast regularly updated documentaries on the conflict. As for the content of these films, they either use the firsthand accounts of participants and the family members of the deceased "defenders of Transnistria" or they consist of a detailed ideological narrative about Transnistrian resistance to "Romanizing" Moldova. Mircea Snegur, the Republic of Moldova's first president, is portrayed as wanting "to wipe Dubossary off the face of the earth and to plant corn in its place." The media also draws parallels between the Transnistrian conflict and resistance to fascism during the Second World War[194]. In Moldova, there are much fewer documentaries of this sort. For instance, the state-run television channel Moldova 1 only recently made a one-hour documentary in honor of the 20th anniversary of the Transnistrian conflict[195]. This is in contrast to the genre of photographic albums

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[191] See, for example, The plan of events dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the beginning of hostilities for protecting the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Moldova. Annex No. 2 to Government Decision No. 79 of February 15, 2017, http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=368937&lang=2

[192] 25 de ani de amintiri dureroase! EROII căzuți în războiul de pe Nistru au fost comemorați azi cu solemnitate – GALERIE FOTO, VIDEO, http://www.realitatea.md/25-de-ani-de-amintiri-dureroase-eroii-cazu-i-in-razboiul-de-pe-nistru-au-fost-comemora-i-azi-cu-solemnitate-galerie-foto-video_53341.html

[193] In Moldova, the state media as well as resources aimed at the right-wing audience, including the unionist one, are most actively involved in the implementation of the policy of memory. The left-wing media outlets close to Igor Dodon are more restrained and reproduce rather the old discourse about a single but divided people, which must necessarily be reunited. In Transnistria, media discourse is much more homogeneous.

[194] The documentary film "War and Peace on the Dniester", https://tv.pgtrk.ru/news/20170618/58268

[195] Războiul de pe Nistru | Documentar, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kItNu6QOlyw

devoted to the Transnistrian conflict, which is widespread in both Tiraspol and Chisinau.

In 2017, Moldova republished the album *In Memory of the Heroes Who Died in the Battles on the Dniester* dedicated to the 300 Moldovan combatants who died in the conflict. The publication of the album was supported by the Bureau for Reintegration of the Government of the Republic of Moldova[196]. These albums are published much more frequently in Transnistria than in Moldova. During the time of Transnistria's first president Igor Smirnov (1991–2011), these publications were filled primarily with photographs of the corpses of those who perished from the "Moldovan aggression"[197]. Over time however, they became much more diverse. They now include more photographs depicting people's daily routine and the end of the war: the portraits of rebels, the flight of civilians from battle zones, the arrival of peacekeepers, etc[198].

In terms of officially commemorated dates, there is one significant difference between the two banks of the Dniester. In Moldova, only one date is associated with the Transnistrian conflict – March 2, the date in 1992 when fighting broke out in Dubossary. Officially, it was established only in 2010 as the Day of Remembrance for Those Who Perished in the Armed Conflict of 1992 Protecting the Integrity and Independence of the Republic of Moldova and for the Victims of this Conflict[199]. While Moldova conducts all activities related to the commemoration of the conflict on a single day, in Transnistria, there are several officially recognized dates.

For instance, officials marked the Day of Remembrance and Mourning for the Dead in the City of Bendery on June 19 and the Day of Remembrance of the Dead and the Deceased Defenders of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic on August 1. In 2017, President Krasnoselsky established another memorial day – the Day of the Beginning of the Repulsion of the Large-Scale Aggression of the Republic of Moldova against the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic on March 2[200]. Previously, this date had been observed informally.

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[196] 25 de ani de la războiul de la Nistru | A fost lansat albumul "În memoria eroilor căzuți în luptele de la Nistru", http://radiochisinau.md/25-de-ani-de-la-razboiul-de-la-nistru-a-fost-lansat-albumul-in-memoria-eroilor-cazuti-in-luptele-de-la-nistru—-46575.html

[197] See, for example: Babilunga N. B., Bomeshko B. G., sost., (1993), Dubossary. Krovotochash-chaya rana Pridnestrov'ya, Tiraspol: Tipar.

[198] See, for example: Palamar' A., sost., (2012), Pridnestrovskaya vojna. Istorija v illyustratsyyakh: Tiraspol.

[199] Resolution No. 17 of 26.02.2010 "On introduction of amendments to the Parliamentary Resolution on public holidays and rest days in the Republic of Moldova No. 433-XII of December 26, 1990", http://lex.justice.md/ru/333881/

[200] Decree No. 128 of 18,02.2017 "On amending Decree No. 41 of January 19, 2017 of the president of the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic "On preparation and taking measures with regard to the state holidays and memorable dates of the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic

Given that March 2 is an officially observed in Moldova, the decision by the Transnistrian authorities to codify the date worked to juxtapose their own version of the memory against the Moldovan one. Increasingly strained relations between the two governments as well as the desire to highlight the distance between "peace-loving" Transnistria and "aggressive" Moldova help to explain this change in policy. In addition, Transnistria frequently marks new anniversaries, such as the 25th anniversary of the Russian peacekeeping mission to Transnistria, which was officially celebrated for the first time on July 29, 2017.

SITES OF MEMORY

The main sites of memory and ceremonies in Moldova and in Transnistria are memorial complexes. The Chisinau and Tiraspol memorials are similar in design. Both are located on the grounds of Soviet memorial complexes dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. In the center of the composition, there is a sculpture of the Grieving Mother. The names of the dead combatants are engraved on special plates. A distinctive feature of the Transnistrian memorial is the graves of the "defenders of Transnistria" as well as stand-alone male statues of an Afghan soldier and a "defender of Transnistria" located on both sides of the Grieving Mother. In addition to the Tiraspol memorial, several similar complexes were installed in Transnistrian cities of Dubossary and Bendery, where a bust of Alexander Lebed was installed in 2012 [201]. These are the cities where the main hostilities took place. In 2017, an additional memorial was opened in Rybnitsa [202]. In Moldova, apart from the memorial in the capital, only one monumental complex was built near the village of Kochiery and opened in 2011 [203].

In addition to national memorials, there are other monuments. In July 2017, the Moldovan village of Choara saw an opening of a monument dedicated to its two dead residents – S. Andreev and O. Sheremet [204]. In the course of the events, flowers were laid at cemeteries where the killed combatants are buried. In the city of Bendery,

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in 2017", http://pravo.pmr-online.com/View.aspx?id=AobFx3yeP5bWznX4gxl5QA%3d%3d

[201] Visiting memorable battlefields: Dubossary, https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/15–05–08/po-mestam-voinskoy-slavy-dubossary

[202] Vadim Krasnoselsky took part in the opening ceremony of the Rybnitsa Memorial Complex of Glory to Fatherland Defenders, http://president.gospmr.org/press-sluzhba/novosti/vadim-krasnoseljskiy-prinyal-uchastie-v-tseremonii-otkritiya-ribnitskogo-memoriala-slavi-zaschitnikam-otechestva.html

[203] Monument în cinstea eroilor la Cocieri, http://www.army.md/?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=802#.WYEaH4TyjIU

[204] Nu şi-au uitat eroii. Monument dedicat eroilor ucişi în războiul de la Nistru, http://www.prime.md/ro/nu-si-au-uitat-eroii-monument-dedicat-eroilor-ucisi-in-razboiul-de-la-nistru_58568.html

there is a separate Alley of Heroes in the Borisovskoye Cemetery, which is visited annually on August 1. Also in Bendery, there is a monument to the officers of Bendery Internal Affairs Department, which every year becomes the center of official events on April 1. Throughout Transnistria, there are numerous crosses installed in the memory of the dead Cossacks and delegations of Cossacks regularly visit the region to commemorate the dead.

A monument honoring the deceased "defenders of Transnistria" – the Sorrowful Mother, Tiraspol, July 2017. Author: Sergey Rumyantsev

In 2017, eye-catching monuments with competing political meanings appeared on both banks of the Dniester. In Bendery, it is a monument to Russian peacekeepers[205]. In Chisinau, the Security and Information Service inaugurated a monument to the heroes of the state security agencies, who "were killed in the armed conflict when protecting the integrity and independence of the Republic of Moldova."[206]

The museification of the conflict on both banks of the Dniester is much less prevalent than the installation of monuments. There are no permanent museum exhibitions in Moldova, while in Transnistria, the Museum of the Bendery Tragedy was opened in 1997, and the Bendery Local History Museum has housed stands dedicated to General Lebed.

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[205] Inauguration of the monument to Soldiers-Peacemakers, http://president.gospmr.org/press-sluzhba/novosti/v-benderah-otkrit-pamyatnik-voinam-mirotvortsam.html

[206] Pavel Philip: Only those who know how to honor and preserve memory can build their future, http://gov.md/ru/content/pavel-filip-tolko-tot-kto-umeet-chtit-i-hranit-pamyat-mozhet-postroit-svoe-budushchee

PARTICIPANTS IN MILITARY OPERATIONS: VETERANS AND DEFENDERS

Following the conflict, officially recognized social groups of combatants appeared on both sides of the Dniester. In Moldova, they are called veterans, while in Transnistria they are referred to as "defenders". On the Left Bank the term "veterans" mainly refers to people who fought in the Great Patriotic War and Afghanistan. Both in Transnistria and in Moldova, veterans are the main participants in events held during the official commemorations. They also take part in the "patriotic education" of young people. They have their own non-profit organizations dealing with their own social security. On the left bank, there is one key organization – the Union of the Defenders of Transnistria. In Moldova, the interests of veterans are represented by at least 36 different organizations[207]. In Moldova, it is officially reported that there are 28,000 participants, while in Transnistria the Union of the Defenders includes more than 10,000 people[208].

The social status of combatants on both banks is far from being equal. In Transnistria, the defenders of the republic enjoy a wide range of benefits – a 50 % discount for housing and communal services, free provision of medicines, free access to public transport, first-priority housing[209]. However, the number of allocated apartments is limited, and this problem is far from being solved[210]. In addition, starting in 2017, the "defenders of Transnistria" who receive a state pension were granted an allowance that is 125 % greater than lowest pension grade. In reality, this is about $ 30 a month. Social benefits are also provided to war invalids and families of the deceased[211]. The situation is different in Moldova. In July 2012, "the participants in the military operations for protection territorial integrity and independence" lost all benefits to which they were previously entitled. They were replaced with a monthly allowance of 100 Moldovan lei (about $ 5) for combatants. War invalids are entitled to receive 475–700 lei, or about $ 25–40

[207] Ion Costash: I am ready to meet and argue with Mikhail Bergman in public, http://www.moldova.org/ru/eksklyuziv-ion-kostash-ya-gotov-publichno-vstretitsya-i-posporit-s-mihai-lom-bergmanom-229756-rus/

[208] The Union of the Defenders of Transnistria celebrates its 20th anniversary, https://novostipmr.com/ru/news/14–11–19/soyuz-zashchitnikov-pridnestrovya-otmechaet-20-letie

[209] For the participants in the military operations for protection of the Pridnestrovian Moldovan Republic, http://minsoctrud.gospmr.org/dlya_uchastnikov_boevyih_deystviy_po_zaschite_prid-nestrovskoy_moldavskoy_respubliki/

[210] Problems of the Transnistrian defenders discussed in the Government, https://tv.pgtrk.ru/news/20170626/58599

[211] Extra charges, increases, additional pensions, http://ef-pmr.org/pensii/nadbavki_povishe-nia_doppensii/

a month[212]. Combat veterans often receive a lump sum payment of 1000 lei, about $56, on March 2 on the anniversary of the war. The authorities by and large have shifted the provision of housing to municipalities which, as a rule, lack the necessary means to subsidize veterans.

<div align="center">***</div>

In general, the traditions of the commemoration of conflict are much more developed in Transnistria, and, in fact, they are the main resource for state building. Since 2010, Moldova has seen efforts to scale up the development their own traditions, but so far, March 2 remains the only memorial day, and there are fewer sites of memory than in Transnistria.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT DISCOURSES

In general, from the perspective of ideology, the memory policy has been effective in achieving a particular set of goals. In Transnistria, the authorities have ensured that there is no visible social resistance to secession from Chisinau. In Moldova, in turn, a national consensus and a view of how it is necessary to solve the Transnistrian issue are gradually forming.

According to a survey commissioned by the *Timpul* newspaper in 2017, 64% of the country's citizens see Transnistria as part of Moldova on an equal basis with any other region of Moldova. 15% of people believe that there is a possibility of granting autonomy, while 16% are ready to support Tiraspol's independence or its annexation to Russia[213]. However, according to another *Timpul* survey, the idea of federalization also has substantial support: 34% of respondents in 2015 and 43% in 2016[214]. Data from a 2017 survey conducted by the Institute of Public Policies present the same picture: 37% for federalization, 41% against, and 15% neither for nor against[215].

At first glance, these data present an ambiguous picture. However, if we remember that the idea of federalization is supported by President Igor Dodon, we can assume that it is his electorate that backs this decision. The key question concerns the model of federalization. Dodon's compromise version, which he talks about in his public

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[212] Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 730 of 02.10.2012 "On amendments, addendum and recognition of some government decrees as invalid", http://lex.justice.md/ru/344918/

[213] SONDAJ: 53 la sută dintre moldoveni sunt contra aderării Republicii Moldova la NATO, http://www.timpul.md/articol/sondaj-53-la-suta-dintre-moldoveni-sunt-contra-aderarii-republicii-moldova-la-nato——doc-106736.html

[214] Sondaj socio-politic realizat de FOP la solicitarea ziarului "Timpul", https://ru.scribd.com/doc/305812783/Sondaj-socio-politic-realizat-de-FOP-la-solicitarea-ziarului-Timpul-martie-2016

[215] Barometrul Opiniei Publice – aprilie 2017, http://consulting.md/pic/uploaded/%C8%98tiri/BOP%202017/Magenta_BOP_final_v3_27_apr.pptx

speeches, resembles the Gagauz autonomy rather than the model of "asymmetric federation" laid out in the Kozak Memorandum.

One can hazard the guess that the relative majority of Moldovan citizens supports such a scenario. But it is obvious that even this idea will be greeted with skepticism from the right-wing electorate who fears that Transnistria will remain an unintegrated region, constantly destabilizing the domestic political environment. On the one hand Maia Sandu, the leader of the pro-European opposition party PAS, supports the Gagauz scenario for Transnistria[216]. On the other hand, Oazu Nantoi, a well-known expert who Sandu often invites to draft general statements on Transnistria, believes that the region should be included in Moldova, not as a single autonomous entity, but as a territory divided into several separate regions[217].

Currently, the Moldovan authorities, who have drastically politicized the Transnistrian issue and the role of Russia in the region, face no serious challenge. On the contrary, this issue unites all major political forces in the country, which differ largely in their tone rather than their content when discussing the issue. In February, leaders of the pro-European parties PAS and the Dignity and Truth Platform Party together with Nantoi and Viorel Cibotaru, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, adopted the joint "Declaration on the 25th Anniversary of the Beginning of military actions to Protect the Integrity and Independence of the Republic of Moldova". In this document, they advocated for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria and opposed any options for the federalization of the country. They criticized the authorities only for a lack of transparency in their relations with Tiraspol surrounding in terms of trade in electricity and their neglect for the social needs of veterans of the conflict[218].

For his part, Igor Dodon, despite meetings with President of Transnistria Vadim Krasnoselsky and his desire to demonstrate "goodwill", supported the establishment of joint Ukrainian-Moldovan customs posts on the Transnistrian section of the border, saying that a united country should have a common border[219]. Dodon also began

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[216] "If we were a project of the West, and it were so strong, I would be president now." Interview of NM with Maia Sandu, http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/esli-by-my-byli-proektom-zapada-i-on-tak-silen-ya-dolzhna-by-seychas-byt-prezident-30184

[217] Nantoj O. Istoki i perspektivy razreshenija pridnestrovskogo konflikta // Matveev D. I dr., red. (2009), Moldova- Pridnestrov'e: obshchimi usiliyami – k uspeshnomu budushchemu. Peregovornyj protsess, Chișinău: Cu drag, 52–74, p. 72.

[218] Declarația comună a Președintelui PPDA, Andrei Năstase, Președintelui PAS, Maia Sandu, Președintelui PLDM, Viorel Cibotaru, și a expertului în problema transnistreană, Oazu Nantoi "Cu privire la comemorarea a 25 de ani de la începutul acțiunilor de luptă pentru apărarea integrității şi independenţei Republicii Moldova", http://unpaspentru.md/2017-declaratia-comuna/

[219] Igor Dodon: "When the regime changes, I promise, I have already started negotiations,

to use the strident rhetoric of ex-President Voronin. According to him, Transnistria's independence is beneficial to the "princes from the Left Bank, who are accustomed to putting huge sums of money into their accounts in Germany." They refuse to solve the problems between Chisinau and Tiraspol "because it is easier to steal from them and take money from Russia."[220]

THE "WEAK POSITION" OF CONFLICT DISCOURSES AND PROSPECTS FOR A PEACEFUL TRANSFORMATION

Despite the seemingly hermetically sealed conflict discourses in Tiraspol and Chisinau, there are strong constraining factors that enable us to hope that a peaceful transformation of the conflict is still possible.

First, there is still a fairly high level of mutual trust between ordinary citizens on the two banks of the Dniester. The results of a 2013 sociological survey, which was published by Nikolai Tsviatkov and conducted throughout the territory of the former Moldavian SSR, show that mutual trust is observed in 62 % of the respondents on the right bank and 75 % of the residents on the left bank[221].

Second, Chisinau and Tiraspol have serious material constraints. The social and economic situation on both banks of the Dniester is not conducive to the resumption of an armed conflict. According to the previously referenced Institute of Public Policies survey, only 11 % of the citizens of the right bank believe that the settlement of the Transnistrian issue should be among the top three state policy priorities[222]. For the majority of the Moldovan population, the Transnistrian conflict is a largely forgotten episode of the past.

In addition, neither government has the resources to re-equip the armies that fell into decay in the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and external players do not seek to provide weapons to the region. Chisinau insists that the Russian army has actually merged with the Transnistrian one and engages in provocations by constantly conducting military exercises. However, it is hardly possible to argue that the Russian troops stationed in Transnistria are a full-fledged military contingent capable of conducting offensive operations[223].

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there will be at least 500 million – one billion dollars annually", https://www.europalibera.org/a/interview-igor-dodon-president-moldova-europe-russia-usa-money-plahotniuc-putin-people-elections/28497213.html

[220] Transnistria's independence is beneficial to the "princes" from the Left Bank, the West and the Unionists, – Dodon, http://bloknot-moldova.md/news/nezavisimost-pridnestrovya-vygodna-knyazkam-s-levo

[221] Tsvyatkov N. (2016), Golos Pridnestrov'ya: Ekho velikoj strany, Chișinău: Intellect group, p. 67.

[222] Barometrul Opiniei Publice – aprilie 2017, http://consulting.md/pic/uploaded/%C8%98tiri/BOP%202017/Magenta_BOP_final_v3_27_apr.pptx

[223] Pavel Felgenhauer: "Russia will not abandon Transnistria but now it has more ambitious

Moreover, logistically, they are completely cut off from Russia.

Third, on both banks of the Dniester, no paramilitary groups that would be capable of destabilizing the situation remain after the conflict. While veteran organizations play an increasingly significant role in Moldovan politics, they engage in socially-directed activities such as the restoration of pensions and increasing benefits[224]. Besides, the veteran movement is seriously discredited by the fact that the government uses some of the organizations of combatants for its own purposes: to struggle against the opposition, to promote initiatives which are beneficial to the authorities, etc[225].

And, finally, **fourth**, the academic community in Moldova is disposed, to a certain extent, to dialogue on the conflict and politics of memory. Many Moldovan analysts generally agree that the Transnistrian conflict resulted from the collapse of the USSR, during which both Tiraspol and Chisinau occupied uncompromising, mutually exclusive positions. In politics, emotions prevailed over carefully thought-out actions. Igor Botsan, the famous Moldovan political scientist, said in March 2017:

> *"For the overwhelming majority of our fellow-citizens from Transnistria, the Transnistrian region and what was formed there represented the last outpost of the Soviet Union, a kind of a formula for resistance against the collapse of the Soviet Union. On this side of the Dniester, there was a wave of enthusiasm for national revival. These two views were used by politicians from both banks of the Dniester, though not necessarily maliciously, and I think that there were a lot of phobias that were poorly recognized, and as a result we got what we now call a "frozen conflict"[226].*

There are also other moderate voices in Moldova like the historian Octavian Rusu who thoroughly analyzes the circumstances of the conflict in his articles. According to him, a large-scale armed conflict was far from predetermined given the fact that on June 18, the day before the introduction of troops into Bendery, representatives of both banks of the Dniester had agreed on a full-fledged peace plan. According to Rusu, the Moldovan leaders overestimated the help they could count on from Kiev, who had recently blocked the entry

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plans", https://www.europalibera.org/a/interview-pavel-felgenhauer-russia-moldova-ukraine-tiraspol-dodon-krasnoselsky-plahotniuc/28623509.html

[224] Adriana Kandu and Pavel Philip have been booed at the memorial, https://point.md/ru/novosti/obschestvo/adriana-kandu-i-pavla-filipa-osvistali-na-memoriale

[225] See, for example, Șapte asociații de veterani susțin votul uninominal, http://www.ipn.md/ro/societate/83544#

[226] Igor Botsan: The Transnistrian conflict is a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union, http://www.ipn.md/ru/politica/82507

of the Cossacks. At the same time, they underestimated Moscow's readiness to respond to the actions of the Moldovan troops in the face of pressure from the West on other issues of importance for Russia[227]. Rusu considers the present attempts to shift all responsibility for the conflict onto Russia to be counterproductive and criticizes the assertion that Moscow made itself a party to the conflict by concluding the agreement on the peaceful settlement on July 21.

It is erroneous, Rusu writes, to belittle the role of Transnistria, in particular, as former president Snegur did when he claimed that Igor Smirnov had not really signed the 1992 agreement[228]. Even participants in the events of 1989–1992 who believe that Moldova fought primarily with the Russian army and that the Russian special services organized the provocation in Bendery, acknowledge that Chisinau made many political mistakes.

Nantoi, who held a high-level post in the People's Front of Moldova, writes that with the collapse of the USSR, the "national revival" served as an occasion not only for restoring "historical justice" but also for humiliating the Russian-speaking population and creating plans for unification with Romania without the Left Bank. For their part, the politicians in Chisinau could not come up with anything better than responding to separatism in Gagauzia and Transnistria through the large-scale use of force. In many respects, Nantoi traces these problems into the present, asserting that the full-fledged democratization and Europeanization of Moldova is one of the main prerequisites to settling the conflict[229].

General Ion Costas, who was the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Moldova from 1990–1992 and who, in 2010 published well-received memoirs about the war on the Dniester, also believes that Chisinau's decision to exclude ethnic minorities from the process of "national revival" was a great mistake. He criticizes the inability of the Moldovan government to cope with the mass riots and provocations launched primarily by members of the People's Front, and the legal nihilism which made many citizens feel unsafe[230].

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[227] Rusu O. Tragedia de la Bender / Tighina și sfîrșitul războiului de pe Nistru, http://www.platzforma.md/tragedia-de-la-bender-tighina-si-sfirsitul-razboiului-de-pe-nistru/

[228] Rusu O. Convenția cu privire la principiile de reglementare pașnică a conflictului armat din zona nistreană a Republicii Moldova: aspecte ignorate și/sau uitate, http://www.platzforma.md/conventia-cu-privire-la-principiile-de-reglementare-pasnica-a-conflictului-armat-din-zona-nistreana-a-republicii-moldova-aspecte-ignorate-sisau-uitate/

[229] O. Nantoi, Ibid.

[230] Kostash I. (2011), Dni zatmeniya: khronika neob"yavlennoj vojny, Chișinău: Universul, p. 175–177.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The traditional tool for overcoming differences in the field of historical memory is the creation of bilateral commissions on historical issues and confidence-building measures. However, these commissions can work successfully only if there is the requisite political will. As for both banks of the Dniester, no such will exists, nor will it in the future.

However, that does not mean that there are no any tools to influence the situation. In Moldova, especially in more recent times, a large number of different "plans" and "declarations" on the Transnistrian issue have been set forth. All of them somehow reflect the discourses of certain political party groups and state institutions. The same situation can be seen in Tiraspol. However, if in Tiraspol there are almost no expert analytical organizations that are autonomous from the authorities and the structures of political party, such organizations do exist in Chisinau. In addition, Transnistria is self-isolated today as it feels politically "cornered" because Chisinau, Kiev, and Brussels are increasingly insisting on the reintegration of the region and have taken a number of political and administrative measures to ensure this comes to pass.

Therefore, it seems expedient to create an expert research group in Moldova with the participation of public intellectuals such as political scientists, sociologists, historians, and journalists who are ready to promote a more balanced, moderate, and depoliticized view of the Transnistrian problem. There is no point in striving to create parity on the Left Bank when creating such a group. It is, however, necessary to include several experts from Tiraspol in it at least as observers. In order to further the autonomy of the group from the dominant political discourses surrounding the conflict, it seems promising to also include competent foreign experts, especially from Romania, Russia, EU countries, the United States, and Ukraine.

This analytical and research group or network could proceed along the following lines:

1. While the direct participants of the events in the conflict zone of 1992 are alive, it is necessary to conduct oral history research on both banks of the Dniester, including among the participants of the hostilities. It is not always the case that conflict narratives and discourses are reproduced within the framework of the personal memory of the war. One can hear and popularize many stories about the rejection of violence during the war, mutual assistance, and unwillingness to continue the conflict. The main goal of this research should be the formation of complex narratives which include the "historical guilt" of all parties involved in the conflict.

2. The data obtained in the course of field research should be summarized in a separate training manual whose content should be discussed with the involvement of the greatest possible number of scholars and instructors from both banks of the Dniester. The final version of the training material should be available online in the key regional languages – Romanian (Moldovan), Russian, and English.

3. In Moldova, there are many problems occurring relating to the implementation of the law on Gagauz autonomy as well as normative acts on the rights of ethnic minorities. It is necessary to study the shortcomings of state policy in the relevant spheres and to popularize ways to overcome them, including with the support of the OSCE.

4. Since 2015, Moldova has joined the international Holocaust Remembrance Day movement. For Transnistria, this issue has long been significant. It is crucial to create conditions for possible cooperation around this issue.

5. It is critical to intensify the public discussions on the experience of solving other similar conflicts. In particular, with the focus on the implementation of procedures such as amnesty, the creation of a common customs and security space, the guarantee of property rights, and the mechanisms by which outside actors fulfill political and other sorts of guarantees.

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Within the three analytical essays presented in this publication,
authors from Russia and Ukraine consider specificity of impact
of conflicts in Transnistria and Donbass on the policy of memory and historical
policy in the post-Soviet states.
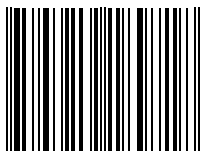
C I S R
B E R L I N

**Center for Independent
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