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From the Editor

“Still without Peace” was the title and the motto of the annual Warsaw East European conferences held in July 1-2, 2022 at the University of Warsaw under the auspices of the Center for East European Studies and with the support of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Russian war in Ukraine has largely determined the topics of that conference as well as the content of this issue of the Warsaw East European Review, partly though not exclusively based on the conference presentations.

From the scholarly point of view, Ukraine has been always a bit of puzzle – partly because it was chronically understudied for years if not centuries insofar as it did not exist on the most of the mental and geographic maps, but also because many processes and phenomena in the ‘newborn’ country did not fit the established analytical paradigms, let alone the dogmas of the Russian ‘Imperial knowledge’ adopted uncritically in the West. This is why so many Westerners, including scholars and politicians, were so stunned by the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union (that had never been seen and named as ‘empire’), and probably even more surprised lately at Ukraine’s spectacular resilience under Russian all-out military invasion.

In spite of the gloomy predictions and expectations, the country that had been broadly described as corrupt, dysfunctional, and internally deeply divided, appeared quite strong, institutionally robust and consolidated by civic patriotism. Ten months of the bloody, horrendous war have not brought any signs of breakdown of Ukrainian state or society. On the contrary, Ukrainians of all social brands seem to rally around the flag, united as never before. And all the state institutions, despite the persistent stress, duly provide all the services, probably even better than before the war. Why did this happen (rather than the opposite) is a big question that requires the study of many interrelated factors in their synergic interaction.

The papers presented at the Warsaw East European Conference and partly collected in this volume, shed some light at the problem, in particular Anna Menshenina's study of "Transformation of socio-political values in Ukraine: from gaining its independence till the outbreak of full-scale war". But the problem remains too broad, multifaceted and complicated, and definitely requires further examination. Four articles of this volume examine various aspects of the ongoing war – starting from the origins of Putin's obsession with the 'Ukrainian question' explored in Mykola Riabchuk's essay, and from the early attempts to impose a disastrous implementation of Minsk agreements upon the Ukrainian government, scrutinized by Iryna Bohinska, – to the remarkable peculiarities of the Russian hybrid warfare against Ukraine, featured by Julien Théron, and to the venomous propagandistic campaigns staged by Russia against Ukraine on a global scale, as presented in a detailed case study by Oksana Nesterenko.

Global ramifications of the Russian war in Ukraine and some scenarios for the future are considered in Olga Brusylowska's article; and the cultural and political activity of displaced Belarusians in the post-war West Germany is attentively discussed by Anastasiya Ilyina. It may slightly fall out of the main topic of this volume, but it may resonate with today's problems of Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons and keep, in a broader sense, all the East European nations on our radar. The Russian war in Ukraine is most likely to dominate in both the WEEC panels and the WEER pages next year but we encourage our international colleagues to explore Eastern Europe as alive and dynamic body, where various parts are interconnected and interdependent.

Mykola Riabchuk
Princeton, November 28, 2022

The Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022: Discussions and Perceptions inside Academia

Olga Brusylovska

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Abstract. Four issues are most actively discussed in Western literature: the aims of Russian foreign politics (occupy all of Ukraine); the legal basis for supporting Ukraine (what the West could do for Ukraine without worsening relations with Russia); the instruments for supporting Ukraine (sanctions are a key policy tool); and the scenarios for the future. The scenario for Russia means that Russia has become a global business pariah. The scenario for Ukraine is connected not only with the convincing response of the Ukrainian army to the Russian invasion, but also with changes in terms of language, national symbols, patriotic rhetoric, and self-esteem. The scenario for the USA and NATO includes revising and widening their military spending. The scenario for the EU means the emergence of a new concept of the EU's foreign politics and transition from 'strategic partnership' to 'strategic confrontation' with Russia.

Keywords: invasion, Russia, Ukraine, Academia, discussions.

1. The aims of Russian foreign politics

A factor that has shaped Russia's role in the world has been the country's unique geography. It has no natural borders, except the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean (the latter of which is now becoming a contested space too). Buffeted throughout its history by often turbulent developments in East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, Russia has felt perennially vulnerable and has often displayed a kind of defensive aggressiveness. Whatever the original causes behind

early Russian expansionism – much of which was unplanned – many in the country's political class have come to believe over time that only further expansion could secure the earlier acquisitions.

According to Stephen Kotkin, the biggest driver of Russian foreign policy has been the country's perennial quest for a strong state, a state willing and able to act aggressively in its own interests. Russians have always had a sense of living in a providential country with a special mission. It has been expressed differently over time – the Third Rome, the pan-Slavic kingdom, or the world headquarters of the Communist International. Today's version involves both Eurasianism and Russian World concepts. Putin does not recognize the existence of a Ukrainian nation separate from a Russian one. "Like Stalin, he views all nominally independent borderland states, now including Ukraine, as weapons in the hands of Western powers intent on wielding them against Russia. Russia is the most corrupt developed country in the world, and its resource-extracting, rent-seeking economic system has reached a dead end"¹.

Russia's written demands show Putin intends to revise history and change the post-1989 European security order. Attacking Ukraine has probably assuaged his damaged ego from the claim Russia is a declining power. On one hand, Putin wants to restore the notion of empire and doesn't recognize the legitimacy of former Soviet republics. At the same time, military aggression against manufactured enemies is a way to deflect discontent at home and maintain his power.

Myah Ward noted that "Putin seeks a significant expansion of Russian territory in the region; an increase in Russian influence globally; as well as – and perhaps most importantly for Putin – yet another demonstration of Western impotence in the face of Russian aggression"².

Therefore Putin's end game goes beyond occupying the eastern regions of Ukraine. The Russian president's ultimate goals are to delegitimize the President and the Government in Kyiv, occupy all of Ukraine, and prop up a government supportive of Moscow. Therefore at the beginning of invasion Yanukovych was brought from Rostov-on-Don to Minsk as a possible figure for the presidential chair.

So, the worst scenario was played out by the Kremlin with several analysts immediately calling the invasion the largest conventional military attack in Europe since World War II. Moreover the Russian occupant's forces have used methods that violate all rules of war. They attack objects of civilian infrastructure which causes death and injuries to civilians including children, and have regional and global effects.

1 S. Kotkin, *Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics. Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern*, „Foreign Affairs”, 2016.

2 M. Ward, *Why Putin chose war*, „POLITICO Nightly”, February 24, 2022.

2. The legal basis for supporting Ukraine

Meanwhile, Western analysts were primarily discussing what the West could do for Ukraine without worsening its position in the face of Putin's illogical actions. The discussion between Luciana Alexandra Ghica and Azuolas Bagdonas serves as a good example. Ghica starts from the point that "there is no legal basis for intervening militarily for supporting Ukraine. Any reaction without legal basis is as illegitimate and destructive for the international legal system as the Russian invasion. Without a legal basis, the direct military support from a NATO member means basically a direct war in Europe between Russia and NATO. Neither Ukraine, nor NATO want to arrive in that situation, in which Ukraine would be in fact the most affected. Legally speaking, only Ukraine was attacked directly, so, one cannot easily invoke collective self-defence without a political interpretation. ...we now have to rely on the General Assembly and regional organizations mechanisms. We need to stop the bloodshed and not to fuel the vicious cycle of violence. The punishment for Putin's regime will eventually come but it should be through justice and not through violence, otherwise we are all doomed to a never-ceasing path of self-destruction. And what we need to punish is the perpetrators – Putin's regime and his acolytes, not the Russian population in general. We must support both Ukraine and all Russians who are fighting for freedom, democracy, and rule of law. The Russian population should be protected as much as possible".

Azuolas Bagdonas alternatively starts from the point that if it is unprovoked aggression (and it is), every country has a duty to assist Ukraine if it asks for help. According to Charter, Ukraine and its allies can defend until the SC takes measures – if the SC does not take measures, as is usually the case, this does not confer authority to the GA to make any kind of decisions, much less binding decisions. Acting in self-defence, Ukraine now has the right to carry out military actions in Russia and Belarus if this is necessary. War in today's world has been outlawed except in two cases – the SC authorizes it or in self-defence. But a full scale invasion of Ukraine is not justifiable in any way. Legally speaking, based on principles and the spirit of international law, at the moment Russia invaded Ukraine it became an outcast, losing all its rights and its privileges, including a seat at the UNSC. Russia should be excluded from the international community until its current regime's top figures are in prison. As an outcast, it can be invaded by other states, preferably with the SC approval, but arguably even in its absence. NATO could and should provide the means of self-defence to Ukraine. And the last argument: "planning and conducting a war of aggression is an international crime, it is also a crime under Russian law, punishable by 20 years in prison"³.

³ L. A. Ghica, „Facebook“, February 25, 2022.

3. The instruments for supporting Ukraine

According Joshua Kirschenbaum, sanctions are a key policy tool, but their relative importance can only be appreciated accurately in the context of other policy dimensions. But first, Russia's gross domestic product is about \$1.5 trillion. Second, Russia is integrated into the world economy, with deep exposure to Europe. Third, Russia is one of the top global producers of both oil and gas. Russia produces over 10 million barrels per day. The situation with natural gas is even more acute. Europe derives 40 per cent of its natural gas supplies from Russia and has no way to substitute for most of that gas in the short term. The EU will continue to pay Gazprom. For these reasons, U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia in retaliation for the current invasion of Ukraine will not be as far-reaching as those targeting Iran. And even in Iran success took five years. So, the U.S. and EU should limit investment in and business with key sectors of the Russian economy (such as energy, mining, and defence), prohibit transfers of advanced technology, and restrict or cut off major financial institutions. The U.S. and EU should also explore creative ways to push Russian elites' wealth out of the Western financial system, without necessarily freezing assets in every instance. "Sanctions will yield the desired outcome if other types of pressure appreciably affect the target government's calculus. So, sanctions are just another tool in the box, nothing more, and nothing less"⁴.

4. The scenarios for future

A positive scenario for Russia, as S. Kotkin resumed, would be if "Russian elites could somehow redefine their sense of exceptionalism and put aside their unwinnable competition with the West. Russian governments have generally oscillated between seeking closer ties with the West and recoiling in fury at perceived slights. Until Russia brings its aspirations into line with its actual capabilities, it cannot become a "normal" country, no matter what the rise in its per capita GDP or other quantitative indicators is"⁵. Liam O'Shea believed that "the reason most eastern European states are unwilling to align with Russia is not because western powers are seeking to undermine Russia's geopolitical position (or at least not only because of this). Rather, it is because alignment with the West still offers more hope for a better way of life than alignment with Russia, with its high levels of corruption and poor provision of key public services. Close association with Russia has little to offer ordinary people in its neighbouring states in the long-term"⁶.

4 J. Kirschenbaum, *Sanctions Are A Tool, Not A Magic Wand*, „The German Marshall Fund of the United States“, 2022.

5 S. Kotkin, *Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics. Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern*, „Foreign Affairs“, 2016.

6 L. O'Shea, *What does Russia offer Ukraine and its neighbours?* „Medium“, 2022.

The negative scenario for Russia means that Putin's regime stays an existential threat to Russia. "Putin helped rescue the Russian state but has put it back on a trajectory of stagnation and even possible failure"⁷. Today we can see that "Russia has become a global business pariah while Ukraine has the potential to become the keystone in the European project"⁸.

The negative scenario for Ukraine, according to Taras Kuzio, means that "in the event of a Russian occupation of Ukraine and Zelenskyy's refusal to capitulate to the Kremlin's demands, Western Ukraine would most likely become the location of a Ukrainian Government-in-Exile. Western Ukraine borders four NATO and EU members – Poland (where 1.5 million Ukrainians work and study), Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. In the event of war in central and southern-eastern Ukraine, Western Ukraine would become a supply base, training ground, and base for supplies from NATO members to Ukrainian partisans fighting against a Russian occupation"⁹. As Michael Kofman and Jeffrey Edmonds predict, the Ukrainian military could retreat to cities as a last resort, forcing Russian units into urban terrain. "But urban warfare is a bloody business, and battles over Ukraine's main cities would likely kill substantial numbers of civilians, destroy entire neighbourhoods, and do untold damage to the economy. Ukrainian resistance might live on as an insurgency. But an insurgency, especially if externally sponsored, might still bleed Russian forces and resources over the years. And those parts of the Ukrainian military that are not directly defeated will continue fighting, echoing the partisan warfare that tore apart this whole region of Europe during and after World War II"¹⁰.

But even today we can see the first features of a positive scenario for Ukraine, connected not only with the convincing response of the Ukrainian army to the Russian invasion, which far exceeded not only the fears of the enemy, but also the hopes of our allies, but also with a change in the general mood in Ukrainian society. For years, it was a popular narrative: Ukraine is a country deeply divided between its eastern and western regions, between Russia and Europe, between its shared history with Moscow and the promise of someday being part of the West. However, as Markus Ziener underlines, "if there is one person who did away with this division, it is Vladimir Putin: the Russian president propelled Ukraine to unity and a patriotism not known before. If Putin wanted to pull Ukraine closer to Russia again, he has achieved the exact opposite. In terms of language, national symbols, patriotic rhetoric, and self-esteem, Ukraine was never as Ukrainian as it is now"¹¹.

7 S. Kotkin, *Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics. Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern*, „Foreign Affairs”, 2016.

8 K. Wolczuk, *The EU and Ukraine: Time for bold solidarity*, „The Chatham House”, March 25, 2022.

9 T. Kuzio, *Vladimir Putin's Imperialism and Military Goals against Ukraine*, „E-International Relations”, 2022.

10 M. Kofman, J. Edmonds, *Russia's Shock and Awe. Moscow's Use of Overwhelming Force against Ukraine*, „Foreign Affairs”, 2022.

11 M. Ziener, *Ukraine in 2022: Putin, the Great Unifier*, „The German Marshall Fund of the United States”, 2022.

The negative scenario for the United States and NATO includes first of all permanent economic war with Russia. In response, Russia will retaliate, quite possibly in the cyber-domain as well as in the energy sector. Moscow will limit access to critical goods such as titanium, of which Russia is the world's second-largest exporter. Second, for the United States, a Russian victory in Ukraine would have profound effects on its grand strategy in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Strong U.S. commitment to European security will prevent Russia from dividing European countries from one another. But this will be difficult in light of competing priorities, especially confrontation with China. But as Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage underline: "if Europe is destabilized then the United States will be much more alone in the world. The Holy Grail of political and cyber-battles will be the 2024 presidential election in the United States. The election of Donald Trump or of a Trumpian candidate might destroy the transatlantic relationship at Europe's hour of maximum peril, putting into question NATO's position and its security guarantees for Europe. If Russia gains control of Ukraine or manages to destabilize it on a major scale, U.S. and its European allies would face the dual challenge of rethinking European security and of not being drawn into a larger war with Russia. If Russia achieves its political aims in Ukraine, Europe will not be what it was before this war. Not only will U.S. primacy in Europe have been qualified; any sense that NATO can ensure peace on the continent will be the artefact of a lost age. Instead, security in Europe will have to be reduced to defending the core members of NATO. In the event of a Russian victory in Ukraine, the role of leading European countries will change dramatically. France and the United Kingdom will assume leading roles in European affairs by virtue of their comparatively strong militaries and long tradition of military interventions. Eastern member states including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania would have NATO troops permanently on their soil. Everyone outside the clubs will stand alone. NATO will no longer have the capacity for ambitious policies beyond their own borders. Russian suzerainty over Ukraine would open a vast zone of destabilization and insecurity from Estonia to Poland to Romania and Turkey"¹². Third, the destruction of Ukraine's democracy through a Russian invasion and installation of a pro-Kremlin puppet regime, would energise China and Iran, and send a signal that the democratic West is in decline. A successful overthrow of democracy in Ukraine would encourage China to consider a military conquest of Taiwan¹³. And we can see the first signs of this scenario in China's response to Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan August 3, 2022. China responded by launching large-scale military exercises near Taiwan, accompanied by a massive media campaign explaining that no one can stop the process of Taiwan's reunification with China.

12 L. Fix, M. Kimmage, *What if Russia Wins? A Kremlin-Controlled Ukraine Would Transform Europe*, „Foreign Affairs”, 2022.

13 T. Kuzio, *Vladimir Putin's Imperialism and Military Goals against Ukraine*, „E-International Relations”, 2022.

The positive scenario for the United States and NATO includes the increasing of NATO members defence after the beginning a broader Russian invasion of Ukraine, revising and widening their military spending. This is 'the final call' to improve Europe's defensive capabilities – in tandem with the United States – in order to help the United States manage the Russian-Chinese dilemma. "Chinese irritation with Russia may initiate new conversations. Turkey as a NATO member will not benefit from the militarization of the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean. Russian actions that destabilize the wider region could push Turkey back toward the United States, which could in turn drive a wedge between Ankara and Moscow. This would be good for NATO, and it would also open up greater possibilities for a U.S.-Turkish partnership in the Middle East. Rather than a nuisance, Turkey could turn into the ally it is supposed to be. If there may be little that the West can do to prevent a Russian military conquest, it will be able to influence what happens afterward. Wars that are won are never won forever. All too often countries defeat themselves over time by launching and then winning the wrong wars"¹⁴.

The negative scenario for the European Union, as Francis Fukuyama predicts, would be "if Putin is successful in undermining Ukrainian independence and democracy, the world will return to an era of aggressive and intolerant nationalism reminiscent of the early twentieth century"¹⁵ and the EU in the best case will turn into the isolated Island of Europe.

Besides, there are a lot of works on the spirit of the so-called 'pragmatic approach'. For ex., David Chandler insists that "the internationalisation of the conflict can be destabilizing ...if a peace agreement is becoming viable, it also seems that the terms of non-membership of NATO and the European Union and recognition of a Russian sphere of influence in the south and the east could have been agreed much earlier and with much less loss of life"¹⁶. Helga Zepp-LaRouche asks rhetorically: "What do we do now? Our only chance is to get an immediate international mobilization for an international security architecture which must take into account the security interest of every single nation on the planet, including Russia, including China, and all other nations on the planet. The model for this is the Peace of Westphalia Treaty of 1648. Because any continuation of geopolitics of the so-called "enemy image" of one or the other, can only lead to a catastrophe; it will be the end of humanity"¹⁷. Lorenzo Kamel also tries to convince us: "a starting point would be for France, Germany and Italy – which, in contrast to the U.S., have much to lose from the current crisis – proposing a 'security dialogue' which

14 L. Fix, M. Kimmage, *What if Russia Wins? A Kremlin-Controlled Ukraine Would Transform Europe*, „Foreign Affairs”, 2022.

15 F. Fukuyama, *A Country of Their Own. Liberalism Needs the Nation*, „Foreign Affairs”, May/June 2022.

16 D. Chandler, *Humanitarianism and the Internationalisation of the War in Ukraine*, „E-International Relations”, March 21, 2022.

17 H. Zepp-LaRouche, *Lies and Truth about Ukraine*, „Executive Intelligence Review”, nr 49(10), March 11, 2022.

will confirm the 'historical guarantee' that NATO won't enlarge to include Ukraine... The alternative might be the end of humanity as we knew it, until today"¹⁸. Emma Ashford and Joshua Shiffrin see "a window of opportunity that may involve difficult and unpleasant choices, such as lifting some of the worst sanctions on Russia in exchange for an end to hostilities. Ultimately, the only thing more tragic than the present war would be an even bigger, bloodier one"¹⁹. And the most shocking quotation of the day from Sebastian Schindler: "We must get ready to accept really quite terrible things. It might mean that we should not try to support Ukraine with as many weapons and sanctions as we can. It might even mean that, despite all our moral sympathies, *we should be ready to sacrifice Ukraine*. A Ukraine dominated by Russia, with its political elites driven out, its citizens persecuted, migrants leaving towards the West, would be a terribly sad and tragic outcome of this conflict. But it would be a far *lesser evil* than nuclear war"²⁰.

The positive scenario for the EU means that we will be witnesses to the emergence of a new concept of the EU's foreign politics and transition from 'strategic partnership' to 'strategic confrontation' with Russia. So, the worst principle of the previous policy – 'business as usual' – must have been in the past. As Michal Baranowski emphasized, "this is the start of an era of a long confrontation with Russia: Putin made it clear that his ambitions extend beyond Ukraine into Central Europe. It is critical that NATO frustrates his plans in Ukraine and secures the alliance's borders for the long run"²¹. James Nixey made an accent: "Only wide-ranging countermeasures can have any effect on Russia's war in the medium-term. This means not ordinary sanctions but massive sanctions, 'oligarch squeezing', disinvestment especially in energy, cultural and sporting boycotts, supporting Ukrainian resilience with military, economic, and humanitarian assistance, and assurances of international criminal legal recourse in the long-term. There needs to be an understanding that, although all this comes at a heavy cost, it is the price of finally facing down Putin and ensuring the future safety of Europe"²². Richard Youngs noticed that "a more Ukraine-led, more political approach to the enlargement process is now apposite, the objections to giving a membership perspective to Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine now look less convincing on their own terms and the case for a more political eastern strategy much stronger"²³. Paul Maddrell predicted that "Putin's policy will fail, just like Stalin and his successors

18 L. Kamel, *On and Beyond Whataboutism in the Russia-Ukraine War*, „E-International Relations”, March 6, 2022.

19 E. Ashford, J. Shiffrin, *How the War in Ukraine Could Get Much Worse. Russia and the West Risk Falling Into a Deadly Spiral*, „Foreign Affairs”, March 8, 2022.

20 S. Schindler, *The Risk of Nuclear War with Russia*, „E-International Relations”, March 3, 2022.

21 M. Baranowski, *Secure NATO's Borders before Putin's War Spills Over*, „The German Marshall Fund of the United States”, 2022.

22 J. Nixey, *A negotiated peace with Russia is fraught with danger*, „The Chatham House”, March 17, 2022.

23 R. Youngs, *Ukraine's EU Membership and the Geostrategy of Democratic Self-Preservation*, „Carnegie Europe”, April 01, 2022.

failed, only if the west proves too united and too strong to be defeated. To take their eastern and southern territories back, the Ukrainians will not only have to wage a long war: they will have to receive enormous military, financial and economic assistance from Europe. The US cannot be expected to provide the lion's share of the assistance, as it has done up to now. Full membership of European Union for Ukraine must be on the cards, as a way of strengthening the country"²⁴. And Oxana Shevel resumed: "Only collective resolve to deter Putin could both prevent an even wider war in Ukraine and preserve the rules based democratic order in Europe and beyond. Standing up to Putin as he seeks to destroy freedom for Ukraine defends not only Ukraine and its people. It would defend a core value of Western democracies and thus their national interests as well"²⁵. Thus, today we see a fairly stable opinion in favour of the possibility of supporting Ukraine, which has become a key factor in the future security of Europe.

* * *

Thus, four issues are most actively discussed in modern Western literature. Firstly, the aims of Russian foreign politics; secondly, the legal basis for supporting Ukraine; thirdly, instruments for supporting Ukraine; and fourthly, scenarios for the future of Ukraine, Russia and all other actors of international relations involved in the war.

In turn, those, who research this literature, should pay attention to their objectivity, research tools, and conclusions. As for objectivity, it is extremely low today, because, like conclusions, it is based on emotions more than on facts. Scientists explain their excessive theorizing by the fact that during the war it is difficult to understand where the truth is, and where the falsifications are, so, they limit themselves to bare schemes. As for tools, today we are dealing with an unscientific approach on the part of scientists, their private opinions are rather published, and scientific understanding of the problem is still ahead of us.

What is behind the current discussions? An obvious dichotomy: we are 'for' Ukraine or 'for' Russia, that is, a moral, ethical, and ideological choice. But, it is impossible not to notice that there are sometimes traced interests behind the choice. There is a considerable amount of work made to order. How to understand that this author works for the money of Russia? They are distinguished by a large number of articles, sometimes published every week, repeating the same theses, despite the facts that are discovered every day and that contradict their theories. It is necessary to uncover such pseudoscientific approaches and illuminate the reality in academia, no matter how sad it may be.

24 P. Maddrell, *Why Putin's policy towards Ukraine has strong parallels to Stalin's post WWII plan for Germany*, „The Conversation”, June 17, 2022.

25 O. Shevel, *Putin is a prisoner of his own delusions about Ukraine. They will be his undoing*, „Los Angeles Times”, February 25, 2022.

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Negotiation Traps and Impasses: Lessons Learned from the Minsk Agreements

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Abstract. When do negotiators say „no” and refuse to reach peace agreements in armed conflicts, even if it may lead to a ceasefire? Empirical studies have predominantly focused on factors and techniques that facilitate the start of peace negotiations. Little is known about the reasons that motivate conflict parties to refuse to negotiate. This article offers a novel framework for analysis that explains how to avoid impracticable peace agreements. Using the case of the Minsk agreements, the article shows at least two ways: avoiding the agreement trap and negotiation impasse tactics.

The Minsk agreements are a case in which a negotiated settlement is defined as a policy goal (agreement trap). The Minsk process is an example of a negotiating impasse created to avoid implementing a peace agreement disadvantageous to Ukraine.

Keywords: negotiation, trap, impasse, Minsk agreements, Ukraine

The study of modern warfare goes far beyond military strategy or tactics questions, or the technical equipment level of the parties involved, which determine the parameters and dynamics of the theatre of war. The nature of modern warfare is largely predetermined by the political and strategic plans that the conflict parties have developed over the years. The widespread practice of „freezing” conflicts, as well as the frequent violations of ceasefire agreements by the parties and the periodic „spillover” of conflict from controlled to uncontrolled escalation

and back, have stimulated research interest in different types and strategies of communication in armed conflicts. Negotiation theory and practice have taken a special place in these sets of issues. Most scholars are concerned with searching for the cognitive and social conditions that enable negotiators to reach optimal agreements¹. The central reference point of most win-win negotiation strategies has been the BATNA concept formulated by Roger Fisher and William Ury in „Getting to Yes”². Scientists' efforts are focused on assessing the quality of the agreements reached. At the same time, the wisdom of avoiding bad agreements has not come to the attention of researchers³. Even though the approach to negotiations as a „danger space” is poorly developed theoretically, it is constantly mentioned by politicians and experts. For example, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson pointed to the possible negative results of current Ukrainian-Russian negotiations: „How can you deal with a crocodile when it's in the middle of eating your left leg? This is exactly what Putin does”⁴. Criticisms of the Minsk agreements prevailed in the assessment of its potential for a peaceful settlement⁵.

Negotiators try as much as possible to avoid falling into traps. However, the problem is that no matter what negotiation style or negotiating technique is used, traps can be difficult to spot and even more difficult to avoid⁶. Meanwhile, the ability to recognize or avoid traps in negotiation takes away its power over negotiators. In other words, effective negotiation requires understanding not only of how to „get to yes”, but also how and when to say „no”⁷.

1. Negotiation in wartime

Although the standard (or canonical) model of war sees the outbreak of war because of a failure in negotiations, in the study of wars the negotiations are often ignored, confused with a peace agreement and the likely end of the war. The transition from war to peace can be a serious problem. To the extent that peace

1 A. Caputo, *A literature review of cognitive biases in negotiation processes*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259443381_A_literature_review_of_cognitive_biases_in_negotiation_processes.

2 R. Fisher, W. Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. URL: https://www.academia.edu/43705717/Roger_Fisher_and_William_Ury_Getting_to_Yes_Negotiating_Agreement_Without_Giving_In.

3 T.R. Cohen, G.J. Leonardelli, L. Thomson, *Avoiding the agreement trap: teams facilitate impasse in negotiations with negative bargaining zones*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264558370_Avoiding_the_Agreement_Trap_Teams_Facilitate_Impasse_in_Negotiations_with_Negative_Bargaining_Zones.

4 Johnson urges more missiles for Ukraine to hit crocodile Putin. URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-27/johnson-urges-more-missiles-for-ukraine-to-hit-crocodile-putin>.

5 D. Allan, K. Wolczuk, *Why Minsk-2 cannot solve the Ukraine crisis*. URL: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/02/why-minsk-2-cannot-solve-ukraine-crisis>; D. Allan, *The Minsk Conundrum: Western policy and Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine*. URL: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine>.

6 *Negotiating traps that you need to learn how to avoid*. URL: <http://theaccidentalnegotiator.com/explore/4-negotiating-traps-that-you-need-to-learn-how-to-avoid>.

7 T.R. Cohen, G.J. Leonardelli, L. Thomson, *Avoiding the agreement trap: teams facilitate impasse in negotiations with negative bargaining zones*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264558370_Avoiding_the_Agreement_Trap_Teams_Facilitate_Impasse_in_Negotiations_with_Negative_Bargaining_Zones.

has attracted scholarly attention, it has largely been seen as the absence of war („negative peace“). However, peace is not the inverse or mirror image of war⁸. This assumption demonstrates the limitations of the „negative peace“ concept and the need to investigate the different theoretical orientations and variables to explain the transition from war to peace.

It has been found that most inter-state wars over the last 200 years have been ended by negotiation⁹. Paul Pillar found that almost two-thirds of inter-state wars are resolved through negotiation, while only one-third of civil wars end in the same way¹⁰.

The theory of international relations regards the outbreak, conduct, and termination of war as part of a single negotiation process¹¹. Case studies show that negotiations are not a mechanical or unidirectional process detached from the battlefield¹². Thus, according to the principle of convergence if war arises because of disagreements over relative strength, wartime negotiations help opponents to reveal information about each other. Information is revealed through strategically manipulated negotiating behavior and unmanipulated results on the battlefield¹³. This view identifies diplomatic negotiations as central to understanding how, when, and why many international conflicts end without total victory or defeat.

The complex and fluid nature of wartime diplomacy is revealed through different aspects. First, negotiations in wartime are singled out as a distinct type of diplomacy from both classic and coercive diplomacy. Assuming that war is one of the powers' instruments available to a statesman, Joseph McMillan argues that wartime diplomacy is not an alternative to war, but an integral part of it. Therefore, the main purpose of negotiation in wartime is not to stop the war, but to achieve the political objectives for which the war is fought¹⁴. Secondly, negotiations in wartime, like the battlefield, are recognized as an important information source. States use both information sources to learn enough about each other to resolve the situation before the military victory. These sources are subject to varying degrees of strategic manipulation and may provide conflicting

8 P. F. Diehl, *Exploring peace: looking beyond war and negative peace*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304576881_Exploring_Peace_Looking_Beyond_War_and_Negative_Peace.

9 B. Leventoglu, B.L. Slantchev, *The Armed Peace: A Punctuated Equilibrium Theory of War*, „American Journal of Political Science“, nr 51 (4), s. 755–771.

10 P. R. Pillar, *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

11 R. Powell, *Bargaining Theory, and International Conflict*, „Annual Review of Political Science“, Vol.5, June 2020. URL: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.polisci.5.092601.141138>.

12 E. Min, *Painful Words The effect of battlefield activity on conflict negotiation behavior*, „Journal of conflict resolution“, URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00220027211069618>

13 B. Slantchev, *The principle of convergence in wartime negotiation*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231746296_The_Principle_of_Convergence_in_Wartime_Negotiation.

14 J. McMillan, *Talking to the enemy negotiations in wartime*. URL: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA437125.pdf>.

information¹⁵. In contrast to non-manipulable results on the battlefield, „wartime diplomacy is a dynamic and strategic exercise, which serves to interpret, clarify, or even amplify uncertainty, depending on what information the battlefield has just revealed“¹⁶. Thirdly, it explores how activity on the battlefield affects the behavior of belligerents at the negotiation table. Thus, Eric Min identifies two types of behavior – substantive and cynical. Substantive behavior reflects the actor’s willingness to discuss meaningful issues of the conflict that are relevant to the goal of an overall settlement. This, however, does not necessarily mean reaching an agreement or offering a concession¹⁷. Cynical negotiation behavior includes refusing to discuss or propose, showing one’s position, and using hostile or propagandistic language that is incompatible with reaching a compromise. It means that the actor does not engage in meaningful discussions that could contribute to a peaceful settlement. Negotiations in wartime fluctuate between substantive and cynical behavior, depending on the information received during the fighting¹⁸. The recognition that negotiations can be used to obstruct peace and displacement instead of simply codifying peace or translating information from hostilities has far-reaching implications for the conflict resolution process. Using the notion of „spillover effects“, scholars point to the consequences of negotiation that are unrelated or even contrary to the achievement of a settlement. These include gathering intelligence on the opponent, delaying time, increasing propaganda in the international arena, attracting the attention of third parties, and increasing one’s political credibility or legitimacy¹⁹.

Fourth, scholars describe the transition from war to negotiation in different ways. Convergence theory links it to the rate at which adversaries accumulate information about each other. War ceases to be useful when it loses its informational content. War as forced bargaining ends when the adversaries manage to negotiate their expectations as to what each of them may concede (not as to the military outcome)²⁰. However, the terms of the settlement depend on the military situation at the time of the agreement, which explains the last-minute struggle for an advantage before an armistice is concluded.

Oriana Mastro believes that a prerequisite for willingness to adopt an open diplomatic stance is to resolve the problem of strategic costs. In determining the likely strategic costs, actors pay attention to two factors: the likelihood that the

15 B. Slantchev, *The principle of convergence in wartime negotiation*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231746296_The_Principle_of_Convergence_in_Wartime_Negotiation.

16 E. Min, *Painful Words: The effect of battlefield activity on conflict negotiation behavior*, „Journal of conflict resolution“, URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00220027211069618>.

17 E. Min, *Painful Words: The effect of battlefield activity on conflict negotiation behavior*, „Journal of conflict resolution“, URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00220027211069618>.

18 Ibidem.

19 Ibidem.

20 B. Slantchev, *The principle of convergence in wartime negotiation*. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231746296_The_Principle_of_Convergence_in_Wartime_Negotiation.

opponent will interpret openness to diplomacy as a sign of weakness, and how the opponent might change their strategy in response to such an interpretation²¹. Belligerents demonstrate a willingness to enter direct negotiations if they consider the costs of negotiation to be low. Only if a state believes that it has demonstrated sufficient strength and resilience to avoid the inference of weakness and believes that its adversary has limited capacity to escalate or intensify the war, will it be open to negotiations with the enemy²². This view is close to the „Ripeness theory“ with its emphasis on mutually hurting stalemates²³. Enriching the theory of conflict maturation with insights from bargaining war theory and ceasefire studies, Valerie Sticher identifies three key stages in the transition from war to a negotiated settlement, namely ripeness for negotiation, ripeness for concession, and ripeness for settlement, and the conditions that help the conflicting parties to reach these stages²⁴.

2. Negotiation traps and impasses

Understanding features of negotiations in wartime allows a slightly different perspective on the actions of the warring parties at the negotiation table. The cessation of hostilities and the shift in focus to the political sphere may not have implications for peace. Negotiations may be used to achieve other objectives and a ceasefire agreement may turn out to be a negotiation trap. An analysis of the different types of negotiating impasse allows them to see impasse not only as an outcome but also as a negotiating strategy.

There were many cases in which the conflict parties were able to negotiate a ceasefire quickly. The hot phase of the struggle over Transdniestria lasted from March 2nd to August 1st, 1992. The Russian-Georgian war in the Caucasus in 2008 lasted only five days. A significant reduction in violence through the signing of quick peace agreements did not lead to lasting peace („positive peace“). In protracted conflicts, the parties are more likely to be determined to continue fighting, despite the high costs and high value of the war.

In explaining impracticable agreements or the inability of negotiators to agree, scholars have focused on two possible errors: reaching an agreement when it was unwise and refusing a mutually beneficial outcome. Both errors result from cognitive distortions to which negotiators are subject and are seen as persistent empirical phenomena.

21 Oriana S. Mastro, *The Costs of Conversation: Obstacles to Peace Talks in Wartime*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

22 Ibidem.

23 William I. Zartman, *The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments*, „Global Review of Ethnopolitics“, nr 1 (1), s. 8–18.

24 Valerie Sticher, *Healing stalemates: the role of ceasefires in ripening conflict*, „Ethnopolitics“. Volume 21, 2022. Issue 2, *Revisiting the „Ripeness“ debate*. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17449057.2022.2004776>.

Agreement bias is the tendency to reach an agreement even when it violates the objective interests of at least one of the parties ²⁵. The agreement trap describes the situation of making a deal that is inferior to BATNA or the best alternative to a negotiated agreement.

In experiments, negotiators who reached an agreement consistently reported experiencing more joy, less anger, and more subjective value about the negotiations than those who reached an impasse, even if reaching an agreement did not satisfy the ultimate interests of the negotiators. Those who did not negotiate also reported that they would respond more favorably to an agreement that did not satisfy their interests than to an impasse ²⁶. „Avoiding impasse“ is the second most important indicator of successful negotiations after „trying to find a compromise“ ²⁷.

Negotiators can fall victim to the agreement trap for a number of reasons. First, the parties are not always able to process all relevant information properly. Regarding negotiations in wartime, there is an expectation that combat always reveals the range of negotiations over time. The movement of the battlefield helps the transmission and disclosure of information. But detecting possible errors by the parties can only be done retrospectively.

Secondly, negotiators may be reluctant to walk away from a bad deal because of the significant investment of time, money, and energy they have put into the negotiation process (escalation of commitment). Thirdly, the desire to strengthen the relationship and please the other side may prevent them from realizing that it is time to walk away ²⁸.

Scholars have explained the refusal of a reasonable agreement in different ways. For example, Max H. Bazerman believes that this error is rooted in a phenomenon he calls the mythical fixed pie. Negotiators fall victim to the mythical „fixed-pie“ mentality when they fail to recognize that they can compromise on different issues ²⁹. Other scholars attribute the rejection of a mutually beneficial outcome in a positive negotiation zone to an extended understanding of the impasse. Usually, definitions of impasse focus on the result of negotiation: the lack of agreement or the inability to reach a deal. The impasse is interpreted as

25 Ece Tuncel, Alexandra A. Mislin, Selin Kesebir and Robin L. Pinkley, „Settling“ for agreement: understanding the agreement bias in negotiation. URL: <https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/ambpp.2013.12437abstract>.

26 Ece Tuncel, Alexandra A. Mislin, Selin Kesebir and Robin L. Pinkley, „Settling“ for agreement: understanding the agreement bias in negotiation. URL: <https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/ambpp.2013.12437abstract>.

27 M. Schweinsberg, S. Thau, M. Pillutla, *Negotiation Impasse Types, Causes, and Resolutions*, „Journal of Management“, vol.48, nr 1, January 2022. URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/01492063211021657>.

28 Taya R. Cohen, Geoffrey J. Leonardelli, and Leigh Thompson, *Avoiding the agreement trap teams facilitate impasse in negotiations with negative bargaining zones*, URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264558370_Avoiding_the_Agreement_Trap_Teams_Facilitate_Impasse_in_Negotiations_with_Negative_Bargaining_Zones.

29 How to find the ZOPA in business negotiation. URL: <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/business-negotiations/how-to-find-the-zopa-in-business-negotiations/>.

a shortcoming or failure that could potentially be resolved by correcting biases or negotiating rationally.

Attempts to clarify and broaden the nature of the impasse are based on recognizing the individual preferences of negotiators. It turns out that a possible impasse, where an agreement meets the interests of the parties, is the outcome that corresponds to their strategic goals.

Accordingly, an impasse is a negotiation in which one or two parties stop engaging, either because one or two parties prefer not to reach an agreement, or because they have failed to reach an agreement even though it is to their advantage³⁰. Conflict management research distinguishes between three types of impasses: if both negotiators perceive a benefit from the impasse (desired impasse); if one negotiator sees a benefit from the impasse (forced impasse); if both do not see a benefit from the impasse (undesired impasse)³¹.

In addition to the structural factors influencing negotiating impasses – the quality of communication channels, time pressures, divergent values – the latent intentions of the conflict parties should be considered. Since the behavior of the negotiator can influence the cessation of hostilities, participants may manipulate the prospect of negotiations by refusing to sit down at the negotiating table. Or they may use stalemate as a form of punishment by refusing to negotiate³².

A lack of or low levels of public support for the results of negotiations in social aspects are more important than rational solutions in negotiating with the enemy. If key constituencies have a strong hatred of the enemy and are largely insulated from the costs of war, it is politically unfeasible for leaders to resolve conflict through negotiation. This can result in a situation where leaders would prefer to negotiate but still choose to continue the war. This situation is called the problem of costly concessions³³.

Understanding and assessing possible pitfalls and desired stalemates demonstrate the difficulty of negotiating with the enemy. In war, a negotiated settlement cannot be the goal of politics, nor can an agreement be reached at all costs.

30 M. Schweinsberg, S. Thau, M. Pillutla, *Negotiation Impasse Types, Causes, and Resolutions*, „Journal of Management”, vol.48, nr 1, January 2022. URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/01492063211021657>.

31 Ibidem.

32 J. A. Yip, M. Schweinsberg, *Infuriating impasses: Angry expressions increase exiting behavior in negotiations*, „Social Psychological and Personality Science”, URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1948550616683021>.

33 Valerie Sticher, *Negotiating peace with your enemy: the problem of costly concession*, „Journal of Global Security Studies”, 2021, nr 6(4), URL: <https://academic.oup.com/jogss/article/6/4/ogaa054/6124710>.

3. Mistakes and lessons from the Minsk agreements

The 2014–2015 Minsk agreements³⁴, the years of inconclusive negotiations over their implementation and the resumption of hostilities on February 24th, 2022, largely confirm assumptions about the inexpediency of fast ceasefires. Ceasefires are often associated with preventing a conflict from maturing, as they remove the immediate costs of the conflict and pressure the conflicting parties to negotiate³⁵. A quick peace agreement reached in the negative bargaining zone is a negotiation trap. Negotiators fall into this trap when they focus unnecessarily on the current moment at the expense of the long term. They may abandon BATNA when they are trying to avoid the worst alternative. In Russia's current war against Ukraine, these dangers are in a quick ceasefire agreement to avoid a Ukrainian defeat or World War III as the worst alternatives.

Even though world leaders repeated the thesis that the Minsk agreements had no alternative, they did not prevent war. Experts were more skeptical about the Minsk agreements than politicians. Criticisms are related both to individual provisions and the sequence of actions. The „Minsk conundrum" refers to two irreconcilable interpretations of Ukrainian sovereignty on which the agreements are based³⁶.

Agreements to resolve the conflict in Donbas went beyond the standard ceasefire agreement. Both Minsk-1 and Minsk-2³⁷ contained a few provisions aimed at a political settlement of the conflict. Still it remains unclear: was the acceptance of the terms of the political settlement a consequence of the critical situation on the battlefield; the unwillingness to make real concessions by signing a politically unworkable agreement; or external pressure on the Ukrainian authorities?

The results of the Minsk talks reveal a direct link to the hostilities. A few days before the meeting between the presidents of Ukraine and Russia (August 26th, 2014), the Ukrainian army's counter-offensive in Donbas was halted. For the Ukrainian side, the Russian army's breakthrough in the direction of Novoazovsk

34 Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group, signed in Minsk, 5 September 2014, URL: <https://www.osce.org/home/123257>; Memorandum on the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on the outcome of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on joint steps aimed at the implementation of the Peace Plan of the President of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, and the initiatives of the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin, URL: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/UA_140919_MemolmplementationPeacePlan_en.pdf; Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, URL: <https://www.osce.org/cio/140156>. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/1/123807.pdf>.

35 Valerie Sticher, *Healing stalemates: the role of ceasefires in ripening conflict*, „Ethnopolitics". Volume 21, 2022. Issue 2, Revisiting the „Ripeness" debate. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17449057.2022.2004776>.

36 D. Allan. *The Minsk Conundrum: Western policy and Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine*. URL: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine>.

37 Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group, signed in Minsk, 5 September 2014, URL: <https://www.osce.org/home/123257>; Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, URL: <https://www.osce.org/cio/140156>. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/1/123807.pdf>.

was largely unexpected, after which a new uncontrolled territory emerged in the south of the Donetsk region. During the talks, Putin denied the Russian military presence in Ukraine and claimed that his country had nothing to do with the hostilities in Donbas³⁸. According to Ukrainian MP I. Gerashchenko, during the negotiations in Minsk, members of the Ukrainian delegation received calls from the military informing them that Ukrainian soldiers were being shot in Ilovaïsk while trying to leave the encirclement³⁹.

By its actions on the battlefield, and by supporting local separatists, Russia made it clear to Ukraine that it would not allow their swift military defeat. In late August and early September 2014, Petro Poroshenko and Vladimir Putin had several hours of telephone conversations to discuss the details of a peace agreement⁴⁰.

On September 5th, 2014, the „Protocol on the outcome of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on joint steps aimed at the implementation of the Peace Plan of the President of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, and the initiatives of the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin" was signed in Minsk⁴¹. There were no signatures of the authors of the „Peace Plan" and „initiatives" under the document. The document provided for the cessation of hostilities. On September 19th, 2014, the „Memorandum on the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol"⁴² was signed, which approved the line of demarcation in Donbas. By the start of the Normandy format negotiations (February 11–12th, 2015) in Minsk, forces of illegal armed groups had significantly advanced towards Debaltseve, an important railway junction between Donetsk and Luhansk. According to official estimates, the separatists seized more than 550 square kilometers of territory. During the negotiations in Minsk, they occupied another 28 settlements⁴³. In memoirs published in 2018, one of the participants in the negotiations, a French ex-president suggested that Putin deliberately delayed the negotiations to complete the encirclement of Debaltseve⁴⁴.

38 *Could have reached the border on September 1: how Minsk-1 was signed seven years ago and how it helped*, URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/minsk-vojna-na-donbasse/31442424.html>.

39 URL: <https://www.facebook.com/iryna.gerashchenko/posts/2418817711539361>.

40 Timothy Colton, Samuel Charap, *Turning Point*, „Russia in Global Politics", 2017, nr 6.1, Special Issue: „No Winners: The Ukrainian Crisis and the Destructive Struggle for Post-Soviet Eurasia", URL: <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/pere-lomnyj-moment>.

41 *Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group, signed in Minsk, 5 September 2014*, URL: <https://www.osce.org/home/123257>.

42 *Memorandum on the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on the outcome of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group on joint steps aimed at the implementation of the Peace Plan of the President of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, and the initiatives of the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin*, URL: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/UA_140919_MemolmplementationPeacePlan_en.pdf.

43 *Putin's letter to Poroshenko: full text and «Putin's» map of the line of contact*, ZN.UA, 24/01/2015, URL: https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/pismo-putina-poroshenko-polnyy-tekst-i-putinskaya-karta-linii-razgranicheniya-164964_.html.

44 F. Hollande, *Lessons of power: memoirs*, Kharkiv: Folio, 2019. 444 s.

On February 17th, 2015, the UN Security Council approved the „Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements” agreed a few days earlier in Minsk⁴⁵. During the meeting, the US representative to the UN, S. Power, noted: „Amid conflicting reports about whether Debaltseve had fallen, the cease-fire that had been in effect since Sunday had not been respected, with many civilians enduring the terror of ongoing assaults. In addition, forces that the Russian Federation had trained and armed were still active”⁴⁶. However, the US supported the Russian draft resolution.

Minsk-2 effectively codified Ukraine's defeat on the battlefield. There was no mention of Crimea. Nor was there any mention of Russia as a party to the conflict. The line of demarcation in Donbas, approved in winter 2015, differed significantly from the September 19th, 2014, line in favor of the self-proclaimed republics. The document provided for a few amendments to the Ukrainian constitution regarding decentralization, the adoption of laws on the special status of Donbas and local elections there, amnesty, the release of hostages, etc. The fulfillment of these conditions would allow Russia to create a legitimate channel through which it could influence the policies of the official Ukrainian authorities.

But politically, the new post-Maidan authorities in Kyiv have survived with the support of Western mediators. A large-scale internal civil conflict was averted. In the Ukrainian interpretation, the paragraphs of the document were aimed at restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. Western sanctions against Russia tied to the implementation of the Minsk agreements were a kind of insurance for Ukraine.

The Minsk agreements halted active hostilities in Donbas. Although the cease-fire was systematically violated, no significant changes took place on the battlefield. The immobile battlefield was matched by a diplomatic stalemate. Ukraine refused to engage in direct dialogue with representatives of the LPR-DPR, insisted on revising the sequence of actions in the political part of the conflict resolution, and proposed new conflict resolution mechanisms not provided for in the signed documents. The Russian Federation refused to discuss any modification of the Minsk agreements and insisted they had no alternative.

Attempts to unblock the negotiation process have been made on several occasions. Ideas of broadening the range of negotiations and the number of participants were combined with attempts to exert pressure by force. A separate negotiation track with the US to discuss the idea of a peacekeeping mission to Donbas was established. However, negotiations between US State Department Special Representative Kurt Volcker and Russian' presidential envoy Vladislav Surkov

45 *Resolution 2202 (2015). Adopted by the Security Council at its 7384th meeting, on 17 February 2015.* URL: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2202.pdf.

46 *Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2202 (2015), Security Council Calls on Parties to Implement Accords Aimed at Peaceful Settlement in Eastern Ukraine.* URL: <https://press.un.org/en/2015/sc11785.doc.htm>.

ended inconclusively. The build-up of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border in spring 2021 did not speed up Ukraine's implementation of the Minsk agreements but contributed to the Geneva meeting between Joseph Biden and Vladimir Putin. The attempt to fit the „Ukrainian case" into the broad spectrum of US-Russian relations was unsuccessful.

On February 21st, 2022, during a meeting of the Russian Federation Security Council, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Dmytro Kozak characterized the results of the Minsk negotiation process, noting that „it is at ground zero in 2015" ⁴⁷. The conclusion of the Minsk process was Russia's recognition of the independence of the LPR and DPR, created with its direct involvement, and a new stage of escalation of the conflict.

Kyiv was not interested in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The conflict resolution algorithm contradicted the political objectives of Euromaidan and the changes that took place in Ukraine after President Yanukovych fled. An active part of Ukrainian civil society used all available means to keep the new Ukrainian authorities from making concessions to Russia. Therefore, the Minsk agreements proved politically impractical for Ukraine's presidents. When in August 2015 Verkhovna Rada adopted the first reading of the bill on constitutional amendments on decentralization, there were clashes between police and protesters outside the parliament building ⁴⁸. The protest was triggered by separate legal acts regulating local self-governance in Luhansk and Donetsk regions added to the package of proposed constitutional amendments. As a result, the final approval of the constitutional amendments was blocked.

In October 2019, participants in the civil action „No Surrender", who opposed Ukraine's signing of the „Steinmeier formula", had proclaimed the „Surrender Resistance Movement"⁴⁹. These acts have forced President Volodymyr Zelensky to refuse from the stating an advisory council to negotiate with representatives of the self-proclaimed republics⁵⁰.

Pressure by civic activists on the authorities to avoid possible concessions to Russia occurred against a backdrop of widespread sentiment in favor of a peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Public support for a diplomatic solution to the conflict has been verified by sociological surveys. An all-Ukrainian sociological survey conducted from June 27th to July 9th, 2015, showed public demand for peace (56.8% in favor of peace talks based on the Minsk agreements)

47 Security Council meeting on February 21, 2022, URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67825>.

48 Clashes broke out at the Rada after the vote for decentralization, BBC, 31/08/2015, URL: https://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2015/08/150831_ukraine_rada_decentralisation.

49 I. Shtogrin, „Surrender resistance movement" proposes to put forward a consolidated claim to Russia as an aggressor country, Radio Liberty, November 7, 2019. URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/ruh-oporu-doktryna/30256828.html>.

50 The Russian Foreign Ministry said that Ukraine refused from the „advisory council" under external pressure, URL: <https://amp.donpatriot.news/en/mzs-rosii-zaiavylo-pro-vidmovu-ukrainy-vid-konsultatyvnoi-rady-pid-zovnishnim-tyskom>.

and relatively low support for the continuation of the war in Donbas (28.3%)⁵¹. In addition, both Poroshenko and Zelensky won the presidential election by promising their voter's a quick peace in Donbas⁵². According to a poll in June 2019, 70% of respondents supported a compromise solution on the Donbas⁵³. In December 2021, only 21% of Ukrainians were in favor of Ukraine's withdrawal from the negotiation process, while 66% were in favor of continuing diplomatic efforts towards a settlement⁵⁴. Finally, in February 2022 (before the Russian invasion) 51.6% of respondents agreed that Ukraine should fully or partially implement the Minsk agreements and 25.9% believed that Ukraine should not implement the agreements⁵⁵.

The impasse in the Minsk and Normandy process negotiations did not lead to a freezing of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The OSCE SMM reports recorded ceasefire violations along the line of demarcation. The „neither war, nor peace” situation that emerged after the signing of the Minsk agreements was generally consistent with Ukraine's strategic goals of restoring sovereignty and territorial integrity. It demonstrated the consequences of falling into the agreement trap of mistakenly defining a negotiated solution as a policy objective. Consequently, the assumption that an agreement is more desirable than a deadlock is problematic.

The impasse in the Minsk and Normandy process was not a negative outcome of failed negotiations. It was a better choice than the consequences of a bad agreement and reflected the desired strategic outcome of avoiding unilateral concessions. The non-implementation of the political part of the Minsk agreements and the return to the hot phase of the conflict in this case confirms the thesis that quick peace agreements are not viable as a solution to reducing violence in the conflict. Bad agreements do not define a transition from wartime negotiations to good-faith negotiations to resolve the conflict.

51 *Social and political situation in Ukraine: July 2015*, URL: <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=540&page=1>.

52 *What did the presidential candidates say about Donbas?* URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/donbas-re-alii/29891179.html>.

53 *How the opinion of Ukrainians about the Russian-Ukrainian war has changed over the two years of Zelenskyy's presidency*, URL: <https://dif.org.ua/article/yak-zminilasya-dumka-ukraintsiv-pro-rosiysko-ukrainsku-viynu-za-dva-roki-prezidentstva-zelenskogo?fbclid=IwARODjinlbfHvmhrLFN1v8ud-AI9IU5v21rC-mz8WLSuvk5zq-YrZGxywYrA>.

54 *Socio-political attitudes of the population December 6–8, 2021*, URL: https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/obschestvenno-politicheskie_nastroeniya_naseleniya_6-8_dekabrya_2021.html.

55 *Almost a third of Ukrainians believe that Ukraine can partially implement the Minsk agreements*, URL: <https://ukranews.com/news/835481-pochti-tret-ukraintsev-schitayut-cto-ukraina-mozhet-chastichno-vypolnyat-minskie-soglasheniya>.

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Putin's "Ukraine".

A Brief History of a Disastrous Obsession

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Abstract. The article examines ideological sources of Putin's "Ukraine obsession" and argues that it is deeply rooted in Russian culture, history and some formative peculiarities of Russian (imperial) identity. The translation of those perverse views into practical politics of the Russian government vis-à-vis Ukraine is explored in the second part of the article. It traces Putin's words and deeds in regard of Ukraine since his ascendance of power in the late 1990s till present, and contends that a great deal of troubles with today's Russia could have been avoided should Russian mental pathologies were properly recognized and Putin's political recklessness was properly addressed at the earliest stages.

Key words: Putin, Russian identity, Ukraine denial, Russian-Ukrainian war

As many observers increasingly tend to agree, Putin's current preoccupation with the "Ukrainian question" largely resembles Hitler's preoccupation with the "Jewish question", with rather similar genocidal consequences of both idées fixes. There are, however, important differences between the two. While Jews in Hitler's perverse perception were the absolute evil, an incurable pathology on the body of humankind that should be thoroughly and methodically destroyed, Ukrainians in Putin's worldview are pathology on the body of the Russian nation, a dangerous mutation of "Russianness" that denies itself and pretends to be something else ("anti-Russia", in Putin's terms), manipulated apparently by Russia's eternal enemies and their local hacks. Here, Ukrainians, unlike Jews in Nazis' preposter-

ous imagination, can be cured from their pathology, from the false consciousness called Ukrainianness, and turned "normal", i.e. Russian. Re-education camps are envisioned for them by Kremlin ideologists, supplemented with summary executions for those who refuse to comply and therefore prove themselves as "Nazis".

Observing all the available evidence, Putin was not so obsessed with the "Ukrainian question" at the beginning of his political career, though he has apparently cherished anti-Western resentment, imperial revanchism and post-Soviet nostalgia throughout all his years in both St. Petersburg and in Moscow. On the other hand, there was no dearth of the highly chauvinistic, Ukrainophobic literature in post-Soviet Russia that included both quasi-scholarly works of the prerevolutionary and White emigre authors and the contemporary anti-Ukrainian texts in all genres. Vladimir Putin as the KGB officer may have been acquainted with that literature even in Soviet times, insofar as the Soviet authorities tacitly tolerated its "samizdat" circulation and often shared with themselves its main ideological, usually conspiratorial tenets. In any case, it would be safe to presume that Putin's own anti-Westernism and residual imperialism coalesced with the deeply entrenched in Russian society supremacist views of Ukraine, and increasingly led him from a quasi-academic denial of Ukraine's existence to questioning its political legitimacy and finally to attempts to eliminate that "historical aberration" by force.

In the first part of this article, I examine the (possible) ideological sources of Putin's Ukrainophobia, while in the second part I trace both his rhetoric and politics towards Ukraine as it has evolved through the years, from the 1990s till now. My major assumption is that this attitude had been largely determined by Russian culture, political philosophy and *Weltanschauung* in general. But the specific political steps and decisions, however based on that distorted and resentful worldview, should not necessarily have acquired such a scale and reached genocidal extremes – if the underlying pathologies were properly recognized and timely encountered.

1. A dubious 'brotherhood'

Shortly after the Bucha massacre, in April 2022, the French president Emmanuel Macron provoked strong indignation with many Ukrainians when he refused to qualify the Russian misdeeds in Ukraine as 'genocide' – which neither the American nor Polish presidents, nor the British prime-minister hesitated to do. For Ukrainians who not only witnessed but also experienced the Russian atrocities first hand, 'genocide' might be the only term strong enough to reflect the scale of their suffering and devastation.

The argument that the French president used to uphold his position had only added insult to injury: "I would be careful to use such terms [like 'genocide'] today

because these two peoples [Russians and Ukrainians] are brothers".¹ The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its disappointment with Macron's words and called the metaphor inappropriate as these so called 'brothers' kill Ukrainian children, shoot civilians, rape women and destroy everything on Ukraine's land. Some commentators riposted, in a less diplomatic way, that Ukrainians are not the 'brothers' of the Russians, but rather the hordes of Genghis Khan. President Volodymyr Zelensky memorably defined the Russo-Ukrainian 'brotherhood' with the biblical metaphor of Cain and Abel.²

The myth of the 'brotherhood' and all the subsequent imagery were developed by Bolsheviks who could not any longer deny the existence of a Ukrainian nation (as their monarchist predecessors did), especially after Ukrainians entered the political scene in 1917, with the proclamation of the Ukrainian National Republic. Bolsheviks actually won the civil war precisely because they were more flexible on the 'nationality question' than the monarchist 'whites' who zealously championed the idea of a 'united and indivisible Russia'. Lenin drew these minorities to his side by offering them – and their leftist leaders – various degrees of autonomy.³

Putin who blames Bolsheviks for the alleged 'invention' of Soviet nations, Ukraine in particular, and setting a time-bomb under the 'united and indivisible Russia', is manifestly wrong: Bolsheviks rescued the Russian empire by coopting the 'nationals' into their utopian project of the global socialist federation, while the monarchists staunchly denied the reality (and the modernity that it entailed) – exactly like Putin himself. The Soviet 'brotherhood' was tricky, yet, since it promoted affinity but not equality: Russians acquired the role of the 'older brother' ('older among the equals', as Stalin put it), establishing thereby a strong hierarchy within the 'family' that meant both political and cultural supremacy.

Ukrainians were assigned with the role of a 'younger brother' in this colonial model: village cousins, rather dull but funny, especially with their folk clothes and songs and ridiculous dialect. They could be nice but usually stupid and therefore all the time they were in need of some brotherly care (and occasional punches). Most Russians, including Putin himself, love Ukrainians – but only as long as Ukrainians agree to play the role of obedient, subservient village bumpkins vis-à-vis their cultured, urbanized Russian relatives. Students of (post)colonialism may compare this to the relations between Robinson Crusoe and Friday. Robinson 'loves' his Friday – as long as the savage recognizes superiority of his master and does not insist on his own culture, language, and dignity. But Friday who wants to

1 Simon Bouvier, Macron rejects use of the term 'genocide' to describe Russian atrocities in Ukraine. CNN, April 13, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-putin-news-04-13-22/index.html>

2 Zelenskiy Trolls Putin After Russian President Publishes Article On Ukraine. RFE/RL Newsline, July 13, 2021, <https://www.rferl.org/a/zelenskiy-trolls-putin-ukraine/31356912.html>

3 See Peter Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1918* (in particular, chapter 8: A Russia Great, United, and Indivisible). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971; <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520312265-010>.

be the equal of Robinson and be called by his real, however unspeakable name, who claims his own cultural let alone political agency, looks apparently crazy or, worse, as being kidnaped and manipulated by some other 'Robinson' – American, German, Polish, or Jewish-Masonic.

A paramount example of this peculiar 'brotherhood' dialectics was provided eight years ago by a neo-fascist philosopher Aleksandr Dugin, professor of the Moscow State University at the time and author of popular textbooks on geopolitics that bred several generations of Russian General Staff officers. In August 2014, he was so bitterly disappointed by Ukrainians' fierce resistance to the Russian invasion of Donbas that he wrote vehemently on his website page *Vkontakte*: "I can't believe these are Ukrainians. Ukrainians are wonderful Slavonic people. And this is a race of bastards that emerged from the sewer manholes... We should clean up Ukraine from the idiots. The genocide of the cretins is due and inevitable..."⁴

It was quite a radical statement at that time, though not unique and exceptional, insofar as the Russian far-right fringe had been increasingly saturated since 2005 with similar calls and 'scholarly' treatises that proved artificial and an essentially anti-Russian character of independent Ukraine and offered various ways of its subjugation and/or elimination. Actually Dugin himself made a similar statement in one of his earlier (May 2014) interviews⁵ and repeated the call eventually several times⁶ in his video-speeches: "Ukrainians should be killed, killed and killed. No talks any more. I aver it as a professor".⁷

Dugin's comment was remarkable not so much for its radicalism, heavily overdone by the warmongering speeches of Zhirinovskiy, and further elaborated by some other intellectuals who called for a targeted nuclear strike at Kyiv or the Chornobyl atomic station nearby.⁸ Today all those statements and calls became commonplace, and multiplied daily in the mainstream media (strictly controlled by the state).

But Dugin's rant is still interesting primarily as a paradigmatic illustration of the inability of Russian imperial consciousness to accept an inconvenient reality – to recognize the existence of real Ukrainians and abandon their virtual image cherished by Russians for years. The personal contacts of Dugin with Putin remain unknown but the scholars who dubbed him 'Putin's Brain' were right at least in discerning their mental affinity and attachment to the same school of highly

4 https://vk.com/wall18631635_3911

5 <http://old.anna-news.info/node/15794>

6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgHiqVy79Zs>, also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwgn3JGNrUo>

7 "Aggressor and Professor". *Svoboda*, March 20, 2015, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/26907371.html>

8 Игорь Джадан, "Операция 'Механический апельсин,'" *Русский журнал*, April 21, 2008, <http://www.russ.ru/pole/Operaciya-Mehanicheskij-apel-sin>

reactionary, messianic, imperialistic thought.⁹ This school is identified primarily with the Russian emigre Christian-fascist philosopher Ivan Ilyin (1883–1954) who as early as 1928 enthusiastically mused on the prospects of Russian fascism¹⁰ and welcomed Hitler's national socialism in 1933¹¹ but was disappointed soon after with his contemptuous attitude to Slavs.

Banned in the Soviet Union, his works reemerged in the country in the 1990s, apparently resonating with imperial resentments of many Russians and giving them hope for national resurrection in murky ideas of national mysticism, messianism, meritocracy and revenge over the godless, rationalistic, liberal democratic West. "The means to this end was to be a strong, totalitarian leader Ilyin described as 'the living organ of Russia, the instrument of self-redemption', a 'Tsar' who would lead Russia 'in the great historical battle between the servants of God and the forces of hell'".¹² There was no lack of candidates for such a role in Yeltsin's Russia but not so many institutions were capable of propelling a contender to such a role. Hardly any preserved its traditional capabilities better than KGB.

In 2005, Putin paid tribute to Ivan Ilyin by facilitating his posthumous repatriation from Switzerland to Moscow. In 2006, in his annual address to the Federal Assembly, Putin acknowledged his debt 'to the famous Russian thinker Ivan Ilyin', and featured him since then many times as an exemplary patriot and bright visionary. In 2014, he recommended his regional governors read Ilyin's book, *Our Mission*, alongside *Justification of the Good* by Vladimir Solovyov and *Philosophy of Inequality* by Nicholas Berdyaev. The trio, with all their differences notwithstanding, had something crucial in common. All of them were committed to the 'Russian Idea' – "a set of concepts expressing the historical uniqueness, special vocation and global purpose of the Russian people and, by extension, of the Russian state".¹³ Besides the mystic of Russian messianism, they shared also very strong anti-Western feelings, aimed primarily at secularism, rationalism and liberal democracy. And all three strongly believed in the 'indivisibility of the Russian

9 Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn. Putin's Brain. Alexander Dugin and the Philosophy Behind Putin's Invasion of Crimea. *Foreign Affairs*, March 31, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-03-31/putins-brain>; Anton Shekhovtsov, Putin's Brain? *New Eastern Europe* no. 4, 2014, 72–79, <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=429899>; David von Drehle, Russian intellectual Aleksandr Dugin is also commonly known as 'Putin's brain'. *NPR*, March 27, 2022 <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/27/1089047787/russian-intellectual-aleksandr-dugin-is-also-commonly-known-as-putins-brain>; Peter Hughes. 'Putin's brain': What Alexander Dugin reveals about Russia's leader. *Spectator*, 19 April 2022, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/-putin-s-brain-what-alexander-dugin-reveals-about-russia-s-leader>; Michael Millerman, Inside "Putin's Brain": The Political Philosophy of Alexander Dugin. Toronto: Millerman School, 2022.

10 https://vtoraya-literatura.com/pdf/russky_kolokol_1928_3_text.pdf

11 http://www.odinblago.ru/filosofiya/ilin/ilin_i_nacional_sociali

12 Peter Hughes, 'Putin's brain': What Alexander Dugin reveals about Russia's leader. *Spectator*, 19 April 2022, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/-putin-s-brain-what-alexander-dugin-reveals-about-russia-s-leader>

13 Santiago Zabala and Claudio Gallo, Putin's philosophers: Who inspired him to invade Ukraine? *Al Jazeera*, 30 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/30/putins-philosophers>

peoples', though only Ilyin can be featured as really obsessed with the 'Ukrainian question'.

Some authors also point out Putin's overtures to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn who shortly before his death in 2007 accepted the state award from the president, even though in the past he rejected similar offers from Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Putin certainly did not share Solzhenitsyn's defense of the freedom of speech or his uncompromised criticism of Stalinism and Gulags. He approached Solzhenitsyn's ideas selectively and opportunistically, putting emphasis on his staunch anti-Westernism and promotion of Russian *Sonderweg*. Even though the writer's neo-imperialism was more restrained and subtle, Putin tried to make the best use of it, especially from his anti-Ukrainian stance expressed as early as 1990: "All the talk of a separate Ukrainian people existing since something like the ninth century and possessing its own non-Russian language is a recently invented falsehood".¹⁴

None of these thinkers informed Putin's view of Russia, Ukraine and politics in general. Rather, they provided him with convenient arguments, helped to articulate some feelings and rationalize some ideas. But all of them, including Putin himself, were products of the same hegemonic culture deeply inclined to anti-Western resentments, conspiracy theories, mystic nationalism and messianism, and last but not least nowadays, "Ukraine denial". All this peculiar culture is based on specific beliefs and assumptions, and grows from a particular experience. In modern times it articulates itself through the so-called 'imperial knowledge' – a set of discursive representations of imperial history and ethnology that informs the mindset of imperial subjects and ensures an empire's dominance over the subjugated people. During three centuries Russian 'imperial knowledge' was institutionalized internationally – in academia, textbooks and popular culture; it became, indeed, a common wisdom, unquestionable and unproblematic.

In regard to Ukraine, that 'knowledge' stipulates that Ukrainians are merely an ethnic subgroup of Russians, and Ukrainian history is just a regional sideshow of the eternal, 'thousand-years-old' Russia. To prove these claims, the linguistic, cultural and religious affinity of Ukrainians and Russians have been overemphasized while important, in some cases crucial, differences have been ignored – in the first place the fact that the two nations developed fundamentally different political cultures, since Ukrainians well into the 18th century used to live in the totally different political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Russian imagination (that 'imperial knowledge' draws upon) created Ukrainians as 'Little Russians' three centuries ago – alongside the appropriation of Ukrainian territory and history – during the transformation of medieval Muscovy, under Peter the Great, into the Russian Empire. Ironically, it was educated Ukrainians from the former 'Polish' lands, engaged by Peter the Great in his project of

¹⁴ Quoted in <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/02/vladimir-putin-guru-solzhenitsyn-115088/>

'Europeanisation', who induced the idea of political continuity between Kyiv and Muscovy (to enhance their own symbolic status), and coined the name Rus-sia for the new-born empire, referring symbolically to the medieval entity [Kyivan] Rus that ceased to exist in the thirteenth century. Such an "invention of tradition" is anything but unique for most states but the invention of 'Russia' as the only successor to Rus had really disastrous consequences for two other, much more direct and legitimate successors, Ukrainians and Belarusians. The continuity myth not only facilitated the transformation of Muscovy into the Russian empire by appropriation of Rus history and Rus territory (that belonged, at the time, to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) but also dismissed and delegitimized the very existence of Ukrainians and Belarusians who were downgraded to the status of regional ethnic subgroups of "Greater Russia".

It is of little surprise, then, that any attempts by Ukrainians to promote their distinct culture, language, and identity were harshly suppressed by the empire as the sprouts of a dangerous separatism. In this sense, we can claim fairly that the Russian war on Ukraine has been ongoing for centuries in multiple forms that include bans on language and print, repressions of activists, the military destruction of the Ukrainian National Republic in 1918–1920, the famine-genocide of 1932–1933, mass deportations of unreliable natives and the mass influx of colonial settlers, recurrent waves of repressions, and, of course, the large-scale policy of Russification. There have been short periods of armistice in this war opportunistically accepted by Moscow, like in the 1920s or 1990s, but essentially the war has never stopped since Russia has never gotten rid of the myth of "Kievan Russia", never developed a modern national identity instead of the antiquated imperial one, and never accepted the existence of an independent, democratic, and European Ukraine.

Vladimir Putin has thus resumed and intensified an old war rather than begun a new one. Initially, he relied on soft power, corruption, and manipulation, then, as Western soft power and influence appeared much stronger, he moved toward increasingly harsher methods of political arm-wrestling and economic blackmail, and, ultimately, to all-out war. His personal background and psychological peculiarities probably played a role in the specific timing, methods, and rhetorical framing of this war, but the conflict's essential reasons stem from the fundamental, existential incompatibility of Russian imperial identity with Ukrainian national identity conceived as distinct and "European".

Putin's obsession with the very existence of independent Ukraine is not his personal paranoia but a quintessential expression of the traumatized imperial consciousness that perceives Ukraine's absence from the imperial project as a gaping hole, a bleeding wound that should be immediately cured by surgical means. If one reads Putin's statements and writings about Ukraine carefully, one is likely to find out some Pan-Slavonic equivalent of *Mein Kampf*. The führer's

messages boil down to a few simple ideas: there is no Ukraine, it was invented by Russia's enemies, Ukrainians are essentially Russians, and those who deny this, make up "anti-Russia" – an existential threat to the whole 'Russian World', – exactly like Jews were seen by Nazis as an existential threat to humankind and to the 'German World' in particular.

The paradoxical effect of his fight was the opposite of what Putin and others desired. Ukraine emerged from the fight as a vibrant political nation with a strong and consolidated, as never before, civic identity that powerfully offset all its ethnic, linguistic, regional and other divisions and peculiarities. The Western world has finally overcome its internal divisions and institutional fecklessness, and the seemingly obsolete NATO got a powerful boost for further development. And Putin's coveted brainchild – the 'Russian World' – shattered, since not only did Ukrainians overwhelmingly recognize Russia as their greatest enemy¹⁵ but even the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine distanced itself decisively from the pro-Kremlin Moscow patriarchate.¹⁶

Ukraine as a nation-state appears to be incompatible with imperial Russia for both historical and political (epistemic) reasons. Historically, Muscovites developed an identity that appropriated Ukrainians and Belarusians as its integral parts, and left no room for their existence as separate nationalities. Politically, Russia evolved from a hybrid regime of the late 1990s into a consolidated autocracy, increasingly dictatorial and totalitarian. It engaged in promotion of an extremely retrograde, antiquated type of identity based on common language, religion and heavily mythologized version of 'common' history. Ukraine, in the meantime, rebuffed authoritarian temptations, defended democracy and developed a competitive political system within an open society. It strengthened civic and, crucially, future-oriented national identity, becoming thus as different from Putin's Russia as the historical Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (and Ukraine as a part of it) was different from the Moscow tsardom.

The conflict between these two entities was largely inevitable – as long as imperial Russians felt their identity incomplete without Ukraine, and Ukrainians felt existentially threatened by these intrusive embraces. But the forms of this conflict varied through history and its current form was probably not predestined – unless some contingencies played a decisive role in the process.

2. Toward the 'final solution'

The popular storyline on the political evolution of Mr. Putin maintains that he had been positively predisposed to the West and sought 'constructive co-operation' in the first years of his incumbency but was misused, deceived and

15 <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1112&page=1>

16 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/world/europe/ukraine-orthodox-church-moscow.html>

humiliated by his Western partners, in particular by the proverbial 'expansion' of NATO toward Russian borders, and only then he has allegedly changed his mind and opted increasingly for confrontation.¹⁷ All those who believe it, may read with some interest and possible benefit a brief Timothy Garton Ash's memoir published shortly after the Russian covert military invasion of Donbas in 2014.

Here, the British author recollects his first encounter with Mr. Putin in 1994 in St. Petersburg, at a round-table organized by the Körber Foundation (hence the transcript and exact quotations).¹⁸ "I was half asleep", he writes, "when a short, thickset man with a rather ratlike face — apparently a sidekick of the city's mayor — suddenly piped up. Russia, he said, had voluntarily given up "huge territories" to the former republics of the Soviet Union, including areas "which historically have always belonged to Russia." And, of course, it cannot simply abandon to their fate those "25 million Russians" who now live abroad. The world has to respect the interests of the Russian state "and of the Russian people as a great nation".¹⁹

In the unfolding debate, T.G.Ash rebuffed the speaker with a sarcastic remark: "If we defined British nationality to include all English-speaking people, we would have a state slightly larger than China." But this had apparently little impact on the eventual Russian president. At the time, however, (Ash describes the events of 1994), the political-cum-historical revisionism had not yet become a propagandistic mainstream in post-Soviet Russia, even though after the spectacular victory of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in the 1993 Duma elections the revisionist rhetoric became fashionable and spread along all the political spectrum. Putin apparently spoke from his heart, expressing personal grievances and beliefs, rather than making prefabricated populist overtures to the electorate that was actually not in the audience. As a deputy of the liberal mayor Anatoly Sobchak, he should have certainly followed a more moderate line, unless his speech was his personal statement.

T.G.Ash notes that the word *narod* (people), rendered in the Körber's transcript as "Volk", perfectly suits Putin's "expansive, völkisch definition of 'Russians' – or what he now refers to as the 'russkiy mir' ('Russian world)". "Little did we imagine", T.G.Ash sardonically concludes, "that, 20 years later, the St. Petersburg deputy mayor, now uncrowned czar of all the Russians, would have seized Crimea by force, covertly stirred up violent mayhem in eastern Ukraine and be explicitly advancing his 19th-century völkisch vision as the policy of a 21st-century state.

17 Besides the numerous Kremlin 'doves' and professional Putinverstehers, the view is supported also by some reputable scholars, especially from the 'realist' school of international relations. See, e.g., John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault. The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* 93, 4 (September/October 2014), 77–89.

18 <https://koerber-stiftung.de/internationale-politik/bergedorfer-gespraechskreis/protokolle/protokoll-detail/BG/russland-und-der-westenbrinternationale-sicherheit-und-reformpolitik.html>

19 Timothy Garton Ash, *Putin's Deadly Doctrine*. *New York Times*, July 18, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/opinion/sunday/protecting-russians-in-ukraine-has-deadly-consequences.html>

Today's Kremlin has its own perverted version of the Western-developed and United Nations-sanctified humanitarian doctrine of the 'responsibility to protect.' Russia, as Mr. Putin insists, has a responsibility to protect all Russians abroad, and he gets to decide who is a Russian".

2.1. Neo-imperial template

It certainly would be an overstatement to assert retroactively that Putin's current genocidal war in Ukraine and aggressive adventures into other countries had already been predetermined in 1994, or that anybody who had made bizarre revisionist statements in the past would inevitably engage in bloody wars with their neighbors three decades later. The episode is remarkable as a proof that Putin has never changed his (imperialistic) mind in response to presumed Western 'insults' – just because that peculiar mind had been always in place. The episode indicates that unabashed revisionism was as 'normal' in Russia-94 as it is today. Putin, with all his opportunism, did not feel it necessary to moderate those views as 'politically incorrect'; he felt nothing embarrassing in presenting those dubious arguments to foreign guests nor was he wary of the possible tarnishing of the liberal image of his boss and the city office.

Putin's moderate tone on international politics and his rather cooperative attitude toward the West in the first years of his presidency were determined by the pragmatic need to solve some domestic problems – curb the oligarchs and redistribute their property, curtail civic freedoms and eliminate opposition, suppress autonomy in the regions and finish the genocidal war in Chechnya – and to avoid the international opprobrium at the same time. The 1999 apartment bombings that helped an unknown middle-rank KGB officer to capitalize on the image of a 'tough guy' and to win presidential elections in a highly competitive (at the time) political environment, were a tacitly recognized 'non-event' and brushed under the carpet, but they still hang as a Damoclean sword over the head of their main beneficiary.

It was those early years of Putin's incumbency when the German MPs greeted his speech in the Bundestag with a standing ovation, George W. Bush found a 'genuine democrat' in the depth of his eyes, and Putin himself hinted at the possibility of Russia joining NATO (on Moscow terms, of course, not NATO's).²⁰ To damp down criticism of Russian war crimes in Chechnya, Putin supported at the UN Security Council a NATO intervention in Afghanistan, and offered transportation corridors over Russian territory to deliver military equipment. Later that year, when visiting the U.S., he declared that "Russia acknowledges the role of NATO in

²⁰ David Hoffman, Putin Says 'Why Not?' to Russia Joining NATO. Washington Post, March 6, 2000, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/03/06/putin-says-why-not-to-russia-joining-nato/c1973032-c10f-4bff-9174-8cae673790cd/>

the world today, Russia is prepared to expand its cooperation with this organization. And if we change the *quality of the relationship*, if we change the *format of the relationship* between Russia and NATO, then I think NATO enlargement will cease to be an issue – will no longer be a relevant issue" (italics mine. – M.R.).²¹ When asked specifically whether he would oppose the Baltic states' membership into NATO, he stated, "We of course are not in a position to tell people what to do. We cannot forbid people to make certain choices if they want to increase the security of their nations in a particular way".²²

In May 2002, when asked on Ukraine's deepening relations with NATO, Putin again remained unperturbed: "I am absolutely convinced that Ukraine will not shy away from the processes of expanding interaction with NATO and the Western allies as a whole. Ukraine has its own relations with NATO; there is the Ukraine-NATO Council. At the end of the day, the decision is to be taken by NATO and Ukraine. It is a matter for those two partners."²³ Two weeks later, at the press conference after the Russia-NATO summit, he reiterated the same, as reported on the Kremlin official website: "On the topic of Ukraine's accession to NATO, the Russian President said that it was entitled to make the decision independently. He does not see it as something that could cloud relations between Russia and Ukraine".²⁴

These statements, of course, should not be taken at face value since they do not reflect any political/ideological conviction but, rather, a sheer opportunism and pragmatic pursuing of 'the art of possible'. On the one hand, Putin was not ready yet for open confrontation with the West and still hoped that Russia's special interests "will be reckoned", i.e., some sphere of Russian influence would be formally or informally recognized (this is what the "quality" and the "format of the relationship" for him always meant). On the other hand, he understood that fighting the Baltic states' NATO accession would be an uphill battle, insofar as there was already consensus on that both in the West and in the Baltics. Fighting Ukraine's accession made little sense for the opposite reason: Putin was well aware that neither the West was interested in Ukraine's membership, nor Ukraine was ready to make such a move in any foreseeable future.

At that time, he had probably little reasons to worry since a major political scandal that broke out in Kyiv in November 2000 badly damaged the reputation

21 As quoted in Robert Person and Michael McFaul, What Putin Fears Most. *Journal of Democracy*, 22 February 2022, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/what-putin-fears-most/>

22 Vladimir Putin: National Public Radio's interview. Broadcast Nov. 15, 2001, <https://legacy.npr.org/news/specials/putin/nprinterview.html>

23 President of Russia [official site], Press Statement and Answers to Questions at a Joint News Conference with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma. Sochi, May 17, 2002, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21598>

24 President of Russia [official site], After the Russia-NATO Summit President Vladimir Putin took part in a joint press conference with NATO Secretary General George Robertson and Italian Prime Ministers Silvio Berlusconi. May 28, 2002, <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/43122>

of the incumbent president Leonid Kuchma and, indirectly, the whole country he led. The secret recordings of the president's conversations with his top officials implicated him in many criminal deeds, including the killing of opposition journalist Georgy Gongadze. Adding insult to injury, the audiotapes contained an episode where Kuchma conspired with his advisers on how to bypass American sanctions and sell Ukrainian radar systems to Saddam Hussein. Even though the radars had actually not been sold, and eventually were never found in Iraq, the very fact of duplicity vis-à-vis the presumed Western allies made the Ukrainian president an international pariah.

To mend his relations with the West and safeguard himself from a too close Russian embrace, Leonid Kuchma announced Ukraine's intention to join NATO at the meeting of the National Security and Defense Council (in May 2002), enshrined this intention in the national law on the Fundamentals of National Security of Ukraine (in June 2003),²⁵ and agreed to send Ukrainian troops to Iraq where they cooperated with NATO until 2006. Ironically, it was none other than Viktor Yanukovich, the prime minister at the time, who had to push the law through the parliament and eventually represent Ukraine at meetings with NATO officials.

Putin could well perceive these moves as sheer opportunism and not worry much about Ukraine's declarative Euro-Atlantic integration. But still he tried to keep Ukraine on a short leash, by applying, as usual, sticks and carrots interchangeably. In 2003, he promoted the beleaguered Ukrainian president to head the Commonwealth of Independent States – an amorphous and rather moribund organization, founded after the dissolution of the USSR as an 'instrument of the civilized divorce' (from the Ukrainian point of view) or as a template, in the Russian view, for the eventual confederation. In September, Kuchma chaired solemnly in Crimea at a summit of presidents from Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan who signed an agreement on the creation of the Common Economic Zone – another stillborn project of the Russia-led 'Eurasian' integration, tacitly sabotaged by all the recruited participants.

The sticks looked more reliable. In October, Russians staged a provocation at the Kerch Strait – they began a construction of the 4 km long dam between the Russian Taman peninsula and a small Ukrainian island Tuzla. The project was launched presumably by the local authorities, without Moscow's consent, so the Kremlin pretended to know nothing when Kyiv approached them with the alarming request. Only after Ukrainian border guards threatened an armed response, the construction was stopped and Putin graciously played the role of an indispensable peacekeeper. The role of 'bad cop' was assigned this time to the head of his administration, Aleksandr Voloshin, a relatively minor figure by Western institutional standards but heavily overblown in the post-Soviet states. He made

²⁵ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/964-15#Text>

a scandalous statement that was certainly not his personal impromptu: "Russia will never leave the Kerch Strait to Ukraine. It's enough that Crimea is Ukrainian ... It's time to stop mocking us. If necessary, we will do everything possible and impossible to defend our position. If necessary, we will drop a bomb there!"²⁶

At first glance, it looked like a replica of Zhirinovskiy's speeches but, in fact, it quite coherently followed the logic of Putin's 1994 revisionist complaints (as reported by Ash) and largely prefigured his 2007 hawkish harangue at the security conference in Munich (that many consider today as the earliest declaration of the new cold war). Voloshin's diatribe would be even less surprising if we take into account a long tradition of similar anti-Ukrainian statements of Russian officials and public figures, with no reprimands from either Vladimir Putin or Boris Yeltsin. As well, neither of them tried to repel the most odious declarations of the Russian Duma – unbinding legally but meaningful symbolically. E.g., in May 1992, the Russian parliament declared the 1954 transfer of Crimea as having "no legal force", because it was adopted "in violation of the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Russian SFSR and legislative process". In 1993, it issued a resolution that "confirmed Russian federal status of Sevastopol" and, three years later, it declared that Russia has a right to exercise sovereignty over the city. The most menacing and potentially dangerous was the 1996 Duma's decision (passed overwhelmingly) to annul the 1991 Belavezha accords on the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

By the end of 2004, as Ukrainians staged their anti-authoritarian 'Orange revolution', Putin's leniency toward Kyiv's pro-Western orientation was exhausted. In December, he warned Ukraine against further flirting with NATO, though still made a positive gesture vis-à-vis the European Union: "If Ukraine were to join the EU this would be a positive factor that, unlike NATO expansion, would help strengthen the system of international relations".²⁷ Ten years later, he would not consider the EU 'expansion' anything better and would employ all his carrots and sticks, bribery and blackmail, to force president Yanukovich to abandon the Association agreement with the EU a few days ahead of its scheduled initialing at the Ukraine-EU summit (November 2014). In 2004, his seemingly different attitudes to the EU and NATO were determined probably not so much by security concerns (ostensible in both cases), as by a sheer (un)likelihood of Ukraine's joining these organizations: slim in the case of NATO and close to zero in the case of the EU.

26 Quoted in Leonid Shvets, KGB Agent Who Dreamed of NATO. Promote Ukraine, August 6, 2021, <https://www.promoteukraine.org/kgb-agent-who-dreamed-of-nato/>

27 President of Russia [official site], Russia takes a negative view of NATO expansion but has always seen the European Union's enlargement as a positive process. December 10, 2004, <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/32366>

2.2. Orange threat

The situation (and Russian policy) notably changed in 2005, as security concerns of a different type came to the fore. A series of anti-government protests and uprisings in some East European and post-Soviet states at the turn of millennium, the so called 'colored revolutions', revitalized Putin's memory of the dramatic developments of 1989 and his personal traumatic experience in the Soviet headquarter in Dresden where he served as a KGB officer. Ukraine's Orange revolution was probably a tipping point in his shift to the tougher policy vis-à-vis Ukraine and eventually vis-à-vis the West as allegedly the main sponsor and instigator of all the democratic movements. Many experts believe that the systemic work with a covert goal to undermine Ukraine's independence and establish a pliant, Lukashenko-style government in Kyiv, started shortly after the 'orange' candidate, Victor Yushchenko won presidential election in 2005 and created a West-oriented, allegedly 'anti-Russian', 'nationalistic' government.²⁸

Remarkably, Yushchenko avoided direct confrontations with the Kremlin and even demonstrably staged his first international visit to Moscow (on his way to Brussels) to assure Putin that he bore no hard feelings for his intervention in Ukraine's presidential elections (on their eve, Putin visited Kyiv to prove his support for Yushchenko's rival Viktor Yanukovich), and that Ukraine values relations with Moscow as much as with the EU. But Putin's hard feelings were too deep to accept Yushchenko's offer of friendly, equal, and mutual beneficial relations. He had invested too much in Yanukovich's victory, and still believed that his protégé was defeated by the Western conspiracy and betrayal rather than a popular vote. Ukraine, however tumultuous and unstable, has always been a democracy, where the formula 'people's will' had both the normative and the practical sense. Russia, since the first years of Putin's rule, was increasingly authoritarian, with more and more venues of free expression and political competition effectively blocked. Putin, who always considered the post-Soviet space as his 'legitimate sphere of influence', had a good reason to be as much afraid of democracy in that space as in Russia itself.

It was not only the fledgling democracy in Ukraine that ran against Russian authoritarian consolidation, but also the historical policy that targeted Soviet totalitarian legacy, in particular Stalinism, increasingly rehabilitated in Russia. It was also a cultural policy aimed at revival of the long-oppressed and marginalized Ukrainian language and culture, that ran against Moscow's attempts to maintain and enhance the Russification policies both at home and in the 'near abroad'. It was also Ukrainian policy on religion that supported the legal equality of all

²⁸ See, e.g., Jeffrey Kuhner, Will Russia-Ukraine be Europe's next war? Washington Times, October 12, 2008, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/oct/12/europes-next-war/>; Sergey Medvedev, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/matj-rodna-sergey-medvedev-o-voyne-kak-natsionaljnoj-idee/31947357.html>

churches separated from the state, and defied Moscow's claim to the so-called 'canonical territory' where the Kremlin-affiliated Russian Orthodox Church should be privileged and de facto granted with the monopolistic status.

There was also the sensitive issue of the man-made famine orchestrated by Stalin in 1932–1933 that starved to death about five million Ukrainian peasants. It was silenced as a 'non-event' in Soviet times, so that any mentioning of the Famine was criminalized as 'anti-Soviet propaganda.' Viktor Yushchenko felt it a personal duty to restore the memory of that tragedy and to honor the victims. In 2006, he established the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance as a special organ under the Cabinet of Ministers for the "restoration and preservation of national memory of the Ukrainian people". Investigation of Stalinist crimes and rehabilitation of victims was the primary task of the Institute, while the study of Holodomor occupied the central role in the Institute's research.

Later that year, the Ukrainian parliament passed a bill that recognized Holodomor as a 'genocide of the Ukrainian people' and encouraged foreign parliaments to pass similar resolutions. The fourth Saturday of November was declared national Holodomor Remembrance Day, to be commemorated annually, and the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide was constructed, at the president's initiative.

Again, being aware of the sensitivity of the issue, Yushchenko and his team carefully avoided blaming Russia and Russians for that crime. "It is the totalitarian, communist, Stalinist system [that committed the genocide] which has no national identity",²⁹ he averred at many occasions – but to no avail. Russian leaders remained unconvinced. They invested too much in a rehabilitation and revitalization of Stalinism, and too deeply identified their own regime with the Soviet 'glorious past', so they could not retreat. Ukrainians' commemoration of Holodomor was listed in Moscow as another proof of their nationalism, Russophobia and, eventually, 'Nazism'.

In response to Ukrainian initiatives, and with an apparent attempt to prevent the spread of the 'orange' disease in Russia, president Dmitrii Medvedev established in 2009 a special commission, mandated to "counteract attempts to falsify history to the detriment of the interests of Russia". Its main tasks would be to "summarize and analyze information about falsifications of historical facts and events that are intended to belittle the international prestige of the Russian Federation". A bill that would criminalize "the rehabilitation of Nazism" was submitted

29 Jan Maksymiuk, Ukraine: Parliament Recognizes Soviet-Era Famine as Genocide. RFE/RL, November 29, 2006, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1073094.html>

to the Duma with a primary goal to ban any debates on Soviet war crimes, collaboration with Hitler, and any comparisons of Stalinism with Nazism.³⁰

In 2007, the government-sponsored *Russkiy Mir* (Russian world) Foundation was created by Putin's decree to project Russian 'soft power' abroad, and in 2008 the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, commonly known as *Rossotrudnichestvo* was established as a federal government agency under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both institutions were used, in the old Soviet tradition, as cover organizations for subversive activity against the countries where they operated.³¹ In April 2021, president Zelensky terminated activity of *Rossotrudnichestvo* in Ukraine,³² and in July 2022 the Russian World Foundation was sanctioned in the EU along many other organizations and individuals complicit in Russian aggression against Ukraine.³³

Ukraine's cooperation with NATO has always been the main irritant for Moscow – not so much for any ostensible 'security threat' to Russia but first and foremost for the real threat to Moscow's capacity and ability to bully and manipulate its neighboring countries. In 2008, Ukraine crossed the 'red line' established by Moscow when it applied for the Action Plan as the first step in acquiring NATO membership. Moscow mobilized all its influence in NATO countries to repel the Ukrainian application, with the leading role assigned predictably to France and Germany as the major beneficiaries of peculiar business relations with Russia. Putin himself delivered a speech at the NATO (April 2) summit in Bucharest where he articulated (for the first time on the record) his peculiar, heavily imperialistic view of Ukraine as an 'artificial' state ("not even a country", as he put it reportedly in a private conversation with George W. Bush).³⁴

A crude mixture of lies, half-truths and perfidious manipulations – so familiar now from his eventual quasi-historical 'essays'³⁵ and provocative speeches about

30 Pål Kolstø, Dmitrii Medvedev's Commission Against the Falsification of History: Why Was It Created and What Did It Achieve? A Reassessment. *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 97, no. 4 (2019), p. 738–760, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.97.4.0738>. See also Ivan Kurilla, *The Implications of Russia's Law against the "Rehabilitation of Nazism"*. PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo, no. 331, August 2014; and Nikolay Kaposov, *Memory Laws, Memory Wars. The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia* [in particular chapter 6, *Memory Laws in Putin's Russia*]. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

31 How Kremlin Uses "Soft Power" for Malign Influence: Case of *Rossotrudnichestvo* in Ukraine. Hybrid Warfare Analytical Group, 9 September 2020, <https://uacrisis.org/en/how-kremlin-uses-soft-power-for-malign-influence-case-of-rossotrudnichestvo-in-ukraine>; Yulia Masiyenko et al., "The Russian flag will be flown wherever Russian is spoken": "Russkiy Mir" Foundation. Ukrainian Institute, 2022; <https://ui.org.ua/en/sectors-en/russkiy-mir-foundation-2/>

32 <https://www.dw.com/ru/rossotrudnichestvo-i-rjad-rossijskih-kompanij-popali-pod-sankcii-kieva/a-57099884>

33 <https://meduza.io/news/2022/07/21/evrosoyuz-vvel-sanktsii-protiv-sobyanina-bezrukova-mashkova-i-lidera-nochnyh-volkov>

34 <https://www.unian.info/world/111033-text-of-putin-s-speech-at-nato-summit-bucharest-april-2-2008.html>

35 President of Russia [official site], Article by Vladimir Putin "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians". July 12, 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

Ukraine³⁶ – hinged on a fundamental but often unnoticed falsity: an antiquated, 19th-century notion of nation as a community united by common ethnicity, language, religion and heavily mythologized past rather than on civic loyalty, equal rights, and a shared vision of the common future. Ukraine did not fit his archaic model of nationhood since it was engaged, from the very beginning, in a painstaking building of the political nation where language, ethnicity, or religion played a secondary role and were not seen as key determinants of civic loyalty and behavior. Nobody was alarmed, however, with Putin's conceptual fallacy then, until it matured into a full-fledged state-sponsored Ukrainophobic theory and, ultimately, into state-performed genocidal practice.

A few months after Bucharest, Russia invaded Georgia, annexed 20% of its territory and apparently interpreted the lack of any international repercussions as a green light for similar operations in the 'near abroad'. In August 2009, Dmitri Medvedev, who played at the time the role of the Russian president, sent an ominous letter to Viktor Yushchenko, full of poorly disguised threats, innuendos, and false claims. He lambasted Ukraine's politics in all areas – memory, culture, language, religion, accession to NATO (despite "Russia's well-known position"), support for Georgia during the 2008 Russian invasion, and severing "existing economic ties with Russia, primarily in the field of energy" (this was a code-name for the attempts of the Ukrainian government to break the corrupt schemes in energy trade, beneficial for a narrow clique of Ukrainian and Russian oligarchs).³⁷ Worst of all, Ukraine did something really unprecedented – something that only sovereign countries could afford: expelled two Russian spies and impertinently reminded Russian military commanders in Sevastopol that there were some paragraphs in the rent agreement that limited the number of troops, constrained the shipment of weapons, and obliged the commanders to consult with the Ukrainian authorities on any movements beyond the assigned location.

The primary goal of Medvedev's 'letter' was seen at the time as an attempt to encourage pro-Russian forces in Ukraine ahead of the presidential election scheduled on January 2010 (the ten-day tour of Patriarch Cyril in Ukraine served apparently the same goal), but some observers also paid attention to the peculiar background of that 'letter': it was actually a video recording from Medvedev's residence in Sochi, with the Black Sea behind him and military ships cruising afar. And the decision "to postpone sending a new Russian ambassador to Ukraine" until Russian-Ukrainian relations normalized, sounded quite ominous against this background.

36 President of Russia [official site], Address by the President of the Russian Federation. February 21, 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>

37 President of Russia [official site], Address to the President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko. August 13, 2009, <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/4938>

2.3. Putin's last chance

The tentative 'peacekeeping operation' in Ukraine (most likely in Crimea) was postponed in February 2010, when a presumably pro-Russian candidate, Victor Yanukovich defeated his 'orange' rival Yulia Tymoshenko in the second round of the presidential election. The victory was not very impressive: Yanukovich received 49% of the votes, Tymoshenko got 46%, and five per cent of voters, mostly from the 'orange' camp, cast ballots against both candidates, being frustrated with their past performance.

Shortly after Yanukovich assumed the presidency and formed the new government, he signed with Dmitri Medvedev the highly controversial 'Kharkiv Accords' that were hastily, without any debate, ratified in April. The bottom line of the document was a 25-year extension of the Russian lease on naval facilities in Crimea, from 2017 through to 2042, with an additional five-year renewal option, in exchange for discounted prices on Russian gas. The agreement was criticized from many angles: as anti-constitutional – because of numerous procedural violations; as harmful economically – because the trumpeted 'discount prices' undermined free market and returned Ukraine back to the opaque schemes in energy trade with Russia; and harmful politically – because Yanukovich made bold concessions in order to "defuse Russian pressure for integration" but instead only increased and encouraged it. In fact, he "mortgaged some of Ukraine's independence to secure internal consolidation" of his regime, and "jettisoned the counterweights that made partnership with Russia feasible and safe".³⁸

In summation, the Kharkiv accords not only signified a "reversal of the policies adopted since 2005 by former president Viktor Yushchenko, they amounted to a fundamental revision of the course that Ukraine had pursued since acquiring independence in 1991".³⁹ It seems, however, that Russians overplayed their hands, having encroached on the personal economic interests of top members of the Yanukovich team. Ukrainian oligarchs did not care much about ideological concessions to Moscow – either privileging the Russian Orthodox church in Ukraine, or enhancing the status of Russian language, removing references to 'genocide' in Holodomor commemorations, reinstating the Stalinist formula of the 'Great Patriotic War' (instead of WWII) in the textbooks, and so on. But they were not so eager to grant Russian businesses unconstrained access to Ukraine's resources. Yanukovich tacitly rebelled and attempted to play his own game, pursuing the (in)famous 'multi-vector' policy of Leonid Kuchma, but he lacked the skills and the space to maneuver. His ultimate failure to sign the Association agreement with the EU graphically illustrates his self-inflicted weakness.

³⁸ James Sherr, *The Mortgaging of Ukraine's Independence*. Briefing Paper. London: Chatham House, August 2010.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The gas-to-fleet deal brought Yanukovich some short-term political and economic benefits but severely undermined, in the long run, Ukrainian security. The Kharkiv Accords not only extended far beyond 2017 the presence of 25,000 Russian troops in Crimea (that played eventually a decisive role in the 2014 take-over of the peninsula), but also legitimized the subversive activity of the Russian security agencies, insofar as the ill-fated 1997 Russia-Ukraine agreement (Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet) stipulated, inter alia, the preservation of ten Russian intelligence and counter-intelligence detachments in Sevastopol. The Russian fleet, as James Sherr summed up, was not a deteriorating mass of old hulks destined for the scrap heap but a "shelter for and initiator of activity that three Ukrainian presidents have regarded as harmful to their country's interests".⁴⁰

In June 2010, the Ukrainian parliament, apparently under Russian pressure, excluded the goal of "integration into Euro-Atlantic security system and NATO membership" from the national security strategy.⁴¹ In July, the law on domestic and foreign policy priorities was adopted that officially obliged Ukraine to maintain a 'non-bloc status'. The Russian intelligence officers expelled by Yushchenko, were tacitly readmitted back into Ukraine; a number of Russian citizens were fast-tracked into obtaining Ukrainian citizenship to occupy top positions, including the headship in the Ministry of defense, Security service of Ukraine (SBU), and the President's security guard. Volodymyr Syvkovich, a politician alleged to having close ties to Russian intelligence services (now in hiding), became the deputy prime minister for security issues. Little surprise that by the moment of Russian invasion in 2014 both the Ukrainian army and security apparatus were completely in disarray; 5,000 officials reportedly followed Yanukovich after he escaped to Russia, and many officers in the army, police and security service shifted the sides.

The large-scale infiltration of Ukrainian state institutions by Russian agents under the mild neglect of Viktor Yanukovich not only enabled a peaceful take-over of Crimea by Russian forces and large-scale military turmoil in the south east. It also made very plausible the hypothesis that escalation of violence in and around Maidan during the winter 2013–14 protests was managed from outside, probably by a third party, as tactics of 'controlled' (or 'manipulated') chaos, favored by Russian 'political technologists'.⁴² One of these 'puppet masters', Putin's assistant and, reportedly, top adviser Vladislav Surkov ("Putin's Rasputin", as Peter Pomerantsev acerbically dubbed him),⁴³ was a well-known 'Ukraine denier' ("there is no Ukraine", he quipped, "only "Ukrainian-ness, a specific disorder of the

40 Ibid., p. 16.

41 Ukraine drops Nato membership bid. Euobserver, 4 June 2010, <https://euobserver.com/news/30212>

42 Andrew Wilson, *Virtual Politics. Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005.

43 <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v33/n20/peter-pomerantsev/putin-s-rasputin>

mind"). His bizarre theorizing, however, was a lesser problem. The main problem was with his practical recipes for the forcible healing of that "disorder": "Coercion to fraternal relations by force [Принуждение силой к братским отношениям] is the only method that has historically proven its effectiveness in the Ukrainian direction. I do not think that some other will be invented".⁴⁴

A huge volume of e-mails and other documents allegedly hacked from Surkov's mailbox in 2016 by the Ukrainian Cyber Junta group indicates his large-scale involvement in the 2014 developments in Ukraine, specifically in the organization and management of the so-called 'Russian Spring' – the appearance of a popular 'uprising' in south and eastern Ukraine in the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution.⁴⁵ His role in the escalation of violence in Maidan and the subsequent, still very baffling, escape of president Yanukovich (after he reached a mediated compromise with the opposition that greenlighted the early presidential election) remains less clear.⁴⁶ We may safely assume, however, that the Kremlin was much better prepared this time to the revolutionary developments in Ukraine than it was in 2004, and was much more capable now to manipulate those events to its own advantage. Not only infiltration of Ukrainian institutions was much deeper, but also the 'political technologies' promoted by Surkov's team were much more sophisticated, and the propagandistic campaign unleashed during Euromaidan was much more powerful – as the ensuing propagandistic war on the global scale has graphically confirmed.⁴⁷

Besides the recurrent motive of Ukraine's 'non-existence' and adjacent motives of 'deep internal divides' and 'artificial borders' that facilitated eventual military invasion, two more distinct though correlated narratives were elaborated to

44 <https://actualcomment.ru/surkov-mne-interesno-deystvovat-protiv-realnosti-2002260855.html>

45 Alya Shandra and Robert Seely, *The Surkov Leaks: The Inner Workings of Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine*. RUSI

Occasional Papers, 16 July 2019, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/occasional-papers/surkov-leaks-inner-workings-russias-hybrid-war-ukraine>

46 Timothy Thomas, *Russia. Military Strategy. Impacting 21st Century Reform and Geopolitics*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2015, p. 373–374.

47 Some provocations, especially since 2014, have been really whimsically designed, e.g., an arson attempt at the Hungarian cultural center in Zakarpattia in 2018, when three Polish citizens, far-right radicals, were hired by a German(!) journalist on behalf of the Russian special services. See Yuri Zoria and Alya Shandra, *Attack on Hungarian centre in Ukraine: three Poles charged with terrorism in German journalist-planned plot*. Euromaidan Press, 9 Jan 2019, <https://euromaidanpress.com/2019/01/09/organized-by-german-journalist-three-poles-face-terrorism-charges-for-arson-attack-on-hungarian-center-in-ukraine>. Or even more outlandish story about a small group of Russian oligarchs who de facto privatized the entire memorial complex Babi Yar with a stated goal to develop there a Holocaust museum but sparked the protests of Ukrainian Jewish community who reasonably suspected a hidden intention to promote pro-Kremlin anti-Ukrainian narratives in that project. (See Josef Zissels : « Poutine nous envoie un Cheval de Troie ». Desk Russie, 24 septembre 2021, <https://desk-russie.eu/2021/09/24/josef-zissels-poutine-nous-envoie.html>). The suspicions were largely confirmed when one of the oligarchs was caught hot at the covert financing of anti-Ukrainian provocations in Khrakiv – as "a part of a false flag operation to exaggerate Ukraine's Nazi presence at a time when Putin was using it as a pretext for war". See Seth Hettena, *Sources Say Oligarch Funded Scheme to Paint Swastikas in Ukraine*. Rolling Stone, 23 March 2022, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/putin-russia-ukraine-invasion-nazi-operation-1325817/>

justify the invasion in terms of both political and ideological expediency. One narrative was about the 'Nazis', ascribed to the heavily demonized Western Ukraine, who allegedly staged a coup d'etat in Kyiv, overthrew (with Western support) the legitimate government and established a fascist junta. The second narrative was about the Russians and Russian-speakers who were arguably oppressed in Ukraine and now, with the 'Nazis' accession to power appeared on the verge of genocidal extermination. Neither narrative was brand new. The story of 'oppressed' Russian-speakers have circulated in Russian and some gullible Western media since the early post-Soviet years when millions of colonial settlers and their heirs in post-Soviet republics encountered suddenly the requirement to learn a bit of aboriginal languages. The 'Nazi' story was tested in 2004 when faked 'nationalists' paraded in Kyiv downtown as ostensible supporters of Victor Yushchenko,⁴⁸ though its deeper roots stem from Soviet times when Ukrainian national movement was identified as 'Nazi' and Western Ukraine was slammed as its primordial cradle.⁴⁹

Both narratives appeared rather successful in propagandistic terms because both of them drew on some pre-established stereotypes (as part of the 'imperial knowledge'-turned-international) but also on some skillfully manipulated facts and half-truths. Both appealed to 'common sense' even though in the relevant cases that 'sense' was based on complete ignorance of Ukraine's peculiarities, its colonial past and postcolonial present. The 'oppressed Russophones' narratives drew on a common belief that each state, especially newly established, tends to be 'nationalizing', i.e., striving to assimilate minorities into the dominant language and culture. The model looks reasonable but hardly applicable to Ukraine where the ruling, almost totally Russified elite retained its power after the declaration of independence, so that the dominant Russian language and culture retained their dominant positions in most spheres of public life. Suffice to say that not a single Ukrainian oligarch speaks Ukrainian as his primary language (if at all), and of all the six Ukrainian presidents only Viktor Yushchenko could be qualified as a Ukrainian-speaker. The gradual advance of Ukrainian language in the past three decades occurred not as a top-down imposition carried out by 'nationalizing' elites (who were actually quite comfortable with their native Russian) but as a complex consensual process negotiated by the Ukrainian-speaking majority with the dominant post-Soviet (mostly Russian-speaking) elite. The slowness and incoherence of the process often frustrated radicals on both sides but secured

48 Anton Shekhovtsov, Pro-Russian network behind the anti-Ukrainian defamation campaign. Blogspot, 3 February 2014, <https://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2014/02/pro-russian-network-behind-anti.html>. See also Halya Coy-nash, Fake 'Ukrainian fascist' arrested and charged with working for Russia and its proxy Luhansk 'republic'. Kharkiv Human Rights Group, 24 Jan 2021, <http://khp.org/en/1608808766>

49 Mykola Riabchuk, The City and the Myth: Making Sense of the Lviv 'Nationalist' Image. *Aspen Review*, no. 1, 2020, p. 63–77; <https://www.aspen.review/article/2020/city-myth-making-sense-lviv-nationalist-image/>

attachment of both Russophones and Ukranophones to the country they perceived as their own.

The 'Nazi' narrative draws on similar stereotypes promoted by the 'imperial knowledge' (Ukrainians as Nazi collaborators, West Ukraine as a cradle of Ukrainian nationalism, Ukrainians as genetic anti-Semites) but seems to be prioritized and developed as the most viable, crashing and internationally appealing. It was introduced in 2004 by Russian 'political technologists' who chartered Yanukovich's campaign against Viktor Yushchenko (remarkably, one of them was the author of today's 'genocide textbook' Timofey Sergeytsev),⁵⁰ and further exploited and elaborated in 2012 when the marginal far-right Svoboda party was promoted to the mainstream media (at the cost of more moderate opposition) and ultimately entered the parliament which was unprecedented for such groups in Ukraine with 10% of votes. The master-plan was probably to promote its leader into the second round of the eventual (2015) presidential election, insofar as it was the only opponent whom Yanukovich could beat without major falsifications.

The efforts paid off unexpectedly in 2014 when protests broke out in Kyiv and the stories about 'Nazis' on the Maidan were picked up and overblown by the Moscow propagandistic machine.⁵¹ It confused many foreigners, let alone Russians, but, worst of all, bewildered and frightened quite a few Ukrainians in the south east who had been tuned traditionally to the Russian media. Some of them joined the Russian operatives who arrived to lead the 'popular uprising' against the junta (as one of them, the notorious Igor Girkin boasted eventually, "If our unit hadn't crossed the border, everything would have fizzled out!").⁵² Many more, of course, remained on the fence, but not so few took the Ukrainian side and this actually predetermined the Russians' defeat and the collapse of the 'Novorossiya' project. The Ukrainian army, however disorganized, managed to liberate, with the help of volunteers, most of the Donbas region and was about to encircle its main centers, Luhansk and Donetsk. To rescue their proxies from complete defeat, Russia sent in regular troops, smashed the poorly armed Ukrainian infantry and forced Kyiv to accept armistice.

50 <https://www.obozrevatel.com/ukr/politics-news/avtorom-planu-znischennya-ukrainskoi-natsii-viyavivsvya-polittehnolog-yanukovicha-yakij-2004-roku-diliv-ukrainu-na-tri-sorti-foto.htm>

51 The Hoaxlines research group examined extensive internet data, from June 2010 through July 2022, to assess media discussions of "Ukraine" and the term "Nazi." They found that the Ukraine-Nazi stories surged as the 2014 Kremlin-orchestrated events in Ukraine stumbled and, again, increased sharply before and coinciding with Russia's February 2022 invasion. The researchers concluded that "widespread concern about extremism in Ukraine was rare until Russia claimed Ukrainian extremism as its justification for seizing Ukrainian land". See Hoaxlines, 3 Aug 2022, <https://hackmd.io/@Hoaxlines/aug-3-2022?fbclid=IwAR3i56GyyRH6TeAF5NqrSypIM-YAXLZwjPnbyzeclpoW9WkY18f2hSeHkyY#What-can-the-data-tell-us>

52 Anna Dolgov, Russia's Igor Strelkov: "I Am Responsible for War in Eastern Ukraine". Moscow Times, Nov. 21, 2014, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/11/21/russias-igor-strelkov-i-am-responsible-for-war-in-eastern-ukraine-a41598>

The protracted negotiations began in Minsk where Russia pretended to be 'not a part of the conflict' and insisted that Kyiv should negotiate directly with the representatives of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk 'People Republics'. This would have meant a de-facto legalization of the puppet regimes that Kyiv could not accept, so the negotiations were held in an awkward format where Russia pretended to be merely a mediator – alongside France and Germany, but also represented and talked on behalf of the representatives of "military formations of some parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts" (as they were officially named at the meeting).

The seven-year bickering over interpretations of the 'Minsk Accords' had predictably brought no results since it was rather impossible to effectively negotiate the conflict when its main instigator, participant and beneficiary pretended to 'not be a part of it'. Ukraine fiercely resisted incorporation of the 'secessionist' regions on Moscow terms (and under Moscow control) insofar as it would effectively turn Ukraine into a dysfunctional state, a 'greater Bosnia', susceptible to all kinds of Moscow subversions and manipulations.

Failure to implant the poisonous cells into Ukraine's body went hand in hand with some other failures of Putin's attempts to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. The electoral setback of pro-Russian parties and candidates in 2014 was deepened in the 2019 elections when the spectacular defeat of the arguably 'ultra-nationalist' incumbent Petro Poroshenko by his presumably 'cosmopolitan' and 'pacifist' rival Volodymyr Zelensky did not result in any significant changes in Ukraine's politics favorable for Moscow. It was a clear sign that Ukraine has passed the no-return point, leaving pro-Russian forces no chances any more for an electoral comeback. Ukraine became quite a normal country where no change of government can result in fundamental reversals of the national politics.

Indeed, the 'decommunization laws' adopted in 2015 under Poroshenko (and aimed in fact at decolonization) remained in force, the national goal to join eventually the EU and NATO remained enshrined in the Constitution, the mild promotion of Ukrainian language and culture was further supported by a set of new laws and institutions, and no extra privileges were granted to the Russian Orthodox church in Ukraine vis-a-vis other churches, especially at the cost of the rivaling Orthodox Church of Ukraine that acquired in 2018 canonical autocephaly under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Popular attitudes toward Russia and in particular to Mr. Putin remained in Ukraine highly negative since 2014,⁵³ while positive attitudes toward the EU and NATO remained predominant.⁵⁴

53 <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1112&page=1>

54 Public Opinion Survey of Residents of Ukraine. International Republican Institute. March 30 – April 2, 2022, https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-April-Survey-of-Residents-of-Ukraine_ENG.pdf

To add insult to the injury, Zelensky shut down the most toxic pro-Russian propagandistic TV channels and put under house arrest Putin's closest friend and the major agent of Russian political influence in Ukraine Viktor Medvedchuk, accusing him of high treason.⁵⁵ The outcry "we are losing Ukraine!" became recurrent in the Russian propagandistic media – as a reflection of the significant, though only partial truth. The full, albeit unspoken truth appears to be that Ukraine has *already* been 'lost' – back in 2014 if not earlier, in 1991.

After two years of blackmail and demonstrable military buildup at Ukrainian borders, the Russian Foreign Ministry, on December 17, 2021, unveiled two draft texts — a "Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees" and an "Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and the Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]" – and requested the United States and its NATO allies to respond immediately. The stated goal of the documents was to obtain "legal security guarantees" but in fact it consisted of unacceptable demands that were tantamount to the complete withdrawal of NATO from Eastern Europe to its pre-1997 position and recognition of the entire region, and Ukraine in particular, the legitimate sphere of Russian influence.⁵⁶

The documents were a rather poorly veiled declaration of war than proposals for a negotiation. If Russia's demands are not met, the Kremlin officials insinuated ominously, they would have no choice but to assure the country's security single-handedly, by military-technical means. Two months later, on February 24, 2022, all those 'means' were set in motion. It was apparently not a war about security, territory, or even revenge. It was a war about imagination: about Ukrainians imagined as 'Nazis' that should be exterminated, about the Westerners imagined as conspiring enemies that should be defeated, and about the Russians imagined as God-bearing people entitled to rescue humankind from the global evil in the millenarian fight. It is still a war of perverse, delusional, parallel world created not only by Putin and the Kremlin elite and their feverish propaganda but also by generations of Russian philosophers, writers, scholars, and other cultural figures, – a war of a collective, self-inflicted delirium against the mundane reality that does not fit the Russian imaginary and therefore should be forcibly changed, as is already evident in Ukraine, by 'military-technical means'.

Ukrainians have no choice, under the circumstances, but to fight in defense of their country, freedom, dignity, and identity. The only alternative is to be wiped out from earth – as the Kremlin ideologists are explicitly calling for. Russians who overwhelmingly follow their possessed leadership have no chance to become a normal nation that pose no threat to the neighbors and do not undermine international order, until and unless they revise their perverse self-consciousness

55 <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-medvedchuk-house-arrest-extended/31647523.html>

56 <https://en.desk-russie.eu/2021/12/30/what-does-the-russian-ultimatum.html>

and develop an identity compatible with the modern world of sovereign nation-states. This might be achieved only by means of external shock via military defeat and collapse of the rogue, paranoid regime. It might look unachievable but Ukraine's future hinges on outcomes of that millenarian fight, and the future of humankind seems to be also at stake in Ukraine's battlefields nearly as much as it was 80 years ago in the fight with Nazis.

Contemporary Warfare Theories and the War in Ukraine

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Abstract. Russia's war against Ukraine has not only challenged the prospective scenarios and anticipation processes of numerous analysts but has also questioned the very definition of war. After eight years of theorising war below or at the bottom of the spectrum, Moscow has now re-introduced high-intensity conventional warfare in Europe. The investigation of contemporary warfare theories offers insight into the nature of this war. Generations of warfare offers numerous conceptualisations that can be used to understand different aspects of Russia's war against Ukraine. The question of hybrid warfare contains many surprising elements. Moreover, the confrontation between theories below and above the spectrum of violence can offer constructive insights into this complex and unexpected war.

In war studies, a plethora of theories have been developed since the end of WWII, and even more have been advanced since the end of the Cold War. Some of these theories are highly relevant to understanding the composite structure of the 2022 war resulting in Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. The period between the invasion of Crimea in 2014 and the Russian invasion in 2022 witnessed a flurry of scholarship on hybrid warfare theory and related concepts. The year 2022 marked the return of conventional warfare, and despite the existence of the recent advances in cyber and electronic warfare, the war can still be considered to resemble a rather classical 20th-century war. In fact, it is necessary to apply various theories of war to understand this armed

conflict, which involves the strategic deception of the Kremlin, classical Soviet military thought and other elements related to multiple theories. It seems, therefore, tremendously important to question how Russia's war in Ukraine is challenging perceptions while also impacting on the development of contemporary warfare. It would be wise to take on board how, after focusing on low-spectrum and non-contact warfare theories for 8 years, the 'It' is important for understanding why most conflict analysts failed to predict the threats during the winter from late 2021 to early 2022, during which time Moscow was amassing troops around Ukraine while openly threatening it. The inability to predict a major conventional conflict is indeed a major setback, not only for the scientific understanding of war but also for policymakers and the general public.

This study begins from the assumption that there is a large difference between Russia's two military interventions in Crimea and Donbas in 2014 and its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In 2014, Moscow tried to innovate in some way. In reality, this innovation was not the use of non-kinetic means, such as information warfare, but the composition of their strategic mix. Indeed, since at least the emergence of the Soviet Union over a century ago, Russia has not changed how it conducts warfare. This is, of course, with the exception of natural technological progress and adaptation. Moreover, in 2014, both of Russia's warfare strategies were already kinetic, albeit a 'hidden kinetic' strategy. The year 2022 marked the return to traditional and open conventional kinetic warfare.

As the world in general, and the West in particular, tried to keep war within the boundaries of *jus ad vim* by limiting the use of violence, Russia introduced self-permissive *jus ad bellum* and, once again, deregulated *jus in bello*. This raises the question of what exactly is happening, and it requires scholars to question how they can understand it. Addressing different theories may be of scientific interest when attempting to understand Russia's 2022 war against Ukraine and its consequences for contemporary warfare. First, attempting to situate the war within multiple generations of warfare may provide insight into its nature. Second, the issue of hybridity is more complex than it may at first appear. Third, the question of the political or military nature of the war challenges its real goal.

1. Generations of warfare: Where does the 2022 war stand?

An interesting theoretical history to investigate is the generations of warfare (GW). The first generation is fundamentally represented by the idea of order, which applies to most armies in the world and even to some non-state armed groups. As in the case of 2022 war the first generation concept could even be contested, as testimonies of fighters on the battlefield reveal multiple flaws and gaps between commanding officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers. Logistical and operational issues have clearly undermined not only the order of

battle but also the commitment of fighters in combat; not to mention the causes of the widespread violations of international humanitarian law.

The two most commonly reoccurring concepts that have characterised the Russian strategy in Ukraine since 24 February 2022 are movement (third generation) and attrition (second generation). They are displayed here in this order for two reasons. First, during the initial phases of the war, Russian strategies changed several times. The now infamous 'special operation' transformed from an attempt to seize major Ukrainian cities, such as Kyiv and Kharkiv; afterwards, Russia retreated to concentrate its main operations on Donbas while keeping pressure on Kharkiv and Kherson. The first two phases were based on movement; the third phase involved the use of massive firepower in what resembled a war of attrition (2GW). Fundamentally, the second and third generations were the basis of the Russian Armed Forces' strategy, which is still deeply marked by Soviet military polity, and particularly the concept of *operativnoe iskusstvo*, or 'operational art,' according to which "the creation of strong shock groupings that leave gaps or weakened sectors along the front" that can be implemented by "modern mobile and high speed combat assets (motorized and mechanized units, cavalry, and aviation)" (Issersson, 2013: 44). That is, Russia's manoeuvring operations corresponded to Issersson's idea that "the central challenge for [...] operational art is to be ready in all respects for the dialectical transition from enveloping linear maneuver to the deep frontal penetration" (Issersson, 2013: 45). This approach requires a solid combination of attrition to crush enemy positions and powerful movement to penetrate deeply into the enemy's territory and disorganise, encircle, and destroy it.

In this way, it is easy to understand the 2022 war as a fourth-generation war (4GW). After all, it is a "political, social, and moral phenomenon", and "this is especially the case when the military force is foreign; usually, its mere presence will further undermine the legitimacy of the state it is attempting to support", which would be, in the 2022 case, of the so-called 'Popular Republics' Donetsk, Luhansk and even the prospected Kherson. In 2014, Moscow used classical agitprop to transform the population of Donbas into "people who will no longer fight for their state" but will "fight for their new primary loyalty" (Lind and Thiele, 2015: 6). However, the 2022 war has been drastically different. Indeed, the conflict possesses a political, social and moral dimension. Even Russian-speaking Ukrainians mobilised to defend their fatherland against the invader. In Mariupol and Kharkiv, ethnic Russians fought to preserve their homes and land not against their own state – a typical feature of 4GW. They did it not in favour, but against an external actor that did not even try to convince them of the existence of an alleged genocide against them, which was, however, the only official justification for a war botched in a one-hour speech by the Russian president on the night preceding the inva-

sion. Therefore, 4GW must be dismissed from the theories that can be mobilised to, or it must serve as a counterexample of its very theoretical foundation.

Further generations are not more applicable to Moscow's war against Ukraine. Kelshall's violent transnational social movements (VTSM), the foundation of fifth-generation war (5GW), could have been pertinent if the Kremlin had managed to mobilise the *Russkiy mir* that Russian spin-doctors and broadcasters began to re-conceptualise beginning in 2014 (Kelshall, 2019). However, like for 4GW, the potential VTSM, Wagner group and local militias, have been almost anecdotal. Other conceptualisations of 5GW, which do not necessarily focus on the same kinds of actors, still do not correspond to the 2022 war. Sixth-generation war (6GW), which is defined by non-contact warfare, could potentially have characterised Russian intervention in Syria, widely mobilising air power and missiles yet regularly forgetting the use of special forces and Wagner group's mercenaries sometimes in cooperation with non-state armed groups, such as Quwwat al-Nimr. However, regarding Russia's 2022 war against Ukraine, the operations demonstrated the exact inverse of non-contact warfare. This kinetic conflict could, on the contrary, be characterised as a hyper-contact form of warfare.

Regarding the ultimate and hardly endorsed conceptualisation of the seventh and eighth generations, technological developments implied in these theories are not projected to be attainable for Moscow and not yet even for the United States or China. Moreover, seventh-generation war (7GW) reveals more of a disillusionment with the core concept of 'automated warfare' in Ukraine than a practical reality, despite missiles and military advance rhetoric. Even the use of the most advanced Russian technologies, such as *Kinzhal* missiles, have not managed to establish such technological superiority or supremacy, which would have enabled Moscow to engage in non-contact warfare with its neighbour. The Su-57 warplane, the T-90M, the T-14 main battle tank and certainly not Russian drones have allowed Russia to implement such warfare. Moscow, in this respect, was not in the position of "shortening (n)or eliminating war as we know it". Instead, it has been stuck in a conventional war (Alderman, 2015). It is possible to understand the adaptive and destructive strategy of the Kremlin by examining its use of distant, non-contact weapons (artillery and missiles). The Kremlin uses them to avoid human casualties among its ranks. However, the idea of automated warfare without casualties, which is a key component of eighth-generation war (8GW), can hardly be more distant from the Russian strategy in Ukraine in 2022. Indeed, one of its political and military aims is, precisely, to inflict massive and traumatic losses on the military and civilian population (Alderman, 2015).

2. Hybridity: Is *gibridnaya voyna* a real thing?

In Crimea, Russia employed its conventional capabilities, such as marine infantry, special forces and military intelligence forces (GRU). However, if the con-

flict was kinetic, the regular forces were deployed in an unconventional way – that is, in covert operations that disrespected the law of war, as all state and non-state forces have to be identifiable. By removing military patches, flags, plates and any other recognition symbol, Moscow's strategy was not only to hide recognisable elements but also to make the local and international authorities understand that the invading troops were Russian through the use of Russian military uniforms, equipment, weaponry and vehicles. The aim of this perception-based strategy was to create surprise, deception, ambiguity and confusion among the Ukrainian forces and facilitate the seizure of a sovereign territory while giving latitude to Russian military forces, the diplomatic service and political representatives to deny the obvious. In Donbas, Russia's strategy has been a bit more inventive, as the sanctions that occurred because of the annexation of Crimea pushed for an adaptation. Moscow tried to use much more discretion, which, in practice, meant erasing any of the permissive signs that Russian troops would be involved in the armed conflict. This worked quite well, as no politicians dared to publicly recognise the direct involvement of the Russian military in the combat in Donbas between 2014 and 2022 despite the material evidence of weapon transfers and the involvement of Russian military intelligence and fighters, including regular soldiers, officially in 'holidays'.

The inability of the West, and especially Western European countries, to accurately identify these two invasions as a Russian war against Ukraine invited scholars to redefine the perimeter and substance of contemporary warfare. However, it also caused an unsavoury effect in terms of anticipation, as it shifted perceptions from what war can traditionally be – that is, a coercive and violent ensemble of direct actions through a wide involvement of capabilities over the long run – to a coercive but indirect ensemble of limited-scale violence and non-violent means combined with the aim of being more of an incentive based on the fear of larger destruction rather than actual large-scale destruction. Clearly, the wars of 2014 caused destruction, but nothing compared to the 2022 conflict. This self-induced cognitive deception, which was likely unintended by the Kremlin, certainly played a role in Vladimir Putin's decision to launch his attack in 2022 while counting on the (real) inability of the West to realise that a major conventional war was possible and on a (wrong) absence of reaction from the West.

Large knowledge development and debate on hybrid warfare has produced a pertinent body of scientific scholarship and has intoxicated security policymakers, who eventually came to believe that high-intensity conventional warfare was no longer possible. At some point, it reached such an extreme state that hybrid warfare became focused on Russian behaviour despite being a concept developed by American scholar Frank Hoffman, to qualify Hezbollah's strategy in the 2006 war with Israel (Hoffman, 2007). In fact, Russia, as an empire (*maskirovka*), and, more precisely, as a dominant part of the USSR, has been using a strategic

mix of violent and non-violent coercive actions without ever calling it 'hybrid' until Valery Gerasimov decided to adopt a translation of the Western concept of '*gibridnaya voyna*' (Fridman, 2018). By proceeding with a kind of declaration related to hybrid warfare, the Russian chief of staff probably aimed to achieve two major objectives (Gerasimov, 2016). The first was an external objective: constructing the narrative that Russia, from this point forward, would actually adapt to the West by doing – when, therefore, it was already using hybrid strategies for decades. The second objective was concerned with the *siloviki*'s internal power struggle: trying to impose the army, and noticeably GRU, as a key centre for conducting all types of violent *but also* non-violent actions abroad. However, the Russian Armed Forces always preserved, which was demonstrated by the 2022 attack, a deeply conventional form of classical warfare.

Assuming that hybrid warfare did not exist before 2014 would be just as much of a mistake as assuming that it did not exist beginning in 2022. Indeed, the third war also involved cyberwarfare, disinformation and political warfare. The key difference was the mobilisation of substantial operating military capabilities under the Russian flag. However, even hidden behind psychological surprise and unrestrained violence, disinformation and political warfare reached an absolute peak before and during this particular war. Indeed, never before has Ukraine been the object, at such a level, of interference; Moscow openly called for a military coup, describing the Ukrainian government as a Nazi regime involved in an anti-Russian genocide. Therefore, if the (needlessly) shocking return of conventional warfare covered the non-kinetic elements of the strategic mix, then it does not mean that they were missing or that they were reduced. It is actually the contrary: They were significantly stepped up yet not dominant in the strategic mix.

It is, therefore, necessary to recognise that if we misinterpreted the 2014 wars as the end of conventional warfare, then we must also misunderstand the 2022 war as the return to high-intensity battle. The three warmongering mechanisms actually triggered three different types of composition for three different strategic mixes that have different aims. In this respect, theoretical planning has been well adapted at the Russian Armed Forces' Headquarters. However, for numerous reasons, the 2022 plans have been completely misled by a misunderstanding regarding Ukraine's ability to resist (Théron, 2022; Volker, 2022).

Hybrid warfare was originally designed to emphasise non-conventional warfare. Hezbollah sits, of course, quite high in the spectrum of irregular warfare through, for instance, the use of conventional missiles and a well-structured paramilitary organisation. Moreover, the hybridisation of the means of war below and above the threshold of violence is a real trend in the history of warfare. However, Russia's history of war demonstrates a particular path that does not start with the birth of this concept or the shadowy emergence of this trend. It is, therefore, necessary to further explore the foundations of Russia's war against Ukraine.

3. Indirect political interference versus unbridled military coercion: Competition around the threshold of violence

Is the Russia–Ukraine War mainly a political project or strictly a military campaign? The question is not easy to answer, and answering it requires investigating different theoretical elements. Two scientific corpuses can be mobilized. One is related to non-contact warfare, made of political interference and more generally of indirect actions, and the other one is heavily dependent on contact, through violent coercion. The confrontation of both sides of the threshold of violence brings, indeed, fruitful teachings.

There is another existing theory that, although incidental to hybrid war, is instructive. This older theory corresponds to an era when Moscow structured its polity related to the use of non-violent means to articulate war behind the lines of the enemy under the Soviet Union. Liddell Hart's indirect approach, which was formulated in the early and middle parts of the 20th century, stated that "while the strength of an enemy country lies outwardly in its numbers and resources, these are fundamentally dependent upon stability or 'equilibrium' of control, morale, and supply" (Liddell Hart, 1941: 4–5). The emergence of non-kinetic techniques in the Soviet Union has been a concern since the emergence of the USSR security architecture and Dzerzhinsky's All-Russia Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-revolution and Sabotage. Heavily politicised from internal security services to every echelon of military ranks, the Soviet political doctrine pushed for new, non-contact techniques in order to sap order and destabilise the enemy from the inside.

The 2022 war was originally planned as a means of achieving regime change, as the Russian leader himself declared. The failure of this strategy led to high-intensity combat. Of course, the fall of former Ukrainian President Yanukovich was seen by Russia's leadership as an encroachment on its political interests. The mobilisation of the conventional military apparatus was, therefore, originally planned as a massive argument to push the Ukrainians to passively accept the coup and restore the power aligned with Moscow. Military power, therefore, was not supposed to conquer Ukraine kinetically; instead, it was simply a means for waging political warfare behind the lines in the direct spirit of Gerasimov's concept of the political agency of the military. The army was, therefore, supposed to serve as an asset – that is, a decisive incentive – and not as a means to implement conventional warfare for an indefinite period of time.

This phenomenon is deeply embedded in the strategic Soviet polity. Military might, based on a heavily armed military and reinforced with a considerable nuclear arsenal, was supposed to incite fear and impose a political order favouring Moscow's interest. The force could potentially be deployed to crush any resistance, as it was made in Budapest and later in Prague. However, contemporary Russia is not the USSR, and the European security order has changed

drastically. However, questioning the political quintessence of Russia's 2022 war against Ukraine seems imperious. George Kennan's 1948 memo explains that 'the Kremlin's conduct of political warfare has become the most refined and effective in history' (Kennan, 1948: 1). However, the thinker does not allow for any ambiguity: If, for him, political warfare is "the employment of all the means at a nation's command [...] to achieve its national objectives", then it is "short of war" (Kennan, 1948: 1). Nevertheless, it is possible to apply a key element in Kennan's analysis: the two, overt and covert, dimensions of political warfare. If we apply it to the 2022 war regarding the 2014 wars, then we may assume that another key difference is that beyond the centrality of huge conventional build-up, both of the 2014 wars were covert, while the 2022 war was overt. This feature was the cornerstone of the Kremlin's deception of Ukrainian and Western authorities.

Still, the 2022 war corresponds more to Galeotti's approach to political warfare. He identified a real possibility for a conventional conflict with Russia, as 'the Russian military, after all, spends a great deal more time and money preparing for conventional operations' (Galeotti, 2019: 43). Galeotti confirmed that Gerasimov offered the service of the Russian Armed Forces to the Kremlin as a tool for achieving political objectives. Moreover, all non-kinetic tools will be used to secure an easy win for the military. However, there is a backlash effect. The overuse of the military created a deprivation of non-violent tools, such as disinformation and political interference. The 2014 wars and the following debate on hybrid warfare led to "the weaponisation of everything" to the point that war falsely appeared to be emptied of its violent and kinetic substance, or what Galeotti referred to as "the deweaponisation of warfare" (Galeotti, 2022: 25). However, the 2022 war had the exact opposite effect: It hyperweaponised rather than deweaponised warfare far beyond the moral and legal limits defined by international law. Moreover, as conventional combat greatly reduced the non-violent tools of political warfare, the 2022 war actually deweaponised everything except violent military tools.

Without planning to do so, the Kremlin reweaponised conventional warfare, and the exploration of the conventional, present-day development of the last two decades might shed some instructive light on the 2022 Russia–Ukraine War. Huber's compound warfare might, for instance, apply to Russia's attempt to build a significant aligned force from the so-called 'Donetsk Popular Republic' and 'Luhansk Popular Republic'. However, the 2014 war in Donbas can certainly be understood as such despite the fact that the Russian Armed Forces were only covertly supporting these proxies. This covertness does not reduce the applicability of compound warfare despite the fact that it induces a real involvement of "both conventional and unconventional force at the same time" (Huber, 2004: 1). Russian Armed Forces were indeed "fortified", according to Huber's concept, during the eight years between 2014 and 2022, and they were

indestructible to Ukrainian forces because of what they were hiding behind clandestinely (Huber, 2004: 3). The 2022 war was the exact opposite. It exposed Russian forces, de-fortifying them, and even transformed the proxies into minor local auxiliaries with little to no impact on the battlefield relative to Russia's military invading force.

Finally, Russia is not only conducting conventional warfare against the Ukrainian army but also trying to seize Ukraine's occupied territory. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the war from a counterinsurgency (COIN) perspective. However, the key authors converge on certain aspects in the characterisation of an efficient COIN, such as a good understanding of locals, an ability to speak their language, knowledge of them as individuals, the ability to deal with their day-to-day concerns, having severed their links with the partisans operating behind the lines, having established a secure environment and having enabled a representative government (Galula, 1964/2006; Trinquier, 1968; Taber, 2002; Nagl, 2005; Kilcullen, 2017). Regarding Russia's behaviour in the 2022 war, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps counterinsurgency field manual states that "illegitimate states [...] typically cannot regulate society or can do so only by applying overwhelming coercion" (Petraeus and Amos, 2007: 37).

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Transformation of socio-political values in Ukraine: from gaining its independence till the outbreak of full-scale war

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Abstract. This paper focuses on the transformation of Ukrainian socio-political values from gaining its independence till the outbreak of unprovoked full-scale war that Russia started against Ukraine. The main historical and geopolitical factors have been determined which have affected the formation of socio-political values of Ukrainian society, its main contradictions and their unifying factors. The features of modern Ukraine's socio-political values were analyzed. The question of nature and peculiarities of Ukrainian society's socio-political values contains the answer to the question why Ukrainians, being in a state of war, have successfully offered such strong resistance to a much larger enemy.

Keywords: socio-political values, value system, Ukrainian society, Ukrainian socio-political values.

Socio-political values can be understood as guidelines and regulators of social and political life in all its institutional and procedural dimensions (features of political decision making, motivation of policy actors, coordination of interests of social groups, etc.). As it was stated by M. Weber, social values cause social changes. In modern times socio-political values can be considered as decisive factors in the transformation of political systems and giving meaning to the political process. For this reason, socio-political values have both theoretical and practical significance.

The problem of political values transformation is considered as a set of changes within the social and political consciousness, which was influenced by the revision of economic, social, interpersonal relations, the social structure itself under the influence of globalization, the spread of pluralism, individualism with the simultaneous expansion of human rights and freedoms, expressed pacifism and humanity against the background of global security, and environmental, economic and political crises.

The possibility of a victory in a war against a much larger enemy is possible if there is a consolidation of society and government, a high moral elevation, which can be ensured by a common system of national socio-political values. During almost nine years of the war that Russia is waging against Ukraine, the processes of crystallization of the national idea of Ukrainian society, nation-building in the context of national unity, development of the civil society as well as development of democratic political institutions have been taking place in Ukraine. The final geopolitical choice was made by the Ukrainian society and declared at state level. In the conditions of war, the consolidating factor of Ukrainian society is determined by faith in a bright future and faith in victory.

1. The formation of the Ukrainian value system

1.1 The main factors of the formation Ukrainian society's socio-political values

The formation of a value system of each nation is influenced by the complexities of historical, geopolitical, socio-cultural factors which usually have origins from earlier periods of history.

The whole history of Ukraine is a history of a struggle for freedom, and for the right to establish the Ukrainian state on its territory. The origins of the Ukrainian state date back to the Trypillian culture in 6000–3500 BC, the Scythian and Sarmathian period dated from the 11th century BC to the 2nd century AD, giving way to the Slavs and the prosperous Kyievan Rus that was playing a significant role in the political life of Europe in the 9th-12th centuries. "The next important historic period is the Ukrainian national renaissance – the Cossack State of the 16th-18th centuries. It laid the foundation for the Ukrainian state that continued to struggle for its independence for several centuries up to the turbulent period between 1917 and the early 1920s, which ended with the complete integration of Ukraine into the Soviet Union"¹. Despite all the unfavorable processes for the formation of Ukrainian identity and the establishment of the Ukrainian state, Ukrainian political traditions are based on democracy, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and the rights of peoples to self-determination. The problem of preserving and

¹ Chekalenko, L. *Foreign Policy of Ukraine*, (Kyiv: "LAT&K", 2016), p.8.

developing Ukrainian identity was crucial in the period of time when the Ukrainian lands were dependent on other states. After Ukraine gained its independence on 24 August 1991 by the adoption of the Act of the Independence of Ukraine the Ukrainian state started a new page of its history.

The formation of modern Ukrainian values, including socio-political values, is an evolutionary process influenced by many factors, such as the following.

The geopolitical situation as a border state connecting the East and the West.

The mentality that was formed at the "crossroads" of Eastern and Western civilization and is historically characterized by tolerance and individualism.

Historical features of Ukraine's development related to the state of political ambitions of the empires that stepped onto the territory of Ukraine which would lead to the simultaneous search for ways to liberate Ukraine by its leaders. This struggle for Ukrainian independence and sometimes even for its existence was accompanied by the hegemon's policy of derogation of the role and historical significance of Ukraine. The historical examples to demonstrate this are the Russian Empire's censorship which forbade the use of the Ukrainian language and even the term "Ukraine" as well as the Soviet propaganda of "proletarian unity" and the simultaneous physical destruction of the Ukrainian cultural and intellectual elite which is known as the "Executed Renaissance".

Political traditions, which consist of the centuries-old process of state formation in conditions of statelessness and external attempts at national assimilation of Ukraine with other peoples. The apogee and end of this state was the entry of Ukraine into the Russian Empire and, after a short surge of national elevation, as a republic of the USSR.

The psychological state of the population, among the main characteristics of which can be called a balance between permanent hope and disappointment.

Traditionally, socio-political values are: "State sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic foundations of development, hard work, spirituality, family, equality of peoples who inhabit Ukraine, self-sacrifice during the defense of the Motherland, social justice, collectivism, material and spiritual wealth of the people of Ukraine, peacefulness, tolerance, benevolence"². According to S. Wozniak, the main spiritual values of the Ukrainian people are such values as "... national statehood, the Christian faith and the Ukrainian language"³.

In addition, the process of the formation of a system of socio-political values is influenced by such factors as the political regime, political system, interests, attitudes, and the level of legal and political culture. Therefore, entering on the path

2 Ситник, Г., „Національні цінності як основа прогресивного розвитку особистості, суспільства, держави”, *Вісн.*

НАДУ, №2 (2004): 369. (National values as the basis of progressive development of the individual, society, and state).

3 Возняк, С., *Духовні цінності українського народу* (Київ, Івано-Франківськ: Плай, 1999), с. 27. (Spiritual values of the Ukrainian people).

of independence, Ukraine inherited a contradictory system of values: national, Ukrainian and Soviet (with the meaning of Ukraine's inferiority).

1.2. The dual system of Ukrainian socio-political values.

By the end of the turbulent 20th century Ukraine had faced several significant tasks which were connected with its gaining independence. Firstly, to overcome the consequences of the Soviet past, including the Soviet political system, narratives, approaches to political elite-formation etc. Secondly, to create democratic institutions, moving towards consolidated democracy and adherence to democratic principles. Thirdly, to perform the transition into a market economy. The process of transforming the Ukrainian political system was accompanied with a strategic task of nation building as a forming of the Ukrainian political nation. At the same time, the Soviet political and social traditions, penetration of the Soviet political elite into the new bodies of state government as well as the significant number of people who got used to "homo soveticus" way of thinking hindered the process of democratic transformation in the Ukrainian political system. That is why the two first decades of Ukrainian independence were characterized by identity crisis and value uncertainty. On the one hand, there were contradictory processes between a corrupt authority and arising civic society, between supporters of autocracy and democracy. On the other hand, as a general rule, the most intense change in the value hierarchy of a society occurs in transitional periods. The reason for this situation can be explained because of the long struggle for the independence of the Ukrainian state that was losing until 1991 because of the lack of consolidation among the political elites, differences in understanding the future of Ukraine and the people's unwillingness to take on democratic change.

This point of view can be referred to the results of a study conducted by the sociological group "Rating" together with the National Center of Culture and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, published in 2017. One of the proposed statements was devoted to the importance of historical heritage for Ukrainians. As a result, "the history of Ukraine is considered very important or important in the answers of 83% of Ukrainians... The percentage of those who consider the history of the USSR to be very important or important is 51% of the respondents"⁴.

According to the abovementioned research, it is possible to conclude that there is a dual identity in the minds of Ukrainians: Ukrainian and Soviet. Despite

4 „Українці про історію, культуру та польсько-українські відносини. Звіт Національного центру культури та Інституту політичних досліджень Польської Академії Наук”, Соціологічна група «Рейтинг»/RatingGroup, accessed January 25, 2019, http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/ukraincy_ob_istorii_kulture_i_polsko-ukrainskih_otnosheniyah.html. (Ukrainians about history, culture and Polish-Ukrainian relations. Report of the National Center of Culture and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences).

the fact that the percentage of the supporters of the Soviet value system decreased, the presence of value attitudes of a post-communist person had played a significant role in the political life of Ukrainians before the outbreak of full-scale war in 2022.

Centralized state management, autocracy, the search for a strong leader, collectivism, paternalism, the lack of mutual responsibility of citizens and the political elite for their decisions as well as the primacy of a sense of security over freedom can be named among the Soviet political values. The Soviet system of political values can be characterized by a conformist attitude to politics and social life with a simultaneously high level of expectations from the authorities on the part of passive citizens. It is this basis that stands out in the system of Ukrainian political values. At the same time, "homo sovieticus" is evaluated by Ukrainian society as an anti-value, the alternative of which is the priority of the Western European vector of development, taking into account the following common political values: freedom, individualism, equality of opportunities, tolerance, democracy, etc.

One example of the ambivalence of political values of Ukrainians was their simultaneous commitment to democracy and authoritarianism. The basis for such a statement is the data of the annual monitoring survey, which was conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2019. Thus, democracy as a value is positively assessed by 79.9% of respondents, the rule of law – 65.8%, individual freedom – 82.4%⁵. Research conducted by the Razumkov Centre demonstrated that Ukrainians recognize the value of democracy as one of the most important for Ukraine, but believe that a strong leader that is not limited by elections and a system of checks and balances, is necessary for Ukraine. Despite the fact that 86.5% (35.8% democracy is very good and 50.7% rather good) of Ukrainians positively evaluate the democratic political system, they would agree with the rule of an authoritarian leader whose activities are not limited by elections or parliamentary control. Such a political regime would be approved by 79.9% (35% very good and 44.9% good political system) of those surveyed⁶. The obtained data indicates the desire of Ukrainians to transition to a democratic regime, to enjoy its benefits, but the expectations of a political leader who himself or herself will lead Ukraine to such a political system are quite high. This may indicate that Ukrainians did not trust in their own strength, shifting responsibility to another person.

5 Інститут соціології НАН України. *Українське суспільство: моніторинг соціальних змін. Збірник наукових праць*, Вип. 6 (20) (2019): 438. (Ukrainian society: monitoring social changes).

6 Український центр економічних та політичних досліджень ім. О. Разумкова. „Основні засади та шляхи формування спільної ідентичності громадян України”, *Національна безпека і оборона. Інформаційно-аналітичні матеріали до Круглого столу*, №1–2 (квітень 2017): 50. (Basic principles and ways of forming a common identity of Ukrainian citizens).

2. Prospects for transforming Ukrainian socio-political values

2.1 Ukrainian society's socio-political values: cyclical processes and regularities

As it was mentioned, Ukrainian society was faced with a transitional period of institutional changes, changes in the society's preferences between democracy and commitment to an authoritarian order. The government has traditionally been criticized by citizens for corruption, clientelism and populism. Reactionary measures to refusal of European integration caused the Revolution of Dignity in 2013–2014. The Revolution of Dignity became a trigger for democratic changes, strengthening the role of civil society, patriotic views, choosing a democratic vector of the country's development based on democratic values.

Conducting research within the framework of the "World Value Survey", R. Inglehart and K. Welzel noted that "... quite skeptically assessed the chances of the post-Soviet countries for a civilizational breakthrough in the near term, precisely in view of their inherent values – a noticeable predominance of the so-called "survival values" over "self-expression values"⁷. However, as already noted, in view of the tragic events of the end of 2013 – beginning of 2014, the process of transformation of political values accelerated, although according to the trend of changes in Ukrainian public attitudes, it became slower.

According to the World Value Survey, it is possible to draw a conclusion about the gradual turn of Ukrainians to the values of self-realization, which are associated with the departure from the consumerist attitude towards the state, which may also indicate a certain individualization of Ukrainians, in contrast to post-Soviet collectivism. This postmodern individualism and commitment to self-expression, according to R. Inglehart and K. Welzel, testifies to post-materialist values that are dominant under a democratic political regime. As part of the seventh wave of the World Value Survey 2020, the index of post-materialism is low, but compared to 2011, it has increased slightly: from 3.7% to 4.6%⁸. On the other hand, a slight decrease in the value index of social comfort may indicate the citizens' awareness of the need for solidarity, the exit of Ukrainians from their comfort zone, which is happening around the mobilization potential in conditions of external aggression from Russia, the strengthening of the volunteer movement and the civil movement in general. However, at the same time, security remains one of the most important values for Ukrainians, which, given the occupational actions of the Russian Federation and the threat of a full-scale war, is also of vital importance.

7 Рябчук, М. "Європейці мимоволі? Про ціннісний вимір української національної ідентичності". *ПІУНД ім. І.Ф. Кураса НАН України. Наукові записки*, Вип 3–4 (95–96) (2018): 96. (Europeans involuntarily? About the value dimension of Ukrainian national identity).

8 "Світове дослідження цінностей 2020 в Україні". World Values Survey. accessed November, 2020, с. 124. http://ucser.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WVS_UA_2020_report_WEB.pdf (World Values Survey 2020 in Ukraine).

According to a survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine regarding the dynamics of value priorities of Ukrainians, for the period from 2012 to 2018 (the next wave of the survey is expected soon), the main life-affirming values of Ukrainians, among the twenty proposed ones, are health, family, children, interesting work, social recognition, and participation in religious life. However, the values of security prevail over the values of self-expression, social comfort and democracy⁹.

The dynamics of value syndromes of the population of Ukraine, 2012–2018

Value syndromes	2012	2014	2016	2018
Safety (values of vitality)	4.67	4.68	4.73	4.70
Self-realization (self-realization values)	3.88	4.05	4.08	4.02
Social comfort (prosocial values)	3.78	3.93	3.97	3.90
Democracy (democratic political and civic values)	3.53	3.81	3.81	3.80

Source: Ручка О. Динаміка ціннісних пріоритетів громадян України. Українське суспільство: моніторинг соціальних змін. Збірник наукових праць. Інститут соціології НАН України. Київ, 2018. Вип. 6 (20), с. 215.

Ukrainian society has a tendency to change public preferences and to change steadily with the periodicity of the end of the term of office of the President of Ukraine: from hoping for the best and a high level of trust at the beginning of the term of an office of the President to complete disappointment in his politics. For example, according to the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko's rating in 2014 was 34%, "and in 2018 – only 8%.". For comparison, the rating of the President L. Kuchma decreased from 27% in 2000 to 15% in 2004; V. Yushchenko – from 49% in 2005 to 23% in 2009; V. Yanukovich – from 31% to 10% (2010–2013)"¹⁰.

The reasons for such a permanent state of early hope are seen in:

- transfer of citizens' responsibility for their well-being to the government;
- selective commitment to democratic values coexisting with the post-communist vision of a leader with a "strong hand";
- a certain impatience with regard to immediate social and economic changes, which are often supported by populist slogans;
- the absence of a single consolidating national idea based on a clear vision of Ukraine's future and a domestic and foreign policy strategy that preserves continuity and consistency.

⁹ Амельченко Н., *Цінності об'єднаної Європи* (Київ: ГО «Лабораторія законодавчих ініціатив», 2013) (Values of united Europe), с. 211

¹⁰ Інститут соціології НАН України. *Українське суспільство: моніторинг соціальних змін. Збірник наукових праць*, Вип. 6 (20) (2018): 24 . (Ukrainian society: monitoring social changes).

The record-high level of trust in President V. Zelensky, according to a famous analogy, had began to fall before the full-scale war: "the level of trust in the President of Ukraine V. Zelensky was the highest in September 2019 – 79% of citizens trusted him, only 13.5% did not trust him, in February 2020 – 51.5% and 41%, respectively"¹¹. According to the data of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in December 2021, the level of trust in the President was 27%¹². Whereas, after the outbreak of a full-scale war, the level of trust in the head of state increased again to 71% in August 2022¹³. This situation can be explained by the high level of national unity and social responsibility.

The steady growth of Ukrainians' support for the Western geopolitical vector, even in the conditions of the dynamic 2019 election year (when, as is known, public preferences changes significantly), indicates a certain transformation of the socio-political values of Ukrainians, the reduction of contradictions between the population of Ukraine regarding its future and methods of policy making.

At the same time, studies of the basic values of Ukraine within the framework of understanding human rights indicate that Ukrainians put freedom, justice, security, dignity and equality first in their value hierarchy. However, compared to 2016, in 2018 the prevailing importance of safety decreased slightly (from 71.9% to 66.5%), as did dignity (from 64.4% to 62.5%) and material security (from 44.7% to 40.9%). At the same time, the need for freedom (from 80.3% to 86%), equality (from 56.7% to 58%), and responsibility (from 49.3% to 52.3%) increased¹⁴. Even against the background of the war with Russia, the primary value of security has somewhat decreased due to giving more importance to freedom, equality and responsibility. This testifies to the consolidation of the predominance of democratic values over the conformist attitude to politics among Ukrainians.

11 Український центр економічних і політичних досліджень імені О. Разумкова. "Оцінка громадянами діяльності влади, рівень довіри до соціальних інститутів та політиків, електоральні орієнтації громадян. Соціологічне опитування. 13-17 лютого 2020 року", accessed March 25, 2020. <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-gromadianamy-diialnosti-vlady-riven-doviry-do-sotsialnykh-institutiv-ta-politykiv-elektoralni-orientatsii-gromadian-liutyi-2020r>

12 "Динаміка довіри соціальним інституціям протягом 2020–2021 років: результати телефонного опитування", Київський міжнародний інститут соціології, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1093&page=1> (Dynamics of trust in social institutions during 2020–2021: results of a telephone survey Ukrainian society: monitoring social changes).

13 Trust in the state: how to preserve national unity for the sake of victory, Democratic Initiatives Foundation, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://dif.org.ua/en/article/trust-in-the-state-how-to-save-national-unity-for-the-victory>

14 Колишк, С., Паращевін, М., Яворський, В. (Ред. Печончик, Т.). *Що українці знають і думають про права людини: оцінка змін (2016–2018): Резюме дослідження. В рамках проекту «Права людини в Україні: оцінка змін», що реалізується Центром інформації про права людини у співпраці з Фондом «Демократичні ініціативи» імені І. Кучеріва, Секретаріатом Уповноваженого Верховної Ради України з прав людини* (Київ, 2018), 18. (What Ukrainians Know and Think About Human Rights: Assessing Changes (2016–2018): Research Summary. As part of the project "Human Rights in Ukraine: Assessment of Changes", which is implemented by the Human Rights Information Center in cooperation with the "Democratic Initiatives" Foundation named after I. Kucheriv, the Secretariat of the Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for Human Rights).

Although Ukrainians do not trust in the government as it is expected to ensure the implementation of democratic principles and feel disappointed in the implementation of democratic principles by the state, they begin to gradually separate their lives from the will of the state, more often paying attention to the development of social ties, the search for economic independence from the state, as well as observance of one's own rights and freedoms.

2.2 Socio-political values of Ukrainian society since the outbreak of the full-scale war

As it was mentioned, Ukraine started its independence as a society with a dual value system, that is why the process of transformation of the political system of Ukraine was complicated. Changes in Ukrainian society's preferences regarding geopolitical aspirations, identity and political activity are the indicators of the transformation of socio-political values.

After the achievements of the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, which contributed to the confirmation of the choice of geopolitical strategy and the formation of a new system of values based on freedom, equality, responsibility, national self-determination, respect, etc., which could testify to the non-return to the influence of the communist past. These steps were embodied in the final determination of Ukraine's geopolitical course regarding European integration and entry into the North Atlantic Alliance, decommunization, breaking away from relations with the Russian Federation as a symbol of the Soviet past, which took place against the background of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the war in eastern Ukraine by the Russian Federation. This vector of development is fixed by relevant changes in the Preamble of the Constitution of Ukraine in 2019 and finally "confirms the European identity of the Ukrainian people and the irreversibility of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic course"¹⁵ that was stated in the Constitution of Ukraine.

This statement can be understood as an achievement on the path of modernization of Ukraine for a number of reasons. Firstly, the eradication of the ambivalent system of political values in favor of democratic values. Secondly, the choice of a single geopolitical course of the state, which will contribute to the concentration of efforts around one strategy for the development of Ukraine, will minimize the division of society into two camps and release the consolidating potential of Ukrainians. This can be considered as a significant step given that numerous sociological studies have indicated that the main contradictions among Ukrainian society prevailed due to different visions of the geopolitical fu-

15 "Конституція України, прийнята на п'ятій сес. Верхов. Ради України 28 черв. 1996р." *Відом. Верхов. Ради України*, 1996. №30. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80>. (The Constitution of Ukraine, adopted at the fifth session. Verkhov. Council of Ukraine June 28 1996).

ture of Ukraine and its belonging to a certain axiological system. Removing this issue from the agenda made it possible to resolve the issue of the dual system of values and the implementation of democratic values within the framework of Ukraine's integration course.

On the other hand, after Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, Ukrainian society in a short period of time has managed to become a powerful force capable of ensuring the unity of the nation, contributing to the growth of the strength and combat readiness of the Ukrainian army thanks to the government, public organizations, volunteer movements and volunteers, as well as successfully resisting Russian military aggression by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

There is a regularity in axiology that notes that the value system of an individual or a society critically differs when a society is in a state of peace from that of a society that is in a threat of danger. The prevailing value system of a society which is in danger includes the value of security and order. The Ukrainian value system has been crystallized into a system that is based on the freedom, territorial integrity, unity of nation, national interests and security, patriotism and helpfulness since 24th February 2022.

The research of public opinion conducted by the Razumkov Centre in August 2022 demonstrates the Ukrainian society's adherence to democratic values and national interest. To illustrate this statement here are some results of the research below.

Do you agree that a few strong leaders can do more for the country than all the laws and discussions?

	August 2002	December 2009	March 2013	August 2021	August 2022
Yes	63	74.9	54.3	54.1	58.4
No	17	9.5	23.6	24.9	23.7
Difficult to answer	21	15.6	22.0	21.0	17.9

Sources: "День Незалежності України: що об'єднує українців і як ми бачимо перемогу на шостому місяці війни", Український центр економічних та політичних досліджень ім. О. Разумкова, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napiamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/den-nezalezhnosti-ukrainy-serpen-2022p>. (Independence Day of Ukraine: what unites Ukrainians and how we see victory in the sixth month of the war).

Despite the Ukraine's state of war, less people agree that autocracy could be more effective than the rule of law and consensus achieved by discussion. The next result of the questionnaire shows the highest level of the adherence to democracy in August 2022, after six months of vast shelling of Ukrainian territory by Russia.

Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2021	2022
Democracy is the most desirable political regime in Ukraine	41.3	42.8	46.9	47.9	54.0	54.0	63.9
Under certain circumstances, an authoritarian regime may be better than a democratic one	23.2	21.5	19.1	22.5	19.8	19.6	13.8
For a person like me, it does not matter whether the country is democratic or not	18.0	17.7	15.7	16.7	15.0	16.7	13.1
Difficult to answer	17.5	18.0	18.3	12.9	11.1	9.7	9.2

Source: “День Незалежності України: що об’єднує українців і як ми бачимо перемогу на шостому місяці війни”, Український центр економічних та політичних досліджень ім. О. Разумкова, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/den-nezalezhnosti-ukrainy-serpen-2022p>. (Independence Day of Ukraine: what unites Ukrainians and how we see victory in the sixth month of the war).

As it is known, Soviet political values are characterized by the readiness of citizens to live with restricted freedoms and human rights in the name of order and well-being. This statement remains essential for some post-soviet societies with their preference for paternalism and conformism. In contrast to these societies the supposition of Ukraine’s overcoming of its Soviet value system can be made. As it seen in the table that 47.5% of Ukrainians are ready to endure some difficulties for the sake of freedom and civil rights.

Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

	2006	2008	2010	2013	2019	2021	2022
Of course, both freedom and wealth are important, but in exchange for my own well-being, I am ready to cede a share of my rights and civil liberties to the state	26.3	32.7	30.9	24.9	33.1	22.8	30.8
Of course, both freedom and prosperity are important, but for the sake of personal freedom and guarantees of observance of all civil rights, I am ready to endure certain material difficulties	38.,5	33.0	30.3	44.6	42.3	38.9	47.4
Difficult to answer	35.2	34.3	38.7	30.5	24.6	38.3	21.9

Source: “День Незалежності України: що об’єднує українців і як ми бачимо перемогу на шостому місяці війни”, Український центр економічних та політичних досліджень ім. О. Разумкова, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/den-nezalezhnosti-ukrainy-serpen-2022p>. (Independence Day of Ukraine: what unites Ukrainians and how we see victory in the sixth month of the war).

The main things that unite people during war are the issues on how to overcome life's difficulties together, patriotic feelings, faith in a better future and belief in victory in war. These factors of the Ukrainian unity disproves the narrative of a division of Ukrainian society into Western and Eastern parts of Ukraine, Ukrainian-speaking or Russian-speaking, some groups which are privileged and some groups which are humiliated. All of these narratives were widely used by Russian propaganda in order to calumniate the Ukrainian choice of a European path of development and its adherence to democratic values. The following data demonstrate the ideas that unite the Ukrainians during the war.

In your opinion, what unites Ukrainian society today?

The issue on how to overcome life's difficulties together	31.2
Feelings of loss of normal life	27.5
Faith in a better future	48.1
Belief in victory in war	72.5
Family and friendly feelings	23.7
Dissatisfaction with the authorities	4.2
Fear of the future	14.5
Language of communication	12.8
Patriotic feelings	35.9
Political views	3.7
Religion of faith	4.1
Ethnicity	3.9
Other	0.6
Nothing unites	0.9
Difficult to answer	1.0

Source: "День Незалежності України: що об'єднує українців і як ми бачимо перемогу на шостому місяці війни", Український центр економічних та політичних досліджень ім. О. Разумкова, accessed October 3, 2022, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napiamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/den-nezalezhnosti-ukrainy-serpen-2022p>. (Independence Day of Ukraine: what unites Ukrainians and how we see victory in the sixth month of the war).

In spite of the challenges Ukrainians are facing, the level of trust in political and social institutions is growing. That does not mean temporary unity in the face of a threat, but a gradual transformation of democratic socio-political values, based on freedom, civic responsibility, respect for rights and freedoms, dignity and the socio-political ideal of an independent, sovereign and democratic Ukraine, which belongs to the European community.

* * *

Despite the contradictions in the value hierarchies of Ukrainians that were discussed as critical before full-scale war, the main contradictions in society do not concern basic values, but the ways of their implementation and modernization of Ukraine. Ukrainians naturally seek security and material well-being, respect decisive actions and despise any abuse of power. At the same time, Ukrainians in general are supporters of democratic values such as freedom, justice, equality, respect for human and citizen rights and freedoms, etc.

The victory in a war against a larger enemy is possible if there is a consolidation of society and power, a high moral elevation, which can be ensured by a common system of constructive values. During almost nine years of the war that Russia has been waging against Ukraine, the processes of crystallization of the national idea of Ukrainian society, nation-building in the context of unity, development of civil society as well as the development of democratic political institutions have been taking place. The final geopolitical choice was made by Ukrainian society and declared at the state level. In the conditions of war, the consolidating factor of Ukrainian society is determined by faith in a bright future and faith in victory.

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“Ukraine Sells Weapons Donated by NATO Countries”: The Story of One Fake News

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Abstract: this article discusses how Russian Propaganda works and what the role of the journalist community is in decreasing the influence of its Propaganda. The paper relies on a critical review of the case of dissemination of fake news regarding the article 'Sells Weapons Donated by Western Countries to Ukraine'. This article analyzes the flood of news regarding the alleged selling of NATO weapons to criminal groups by Ukraine.

Keywords: fake news, Russian Propaganda, Ukraine.

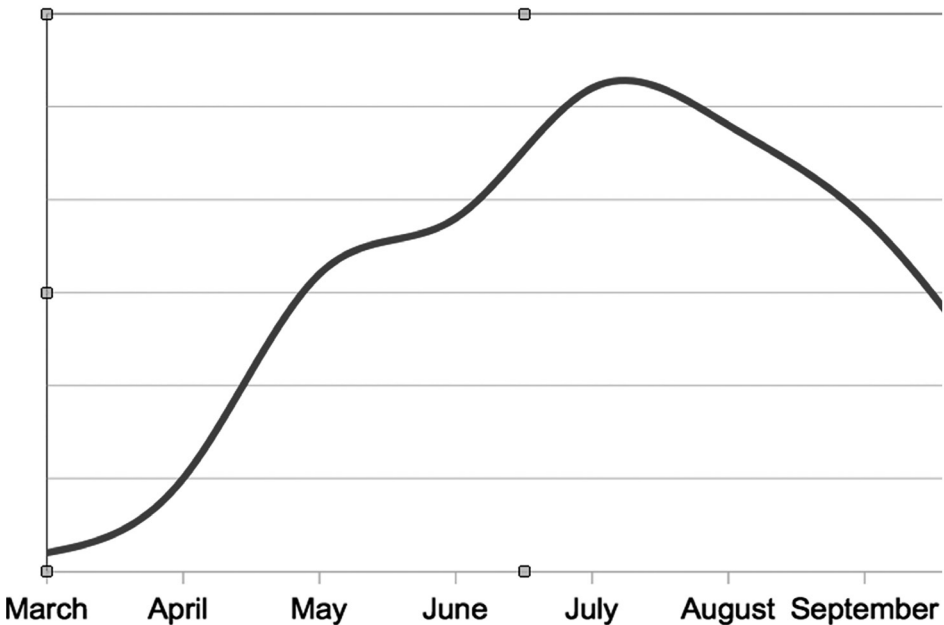
Headlines such as “Javelin on Sale! Western Weapons Delivered to Ukraine by US & NATO are up for Sale on Dark Web” or “Ukraine Sells Military Equipment Donated by NATO Countries” are very common today. These are fake news spread by Russia to convince Ukraine’s Western partners not to supply weapons to the Ukrainian army. Though it is well known that the Russia war against Ukraine is a hybrid war, Russian Propaganda remains one of the main tools in the Russian War against Ukraine that has remained effective.

Against this background, the aim of the article is to discuss how Russian Propaganda works and what the role of journalist community is in decreasing the influence of its Propaganda. The paper relies on a critical review of a single but very archetypal case. The article analyzes the waves of news on the alleged selling of NATO weapons to criminal groups by Ukraine.

1. The analysis of the news.

1.1. Breaking news “Javelin on Sale!”

From June to July the news that Ukraine was selling donated weapons on the black market had gone viral in all types of media and it looked like a tsunami had hit. But, looking back, we can find that this news wave was formed in the spring, and all the eventual thousands of copycats had one root based on three justifications (arguments) about the alleged selling of Western weapons to criminal groups around the world by Ukraine. In April, Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, in an interview with the Big Game program on Channel One (a Russian state-controlled television channel) stated that Ukraine trades in donated arms. A few days later, two other Russian state-controlled media, RIA Novosti and TASS, presented Lavrov's allegation as a proven fact. Over the following months, many international media outlets such as BLITZ, CRUX, The Rio Times, Financial Times, Modern Diplomacy, Global Times, RT, BRICS, CBS news, The Defense Post, EurAsian Times, etc., disseminated the news in various words and formats. However, the central message was all the same: Ukraine sells Western military assistance to terrorist or criminal groups.



Even more interesting in this case is that all the media used the same evidence. All the news on the topic applied the same arguments supported by the same evidence.

- **Argument 1:** Russian Officials Statement.
- **Evidence:** Links to the Russian State-Controlled Media.
- **Argument 2:** Statements of the Secretary General of Interpol and some experts.
- **Evidence:** Links to the interviews and the Report of Israeli cyber-intelligence specialist
- **Argument 3:** Weapons on the Dark Web
- **Evidence:** Dark Web Links

1.2. The Disinformation Tactics

While Russian officials provided no evidence to their words, Russian propaganda employs popular disinformation tactics to develop false arguments. It, in particular:

- Creates fake content;
- Twists the facts;
- Obscures the context.

The Disinformation Tactic 1: "Lack of Context"

In this case, the lack of context was the first instrument to convince the public. The tactic works in the following way: the false news makers use true facts but change the essence of the message by putting the facts out of their context and thereby creating disinformation that becomes the argument and evidence for the fake news. In our particular case, Russian propagandists used the interview of the Secretary General of Interpol with AAPA France as its would-be evidence. In fact, the Interpol head never said that "Arms sent to Ukraine will end up in criminal hands". He stated, literally, that a large amount of weapons in war zones, if uncontrolled, "will result in a proliferation of arms in the post-conflict phase, empowering organized crime groups in the region." His message was just a warning about potential threats and the necessity of international cooperation in preventing the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons after the war. He urged countries to join Interpol's database of missing weapons, and said that "No country can deal with it in isolation." Thus, the real opinion of the top international official was withdrawn from the context and transformed into evidence that Ukraine trades US arms and therefore the military support for Ukraine should be stopped.

The Disinformation Tactic 2: "Creation of Fake Content"

An advertisement on a Dark Web site was invoked as a irrefutable proof that Ukraine trades arms, although a BBC investigation revealed that all the adverts

were fakes¹. Nonetheless, this disinformation tactic of “creation of fake content” appeared effective enough to make some U.S congressmen susceptible to Russian propaganda.

The Disinformation Tactic 3: “Twisting the Facts”

The Reo Times released the news “Western War Weapons for Ukraine End Up for Sale on the Dark-web”² referring ostensibly to the report of the Israeli cyber espionage specialist³. The Reo Times linked to the Rio de Janeiro News contends that Israeli intelligence had found, reportedly, a large quantity of Western weapons on the dark-net, apparently offered for sale by Ukrainians. However, if one bothers to follow the link specified in the news article he/she will find the opposite information:

“The coordinated publication on multiple platforms increases the likelihood of this being part of a disinformation campaign aiming to present Ukrainians as unethical and untrustworthy. Finally, there’s always the possibility these listings are added by scammers wanting to take advantage of the situation and make a profit out of thin air. If that is the case, pro-Russian outlets could be simply picking them up, assuming they’re real, or using them to promote their narrative. At this stage, the authenticity of weapon listings from Ukraine on the dark web cannot be verified, but judging from available information and accompanying clues, most seem to be fake.”⁴

In other words, Israeli intelligence, indeed, has found some quantity of Western weapons on the dark-net but, after analyzing the available information, concluded that fake accounts are used most likely by Russia to disseminate disinformation. This is certainly not proof that Ukraine is selling military aid, as The Reo Times title “Western War Weapons for Ukraine End Up for Sale on the Dark-web” ominously implies.

2. What was a hidden goal of the news?

None of the given evidence, as we see, turned out to be true. The only argument in support of that news was the statement of Minister Lavrov, who also

1 Korenyuk M., Swinnen L., Goodman J., Undercover with Russia’s fake arms dealers. 24 Sep. 2022. BBC. Web. 2 November 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-62983444>

2 Western war weapons for Ukraine end up for sale on the darkweb. June 13, 2022. The Reo Times. Web. 2 November 2022 <https://www.riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/modern-day-censorship/western-war-weapons-for-ukraine-end-up-for-sale-on-the-darkweb/>

3 Toulas B., Dark web sites selling alleged Western weapons sent to Ukraine. 09 Jun. 2022. BleepingComputer. Web. 2 November 2022 <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/dark-web-sites-selling-alleged-western-weapons-sent-to-ukraine>

4 Toulas B., Dark web sites selling alleged Western weapons sent to Ukraine. 09 Jun. 2022. BleepingComputer. Web. 2 November 2022 <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/dark-web-sites-selling-alleged-western-weapons-sent-to-ukraine>

did not provide any evidence to confirm his words. However, the use of such techniques such as the lack of context, twisting the facts and faking the content, combined with emotionally colored headlines, may have a serious impact on the average consumers of such news. After all, people usually do not check the facts referred to by news agencies. Moreover, having come across such news, very often under the influence of emotions, people spread this kind of news through social networks, thereby unknowingly increasing their propagandistic effect. Russian bots who actively support dissemination of fake news in social media, call on American and European citizens for action with the ultimate goal to stop military assistance for Ukraine and protect thereby global security. The Western governments that support Ukraine as well as their citizens should be persuaded that Ukraine is a highly corrupt country where officials even during the war try to benefit from the donated weapons and therefore can neither be trusted nor assisted.

3. What is behind the story of a single fake news?

Ironically, sweeping reforms in Ukraine in the direction of a Western-style, anti-corruption liberal democracy appeared to be one of the major reasons of Putin's aggression. Still, the demand for anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine is high and they are likely to be continued. Inasmuch as Putin and his regime have captured the stet, they have a good reason to believe that the successful reforms in a neighboring and allegedly proximate country would undermine their rule. They remember the Bolotnaya protests of 2011–2012 in Russia and fear that the Ukrainian experiment with democracy might be not only successful but also contagious. They are aware that successful reforms in Ukraine would inevitably result in its economic growth and sustainable development. All the post-Soviet states that tried to move into the Western, liberal democratic direction were harshly attacked by the Kremlin regime. The tools that Russia employs to undermine democratic reforms in neighboring countries can be called Putin's toolkit. It includes propaganda, support for pro-Russian political parties, establishing a corruption network, organized crime, and ultimately the hybrid war which is used as a hammer in Putin's toolbox when the other instruments fail. The Russian invasion of Ukraine paradoxically confirms that Ukraine was developing in the right direction, leaving Putin's regime weaker and dampening hopes for maintaining a corrupt Russia-style patrimonial system that would allow it to keep Ukraine on a short leash.

The lessons learned from a single story of fake news

Fake news about Ukraine's alleged trade in western weapons made notable harm to Ukraine's image as they were taken by some members of the US Con-

gress at face value and sowed seeds of doubt about giving military assistance to Ukraine within American society. Their impact, however, was rather limited since professional teams debunked and dismissed these reports as sheer Russian propaganda.

At the same time, this case raises the question about ethical and professional standards in the media. The spread and partial efficacy of Russian propaganda indicate that not only corrupt Russian money but also the sensationalist fervor and low professionalism of some media workers may undermine the quality of their reporting and distort both the news and the reality on the ground that is not only reflected in but also informed by the news.

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Belarusians in camps for displaced persons in West Germany in 1945–1952

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the life of Belarusians in camps for displaced persons in West Germany, mainly in the British and American occupation zones. The period of "waiting" for further fate and departure to new countries and continents was characterized by another impetus for the Belarusians which, not surprisingly turned out to be a nation-building one. In Belarusian camps, perhaps even following the example of other national camps, there was schooling in the national language, active social and political life, and even religion. It was several years of Belarusians living in camps for displaced persons that became another stage in the existence of the Belarusian Autocephalous Church, which continues to exist in Belarusian diasporas around the world to this day. Printing numerous periodicals and public-political polemics in their columns, an active scouting movement, holding theatrical productions and secular events, creating professional unions - this is evidence that Belarusians held on to their identity, developed social ties that were active in new places throughout their lives. The camps were financially taken care of and controlled by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administrations (UNRRA). From 1 July 1947, the International Refugees Organization (IRO) but several years without ideological oppression and the imposition of someone else's identity made it clear that Belarusians were able to independently expand their own cultural space.

Key words: Belarusians, emigration, diaspora, DP-persons, refugees, exile, II World War, the Belarusian Autocephalous Church, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administrations.

Among the consequences of military conflicts, are not only destroyed countries, but also the fate of people. War entails humanitarian catastrophe, global civilization changes, and is also the cause of migration processes and the emergence of so-called displaced persons. The post-World War II situation was no exception.

The issue of Belarusians in camps for displaced persons in West Germany (1945–1952) is presented quite modestly in Belarusian and Western historiography. One of the reasons for this is a *closed subject*. On the one hand, in the Soviet historical tradition, emigrants after WW II were interpreted as collaborators and *enemies of the people*, and by such tradition are, if not completely, then partially passed into Belarusian historiography. On the other hand, there are limited sources. In Belarus, as in Russia, the archives of the KGB are classified as secret, perhaps some of them were deliberately destroyed. Western researchers have studied the issue of displaced persons in the context of the establishment of camps for them under the auspices of the United States, that is, the work of relevant organizations the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and the IRO (the International Refugee Organization). For example, *The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, 3 vols. by Woodbridge¹, G., *Armies of peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* by Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murry², *European refugees: 1939–1952* by MALCOLM J. Proudfoot³, *Humanizm i polityka: pomoc UNRRA dla Polski i polskich uchodźców w latach 1944–1947* by Józef Łaptos⁴.

I believe that the Belarusian sources should be divided into several categories. The first category includes Belarusian independent studies, the brightest example of which is the book of Aleh Hardziyenka, *Belarusian Central Council: creation, activity, decline (1943–1945)* which appeared with support of the Belarusian NGO *the World Association of Belarusians Бацькаўшчына*⁵. The book also shows the period of evacuation of the Belarusian Central Council, which arose during the German occupation, resumption of its work in post-war Germany (in DP-camps), and then working under the conditions of emigration to other countries. The second one explores the books which were published by Belarusian

1 Woodbridge, G. (1950). *UNRRA; the history of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press

2 Armstrong-Reid, S.E. and Murray, D. (2008). *Armies of Peace Canada and the UNRRA Years*. University Of Toronto Press.

3 Proudfoot, M.J. (1957). *European refugees: 1939–52: a study in forced population movement*. London: Faber and Faber.

4 Łaptos J. (2018). *Humanitaryzm i polityka: pomoc UNRRA dla Polski i polskich uchodźców w latach 1944–1947*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego

5 Гардзіенка, А. (2016). *Беларуская Цэнтральная Рада (БЦР): стварэнне – дзейнасць – заняпад 1943–1995*. Minsk: Кнігазбор

activists who passed through the DP-camps e.g. Leanid Halyak's *Memoirs*⁶, Svyataslau Koush's *Belarusian camp in Watenstedt. Album. Historical reference*⁷. The third category of sources come from the dozens of periodicals published in DP camps, on the pages of which not only household issues were detailed, but also the camps' turbulent social, political, and cultural life was uncovered. The basis of this research was on precisely this third category of sources: DP-camp periodicals. An extensive collection of camp periodicals is located in the Belarusian Kreceuski Foundation in NYC. The research was carried out thanks to a scholarship from the Orsa-Romano Cultural And Educational Foundation. Both of these institutions were founded by representatives of the Belarusian post-war migration.

This interdisciplinary study is not only a historical look at the life of Belarusians in camps for displaced persons in West Germany, but also an attempt to show that this period of existence of Belarusian communities in camps for displaced persons had an impact on the preservation and development of Belarusian national identity. It was an attempt to create Belarusian political structures and state institutions in exile, outside the Soviet Union and communist ideology. Unfortunately, this historical period and its events are still unappreciated by researchers but their role in national and state formation is no less important than other attempts of Belarusians to formulate their history.

At the end of 1946, Belarusians fleeing the Soviet occupation found themselves in more than two dozen Displaced Persons camps in West Germany: 17 in the American zone and 5 in the British zone. The first Belarusian camp in the American Zone of Occupation was founded on the outskirts of Regensburg in June 1945.

In the British zone, the largest Belarusian camp was in Watenstedt, numbering about 600 people. By the end of 1946, more than 6,000 people lived in Belarusian camps in the American and British zones, and about a thousand more in the French occupation zone, although no Belarusian camps were established there.

The camps were taken care of by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administrations (UNRRA). From 1st July 1947, the International Refugees Organization (IRO) took over the supervision of camps. This organization took the displaced persons to different countries for permanent residence. The IRO estimated the number of Belarusians deported from Germany as 25,000. The Belarusian National Committee in Regensburg, which registered Belarusians in the US-occupied zone, estimated the number of Belarusian refugees from 70,000 to 100,000.

The DP-camps were organized on a national basis and had an internal administration. Their inhabitants lived in former barracks, buildings of former factories

6 Halyak, L. (1983). *Memoirs*. U.S.: Letapis.

7 Koush, S. (1981). *Belarusian camp in Watenstedt. Album. Historical reference*.

or specially allotted city buildings. There were schools, kindergartens, hospitals, professional courses, theater groups, dozens of periodicals were being published, and even the presence of the Belarusian Autocephalous Church. The UN-RRA provided refugees with food, clothing, and footwear.

On August 24, 1947, the congress of representatives of Belarusian camps, centers, and organizations of the British zone of Germany was held, where *the separation of Belarusians into their national camps* was discussed. (At that time there was already a Belarusian camp in the British zone which was organized by Sviataslau Koush in Watenstedt which was created in 1945. Also, in 1945, in Watenstedt the Belarusian Relief Committee was established). Due to the fact that the camps came under the auspices of the IRO, it was decided that the Belarusian Relief Committee would deal with the separation of Belarusians into separate camps and seek IRO's recognition of Belarusians as a separate national group. Belarusians in some districts of the British zone still could not go to England as a separate national group. It turned out at the Congress that a large number of Belarusians were in other national camps, mostly Polish, where Belarusians were gradually *denationalized*. The newspaper *On the Path of Life (Sliacham žyccia)* reported that in 1947 a Belarusian camp was established near the town of Komu. For example, one of the largest Belarusian groups was in the Polish camp Gel. Among the 650 inhabitants, 300 were Belarusians. The Belarusian Relief Committee appealed to the authorities to allocate this camp to Belarusians, transferring 350–400 Poles from it to one of the Polish camps and to send Belarusians to this camp. The authors reminded the readers to “remember that Belarusians are not Orthodox from Hrodna, Bielsk, Baranavichy or Pinsk, but also Catholic peasants from Vilnius, Bialystok, Lida or Nalibok, and Polesie or Vilnius Baptist”.

In the columns of *On the Path of Life* in the article *Our tomorrow*, the author explains that the fate of DP camps depended on their inhabitants, on their moral and spiritual qualities. For more than a year, each national group showed its character. Life in the camps had a demoralizing effect that weakened will, psychological resilience, and the ability to work. People were tired of the war and forced labor, for years they could not fully work in the camps. Quite a different story was with the children who had the opportunity to attend schools in the camps and were involved with scout organizations. Life in the camps had left an imprint on the character of the people who stayed there for longer. *The hustle and bustle of camp life, the uncertainty of tomorrow are dangerous and threaten to demoralize if the social community does not dare to help itself*⁸. This was mentioned by the author of the article, which was signed as S.K. He emphasized that in order to preserve oneself, one's national pride, Belarusians had to inherit the national and moral values from their homeland. Belarusians had to live a normal life in

8 “Наша заўтра”, Шляхам жыцця, № 12, 25 сьнежня 1946, с. 7

their camps so that it did not become an unhealthy ground. This means that we needed to prove ourselves as a society that is fully mature and consolidated, not divided by any religious or ideological differences.

One of the issues that split Belarusians in the camps, and this division was hidden within the communities and after they had moved to other continents, – was the church division. The departure of the episcopate from the Belarusian Autocephalous Church and its incorporation into the Russian Church Abroad, allegedly was due to the lack of foundations for the independence of the Belarusian Church. According to the canons of the Orthodox Church, in order to declare autocephaly, it is necessary to have full sovereignty and independence of the state for the people with whom autocephaly is required.

Also, In the columns of *On the Path of Life* in the article *The basics of autocephaly of the Belarusian Orthodox Church*⁹ the author underlined that some Russian bishops, such as the Bishop of Kovno Eleutherios and some Russian believers, did not come under the jurisdiction of the Russian Church Abroad, but were recognized by the Moscow Patriarchate. The author also emphasized the desire to have his own church in Belarus in 1942 and abroad in Regensburg in May 1946. *The matter of the unwillingness of one's church is not so much a religious matter as a national one, in which only Orthodox Belarusians should have a voice, and Orthodox of other nations should not have a voice. Especially when it comes to Russians, because we know that they do not want us to have our schools, our press, our church, and they always oppose the manifestations of our independent life.*

All hierarchs of the Belarusian Autocephalous Church were in exile (a different situation was in the Russian Orthodox Church, where some part of the hierarchs were in exile. Despite this, the Russian Orthodox Church was able to organize an independent church from Moscow). However, instead of keeping the church in exile, the hierarchs of the Belarusian Autocephalous Church tried to liquidate it with their own hands. Many priests converted to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia for financial reasons.

On the pages of the newspaper of *On the Path of Life* in the article, *The results of uniting Belarussian Orthodox Episcopate with Russians* the situation was described that in the camp in Hanover, where more than 600 orthodox Belarusians lived, an orthodox Church was created in which priest Mikhail Smirnov officiated. Many Russian activists appeared there who took a leadership role over time. According to the author of the article, the Russians, not even members of the church, began to spread ideas of the great-power of Russian policy among Belarusians. As a result, the Belarusian church, with the support of the priest, began to lean toward Russianness. On December 4, 1947, he held elections to the church council, in which Belarusians refused to take part in a protest. Twenty-two

⁹ "Асновы аўтакефальнасьці Беларускай праваслаўнай царквы", Шляхам жыцця, №12, 25, сьнежань 1946, сс. 34-39.

Russians took part in the election and the former Russian general became the chief of the church council who said after the election *our church will be called Belarusian in name only, but it is Russian*. During the whole existence of the Belarusian church in Hanover, the priest never mentioned Belarus in his sermons.

The example of the Hanoverian Church demonstrated the nature of national conflicts on religious grounds or religious conflict on national grounds in the camps, that Belarusians – as a nation without their motherland and a real state – could have had more support from public and political figures than from religious ministers. As it is well known, the church at that time played a major role in shaping national identity and self-determination.

In 1948 the magazine *Chronicle*¹⁰ (*Lietapis*) published an appeal by Belarusian Orthodox bishops to the Belarusian Orthodox emigration where the bishops strongly criticized the church union of 1596, the Catholic church, and the ideology of Kryvia (the Kryvichs are one of the tribes that inhabited the northern Belarusian territories. Later the Kryvichs formed the Polotsk, Smolensk and Pskov principalities. The Polotsk principality is considered to be the cradle of Belarusian statehood in the early Middle Ages. The idea of Kryvia to limit itself from Russian influence was popular among Belarusian activists. That's why they suggested calling Belarus Kryvia, the name was in the documents, for example, they tried to call the Janka Kupala gymnasium not the Belarusian gymnasium, but the Kryvia gymnasium. The representatives of the idea of using Kryvia in the camps were Jan Stankievich and Alexander Orsa). But interestingly, in this appeal, among its enemies the bishops also mentioned Belarusian migrants who were against the decision of the Belarusian bishop who had joined the Russian Orthodox Church Outside.

One of the documents which were published in the newspaper *On the Path of Life* described the material life in the ABC camp in Watenstedt in detail. On January 1, 1947 there were 568 inhabitants in the camp, on January 1, 1948, there were 716 inhabitants. From this camp, people went to Britain, Canada, France, and Belgium. During one year, 150 people went abroad, 28 children were born, and 2 people died. During this period, the camp had three educational institutions: a kindergarten, which was attended by 38 children, a primary school with 81 students and a gymnasium with 69 students.

Publishing activities were carried out, for example: 12 issues of the newspaper *On the Path of Life*, the Old Testament, the *Handbook of the Law of God for the Family and School*, *Poems* by Maksim Bahdanovich, *Robinson Crusoe*, and historical abstracts for high schools.

The adult population worked as artisans, shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, locksmiths, watchmakers, electricians, and art began to emerge immediately af-

¹⁰ Адозва Беларускіх праваслаўных епіскапаў да беларускай праваслаўнай эміграцыі, "Летапіс", №4, 1948, сс.1–5

ter the organization of the camp. There were special workshops to train women in tailoring and sewing. A master received from UNRRA a salary, a working ration, for example for 2–3 days of work the master received 300–500 marks. Later, the work of masters was withdrawn from the money of the UNRRA and transferred to self-payment (from income to work performed), also the UNRRA banned the private work of artisans. Thus they struggled with speculation and the expansion of cooperative forms of work in the camp. The tools and production materials were supplied by the UNRRA or purchased by the Workshop Bureau. The largest number of orders were fulfilled by workshops: shoemaking (901), tailoring (609), carpentry (290).

According to the newspaper *Belarusian Will* (Bielaruskaja volia), the fiercest struggle between the ideological currents *Belarusians* and *Kryvichy* was in the Michelsdorf camp¹¹. In this camp, a gymnasium (middle school) was organized where children could receive education according to local programs in the Belarusian language and continued education in Europe. The management of the gymnasium and the parents' committee decided that the gymnasium named by Janka Kupala would not be Belarusian, but Kryvian. This idea was strongly debated in political circles. The ideologist of the idea of Krivichy was the then activist Jan Stankevich, and the director of the Kupala gymnasium Alexander Orsa who supported this ideology. During a visit in the Michelsdorf camp, the head of the Belarusian Central Council (Rada) Radoslau Astrouski criticized the Kryvian movement. Although previously according to the *Belarusian Will* Astrouski silently agreed with this idea. On February 28, 1948, at a general meeting of residents of the Belarusian DP camp in Michelsdorf, the camp council protested against the change of the national name¹².

Jan Stankievich was the main ideologist of the idea of Kryvichy. In the newspaper *Kryvicki Svietch* he published two articles: *Why is Kryvich* and *Why is not Belarusian?* In the article *Why is Kryvich* he underlined that from the 12th century *Kryvich*, *Kryvia*, and *Kryviness* had been national names. He argued that we have historical evidence for it, for example, an educator, princess Eufrafinia Polatskaya was called *regina Krivitiaie* in Roman notes in the 12th century. Prussian chronicler Dusburg wrote that in 1314 the Master of the Teutonic Crusaders went to war with Kryvia and took their capital Navagaradak. Later the name *Kryvichy* was squeezed out by a new name of our people – *Litvin*, *Litva*. From the 14th century, this name started to dominate but the memory of the name was present till the 19th century. During the population census, several thousand people were registered as Kryvichy (Probably, Jan Stankievich mentioned the first census in the Russian

11 Барацьба у лягеры Міхельсдорф, «Беларуская воля», № 3(4), 05.02.1948, с. 5

12 Пастанова Агульнага Сходу жыхароў ДП лягеру Міхельсдорф з дня 28 лютага 1948, «Вызваленне», № 1, 1 сакавіка 1948, сс. 3–4

Empire in 1897). Also, Stankievič said that in the 19th century, writers called people *Kryvichy*, their Motherland called *Kryvia*, and the language – *Kryviain*¹³.

In the article *Why is there no Belarusian* Jan Stankievich proved that the names Belarus and Belarusian were given by foreign nations¹⁴. In his opinion, in *Kryvia* the Christians of the Eastern rite (Orthodox and Uniates) were called *Ruthenians* (*Rusin*) from the point of view of faith. Their faith was Russian. Moreover, he thought that *Kryvia* was on the border with Poland where a lot geographical places have the root *white* -*biel*- for example, *Bielastok*, *Belsk* and etc. So they created the name *Belarusian* for the Orthodox of *Kryvia* to distinguish them from Orthodox Ukrainians. In *Moscovia* the word *white* was a synonym to the word "free". They also called the land near *Arkhangelsk* *White Russia*, because this land was less dependent on the Tatars. When *Kryvia* was launched to *Maskovia* this region started to be called *Rus*, *White Rus* because this region hadn't been under the Tatar's influence. The Ukrainians firstly called *Belarusians* *Kryvian*, later they used *Licvines*. Stankievich thought that *Kryvian* intellectual elites started to call themselves *Belarusian* under Russian pressure in the 19th century. The conclusion of the Stankevich idea is that the *Belarusian* need to give rebirth to the old name *Kryvia*, *Kryvinan* would show political distance from *Moscow* and their ideas of *white*, *red*, or *black Rus*. The name *Kryvia* needed to be used in university courses. He mentioned that at the beginning of 20th century the historian and politician *Vaclau Lastouski* struggled against the name *Belarus* and supported the name *Kryvia*.

The authors of the newspaper *On the Path of Life* were the main opponents of the *Kryvia* idea. The editorial office *On the Path of Life* reprinted the article *Belarus or Kryvia* which was published in the newspaper *Belarusian news* № 2 (7) in Paris. The opponents of this idea were convinced that this polemic did not give any practical results and lead to confusion. *The name Belarus has been definitively established throughout the civilized world over the past five years*¹⁵. If there really is a need to change the name, the *Belarusian* state would be able to do it.

The newspaper *Student's call* (*Студэнці кліч*)¹⁶ described the third academic year 1947/48. It was the third year when *Belarusian* students had been accepted to *German* universities. The problems of *Belarusian* students were connected with their life in exile: financial difficulties; the insufficient number of *Belarusian* camps in 1945 in contrast with the number of *Belarusians* in emigration; the scattered *Belarusian DP*-persons among other national camps; orientation to temporary residence in *Germany*. The author of the article *On a new stage* argued that 30 % of students in the *British* zone were at risk of tuberculosis, students of

13 Станкевіч Я., Чаму крывіч? «Крывіцкі светач», № 1 (3), 1946, с. 5

14 Статкевіч Я., Чаму не Беларусь? «Крывіцкі светач», №2-3, 1949, сс. 6-8

15 Беларусь ці Крывія, «Шляхам жыцця», № 7 (9), ліпень 1947, с. 17

16 Свяцільавіч В., На новым этапе, *Студэнці кліч*, №2 (16), верасень 1947, сс.3-4

Munich higher schools weighed on average 12 kg less than a normal weight. Despite these troubles, almost none of the students who started studying in 1945 were expelled.

Belarusian pupils studied at the three gymnasiums in the British and American zones, and at other foreign schools. Every year 30 alumni of schools and gymnasiums were prepared to study at the universities. One of the problems for school graduates was their young age. Although German universities had 10% of places for foreign candidates, the university recruitment committee put young candidates at the end of the list.

Belarusian students in Munich, Marburg, and Regensburg created student organizations that established the Central Belarusian Organizations in exile. The Central Belarusian Organizations in exile appealed to Belarusians for financial support for Belarusian young people and to establish a special Foundation for students. This organization predicted that DP camps would be liquidated in the near future and DP persons would go to other countries or continents. And Belarusian students had to finish their studies in German universities, but it would be difficult without the financial support of the Belarusian community. The Belarusian Foundation collected donations in France (the Association of Belarusian workers), Britain (the Association of Belarusians of Great Britain), Belgium (the Union Belarusian in Belgium), and the USA (the White-Russian American National Council). In 1947, the Central Belarusian Organizations in exile reported that it had already received 11,179.10 Reichsmark. from Belarusian camps and communities in Aschaffenburg, Saulgau, Watenstedt, Munich, Michelsdorf, Allendorf, Osterhofen, Mainleus, Tierheim, Vohenstrauß, Herrenberg; Belarusian communities (Medical congress in Marburg, the Belarusian gymnasium in Michelsdorf), private persons, priests and the church¹⁷. According to this report, Belarusian students received 50 Reichsmark per month from the Foundation for students.

The first gathering of Belarusian scouts took place in Watenstedt 6–8 July 1946. Belarusian scouts were from the Britain, French, and American zones. Archbishop Philotheos opened this meeting. Also, the delegates of the Scout Rally were welcomed by the administration of the camp in Watenstedt, the Belarusian Orthodox Association, the Assistance Committee, and the Literary Association "Shypshyna". S. Zaluzhnyi's play "Kupala Night" was staged for the reception. After the election of the presidium/panel, the members of the meeting presented their reports: "Methods and direction of scout rearing; The organization of Kryvian scouts; The scout symbols, anthem and greeting"¹⁸.

The meeting resolutions were published in the book "Scout Library" № 2. The rally ended with a camp-fire, at which scout groups performed.

17 Справаздача з дзейнасці цэнтралі беларускіх студэнцкіх арганізацыяў на чужыне, «Шляхам жыцця», №6 (18), чэрвень 1947, сс. 21–26

18 Беларуская хроніка, *Шляхам жыцця*, № 8, 23 жніўня 1949, с. 25

The most active scouts were in the camp in Watenstedt. The *Flag of Krivian* boy-scouts and girl-scouts organized mountain camps, camping trips, and scout classes. Several dozens of scouts took part in such events. Thus, 47 scouts took part in a three-day scout camp in the Harz Mountains (September 9–12, 1946)¹⁹.

There was also an active Scout Krivian organization in Reheisensburg. In the first part of September 1946 the *Flag of Kryvian* scouts took part in an international competition which were organized by the International Scout Organization in Reheisensburg, and finished in second place.

On September 21, 1946, the *Flag of the Latvian* "Naves Sala" in Watenstedt celebrated the first anniversary of its existence in exile. Krivian Scouts with their flag also took part in these celebrations.

On 27–28 September 1946, on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the existence of Ukrainian scouting, a large gathering of Ukrainian scouts took place. More than 700 Ukrainian scouts took part in this event, also there were representatives from Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, and Polish groups and from the main group of Krivian scouts.

On 10 October 1946 Latvian and Kryvian scouts organized a common fire in the Baltic camp in Hallendorf. Kryvian scouts performed the traditional dance performance "Lavonikha".

On 30 September 1946, with the participation of the head of the Belarusian scouts, the Union of Student Scouts was founded in Munich. Sixteen Belarusian students belonged to the student union.

The Union of Belarusian Scouts in Ravensburg consisted of the pupils from the local gymnasium. The UNNRA gave out some elements of the uniform; the color of the scouts' scarf was black. The schoolers in the six-grade school Goslar were also members of the scout association. The UNNRA took part in organizing special camps in the mountains for them.

It is obvious that the UNNRA actively supported the scouts' movement in DP camps. Also, the schools and gymnasiums were involved in these activities. The idea of Kryvia was more popular among scout organizations.

On 5 May, 1946, Belarusian bishops at the Belarusian Orthodox Congress in Regensburg declared that the Belarusian Orthodox Church should express the national interests of the Belarusian nation but it didn't, as then it wouldn't have been so painful to join the Belarusian Orthodox Episcopate to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA). On May 7–10, 1946, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad took place in Munich. It established the union of the Russian episcopate abroad with the episcopate of the Ukrainian and Belarusian churches who joined it as metropolitans. This union was accepted by 15 bishops: Metropolitan Anastasius, Metropolitan Seraphim, Archbishops Benedict, Panteleimon,

¹⁹ Skauckaja chronika, „Skauckaja Infarmacyjnaja Służba“, Watenstedt, №1, 20.10.1946, hod 1, s.1

Philotheos, Bishops Dmitri, Leontios, Eulogius, Athanasius, Theodor, Stepan, Grigor, Alexander, Seraphim and Nathanael²⁰.

The newspaper *Vedamki* mentioned the introductory speech of Metropolitan Panteleimon, which was published in the Belarusian Orthodox refugee magazine *Belarusian Church Voice*, where the hierarch said that *Belarusians should not have hostile feelings towards their Orthodox relatives, who are in the same situation as us, because this can worsen our situation*²¹.

Also, the *Belarusian Church Voice* printed an article by Archbishop Benedict about the situation around the Belarusian Orthodox Church in exile. The Archbishop reminded everyone that the Belarusian Orthodox Church was established in 1941 in the area of two autocephalous churches — the Polish and Russian ones — during the time of German occupation. The Belarusian Church was independent and wasn't managed by any church authority *outside Belarus*. According to archbishop Benedict, this happened due to the fact that the German occupation administration demanded that the organization of the Belarusian church should not be in contact with Moscow, Warsaw, or Berlin. As a result of the events of 1944, the state of the Orthodox Church in Belarus changed. The Belarusian Metropolitanate ceased to exist as an independent church unit, and its entire territory became part of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Belarusian hierarchs ended up in Germany in the area of the German Metropolitan Seraphim who was part of the hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad. According to arch. Benedict, the Belarusian church would not be able to separate itself outside Belarus, because it would separate itself from the unity of the Universal Orthodox Church, as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church did. That is why the Belarusian Synod of bishops decided to unite with the Russian Church Abroad which happened on 6 May 1946 in Munich.

Public figure and lawyer Leonid Halyak entered into a fierce controversy with this decision of the Belarusian episcopate. In the article *Church Topic* Leonid Halyak wrote that according to Archbishop Benedict, a separate Orthodox church was created at the wish of the occupying German authorities. But the Belarusian church arose at the request of the Belarusian society which thought that it was a good moment for a rebirth of their independent church (which was independent for centuries till 1795 when it was affiliated by violence). And Halyak reminded them that after the Bolshevik revolution in the Russian Empire, part of the Russian episcopate found itself outside and refused to recognize the Moscow Patriarchate. This group of bishops appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchs with a request to recognize it as an independent church under the name Russian Church Abroad and their request was granted. When a similar incident happened to the Belarusian episcopate, then Arch. Benedict explained that they had joined

20 У нашых куткох, «Ведамкі», №4, 7 ліпеня, 1946, с.6–7.

21 На царкоўныя тэмы, «Ведамкі», № 6, 1946, с. 5

the Russian Church Abroad in order not to become disunited. Galayk asked the question: *What measures were taken by the Belarusian bishops to preserve their independence?* And, since according to the canons, for the emergence of an independent church, the consent of the church from which this church separates is necessary, it is interesting whether the mother church of ROCA – Moscow had given consent to its independent existence. According to this logic, the Russian Church Abroad was as non-canonical as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church. Galyak underlined that the decision of the Belarusian episcopate to unite with the Russian Church Abroad was just an attempt to rusticate Belarusian believers and a manifestation of pro-Russian sympathy of part of the episcopate. Leonid Galyak called on Belarusians not to agree with the liquidation of the Belarusian independent church, and on Belarusian bishops to return to their people and their needs.

The intensity of religious life in the DP camps was visible not only in the rise of parishes, the building of churches, and the observance of religious holidays, but also in the publishing activities. The Catholic publication *On God's Way* lists the religious Belarusian press²².

Starting from 1946, Belarusian books and magazines of religious content were printed in Western Europe: the prayer book for Belarusians *On God's Way*, was published in Rome in 1946. Also in 1946 in Rome *the Encyclical of the Holy Pope Pius XII* was published on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the union of the Belarusian and Ukrainian Churches with the Apostolic Capital.

The religious song *Almighty God* with notes and music of M. Ravienski and words of N. Arsiennieva was published by the Belarusian religious mission in Paris. The magazine of Orthodox Belarusians "The bells of Saint Sophia are ringing" was published in Regensburg from 1946. The magazine of Belarusian Orthodox bishops "Belarusian Church Voice" was published in Thiersheim in 1946. On november 1946, Belarusian media methodists abroad published only one issue of *Christian light (Chryscijanski svietač)* in Immendorf. The Belarusian Catholic Committee started to publish *Belarusian thought* in Watenstedt in March 1947.

Watenstedt in the British zone was one of the most important places amongst Belarusian camps which were founded in 1945. By 1946, 23 barracks were included into the camp which were left by Czechs, the camp was developing thanks to its first commander Svyataslau Koush²³.

The development of the camp made it possible to take Belarusians from other national camps. First of all, it affected the Belarusian emigrants who lived in the camp in Ringelheim, which was occupied by the Russians. (Previously, the Belarusian Relief Committee appealed to the administration of the British Zone with regard to the case of these Belarusians who could not arrange their Belaru-

22 Рэлігійная беларуская прэса на эміграцыі, «Божым шляхам», №1, 1947, с. 10
23 Коўш С., *Беларускі Лагер Ватэнштэт. Альбом – Гістарычная даведка*, 1981.

sian life in Ringelheim). By 1947, the total number of Belarusians in the Watenstedt camp had reached 800 people²⁴.

On 8 September, 1947, 80 scholars and 10 teachers started the third academic year at the Belarusian (Kryvian) gymnasium named after Janka Kupala. On the initiative of schoolers the newspaper "Klich" was published. The editors set the task: *We will make our gymnasium stronger by your wall newspaper because we would try to arrange our school life, eliminate the shortcomings of our work, to help each other in gaining knowledge, to expand our horizons. Science is also a weapon in the revival of the nation and in its struggle for its independence. Therefore, we must treat our work at school with all vigilance and attention, remembering that great tasks await us in the future*²⁵.

The newspaper *Circular (Abežnik)* provided information about the resumption of work of the *Belarusian Relief Committee* in Watenstedt on 4 May, 1947²⁶. The Belarusian Relief Committee appealed to Belarusian settlements: to provide the number of Belarusians living in Belarusian camps and settlements; to organize local branches of the Belarusian Relief Committee; to solve the problem with the shortage of Belarusian clergy. They turned to Orthodox Belarusians who had inclinations to the priesthood to turn to the Central Council (in turn, the Central Council would turn to the Orthodox authorities to prepare and ordain candidates for the priesthood); after, the Belarusian professional organization the *Association of Belarusian Doctors in Exile* was established in Marburg with the aim of uniting Belarusian doctors, dentists, pharmacists and medical personnel (the Association of Belarusian Doctors in Exile published the magazine *Medical thought*), established contact with them; arrangements were made with the British occupying authorities to form the Belarusian guard units *Guard (Varta)*; celebratory events were organized on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the death of the poet Maksim Bagdanovich; there was a collection of donations for Belarusian students; and as a wave of emigration to Britain began, it was necessary to provide Belarusians with contacts to Belarusian organizations in Britain.

The UNRRA was an international humanitarian agency with the primary objective of easing the transition from martial law to peace. This organization was founded in November 1943, it was dissolved in September 1948. In 1945 UNRRA became part of the United Nations. UNRRA was represented by 44 nations, later 48, one of them being the BSSR from 13 August 1945²⁷. Belarusians who ended up in camps for displaced persons in West Germany presented themselves as Polish citizens in order to avoid deportation to the Soviet Union according to the

24 З Беларускага жыцця, «Шляхам жыцця» № 9–10 (21–22), верасень-кастрычнік 1947, с. 61

25 Ibidem, с. 62

26 Цэнтральны ўрад Беларускага Дапамогавага Камітэту на Брытанскую Зону, „Абежнік”, № 1/ 47

27 Łaptos J. (2018). *Humanizm i polityka: pomoc UNRRA dla Polski i polskich uchodźców w latach 1944–1947*, Kraków, s.

Yalta Conference (At the conference in Yalta (February 4–11, 1945), American and English representatives signed the agreement to forcibly repatriate all *Soviet citizens* from the areas occupied by the Allies, which meant death or years in prison camps for the repatriates). However, this did not prevent Belarusians and Ukrainians, who were in a similar situation under the auspices of the UNRRA, from creating national camps, separate from Poles and Russians.

The UNRRA budget was based on contributions of 1% of the national income of the member states. According to the forecasts, the UNRRA would have had at its disposal about \$2 billion in the first year. The US share would have been \$1.35 billion, two thirds of the total. Great Britain's would have been £ 80 million. The remaining funds were to come from other countries that were not damaged by the war, and therefore mainly from Canada and Latin America. The main financial burden was also placed on the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Brazil, India and the South Union. Africa, New Zealand²⁸. Also, the Germans were obliged to cover the maintenance costs of displaced persons remaining on their territories after the end of the war.

From January 1, 1944, the concept of the UNRRA Headquarters began to be used, including the Central Committee, the offices and departments. The main departments were the delivery office, the financial office, administration, the office of the Regions, Health and Social Welfare departments, and the displaced persons department²⁹. UNRRA teams were to take over the displaced persons camps only after the expiry of the six months of the military period, in which order in the occupied territories of Germany and Austria was to be ensured by the SHAEF, and then by the Allied Control Council of Germany based in Berlin, which acted as the anti-Nazi coalition on behalf of the governments of the four authorities (August 1945- March 1948).

The approximate number of people the UNRRA provided care for was nearly 11 million people. Among them, there were about 2 million former Polish citizens. 90% of them were former forced laborers, the rest were prisoners of war, concentration camp prisoners and children destined for Germanization. As reported by M. J. Proudfoot "Mass repatriation began only after 23, May, 1945, when the exchange of deported people started directly through the army lines in Germany. In the year under review 5, 236, 000 persons were repatriated, including 3,104,284 men, 1,498,153 women, and 633,693 children under 16 years [...] In three republics alone – the RSFSR, the Ukraine, and Belarus – 546,000 repatriated persons were already settled and employed in industry, and 1,100,000 in agriculture"³⁰. According to Proudfoot, till September 1945 the Soviet authorities had been *handed over* 2 million displaced persons.

28 Ibidem, s.84

29 Ibidem, s.88.

30 M. J. Proudfoot, p.219

Forced repatriation primarily concerned Cossacks, soldiers of Vlasov's army, and other formations that fought on the side of Germany. During forced repatriation, there were suicides, even collective ones. Halina Rudnik wrote about one of these cases of forced repatriation in her memoirs *Ptushki pieralotnyja: At the beginning of June in Regensburg, a rumor spread in the camp that the Soviet repatriation commission would forcibly deport DPs to the Soviet Union. No one was sleeping. And on the morning of June 4, as soon as they heard the roar of the trucks, the leaders of the Belarusian camp helped people hide in the fields, bushes and ditches. The trucks passed the Belarusian camp and surrounded the Russians. About 40 men were arrested there. As soon as the trucks left, all the residents of the camp of different nationalities came out and a crowd of thousands headed to the military headquarters of the city of Regensburg. The demonstration was spontaneous. Orthodox, Catholic and Greek-Catholic priests walked ahead. The crowd was stopped by the American military police. All the participants of the demonstration knelt down. The governor agreed to receive the priests. As a result of this demonstration, the captured men returned to the camp on the second day*³¹. In September 1945, the commander of the US military Dwight Eisenhower revised the methods of repatriation. Now only persons who were captured in German military uniform, persons who actively helped the Germans could be repatriated on but the Soviet Union had to provide convincing evidence of their guilt. Civilian refugees had the right to remain in the West.

Education was an important step in returning to normal life. Even uneducated peasants from Central and Eastern Europe applied for their children to have access to knowledge. The UNRRA assisted displaced persons by financing school kits (crayons, pencils, feathers, notebooks, textbooks) and with obtaining the consent of the German authorities to recognize certificates issued by the camp school. There were many professional teachers in the camps and many intellectuals who could take on this function. The UNRRA accepted, though not without hesitation, the obligation to provide them with a wage. In a memorandum entitled *Education Activities in UNRRA Assembly Centers and Camps*, the education of children and adults was identified as a key part of the rehabilitation process as it led displaced persons to take responsibility for themselves³². Education made their lives more meaningful and their future seemed more certain. Vocational courses, a kindergarten, Belarusian studies courses, and an elementary school were established in Regensburg. In the winter of 1945, a gymnasium was opened, which six months later was named after Janka Kupala.

More Belarusians ended up in the American zone, especially in Bavaria. Alexander Rusak, the head of the first Belarusian camp in Regensburg (the camp was established on June 6, 1945), visited many towns and cities to convince Be-

31 Руднік Г. (2011). Птушкі пералётныя, Радыё Свабода, Прага, с. 75

32 Łarkos J., s. 191

larusians to go and live in the national Belarusian camp. Svyataslau Koush, the founder of the Belarusian camp in Watenstedt, Lower Saxony, was engaged in the same activity. The camp in the English zone of the ABC was established on July 30, 1945 and its functioning began with the arrival of 48 Belarusian volunteers. As of January 1, 1948, there were already 716 people living there. The memoirs of Svyataslau Koush are valuable not only as a historical record of the life of Belarusians in camps for displaced persons, but also to show how the Belarusian identity was shaped and developed during this period, so it is worth giving an analysis of the work *Belarusian Camp in Watenstedt. The album is a historical reference*.

Svyataslau Koush first came to Watenstenddt riding a bicycle, on which he hung a white-red-white flag. Watenstedt made a depressing impression on him with its huge factories, and the many camps with a multinational population. In the Ukrainian Camp 25 in Hallendorf, Belarusians agreed to move to the Belarusian camp if it were to be created. However, in the Polish camps, Belarusians refused to join Kaush's initiative, because they were afraid to admit their Belarusian origin, fearing repatriation. The Ukrainian camp made a good impression on Koush because Ukrainians had their own churches (Orthodox and Catholic), their own theater, schools, and scout organizations. He decided to create a Belarusian camp where it could be possible to adjust to Belarusian life. For the fourth time, the British commandant's office allowed the creation of a Belarusian camp, provided that it would be filled. The first settlers were precisely from Ukrainian Camp 25. The UNRRA immediately ordered the spending of 3 days food for 50 people, 40 remained in the camp. As the number of inhabitants increased, the camp expanded to zones A, B and C, as well as Camp 23, from which the British evicted the Soviet repatriation headquarters. After the construction of the barracks and the construction of the bathhouse in the camp, the construction of the Orthodox church began where catholic priests were welcome. Simultaneously with the construction of the church, the construction of a public house and an elementary school was carried out. Roads were put in order, flowerbeds were planted, flowers and vegetables appeared in barracks that had survived, in front of the public house there was an emblem – a huge *Pahonia* (Chase) made of sand and stones. Word about the improvement spread among other national camps, and according to Koush, the attention of the UNRRA and the British military leadership was drawn to the self-organization of Belarusians.

The public house was put in order: the stage and decoration were created, and the walls were decorated with posters and Belarusian motives. In the fall of that year, performances and concerts started to be shown, also debates and parties were held. As Koush remembered, Soviet soldiers from the repatriation office attacked the Lithuanians who had come to Belarusian camp's public house and tried to abduct people, but Belarusians defended them from this attack.

On February 15, 1946, the deputy metropolitan of the Belarusian Autocephalous Church, Archbishop Philotheos, visited the camp in Watenstedt. The high ranking hierarch spent several days in the camp and performed solemn services. People were crying like hell over hearing the preaching of Belarus. The priest spoke to the scouts, and at the request of father Philotheos, the scouts sang several songs in Belarusian. Later Philotheos visited Watenstedt at Easter on May 5, 1946. Earlier, on May 3, 1946, Orthodox priests from Watenstedt visited the Belarusians in the Hanover camp, where they held services. At that time nearly 1000 Belarusian lived in Hanover. In addition to the active scouting movement, the UNRRA supported various sports activities which was also encouraged by the YMCA (which Belarusians called Imca). Among other things, sports activity was aimed at cooperation and competition with representatives of other nations: Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Poles, Ukrainians, and others.

On July 28 and 29, 1946, the anniversary of the existence of the camp was celebrated, especially in the presence of representatives of the UNNRA, and a solemn parade of all organizations, institutions and workshops of the camp took place. Owners of the best gardens and tidiest houses received prizes. A play from S. Zaluzhnyi's camp life *Grey Days* was staged. A prayer was offered and the flag was raised. Also, in the evening, near the bonfire, scouts and a choir under the direction of A. Yeuts performed a special program. An exhibition of camp products was organized: weaving, tailoring and embroidery (rugs, handles, belts, pillows, shirts, curtains, handkerchiefs), painting, and workshop products. The most interesting exhibit was a church chalice made by a locksmith.

On August 6, 1946, the Belarusian camp was visited by an English brigadier general, accompanied by English soldiers and representatives of the UNRRA. The general was greeted with flowers by the scouts, after which the guest visited the camp kitchen, the church, the exhibition of camp products, a kindergarten, a gymnasium, a locksmith's shop, a carpentry shop, and a shoemaker's workshop.

The camp was periodically visited by Orthodox and Catholic hierarchs. The Belarusian Catholic Parish Committee in Watenstedt sent a letter through His Excellency Bishop Sloskans about the situation of Belarusian Catholics in emigration with a request for moral and material support, and also complained about the absence of Catholic clergy.

On March 15, 1947, the first graduation of students from the Francishak Bahushevich Gymnasium took place. In the same year, 1947, Independence Day (March 25) was widely celebrated, which was written about by the camp press *Belarusian Dumka* and *On the Path of Life*.

In the spring of 1947, the emigration of Watenstedt residents began. Great Britain took those who were younger, healthier and without family residents. The first group of 45 people left on April 27, 1947. According to S. Koush, during the four years while he was the head of the camp, 1,420 persons passed through the

camp, 265 people emigrated. 58 people were born, 17 people died. Countries to which immigrants went were Great Britain (46), the USA 11, Brazil 6, Belgium 12, Canada 42, France 55, Australia 41, Switzerland 1.

Conclusion

Belarusians who ended up in the camps for displaced persons in West Germany faced the task of continuing life after *losing home* in a broad sense. Belarusian public activists who found themselves in the West after World War II faced another task – to preserve Belarus in the political sense, despite the fact that it did not exist as an independent, sovereign state. The latter was related to the fact that it was necessary to preserve the national identity of Belarusians, who for a long time before World War II had had unfavorable conditions for its acquisition and preservation. It is paradoxical that the work of the Belarusian political and public elites in the camps for displaced persons played such a significant role that it can only be compared with the period of 1918, i.e., the declaration of the Belarusian People's Republic or 1920, i.e., the anti-Bolshevik uprising of the Slutsk Defense. Belarusians self-organized and created camps based on their national identity like other nations: Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Ukrainians, etc. Instead of expectations and depression, this time was used for ideological polemics in the columns of the printed press and special political meetings, a continuation of the tradition of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church, education in one's own language, and cultural life from scout events to theater plays.

Hundreds of thousands of Belarusians passed through DP camps and found themselves in different countries and continents, mainly in Great Britain, Belgium, France, Australia, Canada, Argentina, and mostly the USA. Having the experience of social integration on national soil, Belarusians actively created diasporas in the countries where they found themselves, trying not to dissolve into other nations. Leaders of the Belarusian diaspora, despite their integration into new societies, preserved the Belarusian language, Belarusian traditions, and Belarusian churches in emigration. Hoping that if they did not return to Belarus, they would at least preserve a part of Belarusian life in their environment. Such a *spirit* was created by Belarusian activists in the camps, as they educated young people, for example, in schools and in scouting.

In a situation where one's own country is under occupation, this is perhaps one of the few opportunities to save the nation. Unfortunately, Belarusians now face similar challenges as in 1944. The scale of the emigration wave caused by political repressions is calculated to be in the hundreds of thousands, which makes research topics on the historical perspective relevant again.



