The Ukraine List (UKL) #475
compiled by Dominique Arel
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, U of Ottawa
http://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/ukraine/
www.danyliwseminar.org
10 October 2015

1. Danyliw 2015 Seminar Final Program, 22-24 October, uOttawa
2. Kule Doctoral Fellowships in Ukrainian Studies, 2016-2020
3. ASN 2016 World Convention Call for Papers (29 October Deadline)
4. Toronto Star: Canada's Policy on Ukraine Set by the Ukrainian Diaspora
6. The Nation: Jared McBride, Ukraine's New Memory Commissar
7. RFE/RL: British Group Presents Evidence Russian Buk Shot Down MH17
8. WSJ: Adrian Karatnycky, Kiev Gets a Grip on Ukraine's Internal Divisions
9. Bloomberg: Putin Tightens Reins on Ukraine Rebels, Putting Conflict on Ice
10. Guardian: War in Donbas Begins to Wind Down
11. Washington Post: In Donbas, Most Western Aid Agencies Have Been Blocked
12. RFE/RL: Behind Ukraine's Front Lines, A Hospital Struggles To Cope
13. AP: When Studying Ukraine Is Deemed Unsafe
15. New Book: Tim Snyder, Black Earth
17. New Book: Marvin Kalb, Imperial Gamble
18. Web Sources: Free Articles on the Ukraine Crise, Bellingcat Investigations, Human Cost of Violence, Ukrainian Crisis and European Security
19. Starvation as a Political Tool, U of Toronto Conference, 22 October
20. World War II Legacy Conference, CIUS, 23-24 October
11th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine  
Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada  
Desmarais Hall 12102, 22-24 October 2015

The internationally renowned Danyliw Seminar is holding its 11th annual event with a comprehensive program devoted to the historic events that have unfolded in Ukraine in the past two years. Entitled “Ukraine 2015: History, War, Civil Society,” the Seminar will be held from Thursday, October 22nd, to Saturday, October 24th in Desmarais Hall 12102 on University of Ottawa campus.

The Seminar will gather 30 experts -- 27 from outside Canada: Ukraine, the United States, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Norway, and Russia. In a testimony of the vibrancy of the field, more than half of the participants will attend the Seminar for the first time. The Seminar will feature 28 presentations.

The program can be accessed at http://www.danyliwseminar.com/#!seminar-2015/c1w63

Among the highlights:

- A keynote address by Anders Aslund (Atlantic Council) who will be presenting his new book Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It (Thursday 4.30 PM).

- Special panels devoted to new books by Faith Hillis (U of Chicago), Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation (Friday 10 AM), on the “Little Russians,” and by Lucan Way (U of Toronto), Pluralism by Default (Friday 1 PM), a comparative analysis of the Ukrainian political system.

- Four panels on the war in Donbas (Friday-Saturday), including a presentation by Hilde Haug of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

- A panel on “Ukraine’s Economic Predicament” (Thursday 2.30 PM)  
- A panel on the role of social media and state propaganda (Thursday 1 PM)  
- Panels on “Refugees” and “The Rise of Volunteer Groups” (Saturday)  
- Panels on Maidan and Crimea (Thursday morning)

- A foray into Ukraine’s First War, the 1917-1922 Civil War (Friday 9 AM)

- And a concluding roundtable on “Studying Ukraine in War Conditions” (Saturday 3 PM).
All the Seminar sessions will be held in Room 12102 of the Desmarais Building (DMS), 55 Laurier Ave., on University of Ottawa campus. A map of University of Ottawa campus – with the DMS location – can be accessed at http://maps.uottawa.ca.

The Seminar is open to the public and registration is free. Since space is limited, people interested in attending the seminar must register by sending an email to the Chair of Ukrainian Studies (chairukr@gmail.com) or by calling 613 562 5800, ext. 3692.

An opening reception will be held on Thursday, October 22, at 6 PM in Desmarais 12102, after the last panel. All are cordially invited.

The Seminar will have an unprecedented presence on the web. A live stream will enable anyone to watch the sessions in real time. All presentations will be filmed and uploaded on the Seminar’s YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX1dVZqseZQDBe2VBJtQTf. Real time updates will be posted on the Seminar’s Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Danyliw-Seminar-874438662581143/timeline/ and live blogging is also planned. The Seminar has also its own web site, http://www.danyliwseminar.com, where papers and videos will be made available. More specific information will be available soon.

The international selection committee is comprised of Dominique Arel, Anna Colin Lebedev (EHESS, France), Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US), and Ioulia Shukan (U Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, France).

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

We look forward to seeing you at the Seminar!

Cordially,
Dominique Arel
Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies
University of Ottawa
THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER

The Maidan Effect
9.30-10.30 AM

Moderator: Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

- Olga Zelinska (Graduate School of Social Research, Warsaw, Poland, ozelinsk@sns.edu.pl)
  Local Governments and Maidan Protests

- Olena Fimyar (U of Cambridge, UK, ohf21@cam.ac.uk)
  Pedagogy after Maidan: A Case Study of Changing Power Dynamics Between Students and Teachers in Lviv Region, Ukraine

Crimea and Ukraine
10.30-11.30 AM

Moderator: Anna Colin Lebedev (EHESS, Paris, France, anna_lebedev@yahoo.com)

- Andrey Nevskiy (Public Sociology Laboratory, St.Petersburg, Russia, anevskij@gmail.com)
  Political and Social Demands in the “Revolution of Dignity”: Evidence from Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkiv, and Crimea

- Eleanor Knott (London School of Economics, UK, e.k.knott@lse.ac.uk)
  Identity in Crimea before Annexation: a Bottom-up Perspective

The Conflict/War and Social Media
1.00-2.30 PM

Moderator: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris-Ouest Nanterre, France, ioulia.shukan@gmail.com)

- Jennifer Carroll (Brown U, US, jenniferjcarroll@gmail.com)
  A Good Enough Lie: The Rhetoric of Misinformation in Ukraine’s EuroMaidan and the War with Russia
• Megan Metzger and Joshua Tucker (NYU, US, megan.metzger@nyu.edu, joshua.tucker@nyu.edu)
  Tweeting Identity? Ukrainian, Russian and #EuroMaidan

Ukraine’s Economic Predicament
2.30-4.00 PM

Moderator: Dominique Arel (Chair of Ukrainian Studies, darel@uottawa.ca)

• Margarita Balmaceda (Seton Hall U, US, margarita.balmaceda@shu.edu)
  Between “Elite Original Sin” and External Conditions: Ukraine’s Foundational Bargain and the Rent Swamps of the Post-Soviet Transition

• Thane Gustafson (Georgetown U, US, gustaft@georgetown.edu)
  Natural Gas in Ukraine 2015: Toward Progress or Partition?

A Conversation with Anders Aslund on his New Book Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It (Peterson Institute, 2015)
4.30-6.00 PM

Moderator: Dominique Arel (Chair of Ukrainian Studies, darel@uottawa.ca)

• Anders Aslund (Atlantic Council, US, aaslund@atlanticcouncil.org)

Opening Reception

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER

The First Ukrainian War
9.00-10.00 AM

Moderator: Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

• Christopher Gilley (U of Hamburg, Germany, christopher.gilley@uni-hamburg.de)
  Otamanshchyna: Ukrainian and Russian Warlordism at the Beginning of the 20th and 21st Centuries

• Thomas Chopard (EHESS, France/YIVO Institute, NY, US, thomas.chopard@ehess.fr)
  To Wage War without a State: Atamans and Insurgents during the Civil War in Ukraine (1917-1922)
A Conversation with Faith Hillis on her New Book *Children of Rus*: *Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Cornell, 2013)
10.00-11.30 AM

Moderators: Dominique Arel (Chair of Ukrainian Studies, darel@uottawa.ca) and Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

- Speaker: Faith Hillis (U of Chicago, US, faith.hillis@gmail.com)

A Conversation with Lucan Way on his New Book *Pluralism by Default* (Johns Hopkins, 2015)
1.00-2.30 PM

Moderators: Dominique Arel (Chair of Ukrainian Studies, darel@uottawa.ca) and Joshua Tucker (NYU, US, joshua.tucker@nyu.edu)

- Speaker: Lucan Way (U of Toronto, Canada, lucan.way@utoronto.ca)

Conceptualizing the War in Donbas
2.30-3.30 PM

Moderator: Anna Colin Lebedev (EHESS, Paris, France, anna_lebedev@yahoo.com)

- Jesse Driscoll (UC San Diego, US, jesse.driscoll@gmail.com) and
- Dominique Arel (Chair of Ukrainian Studies, darel@uottawa.ca)
*Regime Collapse and Ukraine's Unusual Conventional “Civil War”*

The War in Donbas Upclose
4.00-5.00 PM

Moderator: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris-Ouest Nanterre, France, ioulia.shukan@gmail.com)

- Ralph Clem (Florida State International U, US, clemr@fiu.edu)
*Verifying External Challenges to State Sovereignty: Open versus Official Sources and the Geopolitical Narrative in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict*

- Hilde Haug (OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Kyiv, hilde.haug@gmail.com)
*The Monitoring Mission: 18 Months of Field Observations*
SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER

The Refugees
10.00-11.00 AM

Moderator: Ioulia Shukan (U Paris-Ouest Nanterre, France, ioulia.shukan@gmail.com)

• Laura Dean (Clayton State U, US, deanla12@gmail.com)
  Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Ukrainian Conflict

• Greta Uehling (U of Michigan, US, uehling@umich.edu)
  Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine:
  Structures of Feeling from the Revolution of Dignity

Civil Society and the War
11.00 AM-12.00 PM

Moderator: Anna Colin Lebedev (EHESS, Paris, France, anna_lebedev@yahoo.com)

• Sofia Tipaldou (Autonomous U of Barcelona, Spain, sofia.tipaldou@uab.cat)
  The Russian Nationalist-Patriotic Opposition and Foreign Policy:
  The Case of the 2014-2015 Ukraine Conflict

• Rosaria Puglisi (Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, Italy, rosariap@yahoo.com)
  A People’s Army: Civil Society as a Security Actor in Post-Maidan Ukraine

The Combatants
1:00-2:00 PM

Moderator: Mayhill Fowler (Stetson U, US, mfowler1974@gmail.com)

• Amandine Regamey (U Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France, amandine.regamey@gmail.com)
  Women Snipers in the East: Analyzing a War Legend

• Anna Colin Lebedev (EHESS, Paris, France, anna_lebedev@yahoo.com)
  Back to War? Afghanistan Veterans in the Armed Conflict in Donbas
2.00-3.00 PM

The Rise of Volunteer Groups

Moderator: Dominique Arel (Chair of Ukrainian Studies, darel@uottawa.ca)

- Natalia Stepaniuk (U of Ottawa, Canada, natalia.stepaniuk@gmail.com)
  Volunteer Associations in Eastern Ukraine: Helping Soldiers and Refugees
- Ioulia Shukan (U Paris-Ouest Nanterre, France, ioulia.shukan@gmail.com)
  Caring for Wounded Soldiers: The “Sisters of Mercy” in Eastern Ukraine

Studying Ukraine in War Conditions
3.00-4.30 PM

Moderator: Anna Colin Lebedev (EHESS, Paris, France, anna_lebedev@yahoo.com)

- Oleh Kotsyuba (Harvard U, US, kotsyuba@fas.harvard.edu)
  Straddling Academia and Social Engagement: The Krytyka Experience
- Mychailo Wynnyckyj (U Mohyla Academy, Kyiv, Ukraine, mychailo@ukma.kiev.ua)
  Straddling Academia and Social Engagement: The View from the Ground

#2
Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Ukraine (2016-2020)

Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa
Application Deadline: 1 February 2016

The Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Ottawa, the only research unit outside of Ukraine predominantly devoted to the study of contemporary Ukraine, is announcing the third competition of the Drs. Peter and Doris Kule Doctoral Scholarships on Contemporary Ukraine. The Scholarships will consist of an annual award of $20,000, plus all tuition, for a maximum of four years.

The Scholarships were made possible by a generous donation of $500,000 by the Kule family, matched by the University of Ottawa. Drs. Peter and Doris Kule, from Edmonton, have endowed several chairs and research centres in Canada, and their exceptional contributions to education, predominantly in Ukrainian Studies, has recently been celebrated in the book Champions of Philanthropy: Peter and Doris Kule and their Endowments.
Students with a primary interest in contemporary Ukraine applying to, or enrolled in, a doctoral program at the University of Ottawa in political science, sociology and anthropology, or in fields associated with the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, can apply for a Scholarship.

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

Applications will be considered only after the applicant has completed an application to the relevant doctoral program at the University of Ottawa. Consideration of applications will begin on 1 February 2016 and will continue until the award is announced.

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

Students interested in applying for the Scholarships beginning in the academic year 2016-2017 are invited to contact Dominique Arel (darel@uottawa.ca), Chairholder, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, and visit our web site (http://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/ukraine).

#3 Call for Papers

21st Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN)

International Affairs Building,
Columbia University, NY
Sponsored by the Harriman Institute
14-16 April 2016
www.nationalities.org

***Proposal deadline: 29 October 2015***

Contact information:
proposals must be submitted to:
darel@uottawa.ca and darelasn2016@gmail.com

Over 150 PANELS in nine sections:
Nationalism Studies
Migration & Diasporas
Balkans
Russia
Ukraine (and Belarus)
Central Europe (including Baltics & Moldova)
Eurasia (including Central Asia & China)
Caucasus (North and South)
Turkey and Greece (and Cyprus)

THEMATIC Panels on
The Conflict in Ukraine
Refugees and Migrants
Insurgency, Self-Determination and the State
Memory Politics

Screening of NEW DOCUMENTARIES

BOOK PANELS

AWARDS for Best Doctoral Student Papers,
ASN Harriman Joseph Rothschild Book Prize

The Nationalities Papers Opening Reception

The ASN Convention, the largest international and inter-disciplinary scholarly gathering of its kind, welcomes proposals on a wide range of topics related to nationalism, ethnicity, ethnic conflict and national identity in regional sections on the Balkans, Central Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia, the Caucasus, and Turkey/Greece, as well as thematic sections on Nationalism and Migration/Diasporas. Disciplines represented include political science, history, anthropology, sociology, international studies, security studies, geopolitics, area studies, economics, geography, sociolinguistics, literature, psychology, and related fields.

The Convention is also inviting paper, panel, roundtable, or special presentation proposals related to:
• “Insurgency and the State,” on the rise of ISIS, the resumption of conflict in Turkey, civil wars, self-determination, international law;
• “The Conflict in Ukraine,” on the events/international crisis unleashed by “Maidan,” the fall of a regime, the war in Donbas, Russia's role, NATO;
• “Refugees and Migrants,” the refugee crisis in Europe, the rise of the far right, labour migration (gastarbeiter), securitization of borders, migration and civil rights;
• “Memory Politics,” on the construction and contestation of the memory of historical events in sites, symbols, discourse and research;
Prospective applicants can get a sense of the large thematic scope of ASN Convention papers by looking at the 2015 Final Program, which can be accessed at http://nationalities.org/uploads/documents/ASN_Final_Program_2015.pdf.

Popular topics have also included ethnic violence, language politics, religion and politics, EU integration, nation-building, energy politics, and post-conflict reconstruction.

*Nationalities Papers*, the ASN flagship journal, will present the consistently popular roundtable “How To Get Your Article Published”, which features the editors of some of the leading journals in the field. It will also sponsor the opening reception.

For several years, the ASN Convention has acknowledged excellence in graduate studies research by offering Awards for Best Doctoral Student Papers. The ASN 2015 Doctoral Student Awards were given to:

Aleksandra Zdeb (Political Science, Jagiellonian U, Poland) and Jelena Dureinovic (Art History, Justus Liebig U, Germany), Balkans
Kyle L. Marquardt (Political Science, U of Wisconsin Madison, US), Central Europe
David R. Stroup (Political Science, U of Oklahoma, US), Caucasus/Eurasia/Turkey
Scott Weiner (Political Science, George Washington U, US), Nationalism
Maria Tagangaeva (Sociology, U of St. Gallen, Switzerland), Russia
Daria Mattingly (Slavonic Studies, U of Cambridge, UK), Ukraine


Doctoral student applicants whose proposals are accepted for the 2016 Convention, who will not have defended their dissertation by 1 November 2015, and whose papers are delivered by the deadline, will automatically be considered for the awards. Each award comes with a certificate and a cash prize.

In 2010 the ASN Convention inaugurated an annual ASN Harriman Book Prize—the *Joseph Rothschild Prize in Nationalism and Ethnic Studies*. At the 2015 ASN Convention, the prize was awarded to Madeleine Reeves for *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2014). http://nationalities.org/conventions/book-panels/books-2015/border-work

An honorable mention was given to Willard Sunderland for *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Cornell University Press, 2013). The award comes with a certificate and a cash prize. For information on how to have a book considered for the ASN 2016 Convention Book Prize, please contact Dmitry Gorenburg at asnbookprize@gmail.com, or go to http://www.nationalities.org/prizes/Rothschild.asp.

The Convention is also inviting submissions for new documentaries available in mp4 or DVD format (NTSC or PAL). The documentaries selected will be screened during regular panel slots and, in several cases, will be followed by a discussion with the filmmaker.
Proposal Information

The ASN 2016 Convention invites proposals for individual papers or panels. A panel includes a chair, three or four presentations based on written papers, and a discussant.

The Convention is also welcoming offers to serve as discussant on a panel to be created by the Program Committee from individual paper proposals. The application to be considered as discussant can be self-standing, or accompanied by an individual paper proposal.

In order to submit proposals to the Convention, the three mandatory items indicated below (contact information, abstract, biographical statement) must be included in a single Word document (PDF documents will not be accepted) attached to a single email message.

Each applicant – single or multiple authors on individual proposals, every member of a panel proposal – must also fill out a Fact Sheet online that can be accessed at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ASN2016_survey.

IMPORTANT: Applicants can only send one paper proposal -- whether as an individual proposal, or as a paper part of a panel proposal. The Program will not consider more than one paper proposal from the same applicant. At the Convention, each panelist can only appear on a maximum of TWO panels, only one of which can be in the capacity of a paper presenter. For example, a panelist can chair a panel and present a paper on another, or chair a panel and be discussant or another, and so forth. This rule applies to co-authored papers, thus a co-authored paper presentation counts as one appearance. This means that applicants can appear on a maximum of two proposals sent to the Convention, only one of which can be in the capacity of a paper-giver.

Individual paper proposals must include four items:
- Contact information: the name, email, postal address and academic affiliation of the applicant.
- A 300- to 500-word abstract (shorter abstracts will not be considered) that includes the title of the paper.
- A 100-word biographical statement, in narrative form (a text with the length of one paragraph). Standard CVs will not be considered. Individual proposals featuring more than one author (joint proposals) must include the contact information and biographical statement of all authors and specify who among the co-authors intend to attend the Convention. Only joint presenters attending the Convention will have their names in the official program.
- A Fact Sheet, to be filled out online (see above). In the case of co-authors, only those intending to attend the Convention must send a Fact Sheet. The Word document proposal must indicate that the Fact Sheet has been filled out online.
Panel proposals must include four items:
• Contact information (see above) of all proposed panelists.
• The title of the panel and a 200- to 300-word abstract of each paper.
• A 100-word biographical statement (see above) for each proposed panelist. Statements in standard CV format will not be considered. The rules on joint proposals are the same as with individual proposals (see above).
• A Fact Sheet, to be filled out online (see above), for each panelist attached to the proposal. The Word document proposal must indicate that all panelists have filled out their Fact Sheet online.

Proposals can also be sent for roundtables and book panels. Roundtables include a chair, four presenters, but no discussant, since the presentations, unlike regular panels, are not based on written papers. Roundtable proposals include the same four items as a panel proposal, except that the 200- to 300-word abstracts are presentation abstracts, rather than paper abstracts.

The Convention is also inviting proposals for Book Panels, based on books published between January 2015 and February 2016. The proposal must include the Chair, three discussants, as well as the author. A Book Panel proposal must include the same four items as a panel proposal, except that the abstract is limited to a 200- to 300-word abstract of the book. The discussants need not submit an abstract.

Proposals for documentaries must include four items:
• Contact information (see above)
• A 300- to 500-word abstract of the documentary
• A 100-word biographical statement (see above). CVs will not be considered.
• A Fact Sheet filled out online (see above).
• A streaming link for reviewing purposes.

Proposals for a roundtable following the screening of a film are especially encouraged. In these cases, the requirements of a panel proposal apply, in addition to the 300- to 500-word abstract of the film.

Proposals to serve as a discussant must include four items:
• Contact information (see above)
• A 100-word statement about your areas of expertise
• A 100-word biographical statement (see above). CVs will not be considered.
• A Fact Sheet filled out online (see above)

Proposals for applicants already included in an individual paper or panel proposal need only include the 100-word statement on areas of expertise.

IMPORTANT: All proposals must be sent in a single email message, with an attached proposal in a Word document (PDFs will not be accepted) containing contact information, an abstract, a biographical statement, as well as a confirmation that the Fact Sheet has been filled out online (or multiple Fact Sheets, in the case of co-authors and/or panel
proposals). Proposals including contact information, the abstract and the bio statement in separate attachments, or over several email messages, will not be considered. The proposals must be sent to darel@uottawa.ca AND darelasn2016@gmail.com.

The receipt of all proposals will be promptly acknowledged electronically, with some delay during deadline week, due to the high volume of proposals.

IMPORTANT: Participants are responsible for covering all travel and accommodation costs. Unfortunately, ASN has no funding available for panelists.

An international Program Committee will be entrusted with the selection of proposals. Applicants will be notified by January 2016 at the latest. Information regarding registration costs and other logistical questions will be communicated afterwards.


The programs from past conventions, going back to 2001, are also available online at http://nationalities.org/conventions/world/

Several dozen publishers and companies have had exhibits and/or advertised in the Convention Program in past years. Due to considerations of space, advertisers and exhibitors are encouraged to place their order early. For information, please contact ASN Executive Director Ryan Kreider (rk2780@columbia.edu).

The ASN Facebook page will post regular updates on the ASN 2016 Convention. To become a follower of ASN on Facebook, go to https://www.facebook.com/Nationalities and click on the “Like” option.

We very much look forward to hearing from you and receiving your proposal!

Dominique Arel, ASN Convention Director
Ceren Belge, ASN Convention Associate Director
Evgeny Finkel, ASN Convention Associate Director
Sherrill Stroschein, ASN Program Chair
On behalf of the ASN Convention Program

Deadline for proposals: 29 October 2015 (to be sent to both darel@uottawa.ca AND darelasn2016@gmail.com)

To communicate with the ASN Convention’s headquarters:

Ryan Kreider
Assistant Director
The Harriman Institute
In its policies toward Russia, as in most areas of foreign policy, Harper’s approach has been one that has mixed principle and opportunism.

It has been principled insofar as Harper and large sections of the Conservative Party have a powerful distaste for authoritarian regimes.

Since the late 2013 early 2014 Euromaidan protest movement, the Conservative government has been resolute in its criticism of Vladimir Putin and the Russian government. Whereas European governments have called for calm, negotiations and, in certain sections of German opinion, even sympathy for Russia’s position, the Conservatives have pulled no punches.

Whereas U.S. President Barack Obama hesitated in early 2014 to call Russia’s incursion into Ukraine an “invasion,” Harper readily and immediately used the “i” word. At the G7 meeting in June 2015, Harper bluntly stated that Russia has “no place” at the G7. At lots of points in between, he has been passionate and articulate in his attacks on Putin’s violations of international law and Ukrainian sovereignty.

On the policy front, the government has done much less.

The Conservatives have not transferred arms, ground troop transfers are not even on the agenda, and only a small contingent of 200 military personnel have been sent, strictly for training purposes. The government offered a paltry $14 million in aid, and a low-interest loan for another $400 million. These efforts are not meaningless, but they do not match the rhetoric.

And this takes us to the opportunistic element of Conservative behaviour. The target of Harper’s rhetoric is only secondarily Putin or Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko; the primary target is 1.2 million Ukrainian Canadians whom Harper, following a strategy
deployed successively with multiple ethnic groups since the early 2000s, wants to bring permanently into the Conservative column.

Today, Harper’s policy on Ukraine is effectively set by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Whether one agrees with the Congress or not (I happen to, or at least agree much more than I disagree), this is no way to set foreign policy. Combined with a similar approach to Israel and extensive budget cuts to an already demoralized foreign service, it implies a Canadian foreign policy set by the accumulated effect of domestic interest group pressure. And that’s no policy at all.

Randall Hansen is director of the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs.

#5
Undelivered Goods

How $1.8 billion in aid to Ukraine was funneled to the outposts of the international finance galaxy
By Andrew Cockburn
The Harper’s Blog, 13 August 2015

Arriving home from a recent trip to Ukraine, former Senate majority leader Tom Daschle reported his joy at witnessing “the Ukrainian people . . . coming together to rebuild their country from scratch.” Ukrainians had, he wrote, moved him with their dreams of joining the European Union, fighting corruption, and rebuilding their shattered economy, inspiring Daschle, now a highly paid lobbyist, to endorse the ominously strengthening Washington consensus on escalating the fighting with “$3 billion in lethal and nonlethal military assistance.”

Daschle’s trip was sponsored by the National Democratic Institute, an affiliate of the congressionally funded National Endowment for Democracy, headed by ur-neoconservative Carl Gershman, who some time ago identified Ukraine as “the biggest prize” for Russia and deployed considerable amounts of the taxpayer dollars at his disposal to securing it for the West. However, it has been Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland who has played the most active role in pursuit of the prize. Therefore, her interventions in Ukrainian politics and the realities of politics and business in that country deserve closer attention than they have so far received.

“Toria” Nuland, as I reported in the January 2015 issue of Harper’s Magazine, has enjoyed a remarkable career, occupying a succession of powerful positions through changing administrations, despite her close neocon associations over the years both marital—her husband being leading neocon ideologue Robert Kagan—and political, notably as
a national-security adviser to former vice president Dick Cheney. In the buildup to the 2008 Russo-Georgia war, for example, Nuland, at the time ambassador to NATO, urged George Bush to accept both Georgia and Ukraine as NATO members. Since Georgia’s then president and neocon favorite, Mikheil Saakashvili, had high hopes of drawing the United States in on his side in the coming conflict, this was a dangerous initiative. Fortunately, Bush, by that time leery of neocon advice, stood firm against her pleas.

Despite her ongoing proximity to power, Nuland attracted little public attention until the leak of an intercepted phone call gave the rest of us a taste of how she operates. Incautiously chatting on her cell on January 28, 2014, with U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt, as the Kiev street protests against elected Ukrainian Viktor Yanukovych gathered momentum, Nuland and the diplomat mulled over who should now rule the country. Their candidate was “Yats,” the opposition politician Aseniy Yatsenyuk, as opposed to another opposition candidate, former world heavyweight boxing champion Vitali Klitschko, favored by various European powers. Nuland was determined to keep Klitschko out and, as she infamously remarked on that call, “fuck the E.U.”

However, despite her enthusiasm for Yatsenyuk, Nuland was clearly well aware of who was really pulling the strings in Ukrainian politics: the oligarchs, who had assembled enormous fortunes out of the wreckage of the Soviet economy. Chief among these were those connected to the import of Russian natural gas, on which Ukraine was heavily dependent, most especially Dmitry Firtash, a multimillionaire and key supporter of the government Nuland hoped to displace. This may explain why, at the end of 2013, Firtash found himself the subject of a U.S. international “wanted” notice, charged with attempting to bribe local officials in distant India. He happened to be in Vienna, and a request was accordingly submitted to the Austrian government for his extradition back to the United States to stand trial.

On the day the request was submitted, Victoria Nuland left Washington on an urgent visit to Ukraine. President Yanukovych appeared to be backtracking on a pledge to sign an association agreement with the European Union— the specific “biggest prize” cited by Gershman in a Washington Post op-ed the month before. If Yanukovych were to be persuaded to change his mind, threatening to put his sponsor Dmitry Firtash behind bars was a potent lever to apply. Four days later, Yanukovych signaled he was ready to sign, whereupon Washington lifted the request to shackle his billionaire ally.

A month later, Yanukovych changed course again, accepting a $15 billion Russian aid package. Street protests in Kiev followed, eagerly endorsed by Nuland, who subsequently distributed cookies in gratitude to the demonstrators. Yanukovych fled Kiev on February 22, and four days later the United States renewed the request to the Austrians to arrest Firtash. They duly did. Briefly imprisoned, Firtash posted the equivalent of $174 million bail and waited for a court to rule on his appeal against extradition.

Nevertheless, Firtash was still politically powerful enough in Ukraine to decide who should become president. The two leading candidates for the post were Petro Poroshenko,
a chocolate-industry oligarch favored by Nuland, and Vitaly Klitschko, the boxer she had schemed to exclude from the premiership. Klitschko was very much under Firtash's control. Both men flew to the Austrian capital for a meeting with the oligarch, who negotiated a deal in which Klitschko stood down and left the way open for Poroshenko, while Klitschko became mayor of Kiev.

Ukraine meanwhile was in chaos. The revolution that had brought anti-Russian nationalists to power in Kiev was highly unwelcome in the Russian-speaking east, not to mention Moscow. Vladimir Putin capitalized on this to engineer the return of Crimea to Russian rule, and it appeared possible that he would similarly absorb eastern Ukraine. By April 2014, Russian-backed separatists had taken control of the Donbass, the steel and mining region, and were advancing westward toward the next big industrial center, Dnipropetrovsk, the domain of another oligarch, Igor Kolomoisky.

Kolomoisky had built his multibillion dollar financial base partly thanks to his mastery of “raiding,” the local version of mergers and acquisitions, involving methods that would make even the most hardened Wall Street financier turn pale. According to Matthew Rojansky, director of the Kennan Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, who has made a special study of the practice, “there are actual firms in Ukraine . . . registered with offices and business cards, firms [that specialize in] various dimensions of the corporate raiding process, which includes armed guys to do stuff, forging documents, bribing notaries, bribing judges.”

Rojansky describes Kolomoisky as “the most famous oligarch-raider, accused of having conducted a massive raiding campaign over the roughly ten years up to 2010,” building an empire based on banking, chemicals, energy, media, and metals, and centered on PrivatBank, the country’s largest bank, holding 26 percent of all Ukrainian bank deposits. At some point, Kolomoisky’s business practices raised enough eyebrows in Washington to get him on the visa ban list, precluding his entry into the United States.

In April 2014, as the separatists advanced, Kolomoisky mobilized his workforce into a 20,000-man private army in two battalions, Dnipro-1 and Dnipro-2, and stemmed the tide. According to Wilson Center director Rojansky, Kolomoisky is “perceived as the bulwark and the reason why the whole Novorossiya project [Putin’s plan to absorb most of eastern Ukraine] broke down at the border of the Donbass.”

Stopping Putin in his tracks would clearly have earned the master raider merit in the eyes of policymakers in Washington and other Western capitals, which may just explain how it was that while Firtash was under the shadow of the U.S. indictment, no one made too much of a fuss at the disappearance of an estimated $2 billion in IMF aid for Ukraine that speedily exited the country via Kolomoisky’s PrivatBank.

The international financial agency had rushed the money to Ukraine in April, in response to what IMF managing director Christine Lagarde called a “major crisis.” She went on to hail the government’s “unprecedented resolve” in developing a “bold economic
program to secure macroeconomic and financial stability.” Over the next five months the international agency poured the equivalent of $4.51 billion ($2.97 billion in “Special Drawing Rights”—the IMF’s own currency) into the National Bank of Ukraine—the country’s central bank. Much of this money was urgently needed to prop up the local commercial banks. In theory, the IMF appeared to require direct supervision of how the Ukrainian banks used the aid. In fact, it appears the banks got to select their own auditors.

As the largest bank, Kolomoisky’s PrivatBank stood to garner the largest share of the international aid. Published estimates put this share as high as 40 percent. Despite the torrent of cash, the banks’ situation did not improve; nine months into the program, the IMF announced: “As of end January 2015 . . . the banking system’s capital adequacy ratio stood at 13.8 percent, down from 15.9 percent at end-June.” Where had the money gone?

Although we hear much about corruption in countries such as Ukraine in general terms, a precise, detailed accounting of the means by which an impoverished country has been stripped of precious assets is not usually easy to come by. In this case however, thanks to investigative work by the Ukrainian anticorruption watchdog group Nashi Groshi (“Our Money”), we can actually watch the process by which the gigantic sum of $1.8 billion was smoothly maneuvered offshore, in the first instance to PrivatBank accounts in Cyprus, and thence into accounts in Belize, the British Virgin Islands, and other outposts of the international financial galaxy.

The scheme, as revealed in a series of court judgments of the Economic Court of the Dnipropetrovsk region monitored and reported by Nashi Groshi, worked like this: Forty-two Ukrainian firms owned by fifty-four offshore entities registered in Caribbean, American, and Cypriot jurisdictions and linked to or affiliated with the Privat group of companies, took out loans from PrivatBank in Ukraine to the value of $1.8 billion. The firms then ordered goods from six foreign “supplier” companies, three of which were incorporated in the United Kingdom, two in the British Virgin Islands, one in the Caribbean statelet of St. Kitts & Nevis. Payment for the orders—$1.8 billion—was shortly afterwards prepaid into the vendors’ accounts, which were, coincidentally, in the Cyprus branch of PrivatBank. Once the money was sent, the Ukrainian importing companies arranged with PrivatBank Ukraine that their loans be guaranteed by the goods on order.

But the foreign suppliers invariably reported that they could not fulfill the order after all, thus breaking the contracts, but without any effort to return the money. Finally, the Ukrainian companies filed suit, always in the Dnipropetrovsk Economic Court, demanding that that foreign supplier return the prepayment and also that the guarantee to PrivatBank be cancelled. In forty-two out of forty-two such cases the court issued the identical judgment: the advance payment should be returned to the Ukrainian company, but the loan agreement should remain in force.

As a result, the loan of the Ukrainian company remained guaranteed by the undelivered goods, while the chances of returning the advance payments from foreign companies remain remote. “Basically this transaction of $1.8 billion abroad with the help of fake
contracts was simply an asset siphoning [operation] and a violation of currency legislation in general," explained Lesya Ivanovna, an investigator with Nashi Groshi in an email to me. “The whole lawsuit story was only needed to make it look like the bank itself is not involved in the scheme . . . officially it looks like PrivatBank now owns the products, though in reality [they] will never be delivered.”

Thanks to the need to use the economic court as a legal fig leaf, the scheme operated in plain view. “There were no secret sources,” Ivanovna told me. “We found this story while monitoring the court decisions registrar. It’s open and free to search, so we read it on a daily basis.” Other companies had used the same mechanism, she pointed out. “The major difference of this case is its immensity.”

Despite this brazen raid on Ukraine’s dwindling assets, no one in authority seemed to care very much. Ivanovna’s group joined with an anticorruption NGO, Anti-Corruption Action Center (ANTAC), in a request to the Ukrainian General Prosecutor Office to open a criminal proceeding, but with no result. ANTAC’s legal director, Antonina Volkotrub, tells me that there is currently no official investigation of the transactions, though her group has sued the prosecutor to start a criminal investigation.

Kolomoisky himself has however run into a small spot of bother with authorities. In March of this year he launched his most bold raid yet, sending a hundred armed “lawyers” to seize physical control of Ukrnafta, the principal Ukrainian oil company, and UkrTransNafta, which controls almost all oil pipelines in the country. This was a direct threat to the authority of Poroshenko, the oligarch/president, who enlisted ambassador Pyatt, Nuland’s phone-mate, in a deal to remove his rival from the scene. “My understanding is that part of the deal whereby Kolomoisky gave up his attempt to take over control of Ukrnafta and UkrTransNafta and gave up governorship of Dnipropetrovsk and gave up having his pawn in control of Odessa,” Rojansky told me, “was that the U.S. ambassador came in as an intermediary guarantor and said if you do these things, we will take you off the visa bad list.” So it came to pass. Kolomoisky flew unmolested to the United States, where he is reported to have been spending a lot of time watching basketball games, and with no one asking awkward questions about what happened to all that IMF money. (Nuland’s friend Mikheil Saakashvili, the former president of Georgia who had worked so hard to draw the United States into conflict with Russia, took over the governorship of Odessa, with the United States paying his staff’s salaries.)

As for Firtash, the State Department has been less forgiving. In April this year a Vienna court presided over by Judge Christoph Bauer finally got around to hearing Firtash’s appeal against the extradition request in the Indian bribery case. In a daylong hearing, a crowded courtroom received a fascinating tutorial on the inside story of recent Ukrainian political events, including the background to Washington’s on-again, off-again with the Firtash extradition requests according to the status of Ukraine’s E.U. negotiations, not to mention Firtash’s role in the Poroshenko-Klitschko negotiations. Firtash’s lawyers argued that the case had little to do with bribery in India and everything to do with United States meddling in Ukrainian politics. The judge emphatically agreed, handing down a withering verdict, stating that “America obviously saw Firtash as somebody who was
threatening their economic interests.” He also expressed his doubts as to whether two anonymous witnesses cited by the United States in support of its case “even existed.” The State Department announced it was “disappointed” in the verdict and maintained its outstanding warrant for Firtash, should he leave Austria and travel to some country with a legal system more deferential to U.S. demands.

Complex realities such as those related here do not intrude on official Washington pronouncements, where all is black and white, and the party line shifts inexorably closer to endorsing U.S. military engagement in the Ukrainian quagmire. At least we should know who is taking us there.

#6
How Ukraine’s New Memory Commissar Is Controlling the Nation’s Past

by Jared McBride
The Nation, 13 August 2015

Jared McBride was recently a visiting assistant professor in the history department at Columbia University. He is currently a Title VIII Summer Research Scholar at the Kennan Institute.

Since the Maidan uprising and the subsequent attacks on Ukraine’s sovereignty and territory by Russia and Russian-backed rebels, there has been intense debate on how to interpret not only Ukraine’s dramatic present, but also its complex and difficult past. Against the background of military and diplomatic struggles, the representation of Ukraine’s history is also embattled, especially the period of World War II. Russian elites have labeled anything and everything they do not like about past and present Ukraine as “fascist.” Partly this is a reflex due to the memory of right-wing Ukrainian nationalism during the first half of the twentieth century; partly this is the result of a failure to find any better way to express anger at Ukraine’s turn to the West. There has been no shortage of Western commentators attacking this crude propaganda.

However, among representatives of Kiev’s new post-revolutionary elites, unbiased engagement with Ukraine’s past has also been a challenge. But while the West is pillorying Russian distortions, it is much less at ease criticizing Ukrainian ones: Few Western observers feel sympathy for Putin’s involvement in Ukraine (I myself have none). There are many, however, who seem to welcome any historical narrative ruffling Russia’s feathers or appearing “pro-Ukrainian” or “national” (in reality, quite often nationalist), as the nation is facing outside aggression and domestic crisis. Yet this form of “support” is a disservice—to Ukraine and also to the West’s public and decision-makers. It is alarming that some Western journalists, scholars, and policy-makers are embracing a nationalist
version of Ukrainian history that resonates only with part of Ukrainian society and not at all with serious academic discourse in Europe and North America.

Front and center in the efforts to produce a nationalist version of Ukrainian history is the former director of the country’s secret-police archives (SBU) and new director of the Institute of National Memory (or UINP) under the current government of President Petro Poroshenko: Volodymyr Viatrovych. Viatrovych (born 1977), from the western Ukrainian city of Lviv, first stepped onto the national scene when he was put in charge of the archive section of the newly created Institute of National Memory in 2008 and then head of the SBU archives later that year. In these influential positions, he helped in the effort to “exonerate” a key World War II Ukrainian nationalist leader of any complicity in the Holocaust; presented the nationalist Ukrainian Insurgent Army as a democratic organization open to Jewish members; and focused heavily on Ukrainian victimization during the famine of the 1930s (while, interestingly, also blaming Jews as perpetrators).

Viatrovych has made a name for himself as a political activist by instrumentalizing his scholarly credentials. Both before and after his secret-service archive tenure, he was the head of the Center for the Study of the Liberation Movement (or Tsentr Doslidzhen’ Vyzvol’noho Rukhu, TsDVR) in Lviv. The research center is funded by private money from Ukrainian groups abroad that have helped shape its research agenda. The unambiguous goal of the center is to paint the Ukrainian nationalists, in particular the OUN and UPA (two of the most important Ukrainian nationalist organizations from the interwar and World War II period), as “liberators” from Soviet, Polish, and German oppression. Radical right-wing Ukrainian nationalists are depicted as nothing but tragic freedom fighters, occasionally forced to don Nazi uniforms to struggle for independence, liberty, and Western values. This is the party line at the center, one largely shaped by Viatrovych.

Viatrovych’s own “scholarly” output echoes the goals of his center. In a number of publications he has covered a laundry list of flashpoints in 20th-century Ukrainian history, from the vicious anti-Jewish pogroms of World War I through Ukrainian-Polish violence during and after World War II. What unifies his approach is a relentless drive to exculpate Ukrainians of any wrongdoing, no matter the facts. For example, concerning Ukrainian nationalist involvement in the Holocaust, in Viatrovych’s world, collaboration never happened or was coerced and, at any rate, can’t be blamed on nationalism; all evidence to the contrary is blithely assigned to Soviet lies. On the nationalist ethnic cleansing of Poles in 1943-44, Viatrovych lets us know that that was a sort of tragic but symmetrical warfare. And as we all know, war is cruel and bad things happen. When confronted with the fact that the head of UPA, Roman Shukhevych, served the Nazis until 1943 as commander of a mobile police battalion that murdered thousands of civilians in Belarus, Viatrovych responded: “Is it possible to consider Poles or Belarusians a peaceful population, if, during the day, they work as ordinary villagers, only to arm themselves in the evening and attack the village?” In other words, civilians are fair targets, especially for “heroes” of Ukraine in the service of Nazis.
In the academic world, such tactics have their limits. But when confronted with solid archival evidence contrary to his stories, such as orders from OUN-UPA leadership to cleanse the Polish population of Volhynia, Viatrovych simply claims that documents are Soviet forgeries or that scholars challenging him are serving sinister propaganda purposes. Selectivity rules: If there is no smoking-gun document for nationalist crimes, it’s exculpatory; when there is no smoking-gun document for premeditated Soviet genocide against Ukrainians, it’s a result of KGB cunning. Viatrovych deals with video testimonial archives and the integration of witness testimony into history with bravado, simply ignoring them (and especially Jewish voices) altogether when he dislikes what they have to tell us. This abysmal ethical and methodological approach has been challenged by scholars from Poland, Scandinavia, Germany, Canada, and the United States, in addition to a few brave Ukrainian ones. These scholars have written excoriating reviews of his works. Unlike his writings, these reviews were published in peer-reviewed journals.

There are no career repercussions for poor scholarship when you are a political activist. Thanks to his credentials as “former SBU archive director,” director of a prominent “research” institute, and a brief stint as a research fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI), which show up in every bio-blurb possible, Viatrovych is cited frequently in the Ukrainian media. Ironically, as he has gained more negative attention from scholars, he has traversed a different arc in Ukraine—increasingly trusted as a voice of wisdom, a young, fresh force promising to defend and promote Ukraine’s history, here understood as the glorious record of Ukrainian nationalism. It was no surprise when in late 2014 President Poroshenko chose him as head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, a government body originally created by then President Yushchenko to support research and forge a national memory policy.

Viatrovych wasted little time after this appointment. He became the driving force behind the so-called de-communization laws that were put on the books this spring. In reality, these laws regulate how history should be written and place restrictions on free speech, and thus are deeply at odds with Kiev’s claims to Western values. Law No. 2538-1, “On the legal status and honoring of fighters for Ukraine’s independence in the 20th century,” states that “the public denial of...the just cause of the fighters for Ukrainian independence in the 20th century insults the dignity of the Ukrainian people and is illegal.” The fighters for Ukrainian independence explicitly include the World War II nationalists of the OUN and UPA. In essence, this law makes it at least very risky to criticize them or point out the crimes in which they participated. As with similar Putinist legislation in Russia—namely Article 354.1, which criminalizes any deviations from the Kremlin’s version of World War II and was passed by the Russian Duma in 2014—the very vagueness of phrasing is a handy weapon of potential repression: it is a disturbing mystery how the state or other accusers are going to determine who insulted the dignity of violent ethnic cleansers and happy authoritarians or how the courts are going to prosecute those guilty of such thought crimes. Law No. 2540, “On access to the archives of repressive organizations of the communist totalitarian regime from 1917-1991,” puts all secret-police archives under the control of the National Memory Institute in Kiev, headed by Viatrovych.
These new laws have been criticized in a number of journals and magazines. Why they are deeply flawed should be obvious to anybody committed to even elementary principles of free speech and democracy. The reaction to the laws was predictable: first, there was a response from the Western academic community. Seventy leading scholars, including some from Eastern Europe, signed an open letter protesting the laws. Other organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum warned of their dangers. Foreign media outlets also took notice. Yet, despite the outcry, except for a few articles by Western scholars, there has been little discussion of Viatrovych’s personal role in making the laws or the larger backdrop of aggressive history politics, going back to 2005.

A few of the most prominent Ukrainian intellectuals provided commentary that half-heartedly condemned a crackdown on free speech, but they focused on questioning the attitude of Western scholars protesting against the laws. Other Ukrainian commentators have provided rather muted criticism of the laws, less because of the politicization of history and more due to issues of financial and privacy concerns. Only a few Ukrainian commentators did condemn the laws on principled grounds related to academic freedom and historical revisionism.

Sadly, the Ukrainian-diaspora scholarly community in North America has often supported these restrictive laws. Regarding Viatrovych, they see no problem with having a partisan political activist in charge of the country’s secret-police archives; rather the foreign scholars and their “insensitive research” agendas that discuss the dark spots of Ukraine’s history are the real problem for Ukraine. In a recent roundtable interview with two well-known scholars and one member of the Ukrainian-American community, Western scholars were described as “neo-Soviet” and their response as “quasi-hysterical.” In a misplaced “post-colonial” twist, the “propriety or authority of foreigners to instruct Ukraine’s elected representatives as to whom they wish to acknowledge or memorialize and why” was questioned. The laws were praised as the answer to outside tampering in Ukraine’s history. On the issue of free speech, there was hedging. In an Orwellian key, Alexander Motyl, a political scientist at Rutgers University-Newark, went as far as to compare Ukraine’s history regulation laws to civil rights laws, women’s rights, and laws protecting the gay community in the United States. This is not the first time Motyl’s analogies to US history have caused shock in various scholarly communities.

There has been little controversy in the West about putting Ukraine’s secret-police archives in Viatrovych’s hands: the responses from Ukrainian intelligentsia have ranged from joy to muted concerns about privacy issues. Motyl excitedly called the archives law a “coup for freedom and justice”—unsurprisingly, given that he is perhaps the only scholar to have praised Viatrovych’s recent book. Outside of perceptive pieces in Ukrainian by Vasyl Rasevych, a historian and writer, and Stanislav Serhiienko, an activist and writer, about the dangers of archive tampering, few commenters, including those in the West, seem to worry about the potential manipulation of the archives. The dialectics of national liberalism aside, Motyl’s term “coup” is an apposite Freudian slip. We might ask ourselves
why a nation’s most politically sensitive document collection should be entrusted with
a political activist interested in one and only one version of the past, rather than putting
them under the auspices of the central state archive administration. A while ago, when
a Communist was director of Ukraine’s archival administration, Western observers
were worried. The failure to worry when a nationalist defending the record of right-
wing authoritarians takes over the national memory project and the secret-police files is
disturbing.

If the response from the diaspora-oriented scholarly community to the laws and
Viatrovych’s appointment has been scandalous, the naïveté with which some Western
observers have embraced the nationalist narrative is even more troubling. Following
the Maidan revolution, Viatrovych is now cited as a voice of knowledge in the Ukrainian
and Western media. The Christian Science Monitor has quoted him in an article about
Ukraine’s past, where he explained that to dispel “myths” Ukraine should “create an open,
national dialogue.” With no acknowledgment (or, probably, knowledge) of Viatrovych’s
background as a myth-maker-in-chief himself, the article uncritically presents him as a
voice for the future.

Even more egregious was the article “Is There a Future for Ukraine?” by Peter
Pomerantsev, a journalist and producer who writes frequently on Russia, which appeared
in The Atlantic in July 2014. Pomerantsev interviewed and profiled Viatrovych as a
carrier of hope for Ukraine’s future. Pomerantsev has managed to recognize in Viatrovych
“a liberal nationalist,” working to “create a Ukrainian identity”—strange praise for a
man claiming to be a scholar, a profession usually engaged in open-ended inquiry, not
identity building. Pomerantsev tells his readers that Viatrovych is “best known for his
work on reformatting Ukraine’s relationship to the Second World War,” which is both
an understatement and a horribly revealing choice of terms. In his mostly uncritical
portrayal, he writes that Viatrovych “believes he can help bridge these divisions [in
Ukrainian society] and create a story that is at once nationalist and integrationist.”
When asked about a positive unifying message, Viatrovych matter-of-factly tells him that
Russians want “tyranny” and Ukrainians want “freedom.” Pomerantsev swallows this
bigoted statement of frank stereotype about large populations with no response, since
compared to the overtly racist Ukrainian nationalist he interviewed in the first part of the
same article, Viatrovych comes across as less brutal. But perhaps also because “we” in the
West now consider it good form to cut a Ukrainian nationalist more slack than a Russian.

The commentary by Viatrovych himself on the laws he helped make is perhaps the most
illuminating and troubling aspect of the entire debate. On May 1, he reacted to criticism
with a statement packed with paradox. On the issue of academic freedom, he writes that
the “laws...will not in any way influence academic discourse.” He adds that the laws will
serve as a “powerful incentive for the de-politicization of the history of the OUN and the
UPA” and “reanimate academic discussion.” How banning critical views of radical right-
wing ethno-nationalists and their violent deeds represents a depoliticization of historical
topics or supports academic discussion is beyond comprehension. In response to critics’
references to the crimes of Ukrainian nationalists during World War II, Viatrovych
maintains that “this is only one of the opinions that have the right to exist.” He goes on to argue for the importance of nationalism in current Ukrainian culture because “partisan folklore includes hundreds of folk songs and is one of its richest among folklore sources.” These are the priorities of Ukraine’s new memory manager-in-chief: preserving folk songs (which, he may fail to realize, are not likely to all be genuinely “folk” or “traditional”) at the expense of difficult discussions about war crimes, the very existence of which is reduced to “opinions.” As for Viatrovych’s promise that the laws would not be used to intervene in academic debate, it only took about two weeks for the laws to be used to intimidate Ukrainian scholars: the education minister disseminated a letter to “patriotic” scholars of Ukraine, alerting them that it is necessary to respond to the allegedly Kremlin-directed Western scholars’ letter on the new laws.

To be sure, the Russian aggression against Ukraine has forced scholars and other onlookers to take sides. Many Western observers, including this author, support Ukraine’s struggle for democracy and sovereignty. What parts of the Western media, academia, and public-policy world have failed to grasp is that supporting partisan political operatives self-spinning as “national liberals” and objective scholars will do nothing to further Ukraine’s cause. One would think we had learned a key lesson of the Cold War: that the crude calculus of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” is wrong-headed. As for academic freedom, Ukrainians should have the opportunity to struggle with, write about, and argue over their own history in all of its glory and all its darker sides without threats, implicit or explicit. Part of this freedom would include cooperation and debate among scholars from many nations. Ukrainians do not need any more commissars to tell them what they are allowed to say or think, neither in the name of Communism, as in the bad old days, nor of nationalism. Moving forward includes leaving that paternalistic model behind for good.

#7

British Group Presents Evidence Russian Buk Shot Down MH17

RFE/RL, 8 October 2015

A British NGO has published a summary report claiming that a Russian Buk surface-to-air missile system shot down a Malaysian Airlines passenger jet on July 17, 2014, over eastern Ukraine, killing all 298 people aboard.

Bellingcat, which analyzes information available on the Internet, said on October 8 that the Buk antiaircraft system involved in the incident can be traced from the Russian city of Kursk in June 2014 to a field outside the Ukrainian town of Snizhne in Donetsk Oblast on the day of the flight MH17 disaster.
The next day, the launcher from the same Buk system -- with only three missiles instead of the normal compliment of four -- was documented to be near the Russian border in Luhansk Oblast, the report says.

“We have looked at all the open-source investigation we’ve done over the last 18 months and it seems a pretty firm conclusion that the Russian military provided the missile launcher that shot down MH17, that the missile was launched from outside of Snizhne,” Bellingcat founder and director Eliot Higgins says. “And we were able to track the Buk missile launcher back to the actual unit who provided it, the 53rd Brigade.”

Higgins added that Bellingcat has forwarded information about the individual members of the 53rd Brigade who might have been involved in shooting down MH17 to authorities investigating the incident.

The Bellingcat report also contradicts four claims made by the Russian Defense Ministry at a press conference on July 21, 2014, at which Russian officials claimed MH17 may have been shot down by a Ukrainian military jet or by a Buk system controlled by the Ukrainian military.


Moscow has denied Russian military involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The official report on the MH17 disaster by an international Joint Investigation Team, with which Bellingcat cooperates, will be issued on October 13. A preliminary report on the investigation’s findings that was released in July said MH17 was brought down by a Buk missile launched from an area held by Russia-backed separatists.

#8
Kiev Gets a Grip on Ukraine’s Internal Divisions

By Adrian Karatnycky
Wall Street Journal, 6 October 2015

Mr. Karatnycky is a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, where he co-directs its Ukraine in Europe Initiative

As Russia turns its attention to attacking the rebels in Syria, its simmering war with Ukraine has lately enjoyed a bit of a lull. But Kiev isn’t letting its guard down. It’s taking this opportunity to integrate the country’s far-right military groups into its regular
armed forces, steeling itself against the possibility of Russian campaign of internal destabilization.

Under normal conditions, this would be cause for alarm. Ukraine’s far-right groups include “social nationalists” and politically marginal white-supremacist groups, extreme nationalists who preach “Ukraine for Ukrainians.”

Yet given the constant threat of Russian-backed aggression, even leaders from Ukraine’s far right understand that radical action now would be suicidal for the state. As a result, some are cooperating with the integration process, thus dampening the danger these groups might otherwise have posed.

Ukraine’s far right became a growing presence in the country after the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovych in January 2014. Far-right activists were on the Maidan during the mass protests.

Their volunteer militaries, which emerged after the Russian invasion of Crimea as part of a broader volunteer movement that included many nonrightist armed groups, were integral to defending against Russian aggression in Crimea and the eastern Donbas region. Battlefield heroism bolstered their reputation. From a small cohort of far-right adherents, the groups expanded into larger amalgamations that united hundreds of well-provisioned fighters with thousands of volunteers who raised funds and built political support.

When Ukraine’s democratic leaders came to power in January 2014, they found the country’s armed forces unreliable and disorganized. There was no choice but to make common cause with the many highly motivated volunteer battalions in the country, including those that came from the ideologically incompatible far right.

As presidential and parliamentary elections have shown, Ukrainians remain overwhelmingly opposed to the far right’s political message. Yet President Petro Poroshenko has always remained wary about the far right’s disruptive potential. Some of these groups were said to have long been infiltrated by Russian agents and financed by allies of Mr. Yanukovych.

A spate of rightist vigilantism over the past year has also raised alarms. Politicians from the old regime have been beaten. Russian and separatist prisoners captured in the Donbas conflict have been tortured. The pro-Russian writer Oles Buzyna was murdered in Kiev, and activists linked to the nationalist Svoboda Party and the far-right Ukrainian National Assembly have been charged.

The groups and those arrested have denied the charges.

In August, a member of Svoboda threw a grenade at the Ukrainian militia during a protest outside the Parliament, killing four militia guards and wounding more than 100 law enforcement personnel.
The volunteer militias also posed a further unique challenge. As multilateral negotiations with Russia and its proxies gained steam, there was concern in Kiev that these right-wing forces would refuse to respect a cease fire.

All this suggested a mounting threat to order and stability.

In response, Mr. Poroshenko chose to develop a controversial but pragmatic strategy aimed at integrating the far right. His policy had four aims: to attenuate the ideological influence of the far-right among the volunteer forces; to channel the esprit of the volunteers into disciplined energy inside the regular armed forces and national guard; to re-establish control over the many weapons the fighters possess; and to remove these far-right forces from the front line and replace them with regular forces who can be a reliable part of the chain of command.

Over the past half year, volunteer units have gradually been removed from the front lines and integrated into the army and national guard. Fighters with criminal histories have been demobilized. In their stead, professional soldiers have been blended into the volunteer units, which have been rebranded as regular army and militia units.

While residual loyalty to their ideological and volunteer forebears remains, most of these former volunteer units are now under the direct command of career officers. They are deployed alongside members of Ukraine's security service and counterintelligence, who not only supply the fighters with military intelligence, but can watch for potentially seditious internal activity.

There are some risks to this strategy. Nothing guarantees that some fighters from the far right won't one day once again answer the call of their far-right leaders. The presence of rightists in the ranks of Ukraine's military also gives superficial credibility to the Kremlin's preposterous claims that ethnic Russians and Russian speakers are at risk in "fascist" Ukraine.

On balance, however, Mr. Poroshenko's strategy is gradually making gains. He has rebuilt Ukraine's regular armed forces, with 40,000 well-armed, well-trained and reliable soldiers today deployed on the front lines—a force more than 30 times larger than that of the various far right groups.

Matched by some progress in economic reforms and a reversal of economic decline, this means Ukraine is moving toward greater stability. For Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Kiev's newfound resilience, coupled with Western sanctions, may be one reason why he spent so little time last week at the United Nations General Assembly talking about Ukraine, and why he wants to change the subject through his massive intervention in Syria.
Putin Tightens Reins on Ukraine Rebels, Putting Conflict on Ice

by Ilya Arkhipov and Stepan Kravchenko
Bloomberg, 17 September 2015

Ukrainian separatist leaders say their hopes of full integration with Russia or greater independence are fading as the Kremlin tightens the reins on their rebellion.

Russian President Vladimir Putin appears unwilling to risk broadening his conflict with the U.S. and European Union over Ukraine, senior separatist officials said in interviews this month, meaning the rebel regions' future is more likely to resemble Transnistria, the Russian-backed breakaway area of Moldova, whose fate is still unresolved more than two decades after fighting subsided.

“Everything is gradually, steadily heading toward a localization of this territory,” Alexander Khodakovsky, a top rebel security official, said in his office in the separatist capital of Donetsk. “What I see is the formation of a second Transnistria.”

Khodakovsky and other rebel leaders said their backers in the Kremlin are sending the clearest signals in months that they don’t want the conflict to escalate, at least for the moment. Instead, they are leaning on the separatists to limit cease-fire violations and focus on turning their makeshift administration into a functioning government -- with the help of Moscow-trained bureaucrats.

Separatist Limbo

Rebel leaders and people close to the Kremlin said Moscow is aiming to freeze the uneasy status quo, avoiding a major escalation while a resolution to the conflict seems remote. That's likely to ease the pressure on Russia's recession-wracked economy and provide some respite for Ukraine, as well - as Russia tries to shift the focus to the fighting in Syria.

That leaves the separatists in limbo, having broken with Ukraine but short of their goals. Already, with the cease-fire holding better in recent weeks than ever before, signs of war are slowly vanishing, with many road checkpoints now abandoned.

Freezing the conflict amounts to an admission by the Kremlin that international pressure and Ukrainian resistance have made backing further separatist advances too costly. Instead, Moscow is aiming to use the rebel regions to keep the pressure on Ukraine.

For the U.S. and Europe, a stalemate is short of their aims of restoration of Ukrainian control. Still, such an outcome would reflect at least a measure of success for the policy of
sanctions as a means to pressure the Kremlin, Western diplomats said. Kremlin insiders say avoiding any major increase in those restrictions is now a prime goal for Putin.

'Minimal Losses'

“It’s important for Putin to get out of this situation with minimal losses,” said Alexei Chesnakov, a former Kremlin official who still advises top officials on strategy for the Ukraine conflict.

The tenuous cease-fire agreement reached in February in Minsk will probably be extended beyond its year-end deadline amid slow progress toward a political settlement, according to diplomats and others close to the talks.

“Both sides are trying to buy time,” said Chesnakov, referring to Russia and Ukraine.

Many in the separatist regions haven’t given up hope that Russia could annex their territory as it did Crimea last year. Putin faced chants of “take us with you” from some Donetsk region residents when he visited Crimea last week. He responded with a stiff smile. Asked about the episode the next day, Putin said: “It’s not a question to be decided in the street.”

Local residents show some skepticism about the future of the self-declared republics, going to Ukrainian-controlled territory to register weddings and legal documents.

There’s no sign Moscow is backing down. People familiar with Russia’s position say that if Moscow saw a threat to the survival of the separatist enclaves, it would likely dispatch troops to protect them as senior rebel officials now admit Russia did in the summer of 2014. Russia denies sending forces.

Fighting Subsides

For the moment, the orders are to strictly limit firing, Khodakovsky said. Separatist leader Alexander Zakharchenko, has toned down his rhetoric and now says he aims to take the strategic port city of Mariupol by political means, not forcibly.

The separatists have little choice. Russia, always a dominant force in the region, has methodically tightened its grip on all key aspects of the breakaway regions. Political leaders who didn’t fall into line have been replaced with Moscow-backed candidates. Military commanders who defied instructions from Moscow have been removed or killed in mysterious incidents. Economically, the war-ravaged regions rely almost entirely on largely clandestine subsidies from Russia, separatist officials said.

Publicly, Russian officials say the rebel governments are independent and deny any military intervention. They say support is limited to humanitarian aid.
Election Tension

Moscow’s control could face a test in the coming weeks before local elections in the regions that the U.S. and E.U. say amount to a violation of the Minsk deal and should be canceled. Zakharchenko said the poll will go ahead.

Separatist leaders said the edicts from Moscow not to shoot rankle local fighters. “When the guys come to me and ask how are we supposed to react” to fire from Ukrainian positions, “I have to explain to them that there’s a very strict order to observe the cease-fire,” Khodakovsky said.

Discipline isn’t ironclad, he said. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has reported that violations of the cease-fire have come from both the rebel and Ukrainian sides.

The relative truce has led volunteers from Russia to return home in the last few months, bringing their numbers to about 1,500 now from a peak of 4,000 last year, Zakharchenko said.

Instead, Moscow is dispatching dozens of trained bureaucrats to help shore up the separatist governments, which are now staffed largely by amateurs, a rebel official said.

Ruined Economy

Their economies in ruins, the statelets also depend almost entirely on Moscow for funding, separatist officials said.

Khodakovsky said the Kremlin insists the aid be kept low-profile, however, to avoid provoking criticism from the U.S. and Europe.

“If we don’t talk about this openly,” he said, “the population gets the feeling that Russia has turned away from us and is just playing some kind of game, hoping to get out of this as easily as possible.”
As Russia Enters War in Syria, Conflict in Ukraine Begins to Wind Down

by Shaun Walker,
The Guardian, 1 October 2015

At a highly fortified separatist position near the village of Peski outside Donetsk, the pro-Russia fighters have been getting used to an unusual sound in recent weeks: silence.

Shelling and exchanges of fire have become so rare at this frontline position in eastern Ukraine that commander Alexei Novikov and his men even had time recently to kill, grill and eat Poroshenko, the pet pig they named after Ukraine’s president (Merkel the sheep survives, for now).

“Both sides are moving towards partisan warfare, with small diversionary missions behind enemy lines,” said Novikov. “It has become boring here.”

As Russia ratchets up military action in Syria, the fighting in east Ukraine is winding down. The leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany will meet in Paris on Friday for talks on Ukraine, and while a lasting political solution still seems some way off, there is confidence on all sides that the military action could finally be over, a year after the first ill-fated, and largely ignored, ceasefire agreement was signed in Minsk, Belarus.

With all sides tired of military conflict, the most likely outcome appears to be Moscow pushing the territories back to Ukraine legally, with an ensuing period of uncertain peace as both Moscow and Kiev decide how far they are ready to compromise on their goals.

“The Russian side is trying to push the Minsk agreements as far as Ukraine is willing to go,” said Vitaly Leybin, editor in chief of Russian Reporter magazine in Moscow. He said this will probably involve a Trans-Dniester-style solution, where the regions remain de jure part of Ukraine but de facto function as independent statelets backed up by Russia. However, he said if Ukraine agreed to a full range of concessions, the Russian side would be willing to return control of the Russia-Ukraine border to Kiev.

“If Ukraine gives the regions special status, a full amnesty, recognises the rebel forces as a ‘people’s militia’ and gives the regions the right to its own cultural policy and special economic relations with Russian regions, then we would give the Ukrainians back control of the border.”

These conditions will not be acceptable to Kiev, but there too officials have noticed a change of tone from the Russians.
“They are trying to push the territories back into Ukraine, and shift the focus from military aggression to political destabilisation inside Ukraine,” said Dmytro Kuleba of the Ukrainian foreign ministry. “If our goal is reintegration and reconciliation we will have to look at all options,” he said, when asked whether Ukraine was ready for a real political settlement that included rebel leaders.

Russia has propped up the separatist statelets financially and militarily, and many of the commanders have been trained at bases in Russia, as the forces gradually become more professional. Despite repeated denials, it is also clear that Russian regular forces were introduced at key intervals when the rebels faced defeat last year, and again in February this year to back up a rebel offensive. Moscow has made it clear to Kiev that this option is always on the table should the Ukrainians attempt to win the territories back militarily.

“Russia is behind us and there is the unambiguous hint that if you continue military aggression against us, then Russia will not refrain from supporting us in absolutely every way it can, and they understand that,” said Alexander Khodakovsky, a top rebel leader, in a recent interview in Donetsk.

Meanwhile, those who disagree with the uneasy peace on all sides are being sidelined. Andrei Purgin, one of the original ideologues of the Donetsk People’s Republic, who represented the territory at the Minsk negotiations, was sacked from his position in the leadership last month and spent four days under arrest.

In an interview in Donetsk, Purgin evaded a direct answer as to the reason behind his arrest, but said he disagreed with the ceasefire.

“To say let’s stop shooting and then decide the political questions, that is nonsense. You can’t stop shooting unless you’ve decided the political questions already,” he said. Purgin said he believed a criminal case could be launched against him, and his movements were being tracked by the separatist authorities he led until recently.

In Moscow, too, there are rumblings that the “Novorossia project” to carve out a pro-Russian statelet in east Ukraine has been well and truly closed down. Egor Prosvirnin, editor of the nationalist blog Sputnik and Pogrom, has been called in for questioning in recent weeks over suspicions that his website may contain “extremist material”.

The article in question, while advocating for Russia to take full control of eastern Ukraine, does not contain anything that could not have been heard regularly on Russian state television over the past year and a half, and Prosvirnin believes Russian authorities are now trying to stuff the genie back into the bottle.

“The conflict is being frozen and we are too strongly in support of the Novorossia project, we’re too independent. This is a warning to us to stop what we’re doing,” he said.

Khodakovsky said while there are more hawkish elements inside the Kremlin who want to take a firmer line, for the time being they have been sidelined.
“Part of the Russian elite doesn’t want to argue with the west and is ready for very serious compromises, another part of the elite is more tough and ready for real confrontation. The middle position seems to me to be that we should get out of the situation with as few political and economic losses as possible,” said the rebel leader. “There is no ideal solution. All the options are fragile, and whichever is taken, none of them are not ideal by definition and will involve serious compromises from all sides. And this makes more radical people on all sides unhappy.”

For most of the residents of east Ukraine, and the roughly 1.5 million refugees and internally displaced people who have fled their homes, the end of fighting will come as a huge relief.

For more than a year, locals have had to live with a war in which the main mode of military engagement has been both sides firing artillery at each other over the heads of civilians. In the village of Spartak, not far from Donetsk train station, there was still sporadic Ukrainian shelling as recently as last week, despite the fact that rebels said they were obeying a strict order since 1 September not to fire back under any circumstances.

“My knees hurt too much to go into the basement, now I just lie on the floor in the bathroom when the bangs start,” said 80-year-old Ekaterina, who lost her daughter to shelling last year, in tears outside her apartment block in Spartak. “You can’t do anything, you can’t sleep, I just want to sleep. I just want this all to stop.”

At the nearby separatist position, the 22-year old commander who gave his name only as White, said the Ukrainian army had stopped attacking, but that volunteer battalions based near the frontline would send mortars over “out of boredom” every few days. He claimed his men had nothing to fire back with and were respecting the order not to fire, but he was sceptical of a lasting ceasefire.

“Half of my men are from towns under Ukrainian control. What are they supposed to do? There can’t be any real talk of peace until we have pushed the Ukrainians back. But at least people are not dying any more.”

But while few people in Donetsk, Kiev or the west think the underlying issues are even close to being solved, the fatigue with military action on all sides means there is a growing consensus that the “hot” phase of the conflict has drawn to a close for now.

“This is the end of a stage,” said Khodakovsky. “We will be de jure inside Ukraine but will live by our own laws and leaders. Depending on how the political situation inside Ukraine and Russia develops, the next stage will be either increased stability leading to some kind of lasting settlement, or renewed conflict.”
In Eastern Ukraine, Most Western Aid Agencies Have Been Blocked

By Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Julia Smirnova
Washington Post, 17 September 2015

Nearly all Western humanitarian organizations have been blocked from operating in separatist-controlled parts of eastern Ukraine for close to two months, and they fear that unless the situation is reversed, civilians could lose access to critical assistance when winter sets in.

The freeze in assistance and medical care is due in part to new “accreditation” procedures that went into effect for Western aid groups toward the end of July. “No international humanitarian organization is allowed to provide humanitarian assistance in eastern Ukraine at the moment,” said Tomas Kocian, the country director of the Czech organization People in Need.

The measures were imposed by the two self-declared and Russian-backed republics in eastern Ukraine—the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic, according to a Web page maintained by the DPR. According to the site, Western agencies have to provide detailed information about their offices, employee rosters and medical supplies to gain permission to distribute aid in the region.

The ban does not extend to Russian organizations. On Thursday, the 38th Russian “humanitarian aid” convoy arrived in Donetsk and Luhansk, according to Russia’s Ministry of Civil Defense.

The convoys, which have been arriving since the war began, are regarded as illegal by the Ukrainian government, but the authorities in Kiev have no ability to control the border in the east.

Spokesmen for both separatist areas did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

The only organization to receive permission to operate has been Medecins Sans Frontieres, Kocian said.

Although the organization is able to work in Donetsk, it has been barred from operating in Luhansk after separatists raided a warehouse there and accused the organization of possessing psychotropic drugs banned in Ukraine and Russia.

Tim Shenk, a representative of Medecins Sans Frontieres, defended the group’s possession of the drugs, stating that they are “in line with medical protocols,” and are an “essential component of medical kits provided by MSF.”
The International Committee of the Red Cross also told the Russian state news agency Ria Novosti it has “no access” to territory controlled by separatists.

“We decided to comply with this requirement and send them our documents, but we could not even imagine that after more than a month we would not have any information as to the possibility to pursue our work there,” Laurent Corbaz, head of the organization’s operations for Europe and Central Asia, told Ria Novosti.

In July, before the new vetting measures, the committee distributed more than 75,000 medical items and fed 72,600 people in Donetsk and Luhansk, according to its Web site.

Barbara Manzi, the head of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ukraine, said that the United Nations has personnel in separatist areas and has been able to do small-scale “interventions.” However, she said, most aid remains undelivered.

“We have 16,000 metric tons of goods that are ready for immediate delivery. With winter coming, some of these goods have to be delivered right now and can’t wait another two or three weeks,” Manzi said during a phone interview.

Yulia Gorbunova, a researcher in Human Rights Watch’s Europe and Central Asia Division, wrote in an e-mail that the accreditation measures could be a part of an increasingly hostile climate for international organizations, with the ultimate goal of forcing out certain groups. Also, she said, the delay could be a byproduct of political turmoil within the separatist administration.

Gorbunova also said that information on Russian aid groups operating in the region is murky, but they most likely do not have to go through the same accreditation process.

According to the United Nations, there are 5 million people in Ukraine in need of humanitarian assistance. The United Nations is particularly concerned about 2 million people living near the front line between government and rebel troops, approximately half of them on each side.

Almost 8,000 people have died and more that 17,000 have been wounded in Ukraine since the conflict began in April 2014.
Behind Ukraine’s Front Lines, A Hospital Struggles To Cope

by Christian Borys
RFE/RL, 28 September 2015

MARIUPOL, Ukraine -- Standing in pale-blue scrubs in a darkened hallway of a Soviet-era hospital in Mariupol, Volodymyr Mykut looks too young to be out of medical school.

But Mykut’s energetic, amiable air hides the sobering experience he has acquired in a hectic, bloodstained year at the Ukrainian city’s Hospital No. 1, close to some of the fiercest fighting in the war between government forces and Russian-backed rebels.

At age 29, he has dealt with more catastrophic trauma and death than many surgeons will face in a lifetime.

Hospital No. 1 stands on a quiet block surrounded by greenery on the edge of Mariupol, a sprawling industrial port that is the biggest government-held city in the Donetsk region. Located on the road from Russia to the annexed Crimean peninsula, it is a glittering prize for the separatists, who have targeted it several times in a conflict that has killed more than 7,900 people since April 2014.

From the front lines to the north and east of the city, wounded Ukrainian soldiers are evacuated directly into the care of Mykut, his colleague Vitaliy Nahorne, or one of three other Ukrainian military doctors at this relic of a hospital -- a drab gray brick building with a cold, colorless interior. On a recent visit, nurses and wounded soldiers shuffled through the hospital’s two hallways as a young blonde woman armed with a Kalashnikov stood guard outside.

After 16 months of fighting, a cease-fire has largely held since September 1, giving Mykut and his colleagues a reprieve.

Razor-Sharp Shrapnel

Escorting a reporting team up to the second floor of the hospital, days before the truce took hold, Mykut said he could not recall the last time it had been so quiet. Just 24 hours earlier, the doctors faced one of the worst nights of the war: A flood of soldiers, wounded in the heaviest round of shelling near Mariupol in over a month, streamed into the hospital. The Ukrainian forces suffered 20 casualties that night – seven men killed and 13 wounded in action -- and this hospital tended to nearly all of them.

Those evacuations can take anywhere from twenty minutes to one hour according to these doctors. One important reason for that is that Ukraine has been forced to refrain from
using helicopters at the front after many of their aircraft were downed by antiaircraft weaponry Kyiv says was supplied by Russia. By then the drastic wounds these soldiers suffer, many of them from razor-sharp artillery shrapnel, may have taken their toll.

Once the wounded get there, Mykut and his colleagues do what they can. Too often, he said, it’s not enough.

“We can operate, but it’s like Vietnam War standards in here, or even 1943,” Mykut said.

“People talk about America giving us weapons, but we don’t just need weapons from America, we need health care,” he said. “Sometimes the lights just go out, we need things as basic as lamps.”

Shortly before the cease-fire took hold, Ulana Suprun, an American physician who left New York and founded Patriot Defence, an organization that trains Ukrainian soldiers in combat first aid, spent a week visiting Ukrainian hospitals near the “line of contact,” including Hospital No. 1 in Mariupol.

She compiled a report, based on a standard U.S hospital assessment, which tests a hospital’s ability to deal with mass casualties in disaster situations.

“None of the hospitals are prepared for mass casualties,” said Suprun. “The larger second-line military hospitals in Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv boast that only 1 percent of the soldiers they care for pass away, but that’s because the critically wounded guys die before they can ever get to those hospitals.”

Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk are big cities further from the front line – which is where Suprun said the problem starts.

Although Ukraine seems to have plenty of ambulances to transport the wounded from the front, she says, most of the vehicles lack basic lifesaving tools.

“They don’t even have defibrillators, or if they do, they are pieces of ancient Soviet equipment,” she said. “In one, the defibrillator just looked like two cattle prods.”

Another shortcoming, at some of the hospitals close to the fighting, is staffing. Since many of the hospitals are civilian clinics, some of them simply close for the night, and few of the doctors are capable of handling battlefield trauma. According to Suprun, some simply don’t want to.

And despite the ethical standards doctors vow to uphold, there is also the question of loyalty.

“Soldiers told me they’ve driven into cities near their lines and had to ask locals where the hospital is and if they can even get a doctor. Then they’ll have to wake up a doctor, and that
doctor might be a latent separatist, so imagine how that goes,” Suprun said. “They said there are some hospitals they don’t even bother going to because they believe the doctors are all pro-Russian.”

*Life Is Cheap*

Such concerns, Mykut and Nahorne said, were behind the decision to send military doctors like them to the hospital in Mariupol and other facilities.

“Half the town is pro-Russian, and so were the doctors working at this hospital. They were the ones treating Ukrainian soldiers at the beginning so the military had to ship military doctors like us here.” said Mykut.

Nahorne looked at Mykut and added, “Well, some of those-pro Russians have changed sides, but not everyone.”

Beyond shifting loyalties and inadequate equipment, Suprun says that a broader problem is the Ukrainian military’s approach to combat medicine – which she suggests is, more even than Mariupol’s Hospital No. 1, a relic of the Soviet era.

“The Ukrainian military’s doctrine to medical care is carried over from Soviet days,” Suprun said.

“They didn’t care about the individual at all at the beginning, they just thought, in this war if they have 1 million, we’ll send 2 million, so who cares if 1 million from each side die, we will have won. The individual soldier meant nothing and their lives didn’t matter,” she said. “We want to change that.”

Volunteering on the Maidan in Kyiv during the protests that pushed President Viktor Yanukovych from power in February 2014, Suprun tried but failed to save the young victim of a gunshot when government snipers opened fire.

Since the conflict broke out in eastern Ukraine weeks after Yanukovych fled to Russia, Suprun has spent more than $1 million and worked tirelessly to try to ensure that Ukrainian soldiers are trained to deal with the worst possible wounds.

She has been granted Ukrainian citizenship by President Petro Poroshenko, but says she is facing an uphill climb in changing the attitude of the people in charge.

“I told them that they need to start training soldiers in combat lifesaver courses, which is a standard thing for Western armies, and they just sort of gave me a pat on the back and said, ‘Well, you keep up the good work,’” Suprun said. “They have no interest in building this program themselves. They just don’t care.”
Scholars Drawn to Conflict Zones Stoke College Safety Debate

by Collin Binkley
Associated Press, 28 July 2015

BOSTON (AP) — Some U.S. colleges with overseas-study programs won’t touch Ukraine. Tufts University, on the other hand, is drawn to the turmoil in the former Soviet republic, which the U.S. State Department deemed dangerous for travel.

The potential to help activists and scholars, Tufts professor Peter Levine says, outweighs the risks posed by an unstable country. He is leading a conference in Ukraine next month on civics studies, in part because the country exemplifies the struggles of a fledgling democracy.

“American universities, at our best, have people who should be getting on a plane to go to a country that’s in crisis,” Levine said. “Sometimes they do a lot of good.”

As a policy, many colleges refuse to cover costs for students or faculty traveling to areas where the State Department has issued a travel warning. But some colleges and universities are attracted to hotspots as subjects of study and as venues to see historic events unfold from the front row.

Institutions of higher learning must weigh the benefits against safety risks. Some insurance policies won’t cover travel to troubled areas, and tragic cases underscore that even students can be victims when conflict boils over.

A student at Ohio’s Kenyon College was fatally stabbed during a violent protest in Egypt in 2013 after traveling to the country through a private education group. And deadly attacks at universities in Kenya, Syria and elsewhere in recent years spurred a summit of worldwide academics in England this month seeking ways to protect universities from armed conflict.

“There’s always a tension between academics and safety,” said Vanessa Sterling, associate director of the Study Abroad Office at the University of Pittsburgh. Pitt was among several schools that canceled or rerouted trips to Ukraine last summer after violence broke out with Russia. It also withdrew students studying in Egypt after its 2011 uprising.

When a travel warning is issued, Michigan State University automatically suspends programs in that location, said Cindy Chalou, associate director for operations in the school’s Office of Study Abroad. Many schools have similar policies, although students and faculty can appeal for an exception in certain cases.
“We try to see where we can relocate students to achieve their goals,” Chalou said. The current list of countries with warnings includes Ukraine, Mexico, Kenya and much of the Middle East, among others. But critics complain that U.S. travel warnings are overly broad, blanketing entire countries for regional problems, and that they are updated infrequently.

“State Department warnings are fast to go up and slow to go down, for a lot of political reasons,” said Renee Stillings, program director for the School of Russian and Asian Studies, which coordinates study-abroad programs from Woodside, California.

The U.S. only recently lifted a travel warning for Egypt, and many schools still won’t send students there.

At Boston’s Northeastern University, officials wonder why there are warnings for countries such as Colombia but not Tunisia, where 38 were killed in a June attack at a beach resort.

“To a casual observer, that doesn’t make a whole lot of sense,” said Brian Gibson, director of the Global Experience Office at Northeastern, which hires a firm to provide global safety advice.

Levine, of Tufts, said he isn’t brave; he just knows Ukraine and is confident the area where he’s headed is safe.

Despite fears about extremist attacks, the Middle East has grown as a study destination in recent years.

In the decade leading up to 2013, the number of U.S. students studying there more than tripled to 4,700, according to the nonprofit Institute of International Education. Study-abroad trips globally grew by 80 percent in that span.

International flare-ups can reshape which countries become top destinations. Egypt was long a magnet for Arabic-language students, but the number from the U.S. has plummeted. Programs in Morocco and Jordan, meanwhile, have surged. Friction in Ukraine has similarly pushed programs to Moldova, and violence in Mexico dispersed programs to other Spanish-speaking countries.

Students can find ways to skirt their school’s protective arm, though. Colleges can’t stop students from traveling on their own, and even students in approved countries manage to travel outside the radar of their universities.

Anna Fechtor, a senior at Chicago’s DePaul University, was studying in France this past spring when she took a research trip to Istanbul without notifying DePaul. It didn’t get her in trouble, but some schools see Turkey as risky.
Fechtor, who worried about government corruption rather than violence, said the trip was worth it.

“It’s just kind of a place where history is always unfolding,” she said. At some colleges, officials said it’s their job to dissuade students from taking travel risks they might not understand. But those on the other side of the debate said that, in some cases, those risks carry merit.

“There will always be risks, but I think there is a benefit to experiencing and being able to sense firsthand what’s going on,” said Allan Goodman, president of the Institute of International Education. “It’s important to be there.”

#14
[The film debuted on Netflix this weekend. Unfortunately, all interviews are with English voiceover and not in their original languages with subtitles –UKL]

Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom
Reviewed by Jay Weissberg
Variety, 2 September 2015
http://variety.com/2015/film/reviews/winter-on-fire-review-venice-film-festival-1201584587/

An impressive amount of video footage and interviews went into Evgeny Afineevsky’s instant-history treatment of Ukraine’s 2014 revolution.

The 2014 Ukrainian revolution that ousted president Viktor Yanukovych receives straightforward coverage via the sights and sounds of people on the ground in Evgeny Afineevsky’s “Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom.” Taking a more traditional history-in-the-making approach than Sergei Loznitsa’s “Maidan,” the docu corrals an impressive amount of video footage but is hamstrung by its rose-tinted “the people united will never be defeated” p.o.v. Getting swept up in the immediate excitement is entirely understandable, but ignoring the less savory elements, such as ultra-nationalist rhetoric, is problematic at best. Backing by Netflix will markedly boost exposure, especially if marketed as a Ukrainian version of popular docu “The Square.”

Russian-Israeli director Afineevsky (“Oy Vey! My Son is Gay!!”) was on the ground throughout the popular uprising, coordinating a large team of cameramen and women (28 are credited) who covered various locations throughout the difficult, at times frighteningly violent three-plus months. To ensure the broadest international viewership, Afineevsky then wooed noted editor Angus Wall to board as one of the producers; Wall re-envisioned the docu’s approach “to create a more compelling narrative” that would be readily comprehensible to all. The resulting film is certainly easy to follow — arranged by day, with helpful maps pinpointing the various flare-ups.
In addition, the docu more or less sticks to one viewpoint: The people of Ukraine were furious that Yanukovych went behind their backs to forge closer alliances with Putin's Russia, when what they really wanted was firmer ties to Europe. As an underlying narrative for the capital Kiev, the account is true, yet it ignores large parts of the country's Eastern provinces, some of which are currently fighting for either greater independence or Russian annexation.

Instead, “Winter on Fire” presents a single-opinion storyline, utilizing a wealth of interviews from a notably diverse group of people who reinforce the idea that everyone was working toward a common goal: Activists, doctors, retired military, religious leaders and entertainers all describe the feelings of euphoria, followed by fear and resolve as the demonstrators became ever more determined to bring down Yanukovych (whose monumental corruption is oddly never addressed).

All started peacefully in November 2013, when journalist Mustafa Nayyem and others put out a Facebook call for people to gather in Kiev’s Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in protest at Yanukovych’s reluctance to forge closer ties with Europe. A party atmosphere prevailed in those early days, but then the Berkut (special police forces) were called in, using truncheons indiscriminately against protesters. As the crowd became more organized, the Berkut increased the level of violence, assisted by hired thugs known as Titushky.

Barricades were erected and melees ensued, with the Berkut showing no compunction in attacking medical facilities set up to tend the wounded.

Yanukovych’s parliament passed repressive laws to stop the gatherings, but by then the people refused to budge, and the Berkut exchanged rubber bullets for live ammo. By the time Yanukovych fled on Feb. 22, 2014, 125 people had been killed, with 65 missing and 1,890 injured.

Unlike Loznitsa with “Maidan,” Afineevsky isn’t aiming for artistic rigor: This is simplified instant history as triumphalist narrative, with only a bit of text at the very end to say that the country remains in turmoil following Russia’s annexation of Crimea. “Winter on Fire” is a more accessible film, with greater TV appeal, but it’s also more limited by its insistence on shoehorning everything into one perspective, albeit a perspective shared by many. It’s nice to hear interfaith voices all speaking to a common goal, but one wonders just how united a progressive activist would be with, hypothetically, an ultra-nationalist from the Svoboda party.

Chief editor Will Znidaric deserves much credit for wrangling so much footage into a comprehensible whole that flows easily from day to day without much repetition. Visuals vary in quality but are mostly sharp and often disturbing (there’s a lot of blood), while Afineevsky and Co. do an excellent job making sure the films match what the interviewees
are saying. An opening English voiceover, providing a potted history of post-independence Ukraine, is needlessly melodramatic, made worse by histrionic music.

Venice Film Review: ‘Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom’
Reviewed online, Rome, Aug. 31, 2015. (In Venice Film Festival — noncompeting; Toronto Film Festival — TIFF Docs.) Running time: 102 MIN.


#15 New Book

Timothy Snyder
Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning
Tim Duggan Books (Penguin Random House), 2015
Harcouver, ISBN 9781101903452

In this epic history of extermination and survival, Timothy Snyder presents a new explanation of the great atrocity of the twentieth century, and reveals the risks that we face in the twenty-first. Based on new sources from eastern Europe and forgotten testimonies from Jewish survivors, Black Earth recounts the mass murder of the Jews as an event that is still close to us, more comprehensible than we would like to think, and thus all the more terrifying.

The Holocaust began in a dark but accessible place, in Hitler’s mind, with the thought that the elimination of Jews would restore balance to the planet and allow Germans to win the resources they desperately needed. Such a worldview could be realized only if Germany destroyed other states, so Hitler’s aim was a colonial war in Europe itself. In the zones of statelessness, almost all Jews died. A few people, the righteous few, aided them, without support from institutions. Much of the new research in this book is devoted to understanding these extraordinary individuals. The almost insurmountable difficulties they faced only confirm the dangers of state destruction and ecological panic. These men and women should be emulated, but in similar circumstances few of us would do so.
By overlooking the lessons of the Holocaust, Snyder concludes, we have misunderstood modernity and endangered the future. The early twenty-first century is coming to resemble the early twentieth, as growing preoccupations with food and water accompany ideological challenges to global order. Our world is closer to Hitler’s than we like to admit, and saving it requires us to see the Holocaust as it was — and ourselves as we are. Groundbreaking, authoritative, and utterly absorbing, *Black Earth* reveals a Holocaust that is not only history but warning.

*Timothy Snyder is the Housum Professor of History at Yale University and a member of the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. He is the author of* Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, which received the literature award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Hannah Arendt Prize, and the Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding.

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Serhy Yekelchyk  
The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know  
Oxford University Press, 2015  
Paperback, ISBN: 9780190237288

When guns began firing again in Europe, why was it Ukraine that became the battlefield? Conventional wisdom dictates that Ukraine’s current crisis can be traced to the linguistic differences and divided political loyalties that have long fractured the country. However this theory only obscures the true significance of Ukraine’s recent civic revolution and the conflict’s crucial international dimension. The 2013-14 Ukrainian revolution presented authoritarian powers in Russia with both a democratic and a geopolitical challenge. President Vladimir Putin reacted aggressively by annexing the Crimea and sponsoring the war in eastern Ukraine; and Russia’s actions subsequently prompted Western sanctions and growing international tensions reminiscent of the Cold War. Though the media portrays the situation as an ethnic conflict, an internal Ukrainian affair, it is in reality reflective of a global discord, stemming from differing views on state power, civil society, and democracy.

The Crisis in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know explores Ukraine’s contemporary conflict and complicated history of ethnic identity, and it does do so by weaving questions of the country’s fraught relations with its former imperial master, Russia, throughout the narrative. In denying Ukraine’s existence as a separate nation, Putin has adopted a stance similar to that of the last Russian tsars, who banned the Ukrainian language in print and on stage. Ukraine emerged as a nation-state as a result of the imperial collapse in 1917, but it was subsequently absorbed into the USSR. When the former Soviet republics
became independent states in 1991, the Ukrainian authorities sought to assert their country's national distinctiveness, but they failed to reform the economy or eradicate corruption. As Serhy Yekelchyk explains, for the last 150 years recognition of Ukraine as a separate nation has been a litmus test of Russian democracy, and the Russian threat to Ukraine will remain in place for as long as the Putinist regime is in power. In this concise and penetrating book, Yekelchyk describes the current crisis in Ukraine, the country's ethnic composition, and the Ukrainian national identity. He takes readers through the history of Ukraine's emergence as a sovereign nation, the after-effects of communism, the Orange Revolution, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the war in the Donbas, and the West's attempts at peace making. The Crisis in Ukraine is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the forces that have shaped contemporary politics in this increasingly important part of Europe.

Born and educated in Ukraine, Serhy Yekelchyk has published widely on modern Ukrainian history and Russian-Ukrainian relations. His Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation was the first historical survey to include the 2004 Orange Revolution and has since been translated into five languages. A professor at the University of Victoria, Dr. Yekelchyk currently serves as president of the Canadian Association of Ukrainian Studies.

#17
New Book

Marvin Kalb
Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the Cold War
Brookings Institution Press, 2015
Harcover, ISBN: 9780815726647

Marvin Kalb, a former journalist and Harvard professor, traces how the Crimea of Catherine the Great became a global tinder box. The world was stunned when Vladimir Putin invaded and seized Crimea in March 2014. In the weeks that followed, pro-Russian rebels staged uprisings in southeastern Ukraine. The United States and its Western allies immediately imposed strict sanctions on Russia and whenever possible tried to isolate it diplomatically.

This sharp deterioration in East-West relations has raised basic questions about Putin's provocative policies and the future of Russia and Ukraine. Marvin Kalb, who wrote commentaries for Edward R. Murrow before becoming CBS News' Moscow bureau chief in the late 1950's, and who also served as a translator and junior press officer at the US Embassy in Moscow, argues that, contrary to conventional wisdom, Putin did not "suddenly" decide to invade Crimea. He had been waiting for the right moment ever since disgruntled Ukrainians rose in revolt against his pro-Russian regime in Kiev's Maidan.
Square. These demonstrations led Putin to conclude that Ukraine’s opposition constituted an existential threat to Russia.

Imperial Gamble examines how Putin reached that conclusion by taking a critical look at the recent political history of post-Soviet Russia. It also journeys deep into Russian and Ukrainian history to explain what keeps them together and yet at the same time drives them apart.

Kalb believes that the post-cold war world hangs today on the resolution of the Ukraine crisis. So long as it is treated as a problem to be resolved by Russia, on the one side, and the United States and Europe, on the other, it will remain a danger zone with global consequences. The only sensible solution lies in both Russia and Ukraine recognizing that their futures are irrevocably linked by geography, power, politics, and the history that Kalb brings to life in Imperial Gamble.

*Marvin Kalb is a nonresident senior fellow with the Foreign Policy program at Brookings, a senior adviser at the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, and a Murrow Professor Emeritus at Harvard. In his long and distinguished career, he served as the chief diplomatic correspondent for CBS and NBC, the Moscow bureau chief and the host of Meet the Press. He focuses on the impact of media on public policy and politics, and is also an expert in national security, with a focus on U.S. relations with Russia, Europe and the Middle East. His most recent book is The Road to War: Presidential Commitments Honored and Betrayed (Brookings Institution Press, 2013).*

**#18**

**Web Sources**

The Ukraine Crisis: A Free Article Collection from Taylor & Francis

Bellingact Investigation, MH-17—The Open Source Evidence (8 October 2015)

Bellingcat Investigation, Russia’s Path(s) to War (21 September 2015)

Collateral: The Human Cost of Explosive Violence in Ukraine (21 September 2015)
States have many tools at their disposal to suppress their subjects: the military, police, taxes, and laws, to name a few. The extent to which starvation has been used, or became a way to discriminate against, punish or eliminate national, ethnic, racial or religious groups (as described in the UN Genocide Convention) has not always been appreciated. The symposium focuses on four case studies to shed light on the politics of starvation, examining methods, their effectiveness as instruments of government policy, and the devastating effects on target populations.

Presenters:
- Mark McGowan, University of Toronto, on the Irish Famine;
- George Shirinian, Zoryan Institute, on the Armenian Genocide;
- Andrea Graziosi, Università di Napoli Federico II, on the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 (Holodomor);
- Samuel Totten, Professor Emeritus, University of Arkansas, on the case of Sudan;
- Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, University of Saskatchewan, on the transformation of Ukrainian civil society during collectivization and the Holodomor.

Symposium organizers:

Holodomor Research and Education Consortium, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta; the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute); Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies; the Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine at CERES, Munk School of Global Affairs and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Toronto.

For more on the Symposium:
http://www.holodomor.ca/starvation-as-a-political-tool.html
To register for the event:
http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/event/18977/
The Impact of World War II on Ukraine and Eastern Europe

Conference, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
23-24 October 2015

[The program can be accessed at http://ukrainian-studies.ca/2015/08/17/contested-ground-the-legacy-of-the-second-world-war-for-eastern-europe]

The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, in partnership with the Centre for U.S.-Ukrainian Relations, is organizing a major international conference to examine the political, social and economic consequences of the Second World War for the people and postwar states of Eastern Europe. Titled “Contested Ground: The Legacy of the Second World War for Eastern Europe,” the gathering will take place at the University of Alberta on 23-24 October 2015 and will be open to scholars, students and members of the general public.

While the defeat of Nazi Germany liberated millions from fascist dictatorship and led to the establishment of democratic governments in Western Europe, in the areas occupied by the Red Army any sense of freedom was short-lived as Communist and pro-Soviet regimes were imposed and maintained through a combination of force, intimidation, deceptive propaganda and rigged elections. Discussions will primarily be focused on the immediate as well as long-term repercussions that the Yalta and Potsdam agreements had for those that fell within Moscow’s “sphere of influence” or were subjected to varying degrees of pressure from the Kremlin. The Ukrainian postwar experience is to be compared and contrasted with that of other countries which ended up as members of the Warsaw Pact or as uneasy neighbours of the Soviet Union. Besides the Cold War and the lingering effects of the devastation wrought by the bitter conflict, the conference will also consider how narratives of the war were shaped by the official histories adopted by different governments, distorted by post-war propaganda, and contested in the memories of veterans and survivors. Of course, the legacy of Second World War has acquired new relevance due to Putin’s annexation of Crimea, the hybrid war in eastern Ukraine, and the Kremlin’s escalating military threats directed at former Soviet republics and satellites.

A distinguished group of scholars has already agreed to present papers at the Edmonton conference. These include such experts from overseas as Paul Goble (Tartu University, Estonia), Yitzak Brudny (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Hakan Kirimli (Bilkent University, Turkey), and former Polish Minister of Defense Janusz Onyszkwicz (International Centre for Democratic Transition). Among the American participants are Norman Naimark (Stanford University), Mark Von Hagen (Arizona State University), Janusz Bugajski (Centre for European Policy Analysis) and Ariel Cohen (Institute for the Analysis of Global Security). These will be joined by Ukrainian scholars like Yuri Shapoval.
and Vladyslav Hrynevych of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, as well as leading specialists from several Canadian universities.

James Sherr of Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) in the United Kingdom will be the featured speaker at a public banquet to be held on 24 October to mark the conclusion of the conference. A world-renowned authority on Russia and Ukraine, he will address the theme “The ‘Peace of 1945′ and the Current State of Affairs in Ukraine.” More details will be provided as further arrangements are made. A limited number of tickets will be available for the dinner, which will also mark the beginning of the 40th anniversary commemorations of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies.

UKL 475, 10 October 2015

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