Review
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the traumatic collapse of Yugoslavia. She strongly implies that the continuing appeal of an epistemological approach which enshrines universal doubt and the impossibility of establishing accurate knowledge of past events not only promotes superficiality and obfuscation but may lead to the loss of historicity itself.

A set of often insightful chapters show how particular disciplines, such as sociology and cultural anthropology, are struggling to develop critical scholarship against the background of funding and societal constraints. These constraints emerge in sharp relief in a chapter on post-Miloşević Serbia in which Hilde Katrine Haug focuses on the hostility encountered by the Serbian Truth and Reconciliation Commission as it sought unsuccessfully to come to terms with the controversial recent past. She quotes the baleful verdict of the Serbian historian Nikola Samardžić that 'the local humanities are not able to openly and competently discuss the most important issues of the past and future, leaving instead open many controversies related to the process of Yugoslav disintegration' (p. 113).

Local power-holders, often beneficiaries of the war, who Armina Galijaš argues, are managing the lives of citizens with new bureaucratic orders, have no wish to see the past re-opened. There is a battle to find neutral space for research focusing on civic, anti-nationalist and conflict related themes and this well-produced volume on the current state of scholarship about the 'Yugospshere' sheds a welcome light on current debates as well as revealing the range and quality of the scholarship that is seeking to overcome various post-war constraints.

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Bachmann, Klaus and Lyubashenko, Igor (eds). *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention: Ukraine's Complex Transition*. Studies in Political Transition, 4. Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2014. 523 pp. Figure. Tables. Notes. Timeline. Bibliography. List of geographic names. £49.00.

Sakwa, Richard. *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*. I. B. Tauris, London and New York, 2015. xx + 297 pp. Maps. Tables. Notes. Select bibliography. Index. £18.99.

After a year of turbulence, with more undoubtedly to come, there will be many books on all aspects of the crisis surrounding Ukraine. Bachmann's and Lyubashenko's volumne, mainly consisting of contributions from German and Polish specialists, is more academic; Sakwa's is also for the general market.

The Maidan Uprising has useful chapters of pre-2014 political narrative by Andrzej Szeptycki and Maciej Wapiński. Lyubashenko provides a more up-to-date analysis of the changing character of the Maidan protestors. Paweł Kowal

looks at the rise of the Ukrainian oligarchy and argues that its level of wealth and influence is unusual even in the post-Soviet world. Bachmann and Lyubashenko analyse the role of media and 'digital communication tools', and are particularly interesting on the exact mechanisms of Russian internet propaganda; though they are more circumspect about the actual effect of such efforts, especially in the key German media market.

The Maidan was in large part a protest against the shortcomings and perversions of Ukrainian democracy. Bachmann talks about the paradoxes of 'façade' institutions (p. 414), but the chapter on Svoboda and Right Sector is marred by the failure to include any discussion of the role of political technology — or just exposure on oligarch TV — in their rise. The factor is also underplayed in the chapter on the mainstream political parties Batkivshchyna and UDAR — the reader needs to know more about the covert oligarch sponsors that led many of the Maidan protestors to dismiss the two as simply satellites of the Yanukovych 'system' — which was also a big part of the reason why the two failed in the 2014 election campaigns.

Bachmann's claim that the protestors 'decided to launch an attack on the parliament building in order to coerce the members of parliament to reinstate the 2004 constitution' (p. 405) on the key day of bloodshed, 18 February 2014, is highly questionable. On the other hand, his statement that political 'dysfunctionalities were the result of processes on the highest level of political decision making between the Rada , the government and the president and — behind the curtain of domestic politics — key actors of the oligarch system. They were not the result of dysfunctional interest aggregation or unsurmountable social, ideological, regional or ethnic divisions' (p. 410) is much more persuasive and an important counter to arguments that Ukraine is somehow simply an unviable nation or state.

Adam Balcer goes beyond the usual stereotypical discussion of Ukraine's regional differences. He talks as much about the north-south axis as the more normal emphasis on distinctions running west to east (p. 100), providing a nuanced discussion of the legacy of the 'Dyke Pola' [*sic*], without buying into the Russian myth of 'Novorossiya'. Balcer also puts away the broad brush and makes many interesting points about the history of sub-regions like northern Luhansk and the Budjak.

Useinov and Shapovalova provide two good chapters on the multi-ethnic, not eternal Russian, realities of Crimea (the book went to press as the war in the Donbas was beginning). Shapovalova writes well on how tools of Russian influence in Crimea (p. 240 ff) prepared the ground for annexation, and on how Yushchenko's ineffective attempts to oppose them were replaced by a completely open door under Yanukovych.

My favourite chapter is by Igor Torbakov, who argues that the current divergence between Russia and Ukraine has little to do with ethnicity or language, but is

because of two revolutions in the 'axiological dimension' (p. 185). The Russian turn away from Europe came first, now Ukraine is turning towards it. Ukraine and Russia may have intertwined histories, they may be 'fraternal' (though some in Kyiv would like to ban the term); but, as the late Dmitry Furman pointed out (pp. 186–87), brothers often quarrel about values.

I find it hard to comment on Sakwa's book, which exists in a parallel reality; so I will simply quote from it. According to Sakwa, 'much of the discussion of the "Ukraine" crisis externalises responsibility — in other words, it looks for a scapegoat. This book argues that the crisis has been generated by structural contradictions in the international system' (p. 5); although it was also caused by 'tensions within the Ukrainian state-building project' (p. 6). Russia is only looking for an equal place in the international system, denied it by the 'war party in Washington' (p. 181), which far from being weak and distant (see the chapter by Sparrow in *The Maidan Uprising*), has constantly stymied peaceful solutions. Sakwa even endorses the concept of 'proxy war' (p. 180). Though it was the 'Orangist demonization of Putin [that] soon entered the bloodstream of discourse in the Western world, poisoning sensible discussion' (p. 152), not anything Putin himself might have done.

Ukraine is internally divided between 'monist' and 'pluralist' visions (p. ix) — a strange term for the east Ukrainian rebels who are hardly applying pluralism in the areas they control. Sakwa quotes Vladimir Golstein's claim with approval that '"the culture, language, and political thinking of western Ukraine has been imposed on the rest of Ukraine"' (p. 25). Ukraine would be truly divided if that had happened; the fact that opinion polls show that it is more united without the Crimea and half the Donbas, is because it did not. The fragile birth of, and celebration of, a truly multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Ukraine is one the positive things to come out of the crisis.

The claim that the 'Crimean peninsula is the heartland of Russian nationhood' (p. 12) is simply not serious history or geography, given the word 'heartland'. It is close to Putin's comparison with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173).

And finally, on the tragedy of MH17, Sakwa writes 'at the least, Russia was irresponsible to have given lethal weapons to forces who did not know how to use them [recent evidence points ever more clearly to the involvement of Russian Russians], and, even worse, to have operated them without adequate means of identifying targets. Broader culpability lay with all sides, reaching as far as Kiev, Moscow and Washington, who stoked the fires of war' (p. 169).

If this is your cup of tea, then enjoy.

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