Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan, and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

Taras Kuzio*

Senior Research Associate, Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta
Senior Research Fellow, Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Toronto
Non-Resident Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Introduction

Although Ukraine is a regionally diverse country, it had succeeded in peacefully managing inter-ethnic and linguistic tension between competing nationalisms and identities. However, the rise of the openly pro-Russian Party of Regions political machine after the Orange Revolution, whose leader came to power in 2010, and the evolution of Vladimir Putin's regime from proponent of statist to ethnic nationalism, heightened Ukrainian inter-regional and inter-state conflict. Viktor Yanukovych's policies provoked popular protests that became the Euromaidan. His unwillingness to compromise and his fear of leaving office led to violence and the breakdown of state structures, opening the way for Russia's interventions in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. This article investigates the sources for the violence during and after the Euromaidan and Russia's interventions. It argues that domestic and foreign factors served to change the dynamics of Russian speakers in Ukraine from one of passivity in the late 1980s through to the 2004 Orange Revolution; low-level mobilization from 2005 to 2013; and high-level mobilization, crystallization of pro- and anti-Ukrainian camps, and violent conflict from 2014.

The first section integrates theories of nationalism with competing Russian and Ukrainian nationalisms and Russian speakers in Ukraine and the former Soviet Union. The second section analyses ethnic Ukrainian and east Slav nationalisms (Shulman 2005), as well as Soviet and post-Soviet portrayals of Ukrainian nationalism as 'fascism'. The conclusion analyses three influences on Ukrainian national identity arising from the Euromaidan and Russia's interventions.

Theories of Nationalisms in the Russian and Ukrainian Context

The academic debate defines a large variety of types of nationalism, which can be applied to Russia and Ukraine. These range from civic nationalism, which is often associated with patriotism, or territorial nationalism, examples of which lie in Eastern Ukraine, Russia, and English-speaking Scotland and Wales. Other forms of patriotism are often attributed to immigrant settler countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Portraying 'Western' states as civic and 'Eastern' as ethnic is a false dichotomy, as all European and North American democracies are civic states that make choices about the language(s), culture(s), and historical myths that constitute their ethno-cultural core(s) (Kuzio 2002b).

Different types of nationalism have different levels of mobilization capital. Ethnic nationalism, civil society, and anti-colonial discourse mobilized together against European empires after World War I and their overseas empires after World War II. In the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, examples of this occurred in Western Ukraine, the three Baltic states, Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia (Åberg 2000; Beissinger 2002). Anti-colonial and anti-Soviet mobilization proved to be weak where territorial identities were more prominent in Russia, Belarus, Eastern Ukraine, and five Central Asian republics (Barrington 2001; Kolstø 1996). In the early 1990s, ethnic Russian minorities living outside the independent Russian state did not mobilize as the Soviet Union disintegrated unlike Serbian minorities living outside Serbia (Kuzio 2007).

Until the Euromaidan, nationalist mobilization in Ukraine remained confined to Ukrainian speakers while the Russian-speaking population remained passive. Western Ukrainians led the way in mobilizing against the Soviet regime in the late 1980s through 1991, during the 2000–2001 Kuchmagate crisis when President Leonid Kuchma was implicated in the murder of journalist Georgi Gongadze, the 2004 Orange Revolution, and 2013–2014 Euromaidan (Kuzio 2010a; Kuzio 2010b; Zimmer 2005). Ethnic Ukrainian national identity was more successful in mobilizing Ukrainians because the identity of Russians and Russian speakers was grounded not in ethno-cultural resources but territorially, as in Russia itself.[1]

Ethno-cultural resources – such as common identity, group solidarity, trust, and cultural and intellectual resources – are required for successful mobilizations of people. In Eastern and Southern Ukraine, such resources were weak until four key developments took place. First, Russian nationalism became increasingly ethno-culturally based and supportive of Russian-speaking movements in neighbouring countries. Previously marginal nationalists such as Eurasianist ideologist Aleksandr Dugin became influential, and Russia portrayed itself as an antithesis of

Western political models defining its political system as 'sovereign democracy'. Second, Russia reverted to traditional Soviet conspiracy theories in viewing the Serbian (in 2000), Georgian (in 2003), and Ukrainian (in 2004 and 2013–2014) democratic revolutions as Western-backed putsches directed against Russia's 'privileged interests' where the revolutionaries sought to integrate into the West. Third, Russia invested in the ideology of the *Russkii Mir* (Russian World), providing a group identity to Russian speakers and peoples who associate with Russian culture and language. As Russian and Soviet identities were irrevocably intertwined in the Soviet Union, it is not surprising that the *Russkii Mir* also mythologized the Soviet past. This is especially the case with the 'Great Patriotic War' and the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol's status as a 'hero city' (Plokhy 2000), the return to Soviet views of Ukrainian nationalists (understood as being somebody with any political identity that was pro-Western, not only just referring to the extreme right) as 'Nazi collaborators' and 'fascists', the downplaying of Soviet crimes against humanity (while playing up Joseph Stalin as a great war leader), and the defence of Soviet historical monuments. Fourth, Russia invested in special forces, which became known as the 'green men' because they lacked country insignia, and militarily intervened in Georgia in 2008 and in the Euromaidan. Although Russia initially only opposed NATO enlargement, it subsequently turned against the European Union in 2009, when of the Eastern Partnership for Soviet Republics was unveiled. Yanukovych's decision under intense Russian pressure to turn away from the EU Association Agreement (Leschenko 2014:57, 210–15, 218) sparked the Euromaidan that led to the overthrow of Yanukovych and Russia's interventions.

Competing Nationalisms in Ukraine before and since the Euromaidan

Ethnic Ukrainian versus East Slavic Nationalisms[2]

Competing nationalisms in Ukraine did not descend into conflict in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine until after the Euromaidan. The Crimea's major history of over six hundred years from the mid-thirteenth to the late eighteen centuries was within a Tatar Khanate and the Ottoman Empire, not as is wrongly often stated in the Russian Empire, and was part of Soviet Russia from 1922–1954 when it was transferred to Soviet Ukraine; in other words Russia's 170-year rule of the Crimea could be compared to Ukraine's sixty years. In 1990–1991, the republican authorities held a local referendum that supported the upgrading of the region to an autonomous republic. As Kyiv and the Crimea debated the parameters of their division of powers, separatism grew in the peninsula; unlike in neighbouring Moldova and the Caucasus, however, it was resolved peacefully and the region did not become a frozen conflict. In 1994, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States signed the Budapest Memorandum guaranteeing Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty in exchange for Ukraine's disarmament of the world's third largest nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union (Synovitz 2014). Four years later, Russia and Ukraine signed a treaty recognizing their borders and a twenty-year basing agreement for the Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port of

Sevastopol. In 1998, the Crimea adopted a constitution that recognized Ukrainian sovereignty followed by the lower and upper houses of the Russia parliament ratifying the 1997 inter-state treaty.

Violence during the Euromaidan came about because of *who* was in power and *why* they wished to remain in power. Kuchma had been director of the large Pivdenmash (Yuzhmash in Russian) military industrial plant in Dnipropetrovsk and a member of the senior Soviet *nomenklatura*; in this, he was similar to other post-Soviet leaders such as Georgian and Azeri presidents, Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev. Yanukovych was different as he was from neither the senior *nomenklatura* nor the Communist Youth League (*Komsomol*) with which it had been allied in the 1990s. Yanukovych grew up in the working-class coal-mining and industrial region of Donetsk, which, although a major economic centre, had never provided cadres for Soviet Ukraine's ruling elites. As a teenager, he spent two terms in prison for violent robberies. During the 1990s, the Crimea, Donetsk, and Odesa had been the most violent regions of Ukraine when former Soviet assets were divided, huge fortunes were made, and new business clans were built; in these three regions criminality, business, and politics fused into closely connected nexuses. Rampant violence against criminal and business leaders and members of rival criminal gangs continued until the late 1990s in Donetsk.

The Party of Regions was launched in 2000–2001 with the support of Donetsk Governor Yanukovych integrating former Soviet industrial directors, new oligarchs, criminal figures, and Russian and Soviet nationalists (Kudelia and Kuzio 2015; Kuzio 2014a; Osipian and Osipian 2006). The Party of Regions parliamentary faction included eighteen organized crime leaders, according to the head of parliament's committee on organized crime (Moskal 2013), and its deputies led the way in violence in parliament (Shukan 2013). Criminal bosses in the Party of Regions, such as Yuriy Ivanyushchenko, and influential party leaders such as Oleksandr Yefremov and Mykhaylo Chechetov against whom criminal charges have been laid, provided resources for Donetsk separatists, according to the former head of the Ukrainian government's Bureau to Fight Corruption (Chornovol 2014). Close ties between criminal groups in the Donbas and Crimea were long evident in Crimean Prime Minister Sergiy Aksyonov, local leader of the Party of Russian Unity, who was head of the Seylem criminal 'Brigade' in the 1990s where he had the criminal nickname 'Goblin' (WikiLeaks 2006, 2007).

Yanukovych's four-year presidency had increased inter-regional and regime–civil society tensions through the imprisonment of opposition leaders Yulia Tymoshenko and Yuriy Lutsenko, incessant attacks on ethnic Ukrainian identity and language, massive corporate raiding of the state and budget, and agreeing to a host of Russian demands such as adopting the Russian position on the highly sensitive 1933 artificial Soviet famine (which a large majority of Ukrainians throughout the country describe as a genocide), and extending the Black Sea Fleet base agreement to the middle of the century. The construction of extravagant and lavish palaces for President Yanukovych and the repression of the opposition suggest that he was planning to remain in power indefinitely.

In the 2015 elections Yanukovych would have been seeking a second term in office that he believed he needed to fend off potential criminal charges and ensure

he and his allies continued to control their assets. Putin also cannot countenance leaving office for similar reasons. In 2004, Kuchma had no interest in using violence as he was leaving office after two terms. Euromaidan protests began against the government decision to turn away from a European Union Association Agreement and then expanded to include protest against a wide range of issues and becoming, as in the Arab Spring, a 'Dignity Revolution'. Yanukovych, who has never admitted that he engaged in election fraud, viewed the Euromaidan protests as a replay of the Orange Revolution, which he always believed had been a Western-backed conspiracy to deny him the presidency. Yanukovych and the Russian leadership similarly believed the Euromaidan was a Western-backed putsch against a legitimately elected president.

During the Yanukovych presidency, increased support was provided for police special forces such as the Berkut, who became notorious during the Euromaidan, and the Yanukovych administration received financial and security support from Russia. Vigilantes were first witnessed on the national level during the 2004 elections when they were used by the Yanukovych election campaign and became more visible during Yanukovych's presidency when they were used for election fraud and corporate raiding of businesses. Vigilantes were prominent during the Euromaidan when they undertook abductions, torture, and killings of protesters. Some of these vigilantes, such as the Oplot (Bulwark) paramilitary group from Kharkiv, joined the separatists and Donetsk People's Republic 'President' Oleksandr Zakharchenko is an Oplot officer.

Soviet and Post-Soviet Anti-Nationalist (Fascist) Discourse

Another factor that increased inter-regional tension in Ukraine was the return to Soviet era anti-nationalist (fascist) discourse. In Donetsk in 2003, during Viktor Yushchenko's visit to the city as part of the following year's election campaign, billboards were put up showing him giving a Nazi salute with a pun on 'Our (*Nashi*) Ukraine' similar to Nazi's (*Nashisti*). In the 2004 elections, the Yanukovych campaign fused anti-Americanism with anti-nationalist (fascist) discourse directed against Yushchenko and his Ukrainian-American spouse. Communist Hryhoriy Kryuchkov and Future Minister of Education Dmytro Tabachnyk published a book on the threat of fascism in Ukraine, where 'fascists' were defined in the Soviet manner as members of the opposition in their entirety and included those who had supported the Orange Revolution (Kryuchkov and Tabachnyk 2008). Anti-nationalist (fascist) rhetoric grew during Yanukovych's presidency with 'anti-fascist' rallies increasingly used to mobilize his electorate ahead of the 2015 presidential elections.

Rhetoric by the Ukrainian and Russian authorities against Euromaidan protesters depicted them in a Soviet ideological manner as 'extremists', 'fascists', and far-right nationalists in the pay of the West.[3] With Russian television viewed by a majority of Ukrainians in the Donbas and the Crimea, such heavily laden rhetoric found adherents among populations who believed the Euromaidan was a 'fascist' putsch financed by the West.

Xenophobia and Ukrainophobia on Russian television inflamed inter-regional and inter-state tensions where 'fascists' and 'Nazis' were anybody who spoke the Ukrainian language, wore and held Ukrainian national symbols, and supported Ukraine's territorial integrity, and unity. A commonly heard refrain is of Russians telephoning their friends and business acquaintances in Ukraine and asking them how they can live in a country over-run by 'fascists'.[4] Massive propaganda onslaughts on Russian television (Goble 2014; Sukhov 2014) have been described as '[t]he most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare' (Hoyle 2014).

In this context, it is important to note that the Soviet and post-Soviet usage of the term 'fascist' had nothing in common with a Western political science definition because it was broadly applied. In the Soviet Union, the terms 'bourgeois nationalists' and 'Nazi hirelings' were applied to national communists, liberal dissidents, and far-right nationalists. In the post-Soviet era, 'fascists' were those Ukrainians who supported Ukraine's integration into Europe (as opposed to the CIS Customs Union and Eurasian Union) and backed the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan (Kryuchkov and Tabachnyk 2008). In the post-Soviet world, 'fascists' were deemed to be those Ukrainians who did not see their country as belonging to the *Russkii Mir* civilization and lying within Moscow's sphere of influence.[5]

Bearing the above in mind we can seek to understand the irony of Russian neo-Nazi parties establishing an 'anti-fascist' committee to fight Kyiv's supposed 'fascists' (Coynash 2014b). Putin's adviser Sergei Glazyev, who attended the founding of the 'Anti-Fascist Committee' in the Crimea, had earlier labelled President Petro Poroshenko a 'fascist'. Support from Russian fascist and neo-Nazi groups for Donbas separatists has been paralleled by support mobilized among European neo-Nazi and nationalist-populist parties who have allied with Putin in an anti-European Union coalition. They sent their 'observers' to the March 2014 Crimean 'referendum' and, together with extreme left deputies, voted against ratifying the Association Agreement with Ukraine on 16 September 2014 in the European Parliament. Opponents of Ukraine's European integration included twenty-three French Front National deputies (Coynash 2014e; Shekhovtsov 2014a).

Playing up the 'fascist' threat in Ukraine was an opportune way to mobilize Russian and Eastern Ukrainian political support and antagonism against the Euromaidan with the Ukrainian nationalist Pravyy Sektor (Right Sector) as the scapegoat. During the May 2014 Ukrainian presidential elections, Russian state television showed falsified Ukrainian Central Election Commission results with Pravyy Sektor nationalist leader Dmytro Yarosh in the lead; in fact, he received only 1% of the vote (Coynash 2014a). The Russian authorities in the Crimea have detained seven people for allegedly belonging to Pravyy Sektor, including film director Oleh Sentsov. In the October 2014 elections, the weakness of extreme right nationalism was evident in Ukraine when Pravyy Sektor and Svoboda failed to enter parliament.

The Outbreak of Violence

In the spring of 2014, vigilantes violently attacked pro-Ukrainian demonstrators in Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Odesa. In Slovyansk, separatists murdered Batkivshchina (Fatherland) party deputy Volodymyr Rybak and Euromaidan student activists Yuriy Popravko and Yuriy Dyakovskyy, whose bodies showed signs of torture during their abductions. Donbas separatist forces have been alleged to have committed countless crimes against humanity that have included beatings, torture, imprisonments, and killings, including shooting down a Malaysian civilian airliner (MH17) in July 2014 with the loss of three hundred lives (Amnesty International 2014; Human Rights Watch 2014; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2014; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2014). Russian and separatist leaders continue to deny their involvement in the shooting down of MH17 and Russian state-controlled media has blamed Ukrainian forces, a view upheld according to opinion polls by the majority of Russians.

Through the use of such violent action, Putin's strategy was to mobilize a Russian-speaking counter-revolution against the Euromaidan throughout eastern and southern Ukraine and detach 'New Russia' (the tsarist term briefly for eastern and southern part of this region but mistakenly used for its entirety) or foment a frozen conflict. The disintegration of the Party of Regions after Yanukovych fled from power resulted in a political vacuum in eastern and southern Ukraine that in the Donbas was filled by marginal Russian nationalist and pan-Slavic groups. Russia provided covert support through its special force 'green men', who took control of official buildings and transferred them to local separatists. Russia sent its political and military leaders to take control of the Donetsk Peoples Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR).[6] The origins of the violent Donbas conflict therefore lay in both domestic and external factors, which are difficult to separate.

In the so-called 'New Russia' separatist sentiment was only relatively high in the Donbas where it had the support of a third of the population; in the remaining six oblasts it stood at less than 10%. The Donbas also was similar to the Crimea in holding high levels of Soviet identity that whenever it has been present always constituted the most fervent levels of pro-Russian sentiment (Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies 2007). Russian plans to launch uprisings throughout 'New Russia' therefore failed and the separatists have only been able to secure military victories in Ilovaysk (August 2014), Donetsk airport (January 2014), and Debaltseve (February 2015) with the assistance of nine thousand Russian troops and Russian nationalist volunteers that have secured separatist control over half of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Running battles between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces in March–May 2014 showed how Kharkiv and Odesa were swing cities where the former eventually prevailed. In four other oblasts of 'New Russia' – Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, and Mykolayiv – there is very limited pro-Russian sentiment.

Conclusion: Post-Conflict National Identity and Relations with Russia

Conflicts change the national identities of countries, relations between the dominant nationality and minority groups, and attitudes towards neighbours. Russia's annexation of the Crimea and violent conflict in the Donbas will change Ukrainian national identity in three ways.[7]

The first is the implosion of the pro-Russian political camp – a consequence of Yanukovych's violent kleptocracy and Putin's military invasions. Ukraine's three pro-Russian political forces became marginalized (Party of Regions), lost their parliamentary representation (Communist Party), or are no longer based inside Ukraine (Crimean Russian nationalists). The 2014 parliamentary elections, which were held in all areas outside the Crimea and a third of the Donbas controlled by separatists, produced a pro-European constitutional majority. The Party of Regions switched its allegiance to Putin's Unified Russia party in the September 2014 Crimean elections and in the Ukrainian parliament they received 9% as the Opposition Bloc, a dramatic decline from 30% in 2012. The Communist Party, which had become a Party of Regions satellite, failed to enter the Ukrainian parliament for the first time.

The second impact will be on the growth of Ukrainian and Russian-speaking Ukrainian patriotism, indeed, Russia's annexation of the Crimea and military and covert intervention have unintentionally spread Ukrainian patriotism into Russian-speaking Eastern and Southern Ukraine because those who previously held ambivalent, passive, and mixed identities had to chose sides during a crisis. In the late 1980s, Western Ukrainians led Ukraine's drive to independence. Following over a decade of state and nation-building in an independent state, Western and Central Ukrainians voted for Yushchenko and participated in the Orange Revolution. Civic patriotism and ethnic nationalism grew during the Euromaidan, which was more widely supported across Ukraine than the Orange Revolution. The number of Russian-speaking Eastern Ukrainians who held a bifurcated Russian-Ukrainian identity (with Soviet or pan-Slavic overtones) has declined as Russia's interventions produced pressure upon individuals to take sides. This was particularly the case in Odesa and Kharkiv where pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian forces took to the streets in spring 2014 with the latter prevailing. Pro-Russian sentiment was never strong in other Russian-speaking regions of Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, and Mykolayiv. Many of the fifty volunteer National Guard battalions are composed of Russian-speaking Eastern and Southern Ukrainians and Pravyy Sektor leader Yarosh was elected to parliament in Dnipropetrovsk. They receive a large proportion of their military and non-military supplies from civil society groups in Kyiv and the Eastern Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Odesa. Some volunteer battalions and Pravy Sektor receive funding from Jewish-Ukrainian community leader, oligarch, and former Dnipropetrovsk governor Igor Kolomoyskyy. Ukraine's Russian-speaking Jewish community supported the Euromaidan and has repeatedly condemned Putin's misuse of the term 'fascist' (Kuzio 2014b).

Ukrainian patriotism and nationalism not only mobilized against pro-Russian local forces and Russia's interventions but also against the Soviet legacy because

history is a battleground for competing nationalisms in Ukraine. Pro-Western Ukrainian patriots and nationalists view Soviet and Communist memorials as tied to the ancien régime (i.e. Communist Party, Party of Regions) and Putin because of his espousal of Soviet and Russian nationalism. Since the Euromaidan, over four hundred monuments to Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin have been pulled down, the largest of which was in Kharkiv in September 2014. Soviet and Russian nationalists, including Putin, have defended Soviet monuments in Ukraine and other former Soviet republics.

The third factor will be poor relations with Russia. Until the Euromaidan and Russia's interventions, anti-Russian sentiments were confined to Western Ukraine, but these have now spread into other regions of Ukraine. A September 2014 poll found President Putin had the highest negative rating of any foreign politician among Ukrainians (75% with only 16% holding a positive view) (*Ukrayinska Pravda* 2014). Russia's interventions negatively affected trade and energy relations with Russia that were always tense; two crises in the winters 2006 and 2009 led to the disruption of gas supplies to Europe. The implacable nature of their energy relationship is evident in Ukraine importing cheaper Russian gas from Eastern Europe rather than directly from Russia.

More importantly, the second ceasefire negotiated in Minsk in February 2015 will not halt the conflict that will continue either in the form of a long-term simmering proxy war fuelled by Russia or an escalation towards separatists backed by Russian forces and equipment seeking to capture the port of Mariupol and Kharkiv, which Zakharchenko has outlined as his next military goals. President Putin has not achieved his strategic goals of a federalized Ukraine with the Donbas holding a veto over the country's domestic and foreign policies, Ukraine's return to Russia's sphere of influence by rejecting the goals of NATO and EU membership and regime change in Kyiv with a more pliant pro-Russian leader and government (Kuzio 2015). As former President Leonid Kuchma (2015), who negotiated for Ukraine in Minsk, revealed: 'We were actually given an ultimatum (by Putin): "If we don't accept its terms and stop any resistance, we'll cease to exist as an independent state."' This degree of the seriousness of the conflict has yet to be fully understood by the majority of European states.

Notes

[1] President Boris Yeltsin pursued a civic territorial identity for independent Russia in the 1990s, but this failed to find resonance among the Russian population (Hosking 1998; Tolz 2001). President Vladimir Putin's nation-building policies promoted an alternative neo-Soviet, ethnic and imperial-Great Power national identity that has been popular and has given Putin very high rates of popular approval.

[2] In Ukraine, prior to and since the Euromaidan, scholarly focus has been on only ethnic Ukrainian nationalism, especially the Svoboda (Freedom) party, whose voters are primarily based in the West of the country (Kuzio 2002a; Shekhovtsov 2011; Shekhovtsov and Umland 2014). Ukraine is a regionally diverse country with a civic, territorial identity inherited from Soviet Ukraine as well as ethnic Ukrainian nationalisms on the one hand and Russian and Soviet nationalism on the other. Scholars have largely ignored the latter two partly because they are more difficult to classify within theories of nationalism. Stephen

Shulman (2005), one of the few scholars to study different nationalisms in Ukraine, proposed a framework of 'ethnic Ukrainian' versus 'east Slavic' (incorporating Soviet, Russian, and Pan-Slavic Russian-speaking) nationalisms.

[3] In December 2013, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey R. Pyatt told me that President Yanukovych viewed the protesters as 'extremists' and he never understood their anger and the sources of their widespread support.

[4] I heard this in many places in Kyiv and was told this in October 2014 on the overnight train by a businesswoman from Odesa travelling from Kyiv. When visiting Moscow, her business partners would tell her that she did not understand the Ukrainian situation.

[5] Soviet nationality policies also promoted Russian chauvinism towards minority languages and cultures, especially Ukrainian and Belarusian, which were slated for Russification because of the closeness of their languages to Russian. Anna Fournier (2002) maps the resistance to the increase in Ukrainian language usage since 1991 as arising not because it constituted a threat to the Russian language but because a sizeable proportion of Russian speakers would not accept the change in language hierarchy in independent Ukraine where the former 'peasant' dialect (Ukrainian) had become a state language and Russian a national minority language.

[6] The DNR and LNR espouse an eclectic mix of Russian and Soviet nationalism, pan-Slavism (whereby the three Eastern Slavs are viewed as one 'Russian' people, a view promoted by President Putin, *Ruskii Mir*, Russian nationalist and neo-Nazi groups, and the Russian Orthodox Church. Donbas separatists have received support from Russian nationalists such as Dugin and nationalist groups such as the neo-Nazi Russian Party of National Unity, which take pride in Russian fascism (see Jackson 2014; Malfliet and Laenen 2007:41; Shekhovtsov 2014b; Umland 2008).

[7] The Crimea has also long experienced tension between Russian speakers and Tatars who seek redress for their 1944 deportation to Soviet Central Asia when half of their population died. The Party of Regions, Russian and Ukrainian Communist Parties, and Russian nationalists in the Crimea and Russia have long supported Stalin's charges of 'Tatar collaboration' during the Nazi occupation as justification for their deportation (see Kuzio 2011). The Tatars define the 1944 deportations as 'genocide' and have commemorated this each year in May until 2014 when, following Russia's annexation, the commemoration was banned. Repression of Tatars has grown since Russia annexed the Crimea and the unofficial Tatar parliament (Mejlis) has been shut down, its leaders banned from returning to the Crimea, and the local Tatar television channel closed (Coynash 2014c, 2014d, 2014f; Muižnieks 2014). Anti-Tatar feelings are deepened because they were politically allied to pro-Western Ukrainian political forces led by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko, and their leaders were elected to the Ukrainian parliament in October 2014 within the Poroshenko bloc.

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