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## Editorial

## Special section: Re-evaluating democratic revolutions, nationalism and organized crime in Ukraine from a comparative perspective. Introduction

The question of nationalism, civil society and protests has been a recurring theme in Ukrainian history in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. In Soviet Ukraine the major centers of dissent and opposition were in Western and Central Ukraine and these regions were the drivers to independence in the late Mikhail Gorbachev era. In the “Ukraine without Kuchma” and “Arise Ukraine!” protests of 2000–2003, that became the training ground for the subsequent Orange Revolution, Western-Central Ukraine again led the protests. During the 2004 Orange Revolution and 2013–2014 Euro-Maydan these two regions once again contributed to the protests that far outweighed their population size and economic clout in the country. This is the subject of the articles in this special section analyzing protests in Ukraine.

Throughout these periods of time in Soviet and independent Ukraine, Eastern-Southern Ukraine has been largely passive. When protests have taken place, such as in 1989 and 1993 by Donetsk coalminers, they were artificially organized by management, rather than being spontaneous movements, to apply pressure on Kyiv. Violent separatism in the Donetsk region in 2014 is an artificial crisis engineered by Russian covert support, as seen by the low numbers of protesters on the streets in comparison with those in the two democratic revolutions in Kyiv and through evidence provided by the Ukrainian and US governments. Public opinion polls have shown that a majority of Eastern and Southern Ukrainians are opposed to separatism, even in the Donetsk region where it has its highest support at 20 per cent.

The link between nationalism, civil society and protests has been under-theorized and often ignored by political scientists, more often in North America than in Europe where nationalism studies is more prevalent. In American political science journals nationalism is rarely analyzed and the major journals on nationalism (Ethnic and Racial Studies, Nations and Nationalism, National Identities, and many others) are published in Britain. Nationalities Papers, a pre-eminent journal in this field, is published in Britain on behalf of the Association for the Study of Nationalism (ASN) that holds its annual convention in Columbia University. American political scientists who have predominated in the field of studies of democratic cycles and revolutions have not integrated nationalism, national identity, civil society, revolutions and protests into their work. A long-running debate in the Journal of Democracy on the factors behind democratic revolutions completely ignored nationalism and national identity.

Nationalism and patriotism are not opposites, where one is bad, the other is good, as it is often misunderstood. Indeed, while Americans consider themselves patriots their neighbors and much of the world see them as nationalists. Nationalism presents itself in a wide variety of types: ethnic, civil, cultural and other forms, and can be promoted through every ideology from the left to the right. Ukrainian nationalists in 1917–1921 were for example both Socialists and monarchists. Nationalism, in fact, is present across the entire political spectrum and examples can be found as much on the left, for example, Scotland, Quebec, Cuba, and others, and among democratic parties; as well as on the right, as analyzed in this special section by Alina Polyakova in her article on the Svoboda (Freedom) nationalist party. Most theoretical and comparative frameworks of nationalism are intellectually inadequate as they associate “nationalism” with only right-wing Ukrainian nationalism, that is, Svoboda, while ignoring other far more dangerous and anti-democratic nationalisms in Ukraine (such as the Eurasianist Party of Regions, pan-Slavic groups, Crimean Russian nationalists and Soviet nationalism).

Academic discussions have also ignored the close ties between organized crime and these forms of non-Ukrainian nationalisms in Ukraine and Russia, which is analyzed in Kuzio's article. Viktor Yanukovich and the Donetsk clan, whose political “krysha” was the Party of Regions, integrated organized crime into its ranks and emerged from the second most violent region of Ukraine, after the Crimea, its other major stronghold. Yanukovich and the Donetsk clan did not emerge from the senior Soviet *nomenklatura*, as did the majority of post-Soviet leaders (the other source was dissident nationalists) but from a working class, coalmining backwater, lower positions in the Communist Party and organized crime. Donetsk and the Crimea were united by their Soviet identity and high levels of violent criminality in the 1990s. In March 2014, 82 out of 100 Crimean deputies from the Regions parliamentary faction supported the Russian annexation of the Crimea led by the former criminal

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boss and Russian nationalist Sergei Aksyonov (criminal name “Goblin”). Organized crime leaders in the Party of Regions hired the mercenary snipers who murdered protesters on the Euro-Maydan and provided assistance to the violent separatists.

Academic discussions are also misleading when using Rogers Brubaker's “nationalizing state” framework to explain the ideology of national democrats and nationalists by focusing only on ethnic Ukrainian variants (in a similar manner to only focusing on the ethnic Ukrainian nationalist Svoboda) while ignoring other nationalisms in Ukraine). The biggest “nationalizer” in Ukraine was the Party of Regions during Viktor Yanukovich's four-year presidency which sought to establish monopolies in every facet of life. Yanukovich and the Party of Regions sought to establish a Russian-speaking, authoritarian “nationalizing state” similar to Belarus, but with a criminal profile. In the end, their attempt to monopolize power in a regionally divided country led to the Euro-Maydan uprising that is analyzed in this special section by Irina Khmelko and Evgen Pereguda. Brubaker's “nationalizing state” framework is far more applicable to the Party of Regions than it is to Rukh, Our Ukraine or Svoboda, three political forces which never attempted and could not have monopolized Ukraine.

Academic studies of “fascist” influences and anti-Semitism in Ukraine and Russia, such as the workshop held at Columbia University in April 2013, almost always overlook Russian collaboration with the Nazis and Russian Nazi émigré movements such as NTS (People's Labor Alliance). These omissions are significant because all of these tenets of Russian nationalism have their place in the Vladimir Putin regime, the Crimea (where self-proclaimed leader Aksyonov leads the neo-fascist Russian Party of Unity) and within the Party of Regions. Russian nationalists, the Party of Regions and Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) continue to justify the genocide committed by Joseph Stalin against Crimean Tatars in 1944. While memory wars in post-Soviet Ukraine are often subjects covered in scholarly analysis, the same topic in Russia (where Putin has supported a growth in adoration for Stalin) is largely ignored. Stalin monuments were installed in different localities in Eastern and Southern Ukraine during the four-year Yanukovich regime, which mimicking Russia played up the ‘Great Patriotic War’ purposefully ignored Stalin's three year collaboration with Adolf Hitler in 1939–1941.

When organizing discussions of Russian and Ukrainian nationalisms, respectively, contemporary Russian nationalism, such as that exemplified by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and, of course, Putinism is to commit intellectual malpractice. Russian nationalism is playing blind to the half million Russian Vlassov army and also to Eurasianism, Stalinist national-Bolshevism, émigré Russian nationalists (such as the NTS); and while referring to Ukrainian sovereign territories as “Novorossia” (for example, in Putin's description of Eastern and Southern Ukraine). After the Euro-Maydan murders, illegal annexation of the Crimea and Russian covert backing for violent separatism in Eastern Ukraine, academic discussions and scholarly analysis of Ukrainian and Russian nationalisms should not ignore all of the aspects of the latter. This is especially the case in the light of Putin's regime increasingly described as fascist. Russian fascists have traveled to the Crimea and Eastern and Southern Ukraine to support separatists and the only observers who attended the Crimean March 16, 2014 referendum were from far-right and Nazi European parties.

The issue of relations with Jews has also been a blind spot in academic studies of nationalisms in Ukrainian and Russian nationalism. During the Euro-Maydan and Russian intervention Jewish organizations have stated that Jews living in Ukraine have little to fear from anti-Semitism which, according to Josef Zissels, Vice President of the World Jewish Congress and Chairman of Vaad (Confederation of Jewish Organizations and Communities), had not been growing. Jewish organizations in Ukraine have rejected Russia's offer of support and pointed to state sponsored anti-Semitism under Putin. Tens of Jewish-Ukrainian businesspeople, academics, religious leaders, journalists and cultural figures rejected Russia's justification for invading and annexing the Crimea in an open letter to Putin, republished as a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times*. Chief Rabbi of Ukraine Yaakov Don Bleich was a prominent speaker at Euro-Maydan rallies.

The Russian language, the language spoken by most Jews in Ukraine, was widely heard on the Euro-Maydan where self-defence units were multi-national. Three Jews (Alexander Shcherbatiuk, Josef Shiling and Evgeniy Kotlyar), two Georgians and an Armenian and a Belarusian were among the 102 who were murdered in January and February 2014. Pravyi Sektor (Right Sector), the nationalist organization vilified in the Russian media, gave a gun salute at the funeral of Shcherbatiuk, hardly the actions of anti-Semites. A Jewish ‘sotnia’ (company of 100 self-defense volunteers) was led by five former IDF (Israeli Defence Force) veterans. Jews also worked as medical volunteers and seventeen wounded protesters were sent to Israel to undergo medical treatment.

Similar relations between Russian nationalists, the Putin regime and Jews do not exist. Igor Kolomoyskyy, a prominent Jewish-Ukrainian oligarch, was appointed Dnipropetrovsk governor after the Euro-Maydan revolution and has fought against Russian-backed separatists. In contrast to the security of Jews in Ukraine, Crimean Tatars fear for their futures after the Russian annexation of what they see as their homeland. The torture and murder of Crimean Tatar Reshat Ametov in March 2014 and threats to ban the Mejlis (Tatar assembly) point to growing xenophobic and racist repression.

Ukrainian and Russian nationalisms differ with the former largely a defensive and liberatory political force in support of Ukrainian independence, in the USSR and independent Ukraine, while Russian imperial great power nationalism is of an aggressive, violent and chauvinistic nature. This is clearly seen in the weakness of civic nationalism in Russia, the manner in which Russian security forces undertook their brutal campaigns against Chechen separatists, the chauvinism directed at Ukrainian history, culture and language, annexation of the Crimea and fomenting of violent separatism in Eastern Ukraine. Ukrainians living in Russia, the country's third largest minority, have no rights.

The Putin regime clearly does not honor treaties and agreements it has signed, a reflection of the total absence of the rule of law in Russia, and does not respect Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russian television propaganda has been described by Western officials as akin to the worst years of the Cold War with diatribes depicting Ukraine as a failed state run by “fascists and anti-Semites”.

The Euro-Maydan was peaceful from the protesters side until the authorities undertook violent assaults against peaceful students on November 30, 2013 and only turned violent on the part of protesters following the dismantling of Ukraine's democracy transforming it into a dictatorship on "Black Thursday" (January 16, 2014). From then the security forces began using stun grenades, rubber and plastic bullets and hired mercenary snipers shot live rounds leading to 102 dead and over 1,000 wounded. In East Ukraine, counter-revolutionary pro-Russian separatists have never been peaceful; they either were armed by Russian "green men" ((GRU-*Glavnoe Razvedyvatelnoe Upravlenie* or Russian Main Intelligence Directorate) *spetsnaz* without identifications of any kind on their uniforms) or used baseball bats, iron bars and other objects to violently attack pro-Ukrainian demonstrators. A pro-Ukrainian local deputy from the Batkivshchina (Fatherland) party in Slovyansk was tortured and murdered, Ukrainian and foreign journalists have been abducted and tortured and members of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) military mission were abducted and paraded as "NATO spies".

This Ukrainian special section with articles on protests, Ukrainian nationalists and the links between the Party of Regions and violent crime provides a new look at fields either neglected or misconstrued in contemporary Ukrainian studies, studies of nationalisms in Ukraine and Russia and these respective fields in political science. We welcome further contributions from other scholars into this still under-developed field of contemporary Ukrainian studies.

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