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Ternopil State Medical University, Ukraine

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The Ideology of the Euromaidan

Dr. Serhiy Kvit

Minister of Education and Science, Ukraine

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Abstract

The revolutionary events known as the Euromaidan fundamentally restructured Ukrainian political life and advanced the culture of politics. As with the Orange Revolution, the roots of the Euromaidan can be found in its idealism: the Ukrainian people's desire to create a state wherein the ideals associated with freedom, in their broadest sense, are respected. The dedication to ideals was more than political rhetoric; it was almost religious. This level of dedication helps explain the powerful motivation of those who took to the streets in mass protest. This paper examines the important differences between the Maidan of 2013-2014 (the Euromaidan) and the Maidan of 2004 (the Orange Revolution). A description and explanation of the stages of revolution in relation to the Euromaidan are provided, followed by a discussion of ideological consensus between political parties. The historical basis of the Maidan symbols are also examined, with further deliberation on how these symbols were used.

Keywords: ideology, Euromaidan, Orange Revolution, Ukraine, symbols

Introduction

The revolutionary events known as the Euromaidan fundamentally restructured Ukrainian political life and advanced the culture of politics. As with the Orange Revolution, the roots of the Euromaidan can be found in its idealism: the Ukrainian people's desire to create a state wherein the ideals associated with freedom, in their broadest sense, are respected. The dedication to ideals was more than political rhetoric; it was almost religious. This level of dedication helps explain the powerful motivation of those who took to the streets in mass protest.

From Orange Revolution to the Euromaidan

There are a number of important differences between the Maidan of 2013-2014 (the Euromaidan) and the Maidan of 2004 (the Orange Revolution). The first difference is that during the Orange Revolution, the major "battlegrounds" were the cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv; ten years later, the Euromaidan spread to encompass all of Ukraine's regions. Secondly, the protests in 2004 focused on free and fair presidential elections. The Euromaidan is far more complex and its demands broader, essentially calling for the reformation of the entire political system.

Thirdly, in 2004, the protesters' demands focused heavily on an individual, one Viktor Yushchenko. Hopes were pinned on him as the primary agent who would affect positive change. In 2014, the protesters wanted more than "new faces in;" they called for a complete overhaul of the system of government. The notion that one person, or even a small group, can bring about meaningful change was relegated to the past. People began to appreciate that change starts with them.

Fourth, the Orange Revolution succeeded after less than a month of protests. The Euromaidan has already lasted more than three months at the time this article was written. This sustained protest, which was expected to peter out—but has not—was unprecedented in Ukraine's 22-year history as an independent, post-Soviet state.

Fifth, the political elites governing Ukraine in 2013 were significantly different from the first generation of post-Soviet administrators who had been raised in Soviet times. Sixth, the Euromaidan saw a broad ideological consensus emerge among a broad range of social groups with different demands. That consensus led, in late 2013, to the collapse of anti-Ukrainian propaganda based on Soviet myths and stereotypes.

Stages of Revolution

It is commonly accepted to trace the origins of the Euromaidan to November 21, 2013, when it became clear that the regime of President Victor Yanukovich and the government of Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, did not, in fact, plan to sign the association agreement with the EU—despite having spent the last three years promising Ukrainians that they would. At the eleventh hour, the government backed out. Respected journalist Mustafa Nayyem, a Ukrainian

with Afghan and Iranian roots and a mainstay of the political talk show circuit, published an appeal on his Facebook page calling for demonstrations to support the signing of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement. His appeal “went viral.” Peaceful demonstrations ensued. Some fifty thousand people took to the Maidan in Kyiv and rallies were held in other cities.

At this stage, Ukrainian students, who, in their teens and twenties, had never known life under Soviet rule and supported European integration, were the most vocal participants. This stage of the Euromaidan ended under cover of darkness in the early morning hours of November 30, 2013, when *Berkut* (“Eagle”) riot police brutally beat students and dispersed their encampment in Kyiv’s main square. The following day, over one million protesters took to the streets of Kyiv. The protest was no longer just about European integration. It was against a government that attacked its own citizens, and defenceless youth at that. During this second stage, local Euromaidans appeared across Ukraine. Tensions continued to escalate as riot police attacked the Maidan.

The transition from the second to the third stage of Maidan began on January 16, after the so-called “dictatorial laws” (a package of legislation curbing freedom of speech and curtailing democratic rights) were passed by the pro-presidential majority in parliament¹. The protests stopped being strictly peaceful. People donned helmets, put on bulletproof vests and took up shields and bats. Molotov cocktails and stones began flying, massive tire fires were lit and improvised trebuchets appeared. In response, for the first time in independent Ukraine, the government unleashed a nefarious campaign of murder, beating, torture, arrests, and kidnapping across the country. Police hunted down civic activists, journalists, and medical workers. But the intensification of political repression evoked only greater indignation from society.

The physical territory of the Maidan in Kyiv was transformed into a fortress with barricades and watchtowers. People started referring to it as “Sich” – the term for command and administrative centers the Cossacks created in times of war. The Maidan was a miniature state onto itself, with autonomously functioning security, food delivery, medical, and even educational systems. It was a territory of freedom, free of corruption and oppressive police presence. The term “revolution of dignity” was used to describe this phenomenon of self-organization.

Numerous civic communities *cum* organizations sprang up, including the Maidan Self-Defence, the Auto-Maidan (from “automotive,” mobile units of car owners that became the Maidan’s cavalry), “Ne Zlyi Maidan” (the phrase has a double meaning in Ukraine: “Don’t anger Maidan” and “Don’t betray Maidan”), Euromaidan SOS, Maidan Open University, the Hospital Guard, the “Maidan” All-Ukrainian Association, the Civic Council of Maidan, the Civic

¹ Заява Києво-Могилянської академії щодо подій у Верховній Раді України 16 січня 2014 р. (Declaration of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy on the Events in the Ukrainian Parliament on January 16, 2014): <http://www.ukma.edu.ua/index.php/news/1112-zaiava-shchodo-podii-u-verkhovnii-radi-ukrainy-16-sichnia-2014-r>

Committee for Investigating Human Rights Abuses in Ukraine, and the “MaidanPost” Media Guard.

This explosion of civic mobilization led to the emergence of new leaders, most of them civic activists. These included Andriy Parubiy, Ruslana Lyzhychko, Volodymyr Vyatrovych, Tetiana Chornovol, Ihor Lutsenko, Dmytro Bulatov, Vasyl Hatsko, Andriy Dzyndzya, Victoria Sumar, Serhiy Zhadan, Dmytro Yarosh and many others. The Euromaidan had emerged as a powerful political force outside of and independent from the government.

Ideological Consensus

For the first time since 1991, there emerged a real, not just declarative, consolidation of opposition parties in parliament. Opposition leaders Vitaliy Klychko, Arseniy Yatseniuk, and Oleh Tiahnybok agreed upon their most important messages prior to joint press conferences. Although they differed on certain issues, the public perceived them as genuinely trying to work together and present a united position. *Batkivshchyna* (“Homeland”) a left-leaning party, *Udar* (Punch) more liberal, and *Svoboda* (“Freedom”) right-wing (these classifications are relative in the realities of post-Soviet politics) found common ground in their opposition to the government and desire to create a new state system.

The unification of their political messaging signified their desire to concentrate on an agreed-upon set of goals: the development of an effective state, civil society, and European integration. Promotion of their respective ideological positions was secondary. In this, the Euromaidan is reminiscent of the experience of the People’s Movement of Ukraine for *perestroika* (*Rukh*) in the late 1980s, and the *Nasha Ukraina* (Our Ukraine) coalition of 2002-2004.

When the All-Ukrainian Association “Maidan” was launched, many compared it to the Polish Solidarity movement. Its purpose was to create a broad popular movement whose goals were the return of the 2004 Constitution, transparent elections, and complete reformation of how the state functions. It is important to note that the Euromaidan movement emerged not as a result of conflicts between different regions of Ukraine, as touted by government propaganda, but due to a confrontation between the government and the governed.

Parliamentary parties were not the only ones involved in the Maidan. Extra-parliamentary parties, most notably the Democratic Alliance, were active as well. An important force emerged that called itself the Right Sector (a part of the Maidan Self-Defence), formed on the basis of several organizations, most notably *Tryzub* (“Trident”) and *UNSO* (Ukrainian People’s Self-Defence), both established in the 1990s.

On the Maidan, one would meet a variety of activists identifying themselves as nationalists, or as “the new left” (the latter not yet represented on the Ukrainian political spectrum), nationally conscious liberals, and simply “liberals,” as well as representatives of dozens, if not hundreds, of different associations. All together, they contributed to the “dialogue of freedom,” which was a fundamental characteristic of the Euromaidan.

Numerous civic organizations devoted to issues they felt were neglected by the state took to the Maidan. Ukraine's politicians were made to feel how demanding this broad civic movement could be. In addition to civic organizations, a lot depended on the will of the Maidan proper. During mass rallies held on the Maidan, individual citizens voiced their demands to political and civic leaders. On the Maidan stage, clergy representing different Christians, Muslims, and Jews prayed together.

Not only political differences, but also social and national barriers, became secondary on the Euromaidan. Ethnic Ukrainians waving their flags were joined by Crimean Tatars, Jews, Poles, Belarusians, Georgians, Armenians, and others. The legendary leader of the Crimean Tatar people Mustafa Dzhemilyev said he is proud that he is Ukrainian.

Not only were Russian-speaking Ukrainians welcome on the Maidan, but so were Russians and Russian flags. The Maidan organized a “flash mob” of umbrella-wielding protesters to support the Russian television channel “Dozhd” (“Rain”). Foreign diplomats, politicians, and journalists came out to the Maidan. Students, industrial labourers, farmers, business professionals, educators, artists, doctors, and office workers, from Kyiv and across Ukraine, stood on the Maidan. National and social revolutions were occurring simultaneously. These disparate groups were all united by the idea of overturning the status quo and creating a fair state in its stead.

The Euromaidan was ideologically friendly and open to everyone. There was no division based on language or ethnicity. Provocations aimed at exploiting LGBT issues failed repeatedly. On the Maidan, LGBT community leaders and the leaders of socially conservative groups found common ground². Many were surprised when the Euromaidan was supported by football fans, “ultras,” in all of Ukraine's regions. In cities controlled by the Party of Regions, the ultras protected peaceful protesters from provocateurs.

At the height of the anti-Maidan provocations, there were repeated attempts to exploit the issue of anti-Semitism. In response, the Euromaidan provided security guards³ to synagogues in Kyiv after reports that Jews were attacked. Leonid Finberg, the Director of the Kyiv-Mohyla Centre of Jewish Studies, criticized those Jewish community representatives who incited hatred. Vyacheslav Likhachev placed Euromaidan onto “the Ukrainian Jewish agenda”⁴ and later wrote

² Заява ЛГБТ-організацій в Україні щодо чергової спроби використання ЛГБТ для дискредитації Євромайдану (A Declaration of LGBT-Organizations in Ukraine regarding the latest attempt to exploit the LGBT issue to discredit the Euromaidan): http://lgbt.org.ua/ua/news/show_1046/

³ Євромайдан берет под охрану синагоги (*Euromaidan takes synagogues under its protection*): <http://eajc.org/page16/news42881.html>

⁴ Вячеслав Лихачев. Майдан: еврейская повестка дня (*Maidan: the Jewish Agenda* by Vyacheslav Likhachev): <http://eajc.org/page18/news42507.html>

the article “The Jewish Division of Ukraine’s Heaven’s Hundred.”⁵ Josef Zissels, head of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine, stated that he had not encountered any anti-Semitism at Maidan⁶ and his proclamation “For Your and Our Freedom” is historic in Ukrainian-Jewish relations⁷. It should not be a secret that Jews joined the ranks of the Maidan Self-Defence⁸.

Provocations aside, there was no anti-Semitism on the Maidan because there was no demand for it. Those responsible for monitoring anti-Semitism in Ukraine confirmed that fact. In the early days of the Maidan, one could hear the humorous slogan “Whoever is not jumping is a *moskal* (person from Moscow)” that people chanted as they jumped up and down to keep warm. This slogan quickly disappeared after Russian intellectuals appeared in Ukrainian media and on the Maidan expressing their support. The Maidan dissipated the myth of Ukrainians’ xenophobia. The “traditional” animosity of Ukrainians towards Poles was absent on the Maidan, where they stood side-by-side with Ukrainian “right wing radicals.” The Maidan proved to be the best way for resolving historical differences. There emerged a mutual respect between peoples who hoped to be together in a common Europe.

The Euromaidan rejected intolerance. This, of course, infuriated its opponents to the point of fanaticism. Examples of this can be found in the writings of Volodymyr Ishchenko, whose articles disparaged the Maidan from radical left-wing positions. He opposed the position of those leading Western intellectuals who supported the Euromaidan and appealed to “support Ukrainians and they can help us build a fairer Europe”.⁹ According to Ishchenko, the Yanukovich government in Ukraine may have been bad, but the opposition consisted of discredited politicians and the “neo-fascists,” so why change the government? In his opinion, Western intellectuals should not have supported the Euromaidan.

Instead of “European values,” which Ishchenko said were nothing more than an illusion, he proposed an alternative program: “Ukrainian progressive grassroots movements and civic

⁵ *Vyacheslav Likhachev*. The Jewish Division of Ukraine’s Heaven’s Hundred: <http://ejac.org/page34/news43797.html>

⁶ *Иосиф Зисельс*. Антисемитизм на Майдане – я не вижу того, о чем слышу (*Anti-Semitism at Euromaidan: What I Hear about, but Never Have Seen* by Iosif Zisels) : http://booknik.ru/context/litsa/antisemitizm-na-mayidane-ya-ne-viju-togo-o-chiom-lyshu/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=page_booknik

⁷ *Іосиф Зіссельс*. За Вашу і нашу свободу (*For Your and Our Freedom* by Iosif Zisels): <http://www.vaadua.org/news/iosif-zisels-vistup-na-narodnomu-viche-ievromaydan-pid-chas-dnya-gidnosti>

⁸ Еврейский герой новой УПА (Jewish Hero of the New UPA): <http://volnodum.livejournal.com/879170.html>

⁹ Support Ukrainians and they can help us build a fairer Europe // The Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/03/support-ukrainians-build-fairer-europe>

organizations do really need international support in defence of the urgent social-economic rights of impoverished Ukrainian citizens and in building their genuine political representation from below”¹⁰. His “progressive fanaticism” prevented him from understanding the root causes that led to the participation of all strata of Ukrainian society in the Euromaidan. Rich people, the middle class, and those living below the poverty line took part—not just “the impoverished” to whom he appealed in a tone reminiscent of Lenin’s demagoguery.

It is easy to find faults in Ukraine’s political and civic leaders, their actions or programs, particularly if one heeds the post-Soviet taboos and disinformation that have inundated Ukrainian social consciousness. But the Euromaidan brought the issue of national unity in the quest for an effective and democratic state to the forefront. Henry IV of France, likely borrowing the words of Michel de Montaigne, reminded his people that they are French first of all, whether they were Catholics or Huguenots was secondary. Although that sentiment was expressed centuries ago, a society’s ability to respect individual freedoms and rid itself of corruption is still determined on the national level, within the boundaries of independent nation states, and not on a global level.

The aforementioned ideological consensus does not mean that political competition has ceased. Ideological discussions continue. But the important thing is that Ukrainian liberals, right- and left-wing politicians and activists, as well as apolitical citizens, have become united in the struggle to establish a new and fair state. One of the Euromaidan’s enduring slogans is “*Razom – Syl’!*” (“Together, we’re a Force!”). A new civil society is being created. Everyone can find a spot on the Euromaidan’s barricades. In this way, political, inter-confessional, inter-cultural, and inter-ethnic dialogues continue on the Maidan. In general terms, this is the ideology of a new state’s formation.

Historical Basis of the Maidan’s Symbols

The Euromaidan is the continuation of the ongoing national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people. Declared in 1991, independent statehood did not mean the establishment of an effective state, and corruption grew to menacing proportions. All of the negative processes in Ukraine occurred at the same time Putin’s Russia embarked on its campaign to restore the “Great Russian Empire” within the boundaries of the former USSR. Information warfare against Ukraine, economic intimidation, the unpunished activities of Russian secret services and their Ukrainian “fifth column” agents directly undermined Ukraine’s independent statehood.

By pursuing these policies in its “near abroad,” the Russian government is trying to distract its own citizens from social problems that this very government cannot resolve. In terms of ideology, Putin’s system has tried to promote the idea of the *Ruskii Mir* (“Russian World”) among Ukrainians. This campaign has been largely unsuccessful, but has had destructive effects.

¹⁰ *Volodymyr Ishchenko*. Support Ukrainians but do not legitimize the far-right and discredited politicians!
<http://www.criticatrac.ro/lefteast/support-ukrainians-but-not-far-right>

The tenets of this new ideology are that Ukrainians and Russians are really one people who share a “common history,” the imperial “greatness” of the Russian Tsars, the “glory” of the Soviet period (particularly exploiting the ideological construct of the “Great Patriotic War”) and the “consolidating” power of Russian Orthodox Christianity (which is once again serving a repressive state system).

We have grown accustomed to ignoring the fact that the Second World War destroyed only one of the two most totalitarian systems Europe has known – German Nazism. But Soviet totalitarianism, or “Russian Communism,” to borrow a term from Kyiv philosopher Mykola Berdiayev, has survived. It continues along the same lines, today under the guise of “Putinism” with Tsarist-Leninist-Stalinist ideological underpinnings. It is a source of global concern because of its aggressive nature. Timothy Snyder has equated Nazism and Communism in the context of the Euromaidan as an ideological phenomenon. He has expressed concern over the Kremlin’s Eurasian ideology as totalitarian and neo-Bolshevik.

According to French intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy, all Europeans should feel themselves “Ukrainians.” Speaking on the Maidan in Kyiv, he said, “In Paris, there is the Bastille Square, which became the cradle of the French nation. You have the Maidan, where the Ukrainian nation is now being born.”¹¹ This statement is only partially true. Ukrainian independence didn’t fall from the sky in 1991. It was not the result of evolutionary processes within the USSR, but a result of the bitter struggle of many generations of Ukrainians. The Russian Empire attempted to discredit the names of those leaders who were symbols of our national liberation struggle. Ukrainians were labelled *mazepintsy*, *petlurivtsy*, and *banderivtsy* (after the names of historic figures Ivan Mazepa, Symon Petlura, and Stepan Bandera) in an extremely pejorative and demonizing sense.

“Glory to Ukraine! – Glory to Heroes!” became the Maidan’s slogan. It’s repeated constantly by representatives of different political ideologies in all regions of Ukraine. It was inherited from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). It is based on the idea that national and social liberation in Ukraine can be established only by creating “a Ukrainian Independent Unified State”. The concept of “the Ukrainian unified state” was critical in the 20th century when half of Ukraine, known as “Great Ukraine” was under Russia, and the western Ukrainian lands were, at different times, under Austria-Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Hungary.

The struggle for genuine independence resumed on the Euromaidan, and quickly adopted the ideological legacy, organizational, and structural forms of 20th Century Ukrainian nationalism, which is today performing an integrative function for society as a whole.

¹¹ Bernard-Henri Lévy : « Nous sommes tous des Ukrainiens » // Le Monde: http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2014/02/10/nous-sommes-tous-des-ukrainiens_4363410_3232.html?xtmc=poutine&xtcr

Andreas Umland, a researcher of contemporary totalitarian movements, erred when he relegated the above mentioned slogan to belong to “specifically nationalistic topics, symbols and slogans.”¹² It gained popularity not because it was repeated countless times from the Maidan stage and not because of some campaign of ethnic superiority. Its popularity stems from its association with the defiant spirit of a struggle against all odds. Actually, the people of Kyiv took up the slogan “Glory to Ukraine! – Glory to her heroes!” decades earlier during Gorbachev’s *perestroika*. It was first publicly pronounced by Vyacheslav Chornovil at Sofiyivska Square during a demonstration in 1989.

“Paranoid interpretations,” to borrow a term from Umberto Eco, are often verbalized. One such interpretation is the equation of the popular Euromaidan slogan “Ukraine above all!” and the Nazi slogan “Deutschland uber alles!” The researchers shouldn’t try to compare “apples and oranges;” instead, they could listen to the interpretation offered by Auto-Maidan speaker Serhiy Koba who on February 23 declared at the Maidan stage that his organization had gone into opposition to those people who a mere few days earlier were in opposition to Yanukovich, in order to oversee the new government’s activities. He called out to the masses gathered before the stage: “Ukraine!”, and Maidan replied: “Above all!” “That is what every official of the new government must remember,” – the speaker said, – “they must work for the interests of the state, not for their own pockets.” Like this one, all Maidan slogans have a social, not a discriminatory meaning.

The outstanding historian Norman Davies mentioned “a vexatious ideological trap,” in which the UPA and other participants of the Resistance movements against the Nazi in Eastern Europe found themselves, “as long as struggling for national liberty demanded it of them, to fight not only against Hitler, but also against Stalin”¹³. The latter, as we know, has the image – even today – of a great anti-fascist and the West’s ally in the Second World War. Unfortunately, many experts and politicians take a straight line view that if the UPA fought against the USSR, it should be considered a supporter of national-socialism, but this is completely absurd.

There are respectable works printed in English, by Orest Subtelny¹⁴ and Paul Robert Magocsi¹⁵ in particular, that testify that the UPA was established in 1942 as an army to fight against the Hitlerian occupation forces. The nationalistic resistance continued active struggle

¹² *Andreas Umland*. Is Tiahnybok a Patriot? How the Spread of Banderite Slogans and Symbols Undermines Ukrainian Nation-Building // Foreign Policy Journal: <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2014/01/01/is-tiahnybok-a-patriot-how-the-spread-of-banderite-slogans-and-symbols-undermines-ukrainian-nation-building/>

¹³ *Дейвіс Н.* Европа. Історія. – Київ, 2000. – С. 1064.

¹⁴ *Subtelny Orest*. Ukraine. A History. – Published by the University of Toronto Press in association with the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. – Toronto, Buffalo, London. – 1988. – p. 473.

¹⁵ *Magocsi Paul Robert*. A History of Ukraine. The Land and Its People. – Toronto, Buffalo, London. – University of Toronto Press. – 2010. – p. 679.

against Russian communism until the mid-1950s. Today, many descendants of participants or supporters of this movement have come to the Maidan.

The rebirth of symbols of national liberty was greatly advanced by the “Revolution on Granite” led by students in 1990. To wit, journalists from the *Vzgliad* (View) Soviet Union-wide progressive TV program promised the Ukrainian students that they’d pay special attention to national symbols in their coverage of the protests, but the production version of the report avoided the issue of symbols. Soon thereafter, at the beginning of 1990s, Yaroslava Stetsko thanked Vyacheslav Chornovil for promoting the UPA slogan. The Ukrainian dissident replied that this slogan unites various generations of those who struggle for Ukraine’s freedom.

The Euromaidan should be treated within the context of the Ukrainian people’s national liberation struggle. Its main value is unity in diversity. As it turned out, it is hard to formulate in brief what unites all the participants. It’s less about interests (everyone has his or her own) and more about all individuals striving to feel themselves a people in their own state. Thus the Euromaidan is often called a revolution of dignity. After 23 years of independence, Ukraine remains a state under threat, a fairly unstable country with a transitional society, depressed economy, high level of corruption, and blurred system of values.

By resorting to the slogan “Glory to Ukraine! – Glory to Heroes!” the Euromaidan undertook to defend and develop the Ukrainian state. Accusing Maidan activists of extremism is either a provocation or an incompetent statement¹⁶. Indeed, after February 20, when the number of persons killed in Kyiv street fighting during an offensive by the Maidan Self-Defense went past one hundred, the slogan gained a special meaning, in particular among the media. The Maidan called them Heaven’s Hundred. The Heroes of the Maidan died for Ukraine. Europeans should remember that those Heroes were also defending European values. The fighters of Heaven’s Hundred struggled heroically, as their predecessors did as well.

Two Opposing Symbols

To counter the bright, polyphonic symbols of the Euromaidan, to enable ideological confrontation, special anti-symbols were used by the Maidan’s enemies. The best known of these was, as should have been expected, of imperialist Putinite origin. This anti-symbol was the so-called “Georgian Ribbon.” It derived from the defunct Tsarist Order of St. George the Victor, and claimed to symbolize a warrior’s courage and a particularly Russian patriotism. At the same time, it resembles the so-called “Guardian Ribbon” of the Soviet period. Production and distribution of this anti-symbol began in 2005, and yet took place in many countries, with broad Russian backing.

¹⁶ *Mychailo Wynyckyj*. Response to Washington Post article by Keith Darden and Lucan Way: <https://euromaidanpr.wordpress.com/2014/02/15/response-to-washington-post-article-by-keith-darden-and-lucan-way-2/>

This marketing vehicle does not have anything in common with honouring the memory of the Second World War heroes who really contributed to the victory over Nazism. The Georgian ribbon was not popularized in the Soviet period. The main task of this campaign is to find a simple symbol capable of ideologically uniting the military “greatness” of the Russian Empire before and after 1917, and to give its supporters a mass and affordable way to identify themselves in public as Russian chauvinists. Now this symbol is being exported to Ukraine under the pretext of combatting the “fascistic” orientation of Maidan.

In point of fact, however, the Georgian ribbon is just a symbol of the anti-humanism and totalitarianism of the Russian Empire, neither discredited by postwar denazification, as was done in Germany, nor criminalized and prosecuted at Nuremberg. Its task is to mark visually the territory occupied by the aggressive idea of the “Russian World,” which is a reincarnation of communism and fascism, threatening the ideas of humanity, national self-identification, freedom, and civil society. This restored imperial symbolic is opposed by the symbols of national liberation, including the slogan “Glory to Ukraine! – Glory to Heroes!”

The Euromaidan should be considered not a threat to Russia, but rather a threat to Russian autocracy. In January 2012, the well-known Russian intellectual Yuriy Afanasiev, speaking at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, said that Russia’s main problem is not Putin himself, but the autocracy (Putinism), which must be fully terminated. All Russian intellectuals, who spoke from the scene at Euromaidan and commended it to media, are aware of that. Now, participants of opposition meetings in Moscow chant “*Bandu Het!*” (“Away with the Band!”) in Ukrainian. This is in fact an export of democracy, of Ukrainian national and political culture.

The Russian intervention has most clearly displayed the Euromaidan as an ideological phenomenon. Ukrainians have shown themselves surprisingly united. Timothy Snyder, one of the most capable Ukraine scholars, was somewhat astounded by this “unification of the unconnectable”¹⁷ (that is, the collaboration of different groups with seemingly opposite ideological orientation and social foundations). That’s how it was on the Maidan until the regime of Viktor Yanukovich was taken down, so it happened again later, when Russian occupiers invaded Ukrainian territory. These events did not bring on an anti-Russian hysteria. They showed, indeed, that Ukrainians are very diverse, but at once united. Now our views are very

¹⁷ *Timothy Snyder*. Ukraine: The Haze of Propaganda // The New York Review of Books: <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/mar/01/ukraine-haze-propaganda/>

broad or even universal. Only a mature nation can afford such a display. The occupiers arrived too late.

Dr. Serhiy Kvit is the Minister of Education and Science in Ukraine. Dr. Kvit is a prominent commentator on educational issues, has been rector of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy since 2007. From 2002-07 he was Dean of the Social Studies Faculty. He founded the Kyiv-Mohyla School of Journalism in 2001 and became president of the Media Reform Centre set up to initiate open debate and promote more transparent media and government. He served as chair of the Consortium on University Autonomy from 2005-10. Dr. Kvit has published several books and numerous articles. He has a PhD from the Ukrainian Free University in Munich and also holds a doctorate in philology. He was the recipient of a Fulbright scholarship to Ohio University in the US, a Kennan Institute scholarship at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC and a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) scholarship at the University of Cologne.

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