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The Ukrainian bourgeois revolution: from opposition to the nation-state

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of territorial integrity. With the Ukrainian society on the brink of civil war and division, we all have to prove to the world and, first of all, to ourselves that we are Ukrainians! Our country is Ukraine! The Ukrainian state is united and indivisible! Ukrainian people are willing and able to take responsibility for their country's future!

It pains me to know my country has become a pawn in this great geopolitical game. I agree with Vaclav Klaus, the former president of the Czech Republic that

Conservation in Ukraine's geopolitical situation objectively existing as an independent and simultaneously prosperous nation, has a long shutter speed and requires considerable diplomatic tact as Ukrainian politicians and from foreign partners. Unfortunately, ... this country is drawn to irreconcilable conflict that can only end in tragedy. Ukraine had a choice: East or West, then beat it. It seems this is what happens. (<http://www.institutvk.cz/politicke-komentare/politicky-komentar-ivk-c-19-k-situaci-na-ukrajine>, DATE)

Today it is important to not so much focus on the clash of interests and points of view, but also how to find and identify all possible points of the common interest in preserving the unity of Ukraine to prevent civil war and bankruptcy. It is necessary to Ukrainians, to Russians, and to Europeans and Americans as well. It is necessary to not only preserve the stability of the system of global security and geopolitical balance in the contemporary world, but to preserve and strengthen the importance and inviolability of: (a) international norms and principles; (b) agreements and obligations; (c) freedom of choice and democratic development; (d) the value of communication; and (e) ethics and tolerance. That is why the main means of neutralizing threats are political negotiations and it is imperative to seek all possible ways to solve problems in the dialogue.

'Recent events in Ukraine have shown how important proper communication is in today's society and issues of tolerance', said Ukrainian MP and philanthropist, Alexander Feldman at the fifth World Communication Forum (World Communication Forum) in Davos, which was held on 11–12 March 2014. It was no accident that in the forum 'Tolerance for the Future' was announced.

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The Ukrainian bourgeois revolution: from opposition to the nation-state

(1) "The Ukraine situation"

- (a) This situation is far from a catastrophe. I think it is a confrontation – a result of the deadlock in communication and the inability of both sides to resolve the conflict. Ukraine cannot have constructive negotiations of social forces, which are important for building

a balance of interests, harmony and trust. Without these, there can be no strengthening of nation-building.

- (b) The traditional political spectrum is not as important here. In the public sphere, confrontation is not seen from the major sides – the business elite of the East and the rest of Ukraine. That politicians turn out to be incapable of working toward a resolution is not new to Ukraine; it is simply a part of its political culture. On the other hand, business could prove to be more constructive.

It seems this bargain was held at the last moment, which explains this mysterious fact. The morning after the signing of an agreement with the opposition, Yanukovych disappeared and the Party of Regions deputies began to join the opposition en masse. This resulted in the formation of a constitutional majority within the parliament which began to make legitimate decisions. This happened because the big businesses of Eastern Ukraine realized what awaited them. So it was not a surprise when the mayor of Kharkiv, Kernes, who also disappeared for a few days, returned to the troubled Kharkiv and announced that “we are all citizens of Ukraine”. Also, the mayor of Lviv appeared on the main TV channels and in fluent Russian declared that “we are all in the same boat”. In this regard, it can be said that a bourgeois national revolution occurred in Ukraine and that a formation of an ordinary bourgeois nation-state has begun. The Russian actions in Crimea only accelerated this process.

- (c) There is another kind of transparency – in the public sphere, the parties are engaged in self-arousing rhetoric through mutual provocations. As a result, the situation gets out of control and becomes irreversible, which is exploited by the radicals on both sides. If agreements really are being made, then it is done behind the scenes and without any guarantee of those agreements being followed through.
- (d) The difference is that in Russia negotiations are not being conducted at all; there is no one to negotiate and no one with whom to negotiate. The public political activity in modern Russia has a pretense of projects of the power that be without whose explicit or implicit participation no issues can be solved. In Ukraine, there are players and sides, but few are capable of negotiating.
- (e) The situation is not ripe enough. The opposition has spilled onto the streets due to the overt duplicity of Yanukovych’s government, which is openly blackmailing both the European and the Russian sides. The decisive factor is time. Everyone should calm down and collect their thoughts and strength. Eastern Ukraine does not want a split and does not want to be under Russian control. But Western Ukraine’s leaders are failing to take control of the East and the Crimea.

(2) The message and the media

- (a) In general, and in the long run, this is true. But in Russia, even Ukrainian “Westerners” (“zapadentsy”) see Russia not so much as a “necessary evil in the form of a bad neighbor”, as an important market for exports (e.g. of food and labor) and imports (e.g. of raw materials and fuel).
- (b) The Ukrainian situation is not the subject of my special professional interests, especially in social networks. Regarding the media, there are glaring differences in the coverage of events by various media. A larger part of public TV channels exclusively shows the negative, which comes off as gloating, especially when they are emphasizing the “stability” in Russia. “Novaya Gazeta”, “Echo Moscow” and “Rain” are a few sources of regional media that are more objective and unbiased.
- (c) See answer to the previous question. But revolutions and mayhem are rarely addressed in the Russian media – unless it is quoting Putin.

- (d) In general – simplistically biased. The nature of the simplification depends on the nature of the bias.
 - (e) The situation in and around Ukraine provides material for analysis of “cross-communication” that is quite revealing, especially if coverage in Europe is included. However, probably Al Jazeera delivers the most objective information.
 - (f) These and other slogans are nothing more than rhetorical techniques of inspiring the supporters and provoking the opponents. They (thank God) do not have enough illocutionary force. Deep down, everyone understands that “to live like in Europe but to work like in Russia” is a utopian fantasy.
 - (g) I actually saw the posters from Euromaidan and most memorable was the transcription of the word Moscow as abbreviations: Moskalska, Ordynska, Sataninska, Kroviva, Vorovska and Adska. It is a great example of poster trolling.
- (3) Information war?
- (a) Of course, this is worth discussing. However, as in all informational wars (as I recently wrote in your journal), cross-communication is intended to enable third parties. The mutual swordplay between Ukraine and Russia is aimed not only to manipulate public opinion in its respective country, but to activate and provoke Europe and the West in general for profitable (for the initiators) words and actions.
 - (b) In this regard, what comes to mind is the actions of the Russian opposition in support of the protests, including a trip to Kiev by the opposition newsmakers.
 - (c) In information warfare, the threshold for ethics and morals is extremely low, if it exists at all.
- (4) Metaphors and symbolism
- (a) An informational media background must be playing a role in this, e.g. the Olympic Games in Sochi and the sporting history of V. Klichko. Sports always provides for a vivid metaphor. This is not evidence of lack of seriousness. Rather, it is a result of the journalists and commentators wanting to find vivid and applicable images, similes and analogies. If the Ukrainian situation were developing on the backdrop of the World Cup or the anniversary of Gogol, then there would be different metaphors and symbols.
 - (b) The modern protest movement finds bright and successful symbolic installations, performances and happenings; one of these acts is mentioned in the question above. The portrait of Tymoshenko on the Christmas tree is a multifaceted reminder of the “gift” to Yanukovich for the new year of 2014. Also, there is the association with Snegurochka (Snow Maiden). And the mirrors being held up against the police is simply a super creative form of protest. However, due to the recent events surrounding Crimea, another series of metaphors have emerged: The Sudetenland, Munich, Westerplatte.
 - (c) This does not matter. Legvold could have come out with the initiative to rename the Ukrainian events as “the revolution of orange fruit”, especially considering that the naming goes back to actual oranges. There have been attempts to name the events in the Arab world with different colors (e.g. hyacinth or azalea), but “Arab Spring” caught on. Discourse itself chooses successful names.
- (5) The role of social media
- Yes, social media and ultimately all online technology is very important, especially in terms of forming public opinion and motivating the parties. The Ukrainian case only

confirms this. Because of this form of communication, protests are mobilized within a matter of hours or even minutes.

(6) Memory studies

Collective memory does not play a key role but it is significant. Traditionally, the surplus labor forces in western Ukraine emigrated to the West, where they saw more opportunities for self-realization. The western Ukrainians were actively involved in the Holocaust and the Holodomor (“Hunger-extirmination”)... The famine of the 1930s... Stalin’s camps... The rule of Brezhnev’s Dnipropetrovsk’s clan in 1964 to 1981... The televised broadcast of the cutting off of gas supplies to Ukraine by the highest official of Gazprom (at that time, Medvedev)... This collective memory manifests itself differently to this day, forming stereotypes, myths... Rethinking this historical experience, if at all possible, will not happen for a long time.

(7) A matter of comparison

The overall dynamic of the protests is fairly standard and familiar in history: a motive made public; the ruler’s legitimacy called to question; the news picks up the story; attention is attracted. A tragic event – victims. More attention; supporters are mobilized. Finally, an open confrontation and conflict. Nothing new. Except for communication tools...

(8) Freedom of expression

There are enormous differences. Russian control over the media is deeper and harsher.

(9) Language politics

- (a) The language issue is fairly insignificant. The situations are similar to that in Latvia and Estonia. Big business is Russian-speaking, but it does not want to be in Russia – it wants to be in a detached wagon and in a separate carriage. In short, they do not want to learn the “national language”. And the solution to the problem would be to develop cultural autonomy. But the political elite is not ready for this, fearing the repression of more influential Russian-speaking groups. Language is the last trump card of the administrative authority, so they are playing it.
- (b) No. See above for a detailed answer. This is more of linguistic nationalism.
- (c) I do not know of any such debates in Russia. In Ukraine, such debates are ongoing: in the Parliament, at the regional level, in the media... S. Shuster’s talk show alone must count for a lot!

(10) Intercultural communication

I already answered the question about the role of collective memory. I would also add that the collective cultural environment of Ukraine has always been a source of “heresies” for the Russian autocracy and orthodoxy: Catholic heresy, Jewish heresy and so on. However, liberal values were traditionally formed (as they were in Europe) among the cultural elite (in St Petersburg and Moscow). The Soviet past has not been conducive to the formation of personally responsible self. Both Ukraine and Russia are equally characterized by irresponsible intolerance.

(11) Serious matters and humor

As Dostoevsky said, laughter is the truest manifestation of a soul. At what and how a person laughs can give away their personality against their will. Humor, satire and laughter in general are powerful tools and very sharp methods of consolidation (we laugh together,

so we have common views and values) and opposition (as the subject of ridicule). Laughter is the emotion of triumph – a celebration of shared values and norms, and failure of those being ridiculed. These are clear measures of identity. That which is not subject to ridicule is holy and significant for the carriers of this culture. Therefore, it is important to measure the moral sense of laughter and its relevance.

(12) The “Ukrainian situation” as lifeworld

Cross-national conflicts do not practically exist at the level of everyday experiences. Confrontation and the formation of identities is the result of active public communication and symbolic politics. This was well described in its time by R. Brubaker.

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News coverage of the Crimea: who is setting the public agenda?

Introduction

American foreign policy and the news coverage of Russia’s incursion into the Crimea continue to focus on economic sanctions on Russia including actions directed at specific Russian citizens or parties perceived as having a hand in Russia’s acquisition of Crimea. This “only our way” US policy has received widespread news and pundit coverage by a media who largely advocate the government line as they did during the Bush Wars. Against this backdrop, let me offer you the following considerations.

According to Cohen, McCombs, Shaw, and others, internal media organizational pressures and external sources form media agendas. Media agenda-setting occurs at two levels: media inform us of what topics are important and, at the second level through message framing, they affect what we think about topics, thus creating a public agenda. In theory, the public agenda then influences policy agenda. However, in the Crimean case, I suggest the inverse; that is to say, US policy and actions are setting the public agenda through the complacent and apparent uninformed mainstream media.

In this case, economic sanctions as a solution equate with the analogy of attempting to find lost car keys during the evening in a parking lot under floodlights and hoping that the keys will be found in the light, never considering that the keys may be on the ground in the dark. I guess one might expect that the USA would place all of its efforts in the only perceived effective option available or at least highly valued by many in America, money. Of course, President Obama and other politicians continue to attempt to insult Russia into withdrawing from the Crimea through their sacred rhetoric and exhortations of American exceptionalism – just more