

When the Muses are not Silent: Intellectuals' and Artists' Responses to the Ukraine-Russia Conflict and post-Maidan Developments in Ukraine

Convened by Yuliya Yurchuk (Prisma Ukraïna Visiting Fellow 2018)

The workshop is dedicated to the question of the position of intellectuals in Ukraine in relation to the war in the east of the country and specifically to the role of historians, writers, and artists with regard to the production of discourses on the Ukraine-Russia conflict and the post-Maidan situation in Ukraine.

After the end of the mass protests in 2014, new tendencies can be observed in the formation of new discourses in political, intellectual and artistic fields. Intellectuals and artists face a difficult and (not already) theoretical question on whether they can stay neutral and detached from turbulences that shatter the worlds they are living in. Many scholars, media specialists, writers and artists took open activist position and became active participants in the military conflict. Even if they do not participate directly in the battlefields many of them see their professional activities as weapons in the war which is often described as the "war of narratives", "hybrid war," or "information war".

The workshop brings together scholars of different disciplines who give fresh insights on the situation in Ukraine, from both national and local perspectives, taking into account different actors in the field of politics, academic history, media, and art.

9:30 – Welcome and Introduction (Yuliya Yurchuk, Andrii Portnov, Ewa Dąbrowska)

10:00 – 11:00 Session 1. Post-Maidan Ukraine. Main Tendencies in Identity and Memory Politics.

Chair: Sophie Lambroschini

Valeria Korabliova (University of Basel). Away from a non-nationalizing state: the exigencies of war or a missed opportunity?

The presentation tackles nation-building and nationalism in contemporary Ukraine, while discussing apt theoretical tools for their comprehension. Arguably, for the most part of its post-Soviet history, Ukraine has been a non-nationalizing state, where authorities opted for accommodating diversity and avoiding tensions. However, within the recent turmoil, some nationalizing policies started being introduced, which split the

society along this barricade. An ever-increasing need for a proper vocabulary and nuanced approaches rather than taking sides in the debate seems crucial in the context.

Viktorija Sereda (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin). Overview of Ukrainian citizens' attitudes to the past in a comparative perspective 2013-2017

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break

11:15 – 12:45 Session 2. History Writing before and after Maidan. National and Local Perspectives.

Chair: Jan Behrends

Andrii Portnov (European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder / PRISMA UKRAÏNA Research Network Eastern Europe). Historians and History-Writing after the Maidan.

The presentations focuses on the professional activities of Ukrainian historians after Maidan. Main questions discussed are the challenges of history-writing in the country which is in the middle of the war, ethical and practical problems the historians currently face. The discussion also traces the continuities and disruptions in history-writing in relation to the traditions inherited from the past.

Yuliya Yurchuk (Forum für Transregionale Studien, Berlin, and Södertörn University, Sweden). Historians in Times of Trouble: new History-Writing Projects in Ukraine after 2014.

In the face of Russia's references to history to justify and legitimize the annexation of Crimea and the support of pro-Russian "separatists" in the east of Ukraine, some Ukrainian historians started their own initiatives in response to Russian information activities. Those historians act either in the framework of state initiatives, realized by the Ministry of Information and the Institute of National Remembrance, or on an individual basis and even in opposition to state policies. The presentation will focus on the *Likbez* project which brought together historians of the Institute of History of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

Oksana Myshlovska. Dealing with the difficult pasts across the former imperial border: transitional justice and memory politics in Pidvolochysk and Volochysk.

The talk discusses national approaches to "dealing with the past" adopted as of the late perestroika period in Ukraine encompassing investigation of "blank spots" of history, including the crimes of the Soviet period, rehabilitation of victims of mass repressions

and approaches to justice. Then it explores different trajectories and mutual influences in “dealing with the past” during the post-Soviet period in two communities situated in the former borderland area between the Austria-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire and then interwar Poland and the Soviet Union - Pidvolochysk and Volochysk. In particular, the talk focuses on the role of local historians in the processes of “dealing with the past”. The talk will attempt to conceptualize interdisciplinary connections between the fields of dealing with the past which includes the right to know, the right to justice, the right to reparation and the guarantee of non-recurrence, memory studies, and conflict transformation.

12:45 – 13:45 Lunch

13:45 – 15:45

Session 3. Art and Media before and after Maidan

**Chair: Ewa Dąbrowska, Prisma Ukraïna – Research Network Eastern Europe
Oleksandr Zabirko (Ruhr-Universität Bochum). A War for the Better Past: Political Visions in Post-Soviet Counterfactual Histories.**

As one of the most popular types of speculative fiction, the “alternative” or “counterfactual histories” constitute a literary genre, in which one or more historical events occur differently than in the historical record. While in the Western fiction the literary models of time travel and counterfactual history function as the elements of the unreal “secondary world” and thus construct a distance between the fantastic and the mundane, contemporary Russophone authors exploit the generic conventions of fantasy or science fiction in order to suggest a continuity between fiction and reality. Being omnipresent in various media, this aestheticized, counterfactual reality captivates its consumers and is arguably capable of substituting the real world, thus making it possible to read and interpret current geopolitical conflicts (like the war in Donbas) through the prism of speculative fiction. Focusing on geopolitical and social modeling in post-Soviet speculative fiction, the paper claims that the images of the Other, the archaic communal structures and the transformations of historical time provide here an aesthetic ground for a large patriotic consensus of a community united by common resentment.

Alexandra Yatsyk (Uppsala University). Friendlies? Representations of the Donbas region people in post-Maidan art in Kharkiv.

The presentations addresses the events of so-called “Russian Spring” in Kharkiv in 2014-2015 and social and political changes brought into the city by the Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs’) flows due to the war in Eastern Ukraine, that have re-sharpen debates on the markers of belongingness to or excluding from the national and regional political communities, as well as on the semantic points of their intersections and conflicts. In particular, it focuses on the ideational spaces of perceptions, representations and narratives on “friends and foes” as they were expressed in art projects and activities took place in Kharkiv and the Donbas region in recent years.

Mariia Terentieva (Cambridge University). Ukraine's Digital Civil Society Against Russian Propaganda: Whose Story Will Make History?

The propagandist narrative of the 'failed' and 'illegitimate' Ukrainian state, actively spread by Russia-controlled media outlets following the Maidan Revolution, has facilitated Russian invasion of Crimea and contributed to the outburst of the military conflict in the east of Ukraine. Yet, unexpectedly, the answer to Russian propaganda came not from Ukrainian state, but from Ukraine's civil society: in March 2014, young Ukrainian journalists and students from Mohyla School of Journalism created digital civic initiative StopFake.org, fact-checking and debunking Russian propaganda and disseminating refutations to the territories uncontrolled by Ukrainian government. While Walker and other adepts of structuralist approach look at the military conflict in Ukraine through the prism of actions of the large geopolitical actors such as Russia, the European Union, and the United States, – the case study of Ukrainian grassroots digital fact-checking project illustrates the benefits of constructivism, which recognizes the agency of Ukrainian people in acting upon the so-called Ukrainian crisis. The case study of Ukraine's 'digital civil society' showcases how new media can be used not only to challenge the state (as we witnessed in the case of the Arab Spring) but rather to support the state when necessary for the public good, turning pro bono professionals and ordinary citizens, who support digital civic initiatives by donating money or volunteering, into active participants of the state-building process in post-Maidan Ukraine.

15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00 Final Discussion

Biographical notes:

Andrii Portnov is Professor of Entangled History of Ukraine at European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder and the Director of PRISMA UKRAÏNA Research Network Eastern Europe. **Andrii Portnov** is a historian of modern Ukraine, Russia and Poland. He is the initiator of the Berlin-Brandenburg Ukraine Initiative. Portnov specializes in intellectual history, historiography, and memory studies in Eastern and Central Europe. He has been a Guest Lecturer at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin since 2012. In 2017 he was a Guest Professor at the SciencesPo Lyon. In 2015, he was awarded the Baron Velge Prize and conducted a series of lectures as International Chair for the History of the Second World War at the Free University of Brussels. In 2014-2015, he was an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam. In 2012-2014, he was a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. He is a co-founder and co-editor of the Ukrainian intellectual web portal www.historians.in.ua. In the years 2007-2016, he lectured or conducted research at Basel, Cambridge, Frankfurt Oder, Geneva, Helsinki, and Vilnius Universities, as well as at the Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam, the Centre d'études des mondes russe, caucasien et centre-européen (CERCEC) in Paris, and Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna.

From 2006-2010, he was Editor-in-Chief of the academic journal *Ukraina Moderna*.

Andrii Portnov graduated from Dnipropetrovsk (MA in History) and Warsaw (MA in Cultural Studies) Universities. He obtained his PhD in 2005 at the Ivan Krypiakevych Institute for Ukrainian Studies. His publications include the books *Histories for Home Use. The Polish-Russian-Ukrainian Triangle of Memory* (in Ukrainian, 2013; Yuri Shevelov Prize); *Historians and their Histories. The Faces and Images of Ukrainian Historiography in the 20th Century* (in Ukrainian, 2011); *Ukrainian Exercises with History* (in Russian, 2010); *Between "Central Europe" and the "Russian World"* (in Ukrainian, 2009); *Scholarship in Exile. The Scholarly Activity of Ukrainian Emigration in inter-war Poland 1919–1939* (in Ukrainian, 2008; Jerzy Giedroyc Prize).

Viktoriiia Sereda is a Research Fellow at Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. She is a Professor (Dotsent) in the Department of Sociology at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in L'viv. She was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research

Institute where she worked on the “Mapa Ukraine” project. In 2011-2015, she headed the project “Region, Nation, and Beyond: An Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Reconceptualization of Ukraine,” co-funded by the Danyliw Foundation.

Valeria Korablyova is professor of philosophy at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and Uris Fellow at the University of Basel. Her research interests include post-soviet transformations and nation-building in Ukraine and East Central Europe, which invoked a number of related projects in international institutions (Stanford University, iwmm, and others). In 2017-18 she is teaching a course at the University of Basel titled “*Untimely nation: Ukraine in East Central Europe*”, while being also a guest professor at the Charles University.

Yuliya Yurchuk is the Prisma Ukraïna Visiting Fellow 2018 in the Forum für Transregionale Studien and a post-doctoral researcher at Södertörn University. She defended her doctoral dissertation “Reordering of reordering of meaningful worlds: memory of the organization of Ukrainian nationalists and the Ukrainian insurgent army in post-soviet Ukraine” at Stockholm University in 2015. Her ongoing research deals with memory and religion in Ukraine and with historians’ responses to Ukraine-Russia conflict, funded by Baltic Sea foundation. She specializes in memory studies, nationalism in East European countries, and post-colonial studies. Her recent publications include *special volume on memory of organization of Ukrainian nationalists, in Journal of Soviet and post-Soviet Politics and Society, 3:2, 2017* (co-edited with Andreas Umland); “*memory politics in contemporary Ukraine. Reflections from the post-colonial perspective*” forthcoming in *memory studies* (co-authored with Barbara Törnquist-Plewa); *reclaiming the past, confronting the past: oun-upa memory politics and nation-building in Ukraine (1991-2016)*, in *war and memory in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, ed. Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko, Palgrave Macmillan memory studies, 2017.

Oleksandr Zabirko (*1983) studied Literature, Linguistics and Political Science at the University of Luhansk (Ukraine) and the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany). Currently, he works at the Slavic Department of the Ruhr-University Bochum and is a member of the Research Training Group “Literary Form” (University of Münster). His current research (doctoral thesis) examines the models of space and political order in

contemporary Ukrainian and Russian prose. He has taught various courses in Ukrainian and Russian literatures at the University of Münster and the Ruhr-University Bochum.

Alexandra Yatsyk is Visby Visiting Researcher at the Uppsala Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Sweden. She obtained PhD in Sociology at Kazan Federal University, Russia and served as a visiting fellow or a lecturer at the University of Warsaw (Poland), the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna (Austria), University of Tartu (Estonia), University of Tampere (Finland), George Washington University (DC, USA) as well as at the Center for Urban History of East-Central Europe at L'viv (Ukraine). She is an author and editor of works on post-Soviet nation building, sports and cultural mega-events, biopolitics, art, and refugee crisis among those are co-authored books *Lotman's Cultural Semiotics and the Political* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), *Celebrating borderlands in a Wider Europe: Nation and Identities in Ukraine, Georgia and Estonia* (Nomos, 2016), *Mega-Events in Post-Soviet Eurasia: Shifting Borderlines of Inclusion and Exclusion* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), *New and Old Vocabularies of International Relations After the Ukraine Crisis* (Routledge, 2016), and *Boris Nemtsov and Russian Politics: Power and Resistance* (Ibidem Verlag&Columbia University, 2018). Her articles have appeared in, among other outlets, *Slavic Military Review*, *Demokratizatsiya*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *International Spectator*, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, *Sport in Society*, and *Nationalities Papers*.

Mariia Terentieva is a doctoral candidate in Slavonic Studies at the University of Cambridge, where she explores digital civic initiatives for the public good in post-Maidan Ukraine and the emergent culture of what Mariia calls 'public self-service', which aims at filling the gap in provision of public services when the state fails to deliver. Mariia was trained as a media scholar at Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv (Master of Arts in Journalism) and the University of Cambridge (Master of Philosophy in Screen Media and Cultures) and has also undertaken a training in political science at Harvard University as a visiting student. Mariia's recent publications include 'Where Broadcast and Digital Cultures Collide: The Case Study of Public Service Media in Ukraine' in the peer-reviewed academic journal 'Digital Icons'; 'Attention Please! Exploring Attention Management on Wikipedia in the Context of the Ukrainian Crisis' (in co-authorship with Jon Roozenbeek) in *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Social Informatics* at Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford; and

'Russian Television in the Information Warfare between Ukraine and Russia in 2014' in the peer-reviewed academic journal *Obraz*, 2(17), 2015.