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Soviet and Russian anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism and re-Stalinization

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ABSTRACT

The term 'fascist' has been misused by both the Soviet totalitarian system and Russian authoritarian nationalist militocracy to such an extent that it is detached from scholarly understanding and openly manipulated for political purposes. In Vladimir Putin's Russia World the term 'fascist' is manipulated even further by political technology and massive state control of television that spews Ukrainophobic and anti-Western xenophobic propaganda. The article investigates a hitherto under-researched field of Tsarist, Soviet and Russian continuity in the denigration of 'Ukrainian nationalism' that goes back as far as the early 18th century. The article focuses on the Soviet and post-Soviet eras by showing how the growth of Russian nationalism, 'conservative values' and anti(Ukrainian)nationalism has taken place during specific periods that have combined re-Stalinization through the glorification of Joseph Stalin and downplaying and ignoring of his mass crimes against humanity with anti-Western xenophobia. Putin's re-Stalinization is therefore in line with a tradition that requires domestic and external enemies to sustain the authoritarian nationalist militocracy.

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'How can you urge an anti-terrorism coalition if you inspire terrorism right in front of your own door? How can you talk peace and legitimacy if your policy is war via puppet government? How can you speak of freedom for nations if you punish your neighbor for this choice? How can you demand respect for all if you don't have respect for anyone?' (President Petro Poroshenko's speech to the United Nations, September 29, 2015).

'Rendering comprehensive support to the Russian World is an unconditional foreign policy priority for Russia ... we will keep enthusiastically defending the rights of compatriots, using for that the entire arsenal of available means envisioned by international law.' (Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, November 5, 2015).

Russian campaigns against Ukrainian separatism and nationalism stretch as far back as the 1709 Battle of Poltava where Ukrainian Cossack forces led by Hetman Ivan Mazepa forged an alliance with Sweden and were defeated by the Russian Empire. For the last three centuries the themes of 'betrayal' and Western governments behind a Ukrainian conspiracy to weaken Russia have been at the center of Ukrainian–Russian relations. In this discourse Ukrainians have been positively defined if they have supported the Tsarist, Soviet and Russian hierarchy of nationalities with Russians the elder brother (and have been disparagingly called Little Russians by Ukrainian patriots) and those who disagree with the hierarchy who have been defined as 'agents of Austria,' 'bourgeois nationalists' and 'fascists.' Those loyal to the hierarchy of Tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet nationalities policies accept Russia as the 'elder brother.' They strongly believe that Ukrainians are forever 'brotherly peoples' in close union whether as a gubernia in Tsarist Russia, Soviet republic, or as a dominion in the

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Commonwealth of Independent States, accepting Ukraine's junior role in the *Russkii Mir* (Russian World) (Wawrzonek, 2014) and opposing the country's European integration. These Ukrainians are likely to hold Soviet identities and up to 2014 they represented a majority in the Crimea and Donbas. Ukrainians who do not accept the Russian hierarchy of nationalities policies and seek Ukraine's future in Europe are the 'betrayers' who have turned their back on the Russian 'brotherly people' and since World War II, have been disparaged as 'bourgeois nationalists' and 'fascists.' The mirror image of Ukrainians who accept the Russian hierarchy of nationalities and Vladimir Putin's Russian World have been and continue to be depicted as 'Little Russians' who have little Ukrainian national consciousness, for example, such as a former Soviet Ukrainian Communist Party leader Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, or 'Sovok's' – short for *Homo Sovieticus*.

Ukrainians in the Soviet and Russian worldview have never been independent and sovereign actors but only the conspiratorial pawns of conspiracies by the Swedes (1709), Austrians in World War I (Wolkonsky, 1920; Bregy and Obolensky, 1940), Nazi Germany in World War II, Western and Israeli intelligence agencies during the Cold War and the US, democracy promotion foundations since 1991 and the EU since the formation of the Eastern Partnership in 2009. Conspiracy theories remain deeply ingrained in anti-Western post-Soviet political forces such as United Russia and the Party of Regions and Viktor Yanukovych has always been convinced that the Orange and Euromaidan revolutions were Western conspiracies to prevent him from taking power in the first instance and remove him from power in the second (Kuzio, 2011). Putin has a pathological fear of revolutions since he was stationed in the GDR where he witnessed people power overthrowing the Communist regime in the late 1980s (Ambrosio, 2007; Silitski, 2005). Putin told the UN that the Euromaidan capitalized on 'discontent of the population with the current authorities' and 'the military coup was orchestrated from outside,' which then 'triggered a civil war as a result,' thereby blaming Western governments, not Russia, for the ensuing conflict (Putin, 2015).

A majority of Western scholars of Russia have downplayed Putin's Russian nationalism and ignored his chauvinism towards Ukrainians and other peoples. Chaisty and Whitefield (2015, 172) believe Putin 'is not a natural nationalist.' Western scholars have paid little attention to how national identity explains the different outcomes of transitions in Ukraine and Russia with the former a democracy and the latter an authoritarian nationalist militocracy (Brudny and Finkel, 2011). Ignoring or downplaying ideology and nationalism in analyses of Putin disable the scholars to come to grips with the evolution of his political system from soft authoritarianism in the early 2000's to a hard authoritarian nationalist militocracy (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2003, 2009) grounded in 'conservative values' and Eurasianist xenophobia and messianic views of Russia (Laruelle, 2008; Shlapentokh, 2014; Engstro, 2014). Putin has backed the reburial of White Russian leaders since 2005 when Anton Denikin was brought to Russia and successfully reunited the Russian Orthodox and émigré Russian Orthodox Churches in 2007. Putin receives inspiration from White émigré writers, such as the nationalist and fascist publicist Ivan Ilyin (Barbashin and Thoburn, 2015) who, like Alexander Wolkonsky (1920, 160), believed 'There is no doubt as to the Austro-German origin of the legend of the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation.' Putin's White émigré ideological sources never considered Ukrainians to be a separate people and therefore they should not be an independent state. This long historical record of Russian and Soviet thought and discourse views Ukrainians as unable to be autonomous actors. Dissidents in the Soviet Union and democratic revolutions in Ukraine were allegedly funded and manipulated by Western intelligence agencies and governments, operating through democracy promoting foundations and international organizations like the EU. There has been a continuity of thought and article of faith in Tsarist Russia, the USSR and Putin's Russia that Ukrainian nationalists have always been paid by foreign powers that have harbored anti-Russian intentions (Barbashin and Thoburn, 2015).

This article argues that conservative counter-liberalization in the Leonid Brezhnev and Putin eras has drawn on the mythology of the Great Patriotic War and Generalissimo Stalin and led to re-Stalinization in the USSR and Russia and re-Sovietization in Putin's Russia. Taken together, these factors have fanned Ukainophobia through accusations of 'bourgeois nationalism' and 'Nazi hirelings' in the USSR and 'fascism' in the pay of the West in contemporary Russia and the Donetsk and Luhansk separatist enclaves. Putin was socialized in the Brezhnev era and therefore, as somebody who believes the disintegration of the USSR was a tragedy, his reference points for building contemporary Russia are not surprisingly the conservatism that flourished and Russian nationalism that was permitted under Soviet leader Brezhnev.

Soviet and Russian ideological tirades against 'Ukrainian nationalism' therefore go together with glorification of Stalin and in the contemporary era fundamental disagreement with Ukraine's de-communization (Motyl, 2015) and commemoration of the Holodomor as a major Soviet crime and genocide against the Ukrainian people. In 2009–2012, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev headed a Presidential Commission of the Russian Federation to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests and in August 2009 sent an 'address' (a form of demand and threat rather than a friendlier open letter) to President Viktor Yushchenko. In the 'address,' Medvedev (2009) claimed that: 'Russian–Ukrainian relations have been further tested as a result of your administration's willingness to engage in historical revisionism, its heroization of Nazi collaborators, exaltation of the role played by radical nationalists, and imposition among the international community of a nationalistic interpretation of the mass famine of 1932–1933 in the USSR, calling it the "genocide of the Ukrainian people."'

The term 'fascism' is used on many occasions in this article but has nothing in common with Western political science definitions of the term. 'Fascism' was a misused and abused term in the Soviet Union and continues to be in contemporary Russia. In both cases it has incorporated all shades of political opinions, ranging from national communists through to liberal democrats and nationalists in Ukraine; who oppose the Soviet Stalinist-Brezhnevite and Russian designation of Ukrainians as a branch of the Russian nation with Russians being the 'elder brothers'; do not support Ukraine's place within the Russian World and instead back Ukraine's integration into Europe. In Ukraine, those who accept these tenets and the Soviet and Russian hierarchy of nationalities possess Soviet identities and lived primarily in the Crimea and Donbas.

In this article, Soviet and Russian anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism is analyzed over 3 sections (for Tsarist origins of Ukrainophobia see Riabchuk in this special issue). The first section investigates the origins of anti-Ukrainian nationalism in the late 1920s with the rise of Stalin to power, ending of the indigenization campaign, repression of national communists, Holodomor and Great Terror. These reverses in support for the growth of Ukrainian national identity and mass repression took place alongside a return to Tsarist Russian historiography and revival of a hierarchy of nationalities in the eastern Slavs with Russians designated as the 'elder brother.' The second section investigates the use of anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism in the post-Soviet contemporary era in Ukraine and Russia and analyzes its sources and internal contradictions. The third section explores Russia's information war and political technology as an element of Putin's hybrid war against Ukraine in 2014–2015 and the manner in which it fanned pernicious lies and hatreds which in turn fuelled vicious combat, huge civilian losses and human rights abuses.

1. Soviet anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism and re-Stalinization

Attacks on Ukrainian nationalism in 1928–1932 began during the revision by the Soviet state of its attitudes towards national communism and during the rehabilitation of the Russian Empire, Russian nationalists, military leaders and Russian historians (Brandenburger, 2001, 280). From the mid to late 1930s the Soviet regime increasingly pursues a blurring of Soviet and Russian identities and Russian nationalism with Soviet patriotism and drawing its inspiration from Russian historical themes. The Russian people become the 'elder brother' and 'leading people' through the 'wartime restoration of an ethnic hierarchy' (Brandenburger, 2001, 287).

Ukrainian historian, a social democrat, and political leader Mykhaylo Hrushevsky, fell victim to this re-direction in Soviet nationalities policies when he was reclassified in the early 1930s as a 'bourgeois historian' and his views were branded as 'national-fascist' (Yekelchuk, 2004, 16). World War II, when Russian great power nationalism was fully rehabilitated, depicted Ukrainians of all ideological persuasions, apart from supporters of Stalin, as 'fascist nationalists' (Yekelchuk, 2004, 39). Anti-nationalist tirades targeted Ukrainian historians and political leaders, Ukrainian military formations from the Cossacks to the present that had fought for independence, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and Ukrainians who celebrated 'the struggle for independence' (Yekelchuk, 2004, 31, 50, 54, 56–57). Attacks on Ukrainian nationalism and glorification of Russian nationalism 'came down to re-educating the peoples of the USSR to identify with the Soviet present and the Russian imperial past' (Yekelchuk, 2004, 71).

From the 1940s, Soviet attacks on Ukrainian nationalism increasingly targeted western Ukrainians who, as in the Russian Empire, were seen as 'contaminated' and different to Russophones and Sovietophiles in eastern and southern Ukraine. 'Banderites' was simply a modern term for older derogatory depictions of Ukrainian nationalists such as 'Mazepintsy' and 'Petliurites.' In the Russian Empire the choices open to Ukrainians were 'to face persecution as "mazepintsy", self-effacement as "little Russians", or contempt as "khokhols"' (Shkandrij, 2011, 284). Demonization of Ukrainian separatism in the second half of the nineteenth century rested on similar contemporary Russian stereotypes of Ukrainians, with Putin reminding the US President that they did not possess the attributes of a genuine 'nation.' If Ukrainian independence is artificial it must be propped up by the US, NATO and EU in order to weaken Russia (Shkandrij, 2011, 290).

Throughout the 1940s through to 1953, members of the Soviet leadership Andrei Zhdanov and Lazar Kaganovich sought 'To carry through the liquidation of bourgeois nationalist distortions in the history of Ukraine' and the 'cleansing' of Ukrainian culture and educational institutions (Yekelchuk, 2004, 78). Nevertheless, even during the late Stalin era, Soviet Ukrainian readers would send protests to newspapers criticizing these Soviet nationalities policies and historiography that looked up to the Russian elder brother and down at the Ukrainian peasant bumpkin. Meanwhile, underground nationalist organizations printed and distributed leaflets and brochures throughout the 1940s and early 1950s condemning Soviet nationalities policies and Russian chauvinism towards Ukrainians. In the 1940s the underground Ukrainian nationalist movement fought militarily and through propaganda for over a decade against Nazi and Soviet forces and was one of the most powerful partisan movements in Europe (Burds, 1996, 112 and Statiev, 2010, 44, 106).

A respite from Russian chauvinistic depictions of Ukrainians came following Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 secret speech and under Soviet Ukrainian Communist Party leader and national communist Petro Shelest. But, he was deposed in 1971 after being accused of 'national deviationism' and was followed by what was described as a 'pogrom' of Ukrainian dissent, culture and scholarship by the biggest purge in any Soviet republic since the Stalin era. In 1972–1989, during Soviet Ukraine's rule by Communist Party leader Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, Soviet nationality policies pursued a chauvinistic and paternalistic attitude toward the Ukrainian language and culture that reflected the Little Russian character of those who had come to power who paid ritualistic homage to the 'Great Russian elder brother.' 'Ethnic Ukrainians were thus pressed into the task of exorcising Ukrainian separatist nationalism' on behalf of Moscow and the Shcherbytsky era began with widespread repression that continued through to 1987 (Beissinger, 1988, 84). After visiting Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainian-Canadian John Kolasky (1968, XIII) wrote, 'Russians are everywhere with their arrogant overbearing attitude; their contempt, sometimes veiled but often overt, for the Ukrainian language, their open display of a feeling of Russian superiority.' If a Ukrainian dissident or national communist leader had said this, he or she would have been accused of being a 'bourgeois nationalist'; the irony is that Kolasky was not a member of one of the three wings of the émigré OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) but until then a pro-Soviet Ukrainian-Canadian communist. Ukrainian-Canadians represented a very large component of Canada's Communist Party and were especially influential among Ukrainian communities in the prairie provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

From the 1960s, Soviet antinationalist tirades targeted émigré OUN groups, domestic nationalists, prodemocracy dissidents, and national communists who were defined collectively as 'bourgeois nationalists,' a depiction similar to today's elastic misuse of 'fascists' (Kasyanov, 1999; Wilson, 2014, 126). The Soviet understanding of 'bourgeois nationalists' was very broad and included individuals and groups in Soviet Ukraine and the West who promoted democracy and human rights, patriots who defended the Ukrainian language and culture, moderates who supported greater autonomy for Soviet Ukraine within a looser confederation of Soviet republics, and nationalists who demanded Ukrainian independence from the USSR. Hostility to Kyiv-based Ukrainian autonomous and pro-independence governments in the Donbas, which formed its own brief Donetsk-Krivoi Rih Soviet republic in 1918, came from a region that was a bastion of Bolshevik support. In the Soviet era the area produced few dissidents and remained largely passive. In Ukraine, the Donbas produced the country's only political machine, the Party of Regions, which espoused an authoritarian and neo-Soviet identity (Kuzio, 2014, 2015a; Kudelia and Kuzio, 2015). The Ukainophobia historically found in the Donbas is echoed in separatist enclaves, as demonstrably seen in the torture, violence and murders committed against pro-Ukrainian politicians, Euromaidan activists, and Ukrainian Orthodox and Protestant priests by Donbas separatist forces (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Amnesty International, 2015).

The cult and myths of the Great Patriotic War were developed by Soviet Communist leader, Leonid Brezhnev, from the mid-1960s and then, under Putin, have been promoted at the same time as re-Stalinization. The myth of the Great Patriotic War, revived in a massively bombastic way by Putin, is essential to Russia's understanding of its self and national identity (Nelson, 2015, 61) and could not be utilized by the Brezhnev and Putinist regimes without recourse to praise for Generalissimo Stalin. May 9 has been a national holiday in the USSR and post-Soviet Russia since 1965 when Brezhnev ended the campaign of de-Stalinization and the cult of the Great Patriotic War became vociferously promoted by re-Stalinizers, as it is in today Putin's Russia. Re-Stalinization drew on deeply felt Soviet nostalgia, Russian great power nationalism, ambivalent attitudes towards democracy and the blending of Russian and Soviet identities (Mendelson and Gerber, 2005–2006).

A second important component of the cult was the eternal union of Ukrainians and Russians as 'fraternal people's' and those 'nationalists' who fought against this union are therefore by definition 'Nazi hirelings' who betrayed the Soviet fatherland. As Gaddy and Hill (2015, 366–367) point out, for Putin this is very personal because his father was one of only a few who survived as a member of an NKVD unit sent into Nazi occupied Estonia. In Brezhnev's USSR and Putin's Russia, anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism has therefore gone hand in hand with the promotion of the cult of the Great Patriotic War and re-Stalinization. In 2014, Putin expanded these links further by stating the Russian motherland had a right and duty over and above international law and existing treaties with Ukraine to protect ethnic Russians and Russophones in the Crimea against 'fascists' brought to power by a Western conspiracy. This was placed within the age-old Russian yearning for the re-gathering and reuniting of historic *Russkii* (ethnic Russian) lands; with Ukrainians and Belarusians branches of the Russian nation. Putin, in claiming the Crimea as Russian territory from historical, cultural and linguistic perspectives also laid claim to Kyiv Rus history alleging Grand Prince Volodymyr was baptized in the peninsula (Gaddy and Hill, 2015, 369). Russia is planning to build a gigantic statue of Grand Prince Volodymyr in Moscow (Balmforth, 2015).

From the 1930s to 1980s, Kyiv Rus was portrayed as the birthplace of the 'fraternal' Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples in Soviet historiography by incorporating the Russian Imperial succession theory of Kyiv Rus to Vladimir-Suzdal, Muscovy, Imperial Russia and the USSR. In Russian imperial historiography, Ukrainians have no historical origins or separate history, except in union with Russia (a yearning allegedly demonstrated by the 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav) and no existence outside Russia's sphere of influence and the *Russkii Mir* (Kuzio, 2001, 2005; Wawrzonek, 2014).

The Great Patriotic War was the antidote for those Soviet and Russian leaders with Stalinist and Russian nationalist ideological sympathies who wished to end the de-Stalinization campaigns of the mid-1950's-mid-1960s and late 1980s. The cult of the Great Patriotic War in the Brezhnev era and Putin's Russia in both cases covers up Stalinist crimes against humanity and 'suppresses memory of the Gulag, to rename and suppress the memory of the irrational, unjustified sufferings of the victims of the Soviet system' (Khapaeva, 2009, 369). Soviet Russian and Ukrainian leaders, such as Mikhail Gorbachev and Petro Shelest, who promoted economic and political liberalization and who also presided over Soviet periods of history that publicized and raised mass crimes committed by Stalin. Putin is heir to the Brezhnev tradition of covering up Stalinist crimes and instead focusing attention on how Generalissimo Stalin won the Great Patriotic War, defeated the Nazis and transformed the USSR into a nuclear superpower that was internationally respected and globally feared. Anti-Stalinists in contrast focused not only on the mass crimes but also on the large number of casualties in World War II, why the Soviet army was unprepared, the causes of the defeats the Soviet army suffered, the Nazi-Soviet Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, deportations to Siberia from western Ukraine and the 3 Baltic republics, and the massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn forest. Victory in the Great Patriotic War was from the anti-Stalinist viewpoint a product not just of Generalissimo Stalin but of all Soviet nationalities (Tumarkin, 1994, 197–198). Non-Russian national communists, nationalists and dissidents aligned with Russians who promoted liberalization and de-Stalinization, while Russian nationalists and Stalinists in the USSR and contemporary Russia viewed these non-Russians collectively as 'bourgeois nationalists,' 'fascists' and Russophobes.

In Brezhnev's USSR, the Great Patriotic War was used to mobilize 'increasingly disaffected, alienated, and alcohol-prone youth' (Tumarkin, 1994, 130). Similar motivations lie behind Putin's turn to Russian nationalism and Great Patriotic War myths after he returned to power following mass pro-democracy protests in 2011–2012 which he viewed as an attempt at democratic revolution echoing earlier color revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia. In Brezhnev's USSR the mythology of the Great Patriotic War attempted to shield Soviet youth from the Prague Spring, dissidents and stagnation in popular attitudes towards and respect for Communist ideology during the 'era of stagnation.' The cult of the Great Patriotic War mobilized 'military-patriotic upbringing' that integrated young people with veterans and promoted respect for elders. The war was a

'reservoir of national suffering to be tapped and tapped again to mobilize loyalty, maintain order, and achieve a semblance of energy to counter the growing national apathy and loss of popular resilience of spirit' (Tumarkin, 1994, 133). The same reasons could be found to explain Putin's extensive use of Great Patriotic War mythology in contemporary Russia.

From 1965 until the 1980s the USSR mobilized an over-arching comprehensive cult of the Great Patriotic War during which current Russian leaders such as Putin were socialized into the Soviet system. The full cult included 'a panoply of saints, sacred relics, and rigid master narrative of the war' (Tumarkin, 1994, 134). During Putin's upbringing the Brezhnevite system militarized Soviet youth 'to an extraordinary degree' (Tumarkin, 1994, 152), starting with children as young as 6 and 7 years old—Oktyabryata, then continuing with Pioneers, the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), and paramilitary DOSAFF (Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force and Navy). They toured battle sites and war museums, met veterans, organized school exhibitions and commemorative evenings, attended war games and weapons study camps, participated in rituals with honor guards, took oaths, marched in uniforms and waved flags. Much of this cult 'exuded a profound falseness' where the history of the Great Patriotic War 'had been purposively manipulated, twisted, and tinselled over to serve the political needs of those who ran the country' (Tumarkin, 1994, 155). Nevertheless, the Soviet cult of the Great Patriotic War impacted upon young Russians such as Putin who at a time when Communist ideology was stagnating desired to join the KGB, the modern day inheritors of the notorious Cheka and NKVD secret police.

This narrative of Generalissimo Stalin and the Great Patriotic War, portrays the 1930s not as a decade of mass persecution of nonconformists, but rather lauds it as one where industrialization prepared the Soviet state for victory and saving Europe from 'fascism.' Stalin is described in new Russian school textbooks as an 'effective manager' (Put in more flags, 2009). Such mythology requires enemies in the form of non-Russian nationalists who collaborated with the Nazis while simultaneously downplaying the contribution made by non-Russians to the Soviet war victory. Indeed, while all of Soviet Ukraine was occupied by the Nazis only a small proportion of Russian territory was. While focusing on non-Russian 'fascists,' Soviet and Russian mythology ignores the far larger number of Russians than Ukrainians and Baltic peoples in German military service under General Andrei Vlasov, who commanded the 10 divisions in the ROA (Russian Liberation Army). Ukrainians were permitted to create a single division in the 40 division Waffen SS. The 7–8 million Soviet war dead under Stalin grew to 20 million by the 1960s and a 'set store of redemptive suffering' (Tumarkin, 1994, 135) used to prove the unique contribution of the Soviet state to world history. Ideological castigation of Ukrainian anti-Soviet nationalists became intricately tied to the cult of the Great Patriotic War.

The Soviet Ukrainian Communist Party and KGB linked 'Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism' with fascism and World War II Nazi collaborators, Ukrainian émigrés, and fifth columnist anticommunists acting with the support of Western intelligence agencies seeking to destroy the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities viewed 'Ukrainian nationalists' as 'anyone possessing an elementary sense of national dignity, anyone concerned with the fate of Ukrainian culture and language and someone who failed to please Russian chauvinists, Great Russian bully (Birch, 1971, 5). Such a wide-embracing definition of 'Nazi hirelings' and 'fascists' continues to be used today by Russia and Donbas separatist proxies against different groups of supporters of the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan.

From the late 1960s through to the late 1980s the Soviet Communist Party and KGB increasingly viewed support for the Ukrainian language and culture by dissidents and the political opposition as manifestations of 'Ukrainian nationalism' and being publicly proud of speaking Ukrainian would lead the KGB to view a person suspiciously as an ideological subversive. Nationalist activist Anatoliy Lupynis recounted how the KGB had asked him during an interrogation 'Why do you converse exclusively in Ukrainian? What prompted you, one who had been speaking Russian during the first three years at the institute, to start speaking Ukrainian? Are you not aware that the official language of our country is Russian and that in the future all nations will speak Russian? Why did you grow a moustache?' (Jones and Yasen, 1977, 129). Bizarrely, we can only conclude that not only speaking Ukrainian but also growing a Cossack handlebar moustache had become a sign of 'bourgeois nationalism' in the eyes of the Soviet KGB.

Contemporary derogatory views and stereotypes of the Ukrainian language, culture and history by the Party of Regions, Communist Party of Ukraine, Donbas separatists and Russian leaders has its origins in the Brezhnev 'era of stagnation' and earlier. Motyl (2011) pointed out that 'a frequent refrain in Ukrainian dissident writings were the complaint that fellow citizens would sneer at them when they spoke Ukrainian and tell them to speak 'human'—namely Russian.' Such views have left an indelible imprint and in spring 2014, Ukrainian journalists who traveled to the Crimea and Donetsk found that using the Ukrainian language made them automatically suspect as supporters of the Euromaidan and 'western Ukrainian Banderaites'.¹ This tradition stretches back to the 1960s and 1970s in Soviet ideological denunciations of the Ukrainian language as a 'Bandera-ite tongue' (Szporluk, 1976, 84). A Luhansk resident told of his preference for joining Russia over 'fascist Kyiv,' one reason being that 'I don't speak the calf's language (*telyacha mova*); ' that is Ukrainian (Rudenko, 2014). Two decades into Ukrainian independent statehood, Fournier (2012) found that Kyiv school students remained reluctant to speak Ukrainian in class for fear of appearing to be too 'nationalist.' Until the Euromaidan, speaking the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages continued to be associated with 'nationalism' and opposition to the ruling authorities.

In a replay of Stalinist repression of mythical Ukrainian underground nationalist organizations, the Russian occupation authorities in the Crimea and in Russia have sentenced Ukrainian cultural and political activists and members of UNA-UNSO (Ukrainian National Assembly-Ukrainian People's Self Defence) for 'terrorism' and 'extremism.' UNA-UNSO member

¹ Personal recollections from journalist at the time.

Oleksandr Malofeyev was sentenced to 24 years in September 2015 for allegedly fighting on the Chechen side against Russian forces in the 1990s (Coynash, 2015c), a claim made more ridiculous by Russian parliamentary deputies claiming Prime Minister Arsen Yatsenyuk had also fought in Chechnya at that time. The spread of Ukrainophobia into Russia's Far East, thousands of miles from the Donbas, was evident in the repression faced by Natalya Romanenko, head of a Ukrainian choir in Khabarovsk who after returning from Ukraine was accused of 'nationalism' and doused in green paint as a 'Banderite' (Sharyi and Rasskazova, 2015).

Although far larger numbers of Russians than Ukrainians volunteered for military service in Nazi military forces, the Soviet Communist Party and KGB did not unleash ideological tirades against émigré Russians by accusing them of collaboration with the Nazis. The émigré NTS (People's Labor Alliance) had grown out of the collaborationist Vlasov movement and was funded by the US government but émigré Russians were not targeted by the Soviet regime because they never constituted a separatist threat to the territorial integrity of the USSR. As Motyl (1990) points out, Russians were never nationalists as they never sought to secede from the USSR² and in August 1991 the Russian SFSR did not declare independence. Meanwhile, the privileged status of the Russian language and culture meant Russian dissidents and anticommunist émigrés had few grounds to complain about national discrimination and never described themselves as national democrats (in the same manner as non-Russians). Russians opposed to the Soviet regime were therefore never accused of 'bourgeois nationalism' because Russians (similar to the English in the United Kingdom) are not separatists. The Russian SFSR declared sovereignty in June 1990 and celebrates 'independence day' (Russia Day) based on this anniversary.³ Ukraine declared sovereignty in July 1990 and independence in August 1991 and celebrates Independence Day on August 24.

The Soviet regime spent a large amount of resources condemning 'bourgeois nationalism' at home and abroad through to 1987–1988 and some of the most vociferous tirades against Ukrainian émigrés were in the 1980s to assist with the hunt for 'war criminals' in Canada, the UK and US. In 1960, the Soviet Union established the KGB-controlled Society for Cultural Relations with Ukrainians Abroad, commonly known as *Tovarystvo Ukrayiny* (The Ukrainian Society) that specialized in attacks on Ukrainian 'nationalist' émigrés. Similar societies were established for Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians—but not for Russians. *Tovarystvo Ukrayiny*'s two weekly newspapers *Visti z Ukrayiny* and its English-language equivalent *News from Ukraine*, both only available outside the USSR, became a major source of disinformation and accusations against individual members of the Ukrainian diaspora who were depicted as 'Nazi collaborators.' The newspapers contained information about trials of Ukrainian 'nationalists' in the USSR and analysis of the allegedly perfidious ways in which Ukrainian émigré organizations were seeking to undermine Soviet power with Western intelligence support through their local 'puppets.' The KGB and *Tovarystvo Ukrayiny* specialized in linking 'nationalist' émigrés with Ukrainian dissidents and cultural activists in order to buttress their claim they were not authentic homegrown movements but inspired by outside 'Nazi war criminals' and Western intelligence agencies. Linking homegrown groups to Western-funded centers continues in Russian and Belarusian legislation that describes NGO's as 'foreign agents.' The Party of Regions and Communist Party of Ukraine failed to receive sufficient parliamentary support to adopt similar legislation in 2003–2004 (Kuzio, 2011).

2. Contemporary anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism and re-Stalinization

Tsars and Russian leaders nostalgic for the Soviet Union and supporters of re-Stalinization believe Russians and Ukrainians are one people, a view that is at odds with the Soviet recognition of Ukrainians as a separate people. Putin repeatedly says there are no differences between Ukrainians and Russians and they are one people (*odin narod*) (Socor, 2015). Putin's Chief of Staff Sergei Ivanov (2015) agrees and said 'Mentally, religiously, and culturally, between us (Ukrainians and Russians) there is infinitely much in common. Including language. One cannot argue with the fact that we are a single Slavic people.' Such chauvinistic views that today are commonplace in the Russian leadership have received barely no analysis in Western scholarly studies of Russia.

Putin's adoption of White Russian émigré views of Ukrainians is at odds with the country he so admires, the USSR, where Ukraine not only had its own republic and constitution but also was a founding member of the United Nations. The 'friendship of peoples' mythology formulated by Soviet nationalities policies propagandized this as 'a kind of supranational imagined community for the multiethnic Soviet people' (Martin, 2001: 81) that had been forged by Russia and had existed for centuries. Such mythology ruled out objective appraisals of Ukrainian–Russian relations because it could not adequately deal with conflicts, such as in 1709 and with the autonomy seeking and pro-independence governments of 1917–1920, or the banning of the Ukrainian language in 1863 and 1876, the 1933 Holodomor and Russification policies in the USSR. A history of Ukrainian–Russian relations therefore written from the viewpoint of 'friendship of people's' cannot be classified as scholarly work because it implicitly glosses over or ignores problem areas where Ukraine and Russia were in conflict or Russia adopted anti-Ukrainian policies.

² Two exceptions were dissidents Vladimir Bukovsky and Andrei Amalrik.

³ On June 12, 1990, the Russian Congress of People's Deputies, which was then headed by Boris Yeltsin, adopted the Declaration of the State Sovereignty, and a similar Declaration of Sovereignty was adopted by the Ukrainian parliament a month later. The following year in August 1991, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a Declaration of Independence that was confirmed by a referendum in December which received over 90 percent backing. The Russian SFSR never took these two steps in 1991 and therefore celebrates its 'independence day' based on its 1990 Declaration of Sovereignty.

The concept of ‘friendship of peoples’ fails to also take into account the modern day reality that countries with the same languages –even if we accept the Russian nationalist claim of Ukrainian being a Russian ‘dialect’—can nevertheless live in separate independent states. Scotland, Ireland and England speak English. Austria, parts of Switzerland and Germany speak German –the Russian nationalist view would also view Dutch as a German ‘dialect’. Australia, New Zealand, the US, most of Canada and India, where English has become the lingua franca, all speak English. Should all central and South America except Brazil be united into one state because they speak the Spanish language? This would logically follow from Russian nationalist prescriptions for Ukraine.

A second contradiction lies in how Russia has to deal with uncomfortable facts on the ground that existed before but have increasingly grown since 2014. If Ukrainians and Russians are ‘fraternal peoples’ why do a majority of Ukrainians not feel part of the Russian World and are therefore not interested in joining the CIS Customs Union and Eurasian Union? Are all these disinterested Ukrainians really ‘fascists’ because they, especially after the annexation of the Crimea and hybrid war in eastern Ukraine, do not want to be part of the Russian World? Yet, Ukrainians who seek independence from Russia are automatically ‘pro-fascist’ and ‘Russophobes’ (Jonsson and Seely, 2015, 13). If such a large number of Ukrainians are indeed ‘fascist’ led by Euromaidan leaders brought to power through a ‘Nazi *coup d’état*’ why did so few of them vote for nationalist parties and candidates in the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2014? The Svoboda (Freedom) nationalist party has only once entered parliament and this was during Yanukovich’s, not Yushchenko’s or Petro Poroshenko’s, presidency. Pravy Sektor (Right Sector), which is routinely demonized in the Russian media, has never been elected to the Ukrainian parliament. Svoboda and Pravy Sektor are ‘conservative nationalists’ rather than fascist or Nazi parties (Shekhovtsov, 2014). The greatest concentration of Nazi’s and fascists in the Donbas come from Russian nationalist groups such as Russian National Unity (see photographs at Shekhovtsov (2014)) and from European fascist groups. Russian nationalist volunteers deflect accusations they are Nazi’s, claiming swastika tattoos on their arms are ‘ancient Slavic symbols’ (Ioffe, 2014). Bizarrely, Russian bona fide fascists travel to the Donbas to fight mythical Ukrainian ‘fascists’ in the army and volunteer battalions, the majority of who are Russian speakers.

Accusations of ‘fascism’ against nationalist groups seeks to ignore and downplay the ideological similarities of fascism and communism which underpin the de-communization legislation adopted by the Ukrainian parliament in April–May 2015. Decrying the nationalist Svoboda’s 2012 election victory as a threat to Ukrainian democracy ignores the thuggish Party of Regions and Communist Party who are Stalinist apologists on the Holodomor and racist supporters of the 1944 deportation of Crimean Tatars which killed half of them en route to Central Asia (Symonenko, 2012). In the twentieth century the major atrocities committed in the Crimea were undertaken by Russia in the 1920s and 1944, not by mythical ‘Ukrainian nationalists.’ The Party of Regions, Communist Party of Ukraine and most Russian political parties, especially nationalists and communists, support Stalin’s 1944 deportation of Tatars. The annual May commemoration by Tatars of their deportation has been banned since Russia’s annexation of the Crimea.

Soviet antinationalism was revived by post-Soviet Ukrainian leaders in the 2002 and 2004 elections in response to the new threat from Yushchenko and Our Ukraine who were dubbed as ‘Nashism’ (from *Nasha Ukrayina* [Our Ukraine]) that was purposefully close to Nazism.⁴ Soviet style ‘anti-fascist’ labels of the opposition were revived in the 2002 and 2004 elections (Kuzio, 2002) and anti-American campaign directed against opposition candidate Yushchenko (Kuzio, 2004). Secret instructions sent to the media and regional governors from the presidential administration advised to play up the threat of Yushchenko coming to power with ‘nationalists, oligarchs, and extremists’ (Secret Instructions of the Yanukovich Election Campaign, 2004). In October 2003, when Our Ukraine was to hold a congress in Donetsk, billboards were put up showing Yushchenko giving a Nazi salute. Television programs funded by the Party of Regions integrated World War II Nazi parades with Yushchenko’s election campaign. The Donetsk authorities depicted Yushchenko as a ‘nationalist monster,’ ‘fascist’ and ‘Nazi,’ Ukrainian writer Yuriy Andrukhovych recalled.

‘Negative identity’ in the Crimea and Donbas equating Kyiv with ‘fascism’ in the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan drew on conservative Russian Orthodox values, the cult of the Great Patriotic War, defence of Russian language and culture, mythology of the Donbas ‘feeding all of Ukraine’ and anti-Western and anti-American xenophobia. Yanukovich’s 2004 election team included an anti-American campaign that targeted Yushchenko’s Ukrainian-American wife. The growth of Russian nationalism and promotion of Eastern Slavic Orthodox civilization within the Russkii Mir meant ‘the rhetoric of the Kremlin was more or less congruent with the identity politics of the Party of Regions’ (Zhurzhenko, 2014).

One of the most vociferous leaders of the antinationalist campaigns was Dmytro Tabachnyk who began campaigning against Ukrainian nationalist leaders immediately after Yushchenko was elected president in December 2004. He described the Yushchenko administration as ‘fascism on the march’ in a phrase that could have been taken from any Communist Party ideological manual. During the Yushchenko presidency, Tabachnyk co-authored a book warning of the dangers of ‘fascism’ in Ukraine (Kryuchkov and Tabachnyk, 2008). After being appointed Education Minister under President Yanukovich and Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov, Tabachnyk’s new concept for school textbooks revived Soviet views on Ukrainian nationalists as ‘murderers’ and ‘Nazi collaborators.’ Tabachnyk (2012) forcibly asserted that ‘Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych will remain in history as nationalists, and organisers of mass murder and they will forever be stained by the brush of collaborationism.’

⁴ Yushchenko’s ‘Nashists’ should not be confused with Nashi in Russia who were established after the Rose and Orange Revolutions in April 2005 as an ‘anti-fascist’ and ‘anti-oligarchic-capitalist’ youth movement with the aim of fighting the spread of color revolutions to Russia.

'Anti-fascist' rhetoric was used extensively by the Party of Regions in opposition (2005–2010) and in power (2006–2007, 2010–2014) against the national-democratic and nationalist opposition. This rhetoric was expanded in the run up to the 2015 presidential elections⁵ with anti-fascist rallies organized throughout Ukraine in May 2013. The 'anti-fascism' campaign was led by Andriy Kluyev, a close ally of Yanukovych, and ideologically driven by Russian political technologists (Nikolayenko and Shcherbyna, 2013). Party of Regions deputy Vadim Kolesnichenko established a center to investigate Nazi war criminals in Ukraine (Kudelia and Kuzio, 2015; Kuzio, 2015a).

The Soviet tradition of targeting western Ukrainians as the most ideologically suspect of Ukrainians first emerged in the 1930s against Galician Ukrainians who had traveled to Soviet Ukraine to work for the Ukrainization (indigenization) campaign in the 1920s (Bertelsen and Shkandrij, 2014). The Yanukovych election campaign in 2004 and Party of Regions deputies in subsequent elections revived Soviet era tirades against, and stereotypes of, western Ukrainians. They demanded western Ukrainians stop imposing their values on eastern Ukraine and 'Galicians should understand they are spongers in this country and, like all spongers, they ought to know their place by not imposing their values on the rest of us while understanding who feeds them, who supports them and who has the right to their own values,' Party of Regions deputy Yuriy Boldyrev (2012) said. Party of Regions and Azarov government members castigated Galician's for allegedly not speaking 'literary Ukrainian.'

Such doctrinaire views with deep roots in the Soviet era and fanned by Russian television propaganda readily fed into local support in the Donbas for violent counter-revolution against the 'fascist' Euromaidan. It had a direct impact upon the slogans, discourse and ideology of counter-revolutionary separatists in the Donbas. Boldyrev (2012) believes the Ukrainian diaspora in North America is 'organically tied to the collaborationist period of World War Two.' Senior Party of Regions deputy Borys Kolesnykov always portrayed the democratic opposition as 'Banderites' and 'bandits' and therefore implicitly hostile to Russophones, eastern Ukrainians and Russia. These Russophobes were portrayed as in the pay of the West to prevent Yanukovych being elected president in 2004 and remove him from power in 2014 (Nayem and Leshchenko, 2010). Accusations such as these were directed not only at nationalist groups Pravyi Sektor and Svoboda, but as much at Yushchenko and national democrats, as well as at centrists such as Vitaliy Klitschko and Poroshenko. Poroshenko is an example of the perversion of terms such as 'fascism' used by the Russian and separatist media; he was born in Odesa oblast, is a founding member of the Party of Regions, was a cabinet member in the Azarov government and had business ventures in Russia.

Misconstrued Soviet and Russian mythology of 'friendship of peoples' has led to convoluted policies. Putin mistakenly told the US president of the large number of 'Russians' living in Ukraine by conflating Russian speakers and ethnic Russians to arrive at the figure of '17 million' and erroneously claimed that southern Ukraine is populated only by 'Russians' (Putin, 2008). The majority of Ukraine's Russian speakers did not in fact support Putin's 'NovoRossiya' (New Russia) project and backed Kyiv in its war with Russia; indeed, nationalist volunteer battalions include many Russophones. Russian speakers in Ukraine are not the same as ethnic Russians and not all ethnic Russians and Russian speakers support Putin, 'New Russia' or the *Russkii Mir*. By spring 2015 both Putin and Donbas separatists closed the project to establish a 'NovoRossiya' spanning 8 oblasts from the Donbas to Odesa. Outside of the Donbas oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk limited support for 'New Russia' was found in Kharkiv and Odesa but was defeated by pro-Ukrainian forces while Putin's 'green men' mobilized no support in Kherson, Mykolayiv, Zaporizhzhya and Dnipropetrovsk.

With so many Russian speakers supporting Kyiv it is wrong to therefore define the Donbas conflict as a 'civil war' as it is more akin to a clash between competing Ukrainian/European and *Russkii Mir* civilizational worlds (Kuzio, 2015b; Wawrzonek, 2014) that Shulman (2005) had earlier described as the competition between 'ethnic Ukrainian' and 'east Slavic' identities. 'East Slavic' herein incorporates the blending of ethnic and imperial Russian and Soviet identities that characterizes Russian, Little Russian and Eurasian identity. Ukrainians and Russians with Soviet nostalgia and 'who wish the empire still stood' back the Donbas separatists while 'those who can no longer bear its lingering influence' oppose them (Mackinnon, 2014).

If Ukraine is indeed led by 'fascist' Euromaidan leaders, why is anti-Semitism so low there in comparison to Russia and Europe? Anti-Semitic violence and media attacks in Ukraine are the lowest in Europe, particularly in comparison to Germany and France (Coynash, 2015d). Jewish leaders in Ukraine supported the Euromaidan and patriotically rallied in defense of Ukraine in its war with Russia (Open letter of Ukrainian Jews to Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin, 2014). Jewish-Ukrainian oligarch and Jewish community leader Ihor Kolomoysky played a prominent role as Dnipropetrovsk governor in stemming the separatist tide, including through the funding of volunteer battalions.

More interestingly, how can the Russian regime lay claim to fighting 'fascism' in Ukraine while at the same time Russian fascist and imperial monarchist volunteers travel to join the separatists. Putin leads the coalition of anti-EU nationalists, fascists and neo-Nazis who have gained electoral popularity in many European countries. The French National Front, one of the most popular neo-Nazi parties in Europe, received a \$11.7 million 'loan' (gift) from Russia at the end of 2014. In March 2015, Rodina (Motherland), a nationalist party loyal to Putin, organized a meeting of 150 representatives of European nationalist and fascist parties at the 'International Russian Conservative Forum' showing the degree to which the term 'fascism' has become such a misused term that it has lost any meaning (Neef, 2015). A young woman from Kyiv asked Donbas

⁵ Ukraine was to have held presidential elections in January 2015 but these never took place because Yanukovych fled from Ukraine and the Euromaidan revolutionaries came to power. Presidential elections were held in May 2014 and won by Poroshenko. If there had been no Euromaidan and elections had gone ahead as planned in 2015, the likelihood of a popular revolt would have been high as Yanukovych, who was unpopular, would have been forced to use greater fraud than in the 2004 elections to remain in power.

separatists why they used the term 'fascist' and 'none could answer the question' except to repeat the stock phrase 'fascists and Banderists are one and the same!' (Huijboom, 2015).

European extreme left and extreme right volunteers fighting on the Donbas separatist side believe the 'fascist' mythology and are motivated by anti-American and anti-EU sentiments to fight 'CIA-backed Nazi scum' (Walker, 2015b). 'The region has become a hub for those who believe the world is in the grip of a conspiracy, with the CIA, the masons, corporate capitalism or Zionism to blame, and believe the Kremlin and the Donbas rebels are the last line of defence' (Walker, 2015b). If George Orwell were alive, and writing a sequel to his well-known novel '1984,' Putin would surely be a lead character.

3. Russian information war, anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism and re-Stalinization

Television and other Russian media outlets have massively depicted the Ukrainian opposition and Euromaidan as 'fascist' since 2013 in propaganda diatribes that were last seen in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s during the Brezhnev and Andropov's re-Stalinization of the Soviet Union. The Party of Regions returned to Soviet era depictions of their opponents as 'fascists' after Yanukovych was elected president in 2010 (Kuzio, 2010) and in 2013 began mobilizing 'anti-fascist' rallies throughout Ukraine in anticipation of the 2015 Ukrainian presidential elections that never in the end took place. The revived Soviet era antinationalist rhetoric came into prominence in 2014. Putin described the leaders of the Euromaidan as having 'resorted to terror, murder, and riots. Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes, and anti-Semites executed this coup' (Putin, 2014). Putin's stark language drew on decades of antinationalist propaganda where 'nationalists' are a 'group defined as irredeemable by nature' that 'allows for the construction of conspiracy narratives and excluded alternative ways of thinking' (Bertelsen and Shkandrij, 2014, 53).

The use of terror against such opponents in the USSR 'required no evidence of crimes' (Bertelsen and Shkandrij, 2014, 53) in a similar manner to the absence of the need to find real crimes against Ukrainian 'nationalists' in contemporary Russia and the Donbas separatist enclaves. In the USSR, Ukrainian 'nationalists' were imprisoned for 'ordinary criminal offenses' (Bilinsky, 1983, 10) and this has continued in contemporary Russia with the sentencing of Ukrainians on flimsy charges (Coynash, 2015a,b). In 1967, the fifth directorate of the KGB was established with the task of surveillance of émigrés, foreign journalists and unofficial groups in the USSR and its soul and spirit was resurrected in Russia's combatting of 'extremism' and 'terrorism' (Soldatov and Borogan, 2010, 73). Four years prior to the Donbas conflict, the Ukrainian library in Moscow was raided and closed by the Ministry of Interior who took away 50 books for 'psychological-linguistic expertise' and repression of its librarians has continued; Natalia Sharina, the head of the Ukrainian library in Moscow was arrested in October 2015 for allegedly stocking 'extremist' books and magazines. In an outlandish protest at 'Ukrainian fascism' Russian writers in Moscow severed ties with Andrey Kurkov, a well-known Russian-speaking writer living in Kyiv (Kurkov, 2014, 132).

Hybrid war launched in the Donbas in the 'Russian spring' of 2014 is an 'offshoot of political technology' where 'information warfare' plays a central role in the operation (Wilson, 2014). 'Lies are part of the coin of the intelligence operative, and facts are fungible' and Putin spent 'a great deal of time in his professional life bending the truth, manipulating facts, and playing with fictions' (Gaddy and Hill, 2015, 391). Lies and propaganda have mobilized Russian and European volunteers to travel to the Donbas to fight against 'fascists' and 'American mercenaries.' Not all Russian volunteers find 'fascists' and 'American imperialists' and Bondo Dorovskikh found a different reality and returned home disillusioned because instead of finding a similarity to the Great Patriotic War's fight against 'fascism' he found 'pure aggression' (Volchek and Bigg, 2015). Others Russian volunteers return home complaining they were called 'occupiers' in the Donbas, as said by a group of 180 who returned to the Urals that had been hired by Spetsnaz veteran Vladimir Yefimov (Kazakov, 2015).

Russian troll factories target EU and US leaders and 'Ukrainian nationalists' by inserting derogatory comments in online media outlets reporting on the Crimea, the shooting down of the MH17 Malaysian airliner, Western sanctions and Euromaidan politicians. These often repeat churlish claims first heard on Russian television such as NATO troops are embedded in Ukrainian armed forces (Stewart, 2015). The most outlandish of lies have included Ukrainian armed forces crucifying a 3-year old child in front of his mother and a mother tied to a Ukrainian tank and dragged through the streets until she was dead. The Ukrainian soldiers allegedly undertaking these atrocities in areas of the Donbas they controlled are 'beasts and fascists' (Ash, 2015). Another brazen lie alleged a 'mass grave' in Komunar of 80 victims with their ears chopped off and including a decapitated pregnant woman killed by 'Ukrainian fascists' in the Ukrainian armed forces (Walker, 2015a). Although the figure of 80 was believed to be a 'widely accepted fact' that fuelled anger and suspicion it was completely false. Donbas residents are quoted on Russian television saying outrageous comments such as 'They (Kyiv fascists) want to exterminate us' (Antelava, 2014). A Russian Orthodox priest in the Urals blessed volunteers heading for Ukraine to fight 'fascist scum' (Franchetti, 2015) while other Russian Orthodox priests helped torture Ukrainian prisoners of war, beating them with crosses over their heads (Tereshchuk and Coalson, 2015). Former Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, an architect of the EU's Eastern Partnership, was ludicrously described as a CIA agent in his youth driven by a desire for revenge against Russia because of Sweden's defeat in 1709 (Jonsson and Seely, 2015, 13).

Lies and deception emanating from Russian and separatist television channels serve to 'reinforce hatred and divisions' (Walker, 2015a). A young Ukrainian soldier driving an APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) that hit a landmine blew his body parts high up on to a telegraph pole where his remains were left to rot. A Donbas separatist remarked 'That's my favorite sight: a Nazi hanging from a wire. There's a God after all' (Franchetti et al., 2015). Rabid Ukrainophobia and equating of the Euromaidan with the coming to power of 'fascists' fanned violent conflict in the swing cities of Kharkiv and Odesa in spring 2014. Pro-Russian activists guarding the large Lenin monument in Kharkiv held signs saying 'Fascists. Don't test Kharkiv's

patience' and warning Kyiv not to unleash repression of Ukraine's Russian speakers (Sneider, 2014). Russian television promotion of hate propaganda became so intense that those protecting Kharkiv's Lenin monument told CBC (Shprintsens, 2015) 'How can I support a state which has declared war against me?' The large Lenin monument in Kharkiv was pulled down in September 2014. Russian intelligence trained and paid local Oplot paramilitaries to beat up 'fascists', that is, Euromaidan revolutionaries, in Kharkiv and young supporters were dragged out of official buildings and savagely beaten by a crowd applauding such atrocious behavior (Battle for Ukraine, 2014). Berkut riot police officers who had participated in the murder of unarmed Euromaidan protesters were applauded when they returned to Donetsk and the Crimea (Crimea Welcomes Riot Cops after Murdering Euromaidan Protesters in Kiev Ukraine).

Peaceful pro-Ukrainian protesters and supporters of the Euromaidan were violently attacked in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv and Odesa in spring 2014 when 'opponents of separatism were automatically branded as 'fascist', a 'Maidanut' (supporters of the Euromaidan revolution, but also formed as a profanity meaning moron), a 'Banderovets' (supporters of OUN leader Stepan Bandera, associated among Russians with Nazi), and subhuman. Even if you had never been a fascist, did not support the Euromaidan protests, and were not a Bandera follower, it was all the same to them – you were an 'enemy' (Letters From Donbas, 2015). As the Donetsk commentator said, 'What is this, if not fascism?' when the millions of Ukrainians who participated in the Euromaidan 'were retroactively declared enemies and "sentenced to death"' (Letters From Donbas, 2015).

A key figure in Putin's propaganda, political technology and ideological discourse is senior adviser Vladyslav Surkov who is well-known for developing the concept of 'sovereign democracy' to describe Putin's regime. He is the master manipulator in a political system where 'Every politician was an actor, taking their script from Vladyslav Surkov' (Wilson, 2015). Russia's 'dramaturgy' had its own logic and 'long ago lost touch with reality or real world consequences' marching at high speed into Ukraine, Syria and elsewhere 'while drugged up to the eyeballs' (Wilson, 2015). Such levels of Russian propaganda, which is fanning hatred in the Donbas and Crimea, had not been seen since the pre-détente era of the Cold War. This propaganda ties US foreign policies and democracy promotion in the Middle East to the Nazis and warns Russia not to retreat as: 'Behind Syria lies the Russian border' (Ennis, 2013). Such a statement was made 2 years ahead of Russia's military intervention in Syria.

Propaganda espoused by Russia's media, spin doctors and political technologists is believed by Russian leaders and public because 'In place of politics, there is performance art. Instead of debate, there is spectacle. In lieu of issues, there is drama-turgy. And in place of reality, there is fantasy' (Whitmore, 2015). Vitaly Sych (2015), editor of the Russian-language *Novoye Vremya* published in Kyiv, noted that Russian propaganda that looked 'ridiculous' in Kyiv was 'extremely effective' in some Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine and even more so in Russia where the Euromaidan Revolution of Dignity was presented as 'an illegal rebellion of neo-Nazis financed and managed by Americans.' The Euromaidan which was an 'anti-criminal revolution' was 'shown as an aggressive offense on anything that is Russian: culture, language, identity' (Sych, 2015).

Vladyslav Surkov promoted pro-Russian groups such as Ukrainian Choice headed by Viktor Medvedchuk and Russia. Today television channel whose budget had been massively increased. He facilitated funding for extreme right politicians and groups in Europe, and laid out the parameters for Russia's political technology towards Ukraine which is the 'life blood of the system' (Wilson, 2015). Vladyslav Surkov provided advice to Yanukovych and he travelled to Ukraine during the Euromaidan revolution and was the author of the infamous 'dictatorship laws' voted through on January 16, 2014 that became a major factor in Ukraine's deterioration into violence (Aslund, 2015, 106). The Donbas separatists describe him as their 'political supervisor' who provided the ideological background to the failed 'New Russia' project (International Crisis Group, 2015). Peter Pomerantsev describes Vladyslav Surkov as Putin's chief adviser on Ukraine 'For what is Russia's policy in Ukraine if not a war on reality?' The separatist Luhansk (LNR) and Donetsk Peoples Republics (DNR) 'began as fictions thought up by oligarchs in Ukraine's eastern regions and propagandist in the Kremlin' (Yaffa, 2015).

4. Conclusions

Russian campaigns against manifestations of different strands of Ukrainian nationalism have taken place since the early eighteenth century and have become more pronounced and vociferous when the Russian state was in crisis in the early twentieth century, the Russian civil war, World War II, during the Cold War and the Brezhnev's 'era of stagnation,' since 2007–2008 when Putin launched Russia's resurgence and especially during the Ukraine–Russia crisis of 2014–2015. There are five components to Russian and Soviet anti-(Ukrainian)-nationalist campaigns and re-Stalinization. The first is: these campaigns intensify during authoritarian and counterrevolutionary periods, such as in response to the Rose, Orange and Euromaidan revolutions. Secondly, Russian and Soviet leaders behind the Ukrainophobic campaigns are allied to Russian great power nationalists, Stalinists and anti-Western xenophobes. Under Soviet and Russian leaders Brezhnev and Putin anti-(Ukrainian) nationalist campaigns have taken place at the same time as revivals of the mythology surrounding the Great Patriotic War and re-Stalinization of the Soviet and Russian states. Thirdly, Ukrainian identity and autonomy has been more acceptable to Russian leaders during periods of liberalization in the 1920s, mid 1950s to mid-1960s, and second half of the 1980s and 1990s. But, these have covered only a minority of Soviet history which was dominated by Stalin and Brezhnev for 42 out of the USSR's 69 years of existence. In Russia, liberalization during Borys Yeltsin's 9 years in power is far surpassed by Putin's re-Sovietization and re-Stalinization since 2000 (and he is unlikely to give up power). Tsarist and White émigré nationalists and Eurasianists, some of whom, such as Ilyin, harboring fascist inclinations, and Soviet and Russian re-Stalinizers are hostile to Ukrainian national identity and statehood because they believe Ukrainians and Russians are one people and Ukrainians belong within the *Ruskii Mir* as a 'younger brother.' Fourthly, Soviet and Russian nationalists and re-Stalinizers view Ukrainians in two simplistic categories as compliant good Ukrainians (Little Russians) or Russophobic 'bourgeois

nationalists' and 'fascists' backed by foreign powers intent on weakening Russia. Fifthly, Putin and Russian re-Stalinizers will remain increasingly frustrated by their own undoing of the 'fraternal brotherhood' of Russians and Ukrainians and will deflect blame on Western governments and their conspiracies. Russia's aggression has increased Ukraine's civic national integration, promoted public acceptance of controversial aspects of Ukrainian history, reduced the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church and increased public support for NATO membership into a majority (Kuzio, 2015c). The Crimea was given to Soviet Ukraine in 1954 as a gift in gratitude for 300 years of 'fraternal Russian-Ukrainian brotherhood' since the Treaty of Pereyaslav and Putin's annexation therefore shattered illusions among some Russophone Ukrainians who believed in such myths and came to view this as a stab in the back when Ukraine was down. Putin's annexation of the Crimea and hybrid invasion of the Donbas have reduced feelings of 'fraternal brotherhood' with Russians living in the Russian Federation and thereby contributed as much to Ukrainian nation building as two decades of independence. Putin in seeking to build a *Russkii Mir* has in fact promoted the opposite – Ukraine's European integration.

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