FRONTLINE UKRAINE

CRISIS IN THE BORDERLANDS

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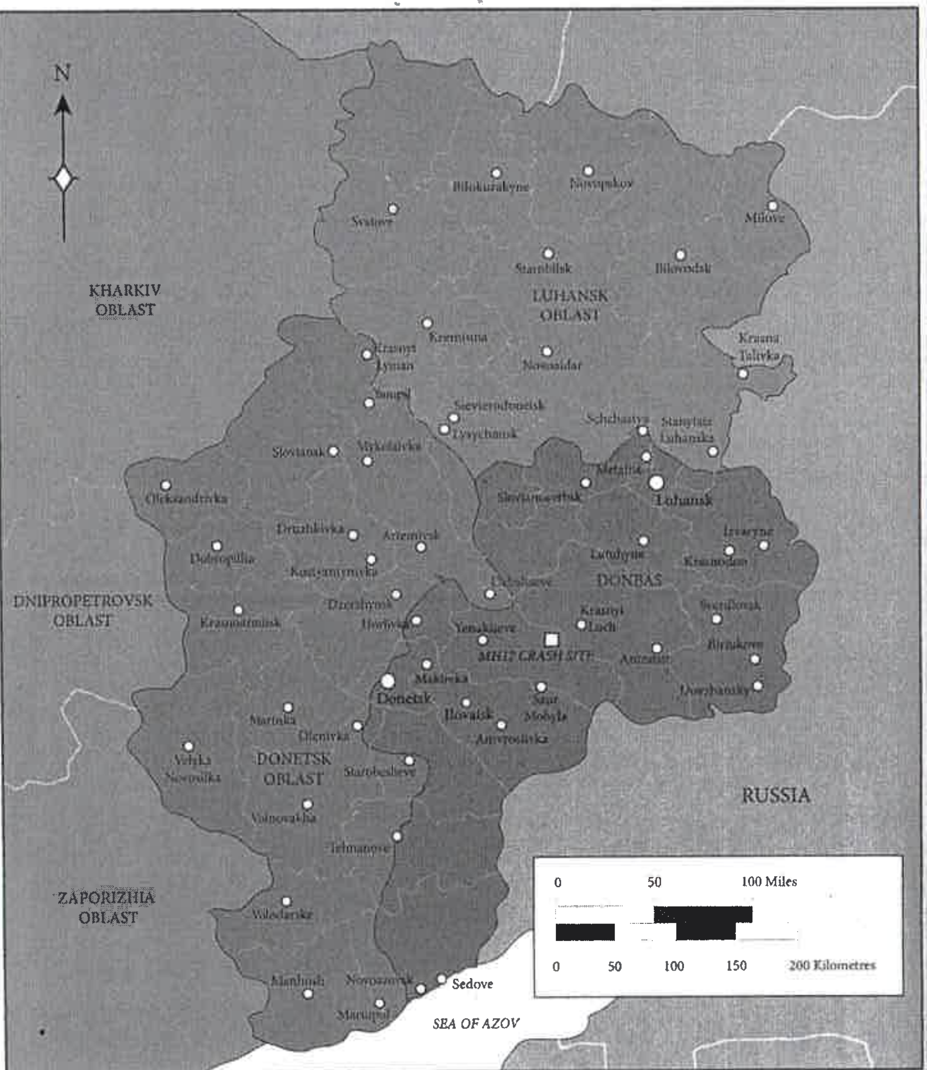
UPDATED EDITION



MAP 6: The Donbas

CHAPTER 1

COUNTDOWN TO CONFRONTATION

On the one hundredth anniversary of World War I and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the start of World War II, and 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Europe once again finds itself the cockpit of a great-power confrontation. How could Europe have allowed itself to end up in this position, after so many promises of 'never again'? This is the worst imbroglio in Europe since the 1930s, with pompous dummies parroting glib phrases and the media in full war cry. Those calling for restraint, consideration and dialogue have not only been ignored but also abused, and calls for sanity have not only been marginalised but also delegitimated. It is as if the world has learned nothing from Europe's terrible twentieth century.

SHADOWS OF WAR

The slew of books published to commemorate the start of the Great War reveals the uncanny similarities with the situation today. The war cost at least 40 million lives and broke the back of the continent, yet in certain respects was entirely unnecessary and could have been avoided with wiser leadership. If key decision makers had not become prisoners of the mental constructs that they themselves had allowed to be created, and if the warning signs in the structure of international politics had been acted on, then the catastrophe could have been averted. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 could well have remained a localised incident if Europe had not already been poised for conflict. Margaret MacMillan demonstrates in *The War That Ended Peace* that there were plenty of

contingent factors that precipitated conflict in summer 1914, but the structural factors had been created over the previous two decades.[1]

A febrile atmosphere of exaggerated moral indignation and 'axiological' truths predominated. By this term I refer to the assertion of what are purported to be unchallengeable (axiomatic) realities, not susceptible to debate or repudiation, a central feature also of the present crisis. Geoffrey Wawro's *A Mad Catastrophe* exposes the reckless unfolding of the logic of conflict, while Sean McMeekin's *July 1914: Countdown to War* is unsparing in its condemnation of all leaders and countries. Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, an updated version of Barbara Tuchman's classic *Guns of August*, shows how none of the actors really wanted an all-out conflict but stumbled into hostilities that destroyed them all in one way or another.[2] More specifically, Thomas Otte's *July Crisis: The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914* shows how the century-old system of great-power politics collapsed in a matter of weeks. He asks 'how and why the civilized world, seemingly so secure in its material and intellectual achievements, could have descended into a global conflict'.[3] Social-Darwinist ideas rendered war a noble and cleansing ideal, but in the end it is the squalidity of the actual war and its catastrophic consequences that are remembered.

This is a salutary warning to those who argue that the military-alliance system forged in the wake of World War II will endure into the twenty-first century, in conditions that have changed unrecognisably from those of the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War years from the late 1940s to 1989. The contemporary crisis, of which the Ukrainian events are only one of the most intense manifestations, is very much worse because of the peril of nuclear catastrophe hanging over humanity. Deterrence has averted a global war so far, but that is no guarantee that the recklessness that affected the ruling classes of Europe a century ago will not once again lead the sleepwalkers to war. The actual fighting in 1914 was only an epiphenomenon of a broader cultural and psychological readiness to engage in conflict. Germany had long been demonised in the British press, above all for its perceived challenge to British naval supremacy, while France was still smarting over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. The list could go on – just as it could today.

The groundwork of the Ukrainian conflict has been latent for at least two decades. It was laid by the asymmetrical end of the Cold War, in which one side declared victory while the other was certainly not ready to 'embrace defeat'.[4] Unlike Germany and Japan in 1945, who acknowledged that they had been at fault and used the moment of destruction as the starting point of their transformation into Western-style liberal democracies, Russia did not in the least consider itself a defeated power.[5] This did not prevent the alleged victors after the Cold War believing that the Soviet collapse

vindicated not only the institutions that had been created to wage the struggle but above all the ideology in whose name it had been fought. This gave rise to the triumphalism of the 'end of history', which effectively replaced one ideology with another, namely the belief in the inexorable advance of liberal democracy and the 'European choice'. Marxist historicism was replaced by liberal historicism, the belief that the telos – or purpose – of history was knowable. This rendered all those who resisted (in the Russian case, not so much the substance of the ideas but the manner of their imposition) as not only mistaken but in some way fundamentally evil, thus closing down space for pragmatic debate, diplomacy or even common sense. This helps explain how Europe in 2014 has once again become the crucible of international conflict, harking back to an era that has so often been declared to be over. Today, Ukraine acts as the Balkans did in 1914, with numerous intersecting domestic conflicts that are amplified and internationalised as external actors exacerbate the country's internal divisions.

One of the central themes of this book is the idea that the Ukraine crisis has escalated because of the multiplicity of power centres, contested narratives and divergent understandings of the nature of the post-Cold War order. As outlined earlier, two fundamental processes have intersected to devastating effect: the 'Ukrainian' crisis has emerged out of the contradictions of the country's nation- and state-building since independence in 1991, while the 'Ukraine' crisis is the sharpest manifestation of the instability of the post-Cold War international system.[6] Here we will briefly outline both, beginning with the Ukraine crisis, with the arguments developed in later chapters.

THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

The Ukraine crisis reflects the continuation in new forms of what used to be called the East–West conflict, the focus of the next chapter. After the end of the Cold War in 1989–91, as a result of Mikhail Gorbachev's reform of the Soviet Union, which was based on the ideas of the 'new political thinking', no inclusive and equitable peace system was established. The Napoleonic Wars ended with the Congress of Vienna in 1815, when the victors came together to map the shape of a new Europe and established a peace system that effectively lasted until 1914, interrupted by the Crimean War of 1853–6 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1. World War I ended with the Paris Peace Conference, which resulted in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which imposed punitive conditions on what was taken to be a defeated Germany. Russia was not invited to attend at all, having defected from the Allies following the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917 and then having been wracked by civil war between 1918 and 1920. Germany's refusal to accept the status of a defeated power

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fuelled a powerful revisionist strain that helped propel Hitler to power in 1933. In other words, the way one war ends determines the shape of the next.

There was no peace conference after the end of the Cold War, and instead an uneven peace was imposed on Europe. The Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991, and Russia emerged as the 'continuer state', assuming the burdens, treaty obligations and nuclear responsibilities of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As far as Russia was concerned, the end of the Cold War had been a shared victory: everyone stood to gain from overcoming the end of the division of Europe, symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The institutions of the Cold War in the East were dismantled, above all the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (the Warsaw Pact), but on the other side the institutions of the Cold War were extended. Above all, NATO, established in 1949, sought to find a new role, which it did by going 'out of area' (notably in Afghanistan) and enlarging to encompass a swath of former Soviet bloc countries. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined in March 1999, and then in a 'big bang' enlargement in March 2004 the Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined, followed by Albania and Croatia in April 2009.

Despite repeated warnings by Russia that bringing NATO to its borders would be perceived as a strategic threat of the first order, the momentum of NATO enlargement continued. At the Bucharest NATO summit in April 2008 Georgia and Ukraine were promised eventual membership: 'NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO.' However, Membership Action Plans (MAPs) were deferred because of German and French concerns that encircling Russia would be unnecessarily provocative, especially since Gorbachev had apparently been promised that NATO would not advance to the east. From Russia's perspective, there was no security vacuum that needed to be filled; from the West's perspective, who was to deny the sovereign choice of the Central and Eastern European states if they wished to enter the world's most successful multilateral security body?

In the end, NATO's existence became justified by the need to manage the security threats provoked by its enlargement. The former Warsaw Pact and Baltic states joined NATO to enhance their security, but the very act of doing so created a security dilemma for Russia that undermined the security of all. A security dilemma, according to Robert Jervis, is when a state takes measures to enhance its own security, but those measures will inevitably be seen as offensive rather than defensive by other states, who then undertake measures to increase their own security, and so on – in this case provoking the Ukraine crisis.[7] This fateful geopolitical paradox – that NATO exists to manage the risks created by its existence – provoked a number of conflicts. The

Russo-Georgian war of August 2008 acted as the forewarning tremor of the major earthquake that has engulfed Europe in 2013–14. As Mikhail Margelov, the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council, put it, noting the West's surprise at 'Russia's firm stance on Ukraine, given that everything has been pointing in that direction for the last decade':

> Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, the West has failed to forsake the principle according to which only Western interests are legitimate. Nor has it learned the lesson of the events of August 2008, when Russia intervened in the war unleashed by the regime of Mikheil Saakashvili, in order to enforce peace in the region. The Georgian crisis should have made clear to everyone that Russia is not only ready to make its voice heard, but is also prepared to use force when its national interests are at stake.[8]

The unbalanced end of the Cold War generated a cycle of conflict that is far from over. An extended period of 'cold peace' settled over Russo-Western relations, although punctuated by attempts by both sides to escape the logic of renewed confrontation. This is what I call a mimetic cold war, which reproduces the practices of the Cold War without openly accepting the underlying competitive rationale.[9] Structurally, a competitive dynamic was introduced into European international relations, despite the best intentions of both sides. At worst, the revanchists in the post-Communist countries of Eastern Europe, encouraged by neoconservatives in Washington and their vision of global transformation on a global scale, fed concerns about Russia's alleged inherent predisposition towards despotism and imperialism. The Trotskyite roots of US neocon thinking are well known, and for them the world revolution was not cancelled but only transformed: the fight now was not for revolutionary socialism but for capitalist democracy – to make the world safe for the US. This became a self-fulfilling prophecy: by treating Russia as the enemy, in the end it was in danger of becoming one. NATO thus found a new role, which was remarkably similar to the one it had been set up to perform in the first place – to 'contain' Russia.

Much of the discussion of the 'Ukraine' crisis externalises responsibility – in other words, it looks for a scapegoat. This book argues that the crisis has been generated by structural contradictions in the international system, but for the scapegoaters Russia is, quite simply, held responsible. The corollary is that the West needs to find an adequate response, which means only intensifying the contradictions that provoked the crisis. Thus Andrew Wilson argues that Russia's alleged 'covert ambition since 2004 to expand its influence within the Soviet periphery, and over countries that have since joined the EU and NATO, such as the Baltic states', accompanied by 'American inattention', is the root cause of the crisis.[10] This sort of analysis, predominant among

the Orangists within Ukraine, is wrong-headed in conceptualisation and dangerous in its consequences. It deflects attention from the tensions within the Ukrainian state-building project by externalising responsibility for the country's failures, and, by demonising Russia, forecloses opportunities for constructive engagement and the solution of common problems, most notably those facing Ukraine itself, but also at the European and global levels.

The contrast with post-war Germany is stark, a country that was also 'contained', but within the framework of a set of institutions, above all the EU and NATO. Russia has effectively been left out in the cold since the end of the Cold War. There were serious attempts to mitigate the outsider effect, but in the end they were not enough to overcome the security dilemma. In the 1990s there was not much that Russia could do about the asymmetrical end of the Cold War, since it was economically weak and engaged in an intensive period of internal transformation as it became something approximating a market economy. Putin's accession to the presidency in 2000 coincided with the beginning of an extended period of high prices for raw materials, above all for oil and gas, as China's boom translated into an insatiable demand for materials to fuel its factories, allowing the West to deindustrialise and to take advantage of an extraordinary period of cheap consumer goods. The Western working classes, and with them the trade unions and other forms of mutuality, were marginalised, allowing corporate capitalism and the financial services to enjoy an extended boom on the back of cheap labour. Although marked by several periods of turbulence, the system thrived – until the great recession.

Russia shared in the good years, enjoying annual growth of 7 per cent up to 2008. The state greatly increased its extractive capacities, with tax revenues rising on the back of the defeat of the oligarchic model of capitalism, notably through the 'Yukos affair' from 2003 that saw the Yukos oil company expropriated and transferred into the hands of state-owned Rosneft, while its head, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, spent a decade in jail.[11] Putin himself stepped down in 2008 after the two terms allowed him by the constitution, and for four years the country was governed by the relatively liberal Dmitry Medvedev. The latter promised to revive the country's democratic institutions, which had been increasingly suffocated by the system of 'managed democracy'. Medvedev achieved only modest success, but he established an agenda for the reform of the Putinite system that remains active to this day. In the end it was perceived foreign-policy threats, notably the Western intervention in Libya in 2011, which ensured Putin's return to the presidency in 2012. In the UN Security Council vote on 17 March 2011 to establish a no-fly zone, Russia abstained, allowing the Western powers to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi by the end of the year. This was another instance of the 'regime change' that alarmed Russia so much, and which already had

provoked a 'tightening of the screws' internally in the mid-2000s, in response to the various 'colour' revolutions.[12]

The Putinite defeat of the oligarchs, accompanied by the humbling of the 'barons' in the regions and enormous energy rents, shifted Russia onto a very different path of development from Ukraine. Ukraine endured societal upheaval and political crisis every few years, while Russian stability provided space for economic growth and societal development, but at the price of the heavy-handed tutelage of Putin's administrative regime. By the time Putin returned to the presidency in May 2012 Russia was much stronger, and ready to assert itself in world politics. What Ickes and Gaddy represent as the 'missing quadrant' was being filled in: a strong but 'bad' Russia, not the weak and good Russia of the 1990s, the weak and bad Russia presented by its critics, or the good and strong Russia extolled by its friends.[13] Oil and other natural-resource rents filled Russian coffers and allowed the Putin administration to co-opt most societal interests. In the wake of the problems exposed by the Georgian war, the armed forces became the object of a grand programme of reform and re-equipping, and in April 2014 Dmitry Rogozin, the head of the military–industrial complex, announced that Russia would invest $560 billion in the coming years in modernising its army and navy, and $85 billion in modernising its defence plants. As will be detailed below, Russia under Putin presented itself as not so much anti-Western as a complement to the West, a type of 'neo-revisionism' that sought not to change the fundamentals of international order but to ensure that Russia and other 'rising' powers were treated as equals in that system.

WHAT IS UKRAINE?

The path to Ukrainian statehood has been exceptionally long and arduous.[14] In the modern era the country has enjoyed only a brief period of statehood following the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917. At a time of revolution and civil war, a precarious independent state was established, but it was overthrown in 1919. With the victory of the Bolsheviks under Vladimir Lenin, the country was reconstituted as a federation. Ukraine was one of the founding nations of the USSR in December 1922, and following World War II was granted a seat in the UN (together with Belorussia), even though it was no more than a 'union republic' of the USSR. Throughout the vicissitudes of war, division and domination, the idea of Ukrainian nationhood was never extinguished, but it was balanced by commitment to the larger Soviet project, which brought with it industrialisation, urbanisation and the creation of a relatively modern and educated society.

Two models of Ukrainian statehood, the monist and the pluralist, have long been in contention. They correspond to the long struggle in Ukrainian history between those who assert that the country is an autochthonous cultural and political unity in its own right, and those who believe that common ancestry in Kievan Rus, a loose federation of East Slavic tribes from the ninth to the thirteenth century ruled by the Rurik dynasty, means that they are part of the same cultural, and by implication, political community. The conversion to Orthodoxy in AD 988 by the Kievan Prince Vladimir the Great, moreover, endowed the modern Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian nations with a shared religion. However, the early Slav state was already fragmenting when the Mongol invasion of 1240 destroyed Kiev and separated the various peoples. Putin's view that Russia and Ukraine are just two aspects of a single civilisation is widespread in Russia, whereas Ukrainian nationalists argue that their country long ago set out on its own developmental path (more on this later in this chapter).

This tension has played out in manifold struggles and conflicts over the centuries. Notably, from the late eighteenth century Ukraine was often described as 'Malorossiya' (Little Russia), derived from Byzantine maps that referred to the territory as Lesser Rus or Rus Minor. Malorussianism views Ukraine as an emanation of the Greater Russian identity, and thus from the nineteenth century sought to standardise the country's language to what had become the Russian Slavic norm. This was the view of Nikolai Gogol, who, although an ethnic Ukrainian, wrote in Russian. This is countered by the long tradition of Ukrainism, which argues that the Ukrainian version of the East Slavic language represents the emergence of a wholly distinct ethnic identity. The name 'Ukraine', like the term Malorossiya, derives from cartographical toponyms and is translated literally as 'borderland'. Taras Shevchenko, who wrote mostly in Ukrainian, is the best exemplar of this tradition.[15]

In our era, Alexander Solzhenitsyn is a good example of someone who embodied the tension between monist and pluralist conceptions of Ukraine. In his powerful 1990 analysis, *Rebuilding Russia*, he argued: 'We do not have the energy to run an Empire. Let us shrug it off'; but when it came to Ukraine he advocated the creation of a 'Russian union' with Ukraine at its heart.[16] For Ukrainists, the main challenge of independence is precisely to repudiate such thinking, to rid the country of the 'imperial' legacy and to carve out a wholly separate Ukrainian nation, whereas the Malorussian tradition represents an entirely different model of statehood, one that encompasses multiple civilisational experiences, languages and cultures, while respecting the Ukrainian inflection of all of these. The post-Communist struggle for democracy, good governance, economic transformation and civic dignity became entwined in this deep-rooted cultural conflict.

Winston Churchill once quipped that the Balkans produces more history than it can absorb, and in certain respects this is equally applicable to Ukraine. There is a surfeit of unresolved historical and national issues that remain scabrous and contested, and thus Ukraine has not yet reached the point where it can be considered to have passed Ernest Renan's test, according to which a nation is made up as much by what is forgotten as that which is remembered. History is raw and alive. For example, the 2014 crisis has brought the notion of 'Novorossiya' (New Russia) back into popular discourse.[17] Between 1764 and 1917, Novorossiya was a distinct administrative unit of the Russian Empire along the entire Black Sea coast from Transnistria in the west to Mariupol in the east, and to this day remains predominantly Russian-speaking. Equally, there are other historic entities, such as the old Sloboda Ukraine centred on Kharkov, and Zaporozhia focused on Dnepropetrovsk. Overarching this is the constant tension between Eastern and Western influences. As Andrew Wilson puts it: 'Ukraine's entire history could be written in terms of its oscillation between the two sides, with the Russians decisively surpassing the Poles in importance only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.'[18] Thus the present contest between 'Europe' and Russia is one that goes back centuries, and is a constituent element of Ukraine's historical DNA (see Map 1).

The modern stage of this conflict begins in 1991 with the break-up of the Soviet Union. Contrary to expectations, when the Soviet Union disintegrated it was Russia that led the way. Its Declaration of State Sovereignty on 12 June 1990 was followed on 16 June by that of Ukraine, which stressed the alliance-neutral status of the country. In the all-union referendum on transforming the Soviet Union into a confederation of sovereign republics of 17 March 1991, 70.5 per cent of Ukrainians voted in favour of retaining a renewed union, although in a second question inserted by the Ukrainian authorities, asking whether 'Ukraine should be part of a Union of Sovereign States on the basis of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine', 80.2 per cent also said yes. As in all revolutionary situations, time was compressed and events moved at a dizzying pace. The attempted coup of 18–21 August 1991 by a group of conservatives, hoping to undo the drift of reforms towards a more pluralist democracy and decentralised state, acted as the catalyst for the disintegration of the state they were hoping to save. The putsch swiftly unravelled, and in its wake Ukraine declared independence on 24 August. In the last months of 1991 Gorbachev frantically sought to save the union, but the overwhelming Ukrainian poll on 1 December, in which 90.3 per cent voted for Ukrainian independence, inflicted the death blow on the USSR. The traditionalists were discredited, and on the same day the Communist-turned-nationalist Leonid Kravchuk was elected Ukraine's first president with 63 per cent of the vote. On 7–8 December the leaders of Russia, Belorussia and Ukraine met in the

Belavezha Pushcha in the country now known as Belarus and, as founding members of the original USSR, agreed to dissolve the union and establish the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Soviet Union was dead, and 15 independent states now began their distinctive paths to modernity and nation statehood (see Map 3).

Like many modern nation states, Ukraine is an agglomeration of territories, peoples and languages. The newly independent republic encompassed various territories and peoples that had at various points been part of neighbouring states, and comprised a society that had endured massive changes and traumas. When the Russian Empire collapsed in 1917 the population of Ukraine included 32.9 million Ukrainians (67.7 per cent), 5.4 million Russians (11.1 per cent) and 4.3 million Jews (8.8 per cent). The Soviet census of 1989 registered the changes on the eve of the Soviet collapse. Out of a total population of 51.7 million, 37.4 million (72 per cent) were Ukrainians and 11.4 million (22 per cent) were Russians, while the number of Jews had fallen tenfold to 486,628.[19] The figures for the 2001 census found that there were 37,541,700 Ukrainians, constituting 77.8 per cent of the population, and 8.3 million Russians (17.3 per cent) (see Table 1.1).

Ethnic Russians were distributed unevenly, being concentrated in the eastern and southern regions, comprising 39 per cent of Lugansk, 38.2 of Donetsk, 25.6 of Kharkov, 24.7 per cent of Zaporozhe and 20.7 of Odessa, while in the cities the proportion of Russians is even higher. There are even greater inter-regional disparities when it comes to language use. The 2001 census found that 67.5 per cent stated that their native language was Ukrainian, 29.6 per cent (including 14.8 per cent of ethnic Ukrainians) said it was Russian, and 2.9 per cent named other languages. Russian-speakers were concentrated in the south east, with 90.6 per cent of people in Sevastopol claiming Russian as their native language, 77 per cent in Crimea, 74.9 per cent in the Donetsk region and 68.8 per cent in the Lugansk region, as well as making up about half the population in several other regions, while Kiev is a preponderantly Russian-speaking city. Surveys reveal that these figures underestimate the proportion of Russian-speakers, with between one-third and a half using Russian at home and in social and professional communication. Once again there are regional differences, with western Ukraine mostly using Ukrainian with some Surzhyk (a mix of Russian and Ukrainian in common use across central Ukraine) and Russian; people in the centre and some southern regions (Mykolaiv and Kherson) mostly speak Ukrainian, but with a large proportion using Surzhyk, with Russian predominating in the large cities, including Kiev; the Donbas (short for Donets Basin, comprising the Donetsk and Lugansk regions) and Crimea are overwhelmingly Russian-speaking; while the other eastern and southern regions of Ukraine are predominantly Russian-speaking, with the common use of Surzhyk and bilingualism.[20]

TABLE 1.1 Ukrainian population census 2001

	POPULATION (THOUSANDS)	AS % OF THE TOTAL 2001	AS % OF THE TOTAL 1989	2001 AS % OF 1989
Ukrainians	37541.7	77.8	72.7	100.3
Russians	8334.1	17.3	22.1	73.4
Belarusians	275.8	0.6	0.9	62.7
Moldavians	258.6	0.5	0.6	79.7
Crimean Tatars	248.2	0.5	0.0	530
Bulgarians	204.6	0.4	0.5	87.5
Hungarians	156.6	0.3	0 4	96.0
Romanians	151.0	0.3	0.3	112.0
Poles	144.1	0.3	0.4	65.8
Jews	103.6	0.2	0.9	21.3
Armenians	99.9	0.2	0.1	180
Greeks	91.5	0.2	0.2	92.9
Tatars	73.3	0.2	0.2	84.4
Gypsies	47.6	0.1	0.1	99.3
Azerbaijanis	45.2	0.1	0.0	122.2
Georgians	34.2	0.1	0.0	145.3
Germans	33.3	0.1	0.1	88.0
Gagauzians	31.9	0.1	0.1	99.9
Other	177.1	0.4	0.4	83.9
TOTAL	48052.3			

Source: All-Ukrainian Population Census [website]. Available at http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/.

Contemporary Ukraine is the product of many changes (see Map 2). In the south-east the Donbas is the most industrialised. The city of Donetsk was founded in 1879 by the Welsh industrialist John Hughes, and is famous for its mines, oligarchs and football team (Shakhtar Donetsk). Already the 1897 tsarist census revealed that the majority in the Donbas identified themselves as 'Malorussians' (that is, Ukrainians), and were not simply Russians who adopted the Ukrainian ethnonym in the Soviet period.[21] In other words, despite the extensive links with Russia and ethnic intermingling, the region had an identifiable sense of belonging to the Ukrainian community. This is balanced by the retention of intense historic links with Russia across the border,

reinforced by common experiences and patterns of economic interaction. The industrialisation of the region in the Soviet period drew in workers from across the USSR, and their detractors in western Ukraine insist that they retain a '*sovok*' mentality, a dependence on the state and an orientation towards Russia. Nevertheless, opinion polls confirmed that before the war the population of the south-east identified as Ukrainians, but of a special sort. A 2005 Razumkov Centre survey, for example, found that 67 per cent of citizens in Ukraine's east answered positively to the question 'Do you consider yourself a patriot of the Ukraine?' and other studies had similar findings. Separatism barely registered, and the majority considered the Ukrainian state their home, but there were deep-seated grievances – notably over the status of the Russian language in state and educational institutions – accompanied by hostility to NATO membership and geopolitical reorientation to the West. It was the failure to give constitutional form to this distinctiveness and the perception that the February 2014 revolution brought hostile forces to power that provoked the rebellion.

In the west of Ukraine, at least three major regions can be identified. The area known as Galicia (currently the regions of Lviv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk) formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, and thereafter was ruled by Poland in the interwar years. Western Ukraine only finally joined the Soviet Union in 1944, when taken from the Germans, but for 400 years it had been ruled by Poland and then Austro-Hungary. Lwów was seized by the Soviet Union in 1939 under the terms of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August, but two years later was occupied by the Germans (returning to Lemberg), until it was taken by the Red Army in 1944 and integrated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) – as Lvov – becoming Lviv at independence in 1991. The region considered the Russians as invaders and occupiers, deep sentiments that flourish to this day. This is presented as a 'civilisational' choice that transcends day-to-day politicking. Transcarpathia was part of the kingdom of Hungary for a thousand years, until 1919, when it was assigned to the newly created Czechoslovakia as punishment for Hungary's role in the Great War. The region was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1945 and assigned to the Ukrainian SSR. In 1919 Lenin also assigned extensive territories to the east and south to what would become Ukrainian jurisdiction. However, it was Stalin who was the greatest Ukrainian state-builder, adding extensive territories to both the east and the west. In cultural terms, however, in the mid-1930s he reversed the cultural renaissance of the period of 'Ukrainisation' of the 1920s, when the policy of *korenizatsiya* (indigenisation) encouraged teaching and the publication of books in native languages. (For contemporary Ukrainian regions, see Map 4.)

The Crimean peninsula is the heartland of Russian nationhood. It was here in Khersones that Prince Vladimir adopted Orthodoxy as the official religion of the

people of Rus. Following the Mongol invasion, the Crimean Khanate ruled the peninsula from 1441, whose territories at one point encompassed a large part of the northern Black Sea littoral. From 1736 Russia started its push to take over the region, prompted in particular by the desire to put an end to the raids on the Slavic parts to the north. Catherine the Great's push against the Ottoman Empire saw Crimea occupied by Russian forces in 1783, and on 2 February 1784 it formally entered the Russian Empire as Taurida Oblast. In turn, the Tatar population now faced successive waves of deportation, including in response to the threat from Napoleon in 1812, when they were sent to Siberia, and then in 1855, towards the end of the Crimean War, when they were branded as enemy agents and tens of thousands were sent to Turkey. From the 1860s the imperial authorities launched a new wave of deportations, accompanied by attempts to Russify the northern Black Sea region. The worst deportation was Stalin's, on 18–20 May 1944. The whole population, some 230,000, including 40,000 who had served with distinction in the Red Army, were sent to Siberia and Central Asia, with at least 100,000 expiring en route of hunger and thirst. They had been accused of collaboration with the Nazi occupiers, but given the purges of the 1930s, which had wiped out much of the Crimean Tatar elite, surprisingly few (some 2,000) joined 'defence teams' rather than be sent to work in Germany. Tatars now make up 13 per cent of the Crimean population, whereas before the Russian occupation of 1783 they comprised 80 per cent.[22] In 1954 the region was transferred from Russian to Ukrainian jurisdiction, a decision that was contested from the first, above all because Russians made up the majority of the population. The 2001 census revealed that 1.45 million (57 per cent) out of a total population of 2 million claimed to be Russians, 576,000 Ukrainians and 245,000 Tatars, while some 77 per cent were registered as native Russian-speakers. It was the return of Crimea to Russia in March 2014 that transformed the Ukrainian crisis into a major European confrontation (see Chapter 5).

The pattern of religious affiliation is equally complex. Some 68 per cent of Ukrainians identify themselves as Orthodox Christians, 7.6 as Greek Catholics (Uniates), 1.9 as Protestants and evangelicals, 0.9 as Muslims, and 13 per cent do not identify with any of the above faiths.[23] The Uniates, who observe Orthodox rites but render allegiance to the Pope in Rome, are concentrated in the seven regions of western Ukraine, overwhelmingly in the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil regions (Galicia). Orthodoxy itself split in 1989, when the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) once again took on a legal identity, and then in 1992 split away under the leadership of Metropolitan Filaret (who in June 1990 lost the battle to become Moscow Patriarch) to create the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP), with Filaret becoming its Patriarch in October 1995. The

split provoked some undignified tussles over parishes, with about half remaining loyal to Moscow, especially in the Russophone regions, now registered as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). In 2013–14 Filaret has been an enthusiastic supporter of the pro-European protesters, a stance that has put him at odds with the Moscow-oriented Church. There have been numerous incidents of pressure against Moscow-affiliated congregations following the revolution of February 2014. Although the Moscow Patriarch, Kirill, is often accused of being too close to the Putin regime, when it comes to Ukraine he has sought to steer a path towards reconciliation and dialogue.

Thus the fundamental question facing the newly independent Ukrainian state in 1991 was to find an adequate political form in which to institutionalise and represent this diversity. Countries like Belgium and Canada have used federalism to provide a constitutional framework for diversity. Others, like Spain and the United Kingdom, remain unitary but have a great degree of quasi-federal devolution of powers. In the end, after a divisive debate, Article 2.2 of the 1996 constitution declared that Ukraine is a unitary state and that its territory is indivisible and inviolable. Ukraine is far from being the only country facing the problem of managing diversity, but the internal developmental impasse and the incipient new East–West division of Europe that runs across its historically diverse territories has made the task immeasurably more problematic.

TWO MODELS OF UKRAINIAN STATEHOOD

I mentioned earlier that there are two contrasting visions of statehood, and ultimately the Ukrainian crisis of 2013–14 is a battle between the two. The first is *monist nationalism*, driven by the idea that after several centuries of stunted statehood the Ukrainian nation has had to seize the opportunity to join the front ranks of nation states. The Pereyaslavl treaty uniting Ukraine with Russia, signed by Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitsky in 1654, was to be undone, along with the succeeding centuries of Russianisation, which only in the late nineteenth century turned into a conscious programme of Russification. Ukrainisation entailed above all giving priority to the titular language as the single most important token of nationhood. This form of Ukrainian nationalism affirms the link between ethnicity and the state, although couched in the civic language of modern governance. The tension between nationalising ambitions and recognition that in fact Ukraine is a fragile ensemble of peoples and territories provoked exaggerated fears about the country's cohesion. For this reason the Ukrainian nationalising elite insisted on creating a unitary state, fearing for the territorial

integrity of the country. Thus the monist model is one of integrated nationalism, in which the state is a nationalising one, drawing on the tradition of Ukrainism to fill the existing borders with a content sharply distinguished from Russia. It would be officially monolingual, unitary and culturally specific.

The monist vision of Ukrainian statehood draws in part on the ideas of Dmytro Dontsov, a Ukrainian nationalist writer whose radical ideas shaped the thinking of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), established in Vienna in 1929. Like so many of his generation, Dontsov was traumatised by the collapse of the government of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, in which he served, in 1919. Ukraine's failed attempt to establish its independent statehood in the period of revolution and civil war radicalised later thinking and influences policy to this day. In the interwar years Ukrainian-populated areas were divided between Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Bolshevik Russia. The Soviet part was granted the institutions of federal statehood, but like the other Soviet republics, this was overlain by the unitary power of what would become the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Dontsov wrote withering critiques of the failure of Ukraine to sustain its independence between 1917 and 1921, including severely personal attacks on the leading Ukrainian figures of that time. He repudiated the socialism of his youth and instead embraced a radical Ukrainian nationalism that excluded the possibility of consensus and cooperation with Russia. He proposed a new 'nationalism of the deed' and a united 'national will' in which violence played an essential part in overthrowing the old order. He excoriated the Russianism, Polonism or Austrianism of parts of Ukrainian society, and instead advocated the creation of a 'new man', who with 'hot faith and stone heart' would destroy Ukraine's enemies. A national culture in his view was sacred and should be defended by all means necessary.

Dontsov did not become a member of the OUN but his writings provided much of the inspiration for the movement, and he remains a revered figure today in the pantheon of integral Ukrainian nationalism.[24] Liberalism, democracy and the lack of political will were held responsible for the failure to establish an independent Ukrainian state and encouraged a turn to fascism.[25] Fascist ideas about national rebirth took deep root, and despite the inherent fractiousness and contradictions of the ideology, Ukrainian ultra-nationalism conforms to Roger Griffin's definition of generic fascism: 'bent on mobilising all "healthy" social and political energies to resist the onslaught of "decadence" so as to achieve the goal of national rebirth, a project that involves the regeneration (palingenesis) of both the political culture and the social and ethical cultures underpinning it'.[26] While elitism, strong leadership, militaristic values and mass mobilisation are core elements, racism and anti-Semitism are not necessarily part of what Ernst Nolte calls the 'fascist minimum'.

In the early 1930s the OUN, headed by Andriy Melnik, ed the resistance to Polish rule. In June 1933 Stepan Bandera became head of the OUN's national executive in Galicia, territory that became part of Poland after the Great War. Bandera led a vicious campaign against Polish officials and policies. Released from a Polish jail in September 1939, he moved to Krakow, the capital of the German General Government of occupied Poland. Here the OUN split into a more conservative faction headed by Melnik (OUN-M) and a more radical wing headed by Bandera (OUN-B). By the terms of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 Galicia for the first time became part of the Soviet Union. The peace lasted barely two years, and the German invasion of 22 June 1941 was at first welcomed by the Ukrainian nationalist movement, anticipating that Germany would re-establish some form of Ukrainian statehood.

Bandera espoused a virulent form of integral nationalism, an exclusive and ethnically centred definition of the Ukrainian nation, accompanied by the murderous denigration of those who allegedly undermined this vision, notably Poles, Jews and Russians, the last of whom in his view were the worst. Bandera's supporters argue that in fact he advocated an inclusive policy of nation-building, including Jews and others as long as they supported his goals. This is true to the degree that the participation of the OUN in the slaughter of Jews in the early period of German occupation was motivated less by virulent anti-Semitism than by the situational alliance with the Nazis.[27] By late 1941 some of their violence was directed against the Germans. The OUN's goal was the creation of an independent Ukrainian national state to unite ethnic Ukrainians, and they were willing to accept support from any source in pursuance of this goal. Zaitsev defines integral nationalism as

> a form of authoritarian nationalism that regards the nation as an organic whole and demands the unreserved subordination of the individual to the interests of his or her nation, which are placed above the interests of any other group, other nations, and humanity as a whole.[28]

The other side of the coin is the denial of the common historical path of Russia and Ukraine accompanied, in Dontsov's words, by 'unity with Europe, under all circumstances and at any price – that is the categorical imperative of our foreign policy'.[29] All of this has deep resonance today, although of course intellectual filiation is never direct but a tangled skein of complex interactions.

On 30 June 1941, in Lviv, Bandera announced the formation of the Ukrainian state, appointing his associate Yaroslav Stetsko as prime minister. The OUN fought with the Germans, committing atrocities against the Jews, Poles and Russians. Nazi Germany proved a fickle ally, and on 5 July Bandera and his colleagues were arrested

and they spent the rest of the war in German concentration camps. Bandera was taken to a special wing of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp for political prisoners (Zellenbau), from where he was released in September 1944 when the Germans thought that he could once again prove useful against the advancing Soviet forces. Even without him the Banderites (Banderovtsy) organised the Ukrainian Waffen SS Nachtigall and Roland divisions that together with the Galicia division by some estimates were responsible for the deaths of some half a million people, typically attended by extreme brutality. The military wing of OUN-B, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrayinska Povstanska Armiya, UPA), was organised in Volyn in 1943 to fight for an independent Ukraine after the war. In the first instance this entailed a radicalisation of the long-standing Polish–Ukrainian civil war. Beginning on 'bloody Sunday', 11 July 1943, the UPA slaughtered some 70,000 Poles, mainly women and children and some unarmed men, in Volyn, and by 1945 it had killed at least 130,000 in Eastern Galicia. Whole families had their eyes gouged out if suspected of being informers, before being hacked to death. After Ukraine was liberated by Soviet forces in summer 1944, the Ukrainian nationalist resistance movement (OUN-B and UPA) continued a partisan war against the Polish and Soviet authorities, apparently with British intelligence service (MI6) support, which lasted into 1949. Bandera himself was assassinated by the KGB in Munich in October 1959.[30]

When the Soviet Communist overlay disappeared in 1991, what had become a rather large Ukrainian proto-state gained independence. The Soviet institutions of governance were replaced by liberal-democratic forms, and the Soviet economy began the long transition to a market system. However, the traumas associated with the struggle for independent Ukrainian statehood remained etched in the national consciousness. In October 2007 the city of Lviv erected a statue in Bandera's honour, and dozens of other cities in western Ukraine followed suit. As the leading scholar of right-wing extremism Andreas Umland puts it: 'The OUN is a – if not the – major historical source of inspiration for all Ukrainophone nationalist parties, especially the more radical ones.'[31] At the height of the protests on Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti, henceforth Maidan), the centre of Ukrainian civic life in the heart of Kiev, on 1 January 2014 a 15,000-strong torchlit procession celebrated his one hundred and fifth birthday, a march supported not only by the nationalist Svoboda (Freedom) party but also by Yulia Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna (Fatherland) party. All of this was alien and incomprehensible to the large Russophone populations in the south-east, for whom the Soviet period was one of development and progress. It was also the time when the modern Ukrainian state was given its territorial shape by the Soviet Union, encompassing contested territories to the west and east, as well as Crimea in the south.

The red and black UPA flag was once again displayed as the symbol of radical Ukrainian nationalism. Monist nationalism draws on a naturalistic, historicist and restitutive narrative of Ukrainian statehood, suggesting that Ukraine has finally come together naturally after the deviations and mistakes of history. As in some other post-Communist states, notably the Baltic republics, the model of state-building is restorative: the attempt to re-establish some lost ideal of what the new state and nation should look like. In the case of Estonia and Latvia, for example, the idea was to return to the pre-war republics, and thus only those who lived there at the time and their descendants gained the automatic right to citizenship. The tens of thousands of Russians who had arrived since to build the new industries and to serve in the armed forces, who now hoped to live out their pensionable years in peace in their homeland, had to win the right to citizenship through language and history tests. Ukrainian state-building also operated with an attenuated restorative model at its heart. Although all those living in Ukraine in 1991 automatically gained the right to citizenship, including many stationed there in the armed forces, the nationalising state was nevertheless biased towards the view that ultimately the society would have to be 'Ukrainised', above all through the monolingual imposition of Ukrainian. This view was incorporated, after intense debate, in the 1996 constitution.[32] Article 10 was studious in its denigration of the status of Russian: 'The state language in Ukraine is the Ukrainian language. [...] in Ukraine the free development, use and protection of Russian, other languages of national minorities of Ukraine is guaranteed'. The comma after 'Russian' was particularly symbolic of the new priorities, as was lumping Russians together with other 'national minorities'.

The new state sought to create its attendant symbolism and myths, but there was no single national narrative. Indeed, much of the discussion over the last two decades has been about the weakness of Ukrainian ethno-nationalism and Ukrainisation, registered by Russophones more as an annoyance than a major impediment. Ukraine developed as a pluralistic community, in which Ukrainian in culture and the arts may actually have diminished. The deep cultural struggle continued, however, with contrasting mythologies, memory politics and calendars of secular saints used as the currency of political exchange. As with so many of the former Communist Eastern European states, nation-building was accompanied by a pronounced cult of victimhood, the seedbed for new conflicts. In particular, the Holodomor (meaning 'hunger extermination') was crucial for the nation's self-identification. More than 2 million died in the famine of 1932–3 in the wake of Stalin's vicious collectivisation campaign, which saw peasants uprooted from their land and the so-called kulaks (rich peasants) exiled to Siberia. Even as food production collapsed, exacerbated by a severe drought, the Soviet regime continued to export grain to buy machine tools and other equipment

to push forward the campaign of accelerated industrialisation. The famine affected the heartlands of Ukraine nationhood, and the Stalinist elite may well have sought to destroy the spirit of the nation; but the famine was not restricted to Ukraine alone, with millions more dying in the Kuban and the lower Volga.

A further symbol of the Ukrainisers was Bandera, the leader of the OUN from the 1930s. The defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 did not bring peace to Galicia, and the Soviet forces fought a vicious war against the insurgent army of the Banderovtsy. After his death this strain of militant Ukrainian nationalism lived on in the emigration abroad, combined with a pronounced anti-Russian ideology. Stetsko took over the leadership of the Ukrainian government in exile following Bandera's death in 1959, and led the organisation until his own death in 1986. Many leading Ukrainian nationalists were associated with the organisation, including Viktor Yushchenko, president from 2005 to 2010. The émigré movement inspired the creation of the Captive Nations Committee, which in 1959 persuaded the US Congress officially to acknowledge a Captive Nations Week. This recognised Nazi creations such as Idel-Ural and Cossackia as being captive, with Russia portrayed as the captor. Irrespective of their ideology, in this tradition Russia is viewed as inherently evil, and thus the fall of Communism did not make the slightest difference: Russian imperialism was considered oppressive before Communism and after.[33] This feeds the irreconcilable anti-Russianism of part of the monist nationalist tradition, which has considerable resonance in Washington, impeding constructive and pragmatic relations between the two countries.

Yushchenko's second wife Kateryna, an American citizen, briefly headed the Captive Nations Committee, writing a famously anti-Russian letter to the *Washington Times* (no longer available online). Her career included working for the State Department and the White House during Ronald Reagan's presidency, and after Ukrainian independence she was a co-founder and vice president of the US–Ukraine Foundation. Yushchenko was the first Ukrainian president to support the rehabilitation of the OUN and Bandera, its controversial leader. In one of his most divisive acts, on 22 January 2010 Yushchenko awarded Bandera the title of 'Hero of Ukraine', a move that was widely condemned, including by the European Parliament and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Exactly a year later the new president, Viktor Yanukovych, officially annulled the award. A giant portrait of Bandera was positioned to the left of the stage (from the viewer's perspective) during the Maidan protests, understandably alienating the Russophone population. The struggle for democracy and the 'European choice' was overlain by a radical nationalist mobilisation.

Equally, Yushchenko made recognition of the genocidal nature of the Holodomor one of the central planks of his presidency. In 2006 the Verkhovna Rada (parliament)

adopted a resolution referring to the Holodomor as an 'act of genocide against the Ukrainian people'. The move was bitterly divisive, with the prime minister, Yanukovych, and over 200 MPs from the east abstaining or not taking part in the vote. The next year Yushchenko sought to make Holodomor and Holocaust denial a criminal offence, although parliament did not vote on the bill. On assuming the presidency in 2010, Yanukovych told the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that the Holodomor was not genocide: 'Recognising the Holodomor as an act of genocide, we think, will be incorrect, unjust. It was a tragedy, a common tragedy of the states that made up the Soviet Union.' The implication was that the partisans who considered the Holodomor to be genocide were not only condemning the Stalinist regime, but also couching it in anti-Russian terms. Instead of a common disaster for all Soviet peoples, monists made it a uniquely Ukrainian tragedy. The question divided the western from the eastern part of the country and is yet another example of the 'genocide wars', which include the struggle over the recognition of the Armenian massacres in 1916 and 1988 as 'genocides'.[34] This was another divisive issue in the debate over the formulation of Ukrainian national identity.

The model of integrated nationalism shares some of the concerns of the classic ideas of integral nationalism – the latter denoting the creation along fascist lines of a united people with a single language, culture and mythology – but it is important to stress the differences. Integrated nationalism is fundamentally oriented towards a civic model of state development and is tolerant of diversity and rights. There is little evidence that the civic rights of Russian-language-speakers were systemically abused, even at the height of the mobilisations in 2004 and 2014. As Kuzio argues, civic development and nationalism are not necessarily opposed and can complement each other.[35] This is the fundamental argument long advanced by Michael Ignatieff, who distinguishes civic from ethnic nationalism. For him, nationalism can be a constructive force as it brings a people together to create the institutions of a modern representative state, but in extreme forms it can lead to a collective escape from reality in which the rhetoric of noble causes and tragic sacrifices in the name of some primordial entity inflicts agony on others and subverts civic idealism.[36] The collapse of Tito's socialist state in Yugoslavia in 1989–91 unleashed the demons of war and extreme nationalism, and the post-Communist phenomenon of 'new nationalism' is now evident in Ukraine.

However, civic inclusion was partial and integrated nationalism could not find a formula to include the country's diversity on a constitutional basis. Ukrainian was the sole state language, and thus all official documents, notices and signs were in that language alone. Not everyone could understand the state documents that they had to read and sign, and even at election time all the instructions are in Ukrainian alone. Such inconveniences and demonstrative assertion of Ukrainism provoked

a constant sense of resentment. Russian for the most part was not proscribed, but was rendered the language of private life. Ukrainian nationalists like to sneer that Russian is the 'kitchen language', not worthy of use in civic and professional life. In practice, even during the protests on the Maidan in 2004 and again in 2013–14, the predominant language was Russian. In addition, plenty of Russian-speakers endorse the nationalising model of state development, as do a certain quotient of ethnic Russians, but at the level of state development the problem remains. Identities are so mixed that the majority of the population comfortably live with multiple identities, yet this represents social adaptation and not the resolution of the political question at the constitutional level.

The core of the problem is an ideological one. At the heart of the monist model, as noted, is a restitutive understanding of re-established statehood. In other words, the aim is not to reflect existing realities, above all the different histories of the territories making up contemporary Ukraine, but to restore some idealised vision of that statehood. As we have seen the model is also applied in Estonia and Latvia, where the post-Communist national elites gave automatic citizenship only to those with roots in the pre-war independent republics, while all the rest (overwhelmingly the Russians who had moved there in the post-war years) had to demonstrate their eligibility for citizenship, typically through a language test. Like all ideologies, the restitutive model seeks to impose an external pattern on reality.

Not surprisingly, the model of restitutive nationalism could assume highly intolerant forms. At the extreme, it took on aspects of the integral nationalism espoused by the classic fascist movements of the twentieth century. This was the case with the militantly nationalist Svoboda party. Established as the Social–National Party of Ukraine (SNPU), an obvious reference to Hitler's National Socialist Party, in Lviv in 1991 by Oleg Tyagnybok, Andriy Parubiy and others, the group was distinguished by 'its openly revolutionary ultranationalism, its demands for the violent takeover of power in the country, and its willingness to blame Russia for all of Ukraine's ills'. It was also the first party 'to recruit Nazi skinheads and football hooligans'.[37] In 2004 the party changed its name to Svoboda, replaced its neo-Nazi *Wolfsangel* (Wolf's Hook) official symbol by a stylised trident (the emblem of Ukraine) consisting of three fingers, and Tyagnybok became sole leader (while Parubiy went on to join Yushchenko's Our Ukraine). Until 2013 they were happily distributing Ukrainian versions of Nazi tracts. In a debate in 2012 about the Ukrainian-born American actress Mila Kunis a Svoboda spokesman, Igor Myroshnichenko, argued that she was not Ukrainian but a 'Jewess'.[38] Anti-Semitism was deeply embedded in the party, but the intensity of its Russophobia was far greater. Svoboda is allied with France's Front National and the Italian neo-fascist group Fiamma Tricolore.

The great recession from 2008 hit Ukraine with particular intensity, exacerbating social and political divisions, redounding to the advantage of right-wing populism. The more mainstream Batkivshchyna party also strongly reflects the monist Ukrainian nationalist aspiration of creating a culturally uniform Ukrainian-speaking nation, by contrast with the pluralist concept of Ukraine as culturally and linguistically diverse. A welter of radical nationalist parties made electoral advances, notably Svoboda. Viacheslav Likhachev rightly predicted 'the final escape of right-wing extremism from the marginal niche that it occupied for the first twenty years of the political history of independent Ukraine'.[39] In the 28 October 2012 parliamentary election Svoboda won 10.44 per cent in the proportional part of the vote, taking 25 list candidates to the Rada and another ten from single-mandate districts. Parliament became a rostrum 'for the fight against Yids, Russkies, and other filth'.[40] A resolution of the European Parliament at that time condemned the party as xenophobic, anti-Semitic and racist.

The nationalising agenda could take both a civic and a more harshly accentuated, exclusivist nationalist form. This explains the paradox that even the Ukrainian nationalist parties, unlike their right-wing, populist counterparts in Western Europe, supported accession to the EU. For them, it was not so much the institutional and normative structures of the EU that were attractive, but the Wider European representation of political space. The enlargement of Wider Europe to the post-Soviet area and Ukraine meant pushing back Russian influence and limiting its geopolitical pretensions. In other words, for Svoboda and others of that ilk the EU came to be associated not with the normative values of human rights and good governance, and, above all, with the overcoming of the logic of conflict, but with the projection of Western European geopolitics, reinforced by the power of the Euro-Atlantic security community. The nationalists favour the EU not for its principles but because it embodies a set of interests that increasingly run counter to those of Russia. In other words, the exclusive and proprietary nature of 'Wider Europe' amplified the exclusivity of the integrated-nationalism project.

The Russophobia of monist Ukrainian nationalism does not acknowledge that Russia was both victim and perpetrator. Russia still has to come to terms with its Stalinist past (just as Britain does with many remaining dark spots of colonialism), but one-sided condemnation by its former 'fraternal nations' in the USSR does not help, especially since each of these countries played their part in Bolshevik crimes. Three Soviet general secretaries came from mixed Russian–Ukrainian stock: Nikita Khrushchev – who was born on the Russian side close to what is now the Russo-Ukrainian border, grew up in the Donbas and spent most of his early career in Ukraine – is often perceived as a Ukrainian, especially since his wife, Nina

Kukharchuk, was fully Ukrainian; Leonid Brezhnev, who became the party boss in Dnepropetrovsk, was born there and used it as his political base even when in Moscow; and Konstantin Chernenko, who came from a Russified Ukrainian family born in Siberia. Mikhail Gorbachev is half Ukrainian, as was his wife, Raisa Titarenko. The post-colonial model can shed some light on the tangled history of the two peoples, but the issue of competing identities runs far deeper. Even if one accepts that the Ukrainian nation has its own thousand-year history, distinct but complementary to the history of the Russian nation, the political question of the foundation of relations between the two countries still has to be resolved. The post-colonial model by definition emphasises the self-assertion of the former subaltern element, but this is only the other side of the coin to those who stress the 'fraternal' nature of the relationship between the two countries. One stresses separation, the other unity, whereas in fact 'normal' relations in the end will only be established through a combination of the two.

This brings us to the second paradigm of Ukrainian state development, which I call the *pluralist* to denote its appeal to broad principles of national inclusiveness. At root, this model proposes that the post-Communist Ukrainian state is home to many disparate peoples, reflecting its long history of fragmented statehood and the way that its contemporary borders include territories with very different histories, but that they all share an orientation to a civic Ukrainian identity. The borders of Ukraine, as we have seen, have changed considerably over the years. In particular, the boundaries of the interwar Ukrainian SSR were very different to those of today.

A path not taken is that represented by Vyacheslav Chornovil. He was one of the leaders of the 'dissident' movement in Soviet Ukraine, and then the most articulate of the leaders of the national-independence movement known as 'Rukh' in the final period of the Soviet Union. Rukh led the movement towards Ukrainian independence, but as with similar movements in Russia, it was quickly marginalised by more powerful players once independence was achieved. Chornovil fought passionately for the rebirth of Ukrainian nationhood, but he was sensitive to the pluralistic nature of the society. His vision of reborn Ukrainian statehood was inclusive and multidimensional, but it was overshadowed by the 'nationalisers' and partisans of a narrower monism. Chornovil spent the 1990s on the margins, but was set for a comeback when he was killed in a suspicious traffic accident in 1999. Chornovil's ideas appealed to all segments of Ukrainian society while challenging the powerful 'third force' – the oligarchs. Chornovil remains a hero for those who believe that Ukraine can develop as a confident pluralistic society on good terms with all of its neighbours.

Thus Valentin Yakushik argues that Ukraine is 'bicivilisational', with Ukrainians and Russians as equals in the state, together with a rich variety of other peoples, notably Ruthenians, Gagauzians, Hungarians, Jews, Romanians and Crimean Tatars.[41] Nicolai Petro refers to the Russian-speaking population as 'the Other Ukraine', and stresses that the current tension goes back generations. It is fundamentally a dispute about who gets to define what it means to be Ukrainian. From this perspective Ukraine is not one culture but many; not simply a 'cleft' society, as Samuel Huntington put it in his infamous lecture 'The Clash of Civilizations?', but a richly diverse society.[42] Equally, although the various Orthodox congregations are split, the tension was exacerbated by the myth-making of the nationalisers. For the pluralists multiple religious and linguistic orientations do not represent a danger to the state, as the nationalists would have it, but the opposite: the diversity contributes to a rich and multifaceted culture. This did not necessarily entail turning Ukraine into a federal state, but it did mean that it would have to evolve into some sort of 'consociational' entity in which the voice of its multiple identities was given some sort of legally defended constitutional status.

The pluralist model argues that all the peoples making up contemporary Ukraine have an equal stake in the development of the country, and thus opposes the nationalising strain, although without repudiating some of its concerns. For example, few would deny the need for special programmes to reassert the centrality of the Ukrainian language, including ensuring that it is taught to all children and can hold its own in further and higher education, the professions and government. This would not necessarily exclude linguistic competency tests for civil servants to ensure that Ukrainian is not overwhelmed by Russian – but it does repudiate the idea that the new state should officially be monolingual. One of the great riches of Ukraine is precisely its diversity, and, as far as the pluralists are concerned, there is no reason why this should not be constitutionally entrenched. The very 'borderness' of the country adds to its complexity, not as a problem to be managed but as an endowment to be celebrated. Thus the pluralists condemn the nationalists for failing to find a political form in which this diversity could be embedded in an inclusive constitutional order.

The tension between these two representations of Ukrainian state formation has a clearly delineated spatial dimension. The monist view is obviously stronger in the western part of the country, while the pluralist approach is stronger in the east and the south. There is also a cross-cutting temporal dimension, that is, different representations of the past and future. As well as calling for a pluralistic form of statehood, the south-east also appeals to neo-Soviet sentiments, recalling the good times of the Soviet period when jobs were plentiful, welfare (however minimal) was guaranteed

and the borders between Russia and Ukraine were wide open, with numerous intermarriages and a genuine 'Soviet' people beginning to emerge. The change of regime in February 2014 thus played out against the background of already intense divisions. As a recent unequivocal study puts it: 'the culture, language, and political thinking of western Ukraine have been imposed upon the rest of Ukraine'. The goal ostensibly is the unification of the country,

> but in fact the objective has been to put down and humiliate Ukraine's Russian-speaking population. The radical nationalists of western Ukraine, for whom the rejection of Russia and its culture is an article of faith, intend to force the rest of the country to fit their narrow vision.[43]

This may be putting it rather strongly, but the division is real.

clear that the US had moved to become Russia's main opponent. The September 2013 G20 summit in St Petersburg was marked by a bitter chill in relations between the two countries, exacerbated by attempts in Washington to lead a boycott of the Sochi Olympics, scheduled for February 2014. Equally, it was clear that the EU had blundered badly in its Ukraine policy. It had been unable to temper the partisan agendas of its 'new Europe' members allied with the more virulent Atlanticist countries elsewhere. The EaP in principle served an important purpose, but its implementation proceeded within the worst paradigm of competitive geopolitics.

All the conditions were in place for the 'perfect storm' that hit Europe in late 2013. There was a deepening 'Ukrainian' crisis, with a president who had already destroyed civil society when he had been governor in Donetsk, and who was now generalising these corrupt practices to the country as a whole. The bureaucratic–oligarchic system of rule was also being destabilised by the greed of his 'family'. This provoked a radicalisation of public opinion, as reflected in the 2012 parliamentary-election results. At the same time, the 'Ukraine' crisis was also gathering pace as the Atlantic and Eurasian integration poles radicalised their positions. The catalyst was the Association Agreement with the EU, but this was only the culmination of a broader failure to negotiate a mutually acceptable structure to post-Cold War European international politics. The country's central position meant that when the two crises intersected there would be a rapid escalation of both. Tony Wood summarises the situation nicely:

> For the US and Europe, the aim has all along been relatively straightforward: to wrest the country from Russia's sphere of influence and continue the joint eastward expansion of NATO and the EU. [...] For Russia, the basic goal has until recently been a symmetrical pushback: to keep Ukraine out of Western security and economic structures, leaving it as at the very least a neutral state, if not an active member of a 'Eurasian Union' dominated by Russia.[57]

The two trains were hurtling towards each other.

CHAPTER 4

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

Following Yanukovych's announcement on 21 November 2013 that he would not after all sign the Association Agreement, Mustafa Nayyem, a journalist for the online news site *Ukrainska Pravda*, called on Facebook for people to gather on the Maidan to protest. Starting with a relatively small gathering, the numbers soon swelled. The Maidan became a symbol not only of protest but of the direct expression of popular sovereignty. The language of the 1989 movements that brought an end to the Communist systems in Eastern Europe was heard once again, including a romantic but also extremely effective belief in the power of the people and civil society. Disappointed by what was perceived to have been the betrayal of the ideals of the Orange Revolution after 2004, the 'people' this time would not disperse until they had achieved a fundamental reordering of the Ukrainian political system.

THE PEOPLE ARMED

Ukrainian society has repeatedly demonstrated a capacity for mass mobilisation and engagement in political protest. The 'granite' student strike movement in 1990 forced the republic's Communist leadership to pursue sovereignty and then independence, while protests against Leonid Kuchma had engulfed the country in 2001. In the autumn of 2004 the Maidan was occupied for several weeks, forcing an unprecedented third round to the presidential elections. Now once again the Maidan became the epicentre of a movement that would sweep away the president and provoke a major European crisis. This was a time when a wave of popular protest broke on the rocks

of authoritarian stabilisation. The Arab Spring of 2011–13 saw long-time dictators swept from office in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya, but not in Syria, where the country was engulfed in civil war. In Russia, Putin's return for a third presidential term provoked a protest movement. The distortion of the result of the parliamentary ballot of 4 December 2011 brought thousands on to Bolotnaya Square, the site of a confrontation later with the police on the day before his inauguration on 6 May 2012.[1] The Kiev Maidan, like Tahrir Square in Cairo and Bolotnaya Square in Moscow, became the site of putative civic renewal and the restoration of popular accountability.

Demonstrations across the country on 24 November gathered some 300,000 people, but thereafter the protests appeared to be on the wane. However, the ill-judged attempt by the police to disperse the crowd on the Maidan on the night of 29–30 November, under the pretext of putting up a Christmas tree, prompted renewed mobilisation. Over half a million came out on Sunday 1 December. The swirling crowd occupied the centre of the city, and pulled down the statue of Lenin off the main street, Khreshchatik. The police action was the key blunder, and later the Ukrainian authorities admitted that they had overreacted. The four main opposition parties – Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna (Fatherland), Vitaly Klitschko's UDAR, Arseniy Yatsenyuk's Front for Change and Oleg Tyagnybok's Svoboda – had already formed an alliance, with Yatsenyuk as leader, in anticipation of the 2015 presidential election, and they now worked together in opposition to Yanukovych. On 11 December the square was once again attacked, provoking violent conflicts but still no deaths. On 24 December the opposition journalist Tetyana Chornovil was savagely beaten up on her way home from a village near Kiev where her parents lived. At this stage the protesters were mainly middle-aged and middle class, drawing on social media and the internet for information, looking to the EU to escape from economic and political stagnation. Although students were well represented, two-thirds of protesters were over 30 years of age. The median protester was male, between 34 and 45, and with a full-time job. The ethnic make-up broadly reflected the country's national composition, with 92 per cent of the demonstrators ethnic Ukrainians, while a large group of Russians also joined, motivated by the same concerns as their Ukrainian counterparts – corruption and misgovernance.[2]

The atmosphere on the square has now become legendary. The sweet smoke from wood-burners was tempered by the acrid fumes from burning tyres, while purposeful platoons marched intent on their business of saving Ukraine. What appeared to be a funeral pyre became a monument to freedom. Stepan Bandera looked down from his giant portrait and would no doubt have approved of the frequent bursts of singing the national anthem and cries of 'Glory to Ukraine. Glory to the Heroes!' Impassioned speakers took to the stage to excoriate the authorities, to rally the troops

and to organise what soon turned into an insurrection. The surrounding buildings were occupied and provided shelter and warmth, and the encampment reached far up the main boulevard, the Khreshchatik, and on occasions flowed into government buildings in the surrounding streets. This was more than just another Orange Revolution, since the Blues had a direct stake in a better governed and less corrupt Ukraine, and even some of the Gold oligarchs threw in their lots and supported the insurgency with money, food and tents. For those who participated, this was a transformative experience, while observers could not but be concerned about what sort of Ukraine would emerge as a result.

The major escalation took place after 16 January 2014, when the Verkhovna Rada adopted a bundle of 12 'anti-protest laws' (technically called the Bondarenko–Oliynik bill but soon dubbed the 'dictatorship laws'), which aroused popular fury and accelerated the drift towards violence. The laws imposed draconian penalties against demonstrations, with the 'organisers of mass unrest' facing 10 to 15 years in jail. The measures were not discussed in committee, and were adopted in a tumultuous parliamentary session by a show of hands. They were signed into law immediately by the speaker, in contravention of the rules. At the same time, the moderates in Yanukovych's team were dismissed, notably Sergei Levochkin, the head of the presidential staff, who favoured dialogue with the opposition. The first demonstrator was killed on 22 January, transforming the protest movement into a revolution. From 23 January insurgents took over regional state administration buildings, effectively ending governmental control. In Lviv armed protesters occupied several government buildings, including City Hall, which was festooned with Nazi banners, and also seized a military arsenal. They dispatched up to several hundred armed forces daily to the Maidan, who participated in the escalating violence. In three regions, Volyn, Lviv and Ternopil, a new government structure called the Narodna Rada (People's Council) came to power.

The defence of the square increasingly took on a quasi-military form. In other words, a civic protest movement turned into an armed struggle in the space of just a few weeks. The head of the *samooborona* (self-defence committee) was known as 'commandant', the post taken up by the veteran nationalist Andriy Parubiy, one of the founders of Svoboda, and the lightly armed units making designated *sotnyas* (squadrons, literally 'hundreds'). The radicalisation of the square marginalised the traditional party leaders. Klitschko came in for particular criticism from the radicals, with Tymoshenko in jail and Tyagnybok in his element in fomenting revolution. The trade union building adjacent to the square was taken over by militant groups and provided field kitchens, a press centre, meeting space and first-aid facilities. Entrance to the square was strictly controlled to stop 'provocateurs' entering, in particular the

so-called '*titushki*', young men in civilian clothes hired by the regime to support the security forces and intimidate the opposition through kidnappings and beatings. The Orange Revolution endured for 17 days, whereas the Maidan revolution lasted 100.

Svoboda was now joined on the nationalist flank by Right Sector (Pravy Sektor), a coalition of small groups which took the lead in organising the defence of the Maidan. It is reputed that Kolomoisky was one of the main funders of the Maidan movement, and in particular Right Sector, a party that began as a loose grouping of radical right-wing movements that led the confrontations with the riot police on the Maidan, 'organically combining militaristic organisation, nationalist ideology and Christian doctrine'.[3] Born in the territorial configuration of the defence of the right-hand segment of the square, Right Sector came together on 26 November 2013 and proved the most resolute militant fighting force. It combined such groups as the Stepan Bandera All-Ukrainian Organisation Trident (the trident being the symbol of Ukraine), the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA), White Hammer and the avowedly fascist Social–National Assembly. It set up headquarters in the trade union building overlooking the square, until it was burned out on the night of 18–19 February. At the peak of the protests it numbered at most a few thousand, devoted to Yanukovych's overthrow, and after successfully achieving that it transformed itself into a political party. Its leader, Dmytro Yarosh (also the head of Trident), fought the 25 May presidential election. Typical of the distorting effect of Eastern European post-Communist politics, the group supported Ukraine's association with the EU, not because of any respect for the values traditionally associated with that organisation but because it symbolised separation from Moscow.[4] Yarosh had been a member of UNA, but like the movement had developed a more eclectic post-Communist ideology. Right Sector inherited the Bandera philosophy that Russia was the main enemy in all circumstances and at all times, a credo that destroyed the possibility of diplomacy and rational political debate, and which seeped heavily into the new regime after February.

The authorities used force three times, and in each case it provoked a powerful counter-mobilisation and an escalation of violence. Three protesters were killed in the third week of January, one of whom showed signs of torture. Protest supporters were being kidnapped, tortured and murdered. The rhetoric on both sides revealed cleavages that presaged the civil war to come. Even the prime minister, Mykola Azarov, described the demonstrators as 'extremists and terrorists', although when resigning on 28 January he stated that he did so to allow a peaceful resolution of the civil unrest. The pro-government Lugansk MP Arsen Klintshaev said that it was 'totally right' that the first demonstrators had been killed, since they had turned against the country's leadership and urged 'a much harder line against the protesters'. On the

other side, Svoboda activists argued that that 'the EU is the only possibility for us to defend ourselves against Russian pressure'. As a perceptive report noted, 'without the nationalists' tight organisation, the revolt on Maidan Square would long since have collapsed. But Svoboda also embodies the greatest danger to the protest movement.'[5] The battle on the square became a civilisational struggle, with the hardliners on both sides squeezing out the middle ground where monists and the pluralists could meet on a common platform of anti-corruption and democratic renewal.[6]

A range of popular initiatives welled up from below, bypassing the traditional parties and giving shape to citizen activism. A Maidan Council was established early on to coordinate actions and to advise leaders. A number of self-defence organisations were created following the beating of Chornovil, the first step in the institutionalisation of the Maidan. One such group, the AutoMaidan, became responsible for transporting protesters safely to and from the Maidan, while a night guard group sought to prevent injured protesters being removed from hospitals by the security forces. EuromaidanSOS was established after the beating of the students on 30 November to provide legal and other support for those who had suffered at the hands of the Berkut (Golden Eagle), the special police force, and to help find missing people. It was based on the Centre for Civil Liberties, thus reinforcing the point that much of the activism in 2013–14 has its roots in movements spawned by the Orange Revolution a decade earlier. It provided a list of lawyers willing to provide their services, monitored the fate of those who went missing, and created mobile groups in Sevastopol and south-east Ukraine after the Crimean events. The opir.org website warned activists of how to avoid Berkut emplacements. In short, the new social media that had helped launch the protest movement was then used to organise activities and to support the participants.

However, these aspirations were later overshadowed and the revolution became a mockery of its original ideals. The focus broadened out from European issues to become an insurrection against the corruption, nepotism and general malfeasance of the Yanukovych regime. The 'revolt' element became more salient, above all against abuse of the constitutional system and the exercise of power over law. This was now less of a movement 'for' some ideal but a revolution 'against' the regime. The Maidan protest became radicalised, in large part because of the incompetence and irresolution of the regime's response. Just enough coercion and violence was used to strengthen the spirit and numbers of the protest movement, but not enough to achieve the goal of clearing the Maidan and the city centre of protesters. The 42 self-defence units of the Maidan managed and defended the square, three of which were all-female. Traditional gender roles, however, were asserted as the militarised agenda of national liberation began to overshadow the civic aspirations of the early protests. The Ukrainian 'revolution' was now dominated by neo-Leninist bodies of

armed men strutting across the square, foreclosing pluralist options and undermining the representative institutions of the state. The radical nationalism that came to predominate was later generalised to the rest of the country.[7]

This played into the hands of the more radical elements in the protest movement, notably the activists grouped around Right Sector. Unlike the Svoboda party, this was less an ideological, right-wing movement than an eclectic front of militants. Hence it is always easy to point out that it contained some Jews, to counter claims that Right Sector was anti-Semitic; that it contained ethnic Russians, to refute claims that it was Russophobic; that it brought together people from the Donbas, to deny that it was exclusively Galician, and so on. Despite its ideological and social heterogeneity, the predominant spirit undeniably was an extreme form of monist Ukrainian nationalism. The age profile of Right Sector was higher than the average on the Maidan, including some Afgantsy (those who had fought in the Afghan war in the 1980s) and veterans of the Chechen wars, and the predominant language was Russian.[8] Right Sector's relative prominence reflected the contradiction in the Maidan between liberal-democratic aspirations for civic dignity and democratic governance, and anti-liberal monistic representations of the nation. The rising tide of Ukrainian nationalism subordinated the struggle for individual rights to the collective aspirations of the nation. The various battles for the Maidan generated militancy as a distinct form of political behaviour, and thus gathered under its umbrella all sorts of activists, many of whose views were antithetical to each other.

The Maidan became a pilgrimage site for advocates of Western democratism. As Victoria Nuland, assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs, revealed in her remarks to the US–Ukraine Foundation conference at the National Press Club on 13 December 2013, she had travelled to Ukraine three times since the protests had begun. Visiting the Maidan on 5 December, she famously handed out 'cookies' to the demonstrators, although Catherine Ashton, who was in attendance, demonstrated European independence by not following suit. Nuland describes how

> in the wee hours of December 10th, we witnessed the appalling show of force by government forces who turned riot police, bulldozers and tear gas on the Maidan demonstrators as they sang hymns and prayed for peace. Ukrainians of all ages and backgrounds flooded to the Maidan to protect it. Secretary Kerry wasted no time in expressing the United States' disgust at this decision of the Ukrainian government and by morning the riot police had been forced to retreat.

She revealed that the US had 'invested' over $5 billion in democracy-promotion in Ukraine since 1991. Her remarks took it as a given that 'Ukraine's European future'

was the only possible option, and thus she commended 'the EU for leaving the door open on the Association Agreement and for continuing to work with the Ukrainian government on a way forward'.[9] It did not appear to have crossed her mind that the occupation of a city centre square in any other major city would long ago have been broken up, or that Ukraine was genuinely torn between East and West.

By early February, Yanukovych's position was becoming untenable. A leaked telephone call between Nuland and the ambassador, Geoffrey Pyatt, revealed the close involvement of the US in choosing his successor. The transcript was placed on YouTube on 6 February, and was part of a larger conversation. Its veracity was not challenged by the American authorities, although they blamed Russia for the interception and leak. Although the mantra of the Atlantic powers was that Ukrainian sovereignty should be respected, the tape revealed that the US had clear ideas on who should assume power. The leadership potential of Vitaly Klitschko, the head of UDAR, was assessed, but he was considered to be rather pro-German (EU), with Nuland summing up: 'I don't think Klitsch should go into government. I don't think it's necessary. I don't think it's a good idea.' Pyatt agreed and feared that it would be hard 'to keep the moderate democrats together', but Svoboda head Tyagnybok was identified as a problem, to which Nuland responded: 'I think Yats is the guy who has got the economic experience, the governing experience', clearly expressing the wish to see Arseniy Yatsenyuk become the country's prime minister.

The two then discussed how this could be achieved. They considered how to manage the Ukrainian opposition and how to get the UN involved, and noted that high-level reinforcement was waiting in the wings in the form of US vice president Joe Biden, who could move the process along at the appropriate time. Nuland stressed the importance of the UN: 'I think, to help glue this thing and to have the UN help glue it and, you know, fuck the EU.' This is certainly a sentiment shared by many Eurosceptics, but in this case it refers to the hesitancy of the EU to go along with American militancy on the Ukraine crisis, as well as its own divisions that inhibited the formulation of a coherent policy. The tape also reveals concern about Russia: 'You can be pretty sure if it [the deal] does start to gain altitude, that the Russians will be working behind the scenes to try to torpedo it.'[10] There are many disturbing elements about the intercept, quite apart from its provenance, one assumes, as part of the Russian secret intelligence service's attempts to discredit its opponents. It reveals the high degree of US meddling in Ukrainian affairs, and the way that the concerns of its ostensible allies and partners are dismissed with a profanity.

The country edged towards civil war. On 18 February 28 people were killed, including ten policemen from the Berkut riot police. The bloody clashes culminated in mass violence on 20 February. This was the day of sniper shootings, targeting both

protesters and police, with at least 39 protesters and 17 police officers killed. The angle of some of the shots suggests that they came from buildings occupied by the insurgents. Shots killing both protesters and police were fired from the Philharmonic Hall, a building under the full control of the insurgents. Parubiy was in charge of the building, and in general he ensured strict control on who could enter or leave the square. Surprisingly, Right Sector activists escaped mostly unharmed, even though they were actively involved in the fighting. The Maidan doctor Olga Bogomolets is reported to have suggested that the same type of bullets that killed the protesters also killed the police. Overall, between 30 November and 20 February at least 15 police officers and 77 activists (later commemorated as the 'heavenly hundred') were killed, and around 900 people were injured.

With violence spreading, on the night of 20–21 February the foreign ministers of Germany (Frank-Walter Steinmeier), Poland (Radosław Sikorski) and France (Laurent Fabius, who soon left for a visit to China), together with the head of the continental European department of the French foreign ministry, Eric Fournier, flew to Kiev and brokered a deal with Yanukovych. At 4 p.m. on 21 February in the building of the presidential administration the agreement was signed by Yanukovych, Yatsenyuk, Klitschko and Tyagnybok, and witnessed by the three EU ministers and Vladimir Lukin, Russia's former ambassador to the US and then human-rights ombudsman, who was now Putin's special representative. There were six key provisions:

i. within 48 hours Yanukovych was to sign a bill to return the country to the 2004 constitution, which would allow the Rada to form a 'government of national unity' within ten days;
ii. the unity government was to draft a new constitution by the end of spring 2014 that would further limit presidential powers;
iii. early presidential elections were to be held as soon as the new constitution was adopted, no later than December 2014, with a new electoral law and electoral commission;
iv. an investigation was to be conducted into the recent bout of violence, to be overseen by the authorities, the opposition and the Council of Europe;
v. the authorities would not introduce a state of emergency and all sides would renounce the use of force accompanied by the withdrawal of government forces from the Maidan and the disarming of the Kiev street militias;
vi. the various foreign ministers and representatives called for an immediate ceasefire.[11]

These were significant concessions and offered a peaceful and constitutional way out of the crisis. The security services melted away and Yanukovych was left defenceless.

That evening the deal was fulsomely rejected by the Maidan, whose leaders demanded Yanukovych's immediate resignation, the release of jailed protesters, signing of the Association Agreement and reversion to the 2004 constitution.[12] When the three opposition leaders went to the demonstrators to sell the deal, the Maidan squadron (*sotnia*) leader Vladimir Parasyuk responded furiously:

> We don't want to see Yanukovych in power. We don't want deals with them. On Saturday [22 February] at 10am he must step down. And unless this morning you come up with a statement demanding that he steps down, then we will take arms and go, I swear.[13]

Party leaders of maturity would have argued that the deal offered a peaceful way out of the crisis, but instead Klitschko even apologised for having shaken hands with Yanukovych. The next day insurgents took advantage of the removal of government forces to assert their control of the city and to occupy parliament. On that day statues of Lenin across the country were destroyed (part of the process known as the 'Leninopad'). Undoubtedly, Yanukovych's position was already shaky, and thus he was not a strong foundation on which to base a deal, yet with the Western powers and Russia as guarantors and less populism from the opposition, it could have worked. The revolution by then had a dynamic of its own, and, just as in February 1917 in Russia, a regime that looked so powerful crumbled in a matter of hours.

The details remain unclear, but on the night of 21–22 February Yanukovych left Kiev to attend a conference of PoR in Kharkov. He had already been packing and sending his goods towards Russia.[14] Putin warned Yanukovych against leaving Kiev, but it was already clear that his life was in danger. As Yanukovych left the city there were at least four assassination attempts. Yanukovych stayed briefly in Kharkov before making his way to Crimea, and then escaped to Rostov with Russian help. As with Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Colonel Gaddafi in his ill-fated flight from Tripoli, the extreme personalisation of the system meant that when the tyrant fled, the regime effectively collapsed. Hussein ended up being hanged by the victorious allies, and Gaddafi met a gruesome fate at the hands of the insurgents, but Yanukovych has been given shelter, although reputedly has little influence on Russian policy. Later it was claimed that Yanukovych and his entourage took some \$32 billion in cash to Russia.[15] The physical task of transporting such a sum would require at the minimum some 20 large trucks, which were not available at the time. Some of this money was allegedly used to finance the resistance in the Donbas, while the government sought to recover some of his assets lodged in Western banks. More immediately, Yanukovych's 350-acre estate at Mezhyhirya was opened up. Acquired from a former nature reserve in 2007, he built a grotesque mansion in a style now dubbed 'Donetsk rococo', a private zoo and garages

for an extensive fleet of cars and a large boat. The scale of his opulence was a source of wonder, as was his spectacular bad taste.

THE RIDDLE OF THE MAIDAN

aidan protest was a movement for the EU and the Association
uickly dubbed the 'Euromaidan', with the focus on expressions
raine's European destiny. By definition this was a concern that
raphically, mainly to the west and centre, and socially – those
s who would benefit from closer ties with Western Europe.
tempt to shift Ukraine's trajectory out of the '1990' rut, with
s and indeterminacies, and to set the country firmly on the
'1989' and Wider Europe. It would mean that Ukraine would
b of 'dictators for life', since Yanukovych would certainly have
e presidential elections due in March 2015. It was rumoured
cumulated a campaign war chest (known colloquially as the
3 billion before he was overthrown. The Euromaidan sought to
y from the indeterminacy of the '1990' impasse, and certainly
ing the '1991' group of countries. The idea of '1989' came to
rconnected package: economic modernisation, improvement
gnment with the Euro-Atlantic security community.
egration of Ukraine into the EU is a natural process, just as it
EaP had politicised the issue while pretending it to be no more
was later discovered that between 2004 and 2013 the EU had
Ukraine on 'subsidising front groups'. As Patrick Armstrong
Washington lit the fuse, the fire is burning. Easy to start; hard
is, the impulse that generated the Euromaidan for civic dignity,
ent and a 'European future' was genuine and continued to inspire
The struggle for good governance and constitutionalism was
he whole country had a stake, and it was on this basis that sig-
n the south-east joined the Maidan protesters. The movement
on represented a moment of national unity and the uniting of
nation-building on the basis of civic renewal for all.
ubted spirit of popular participation and civic engagement, the
eflected a particular strain of Ukrainian nationalism. Stephen
ttempt on 6 February by a group of 41 *engagé* scholars led by
efute allegations that the Maidan was 'being infiltrated, driven

or taken over by radically ethnocentrist groups'. They denied that 'ultra-nationalist actors and ideas are at the core or helm of the Ukrainian protests', since these claims only fed the Kremlin propaganda mill. The refutation in Shenfield's view was weak, since no one would dispute that the Maidan movement was politically diverse and dynamic, but this does not explain 'how a Banderite slogan became the main motto of the Maidan'. In other words, the radical nationalism of Galicia was becoming generalised to become the new normal of Ukrainian state development. A conservative, Russophobic nationalist ideology came to predominate. As Shenfield notes, 'what is perhaps most shocking is not the presence of ultra-rightists or even their numbers but the fact that (with few exceptions) they are broadly accepted as a legitimate part of the Maidan'. In addition the political ethos of the Maidan became axiological, with the 'forces of absolute good' ranged against the 'forces of absolute evil', with legitimate disagreements, for example over the scope of relations with the EU, 'glossed over for the sake of unity', accompanied by a proclivity towards conspiracy theories. Russian-speakers were characterised as '*sovoks*', people still influenced by Soviet attitudes. The endless repetition of the idea of the 'European choice' was reminiscent of Gorbachev's set phrase of 'the socialist choice of the Soviet people'; in both cases, 'the word "choice" is actually used to deny choice'.[17]

The spirit of the Maidan was not limited to Kiev, and prompted a wave of civil-society development across the country. Everywhere civic associations were established to hold officials and administrators accountable, to investigate corruption and malfeasance, and to advance positive projects for social amelioration. The lustration (from the Roman lustrum purification rituals) campaign gathered pace, focusing not on the Communist past of officials but on their honesty, probity and competence in office. Integrated nationalism was united as never before, and the patriotic fervour brought it new adepts from the Russian-speaking community. In the philosophy of the monist nationalists, Russia was always the implicit 'other' against which the nation was forged; but now what had been feared became real, in part because of the philosophy itself. As the pluralists had long warned, treating Russia as an enemy would in the end become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The dynamic of conflict embedded in integrated nationalism was now amplified by the exclusivist ambitions of the Wider European project. Those favouring a more pluralist expression of Ukrainian nationhood and mediating conflict through Greater European institutions were marginalised. Ukraine was hit by a perfect storm of competing ambitions.

The long-promised independent inquiry into the sniper shootings of 20 February, in which 50 people were killed, has still not been reported, allowing conspiracy theories to flourish. The initial assumption was that the shooting came from Yanukovych's forces, but in a leaked phone call of 26 February between the Estonian foreign minister

Urmas Paet (who had visited the Maidan on 25 February) and Catherine Ashton, which emerged on 5 March, he told her that 'there is now stronger and stronger understanding that behind the snipers, it was not Yanukovych, but it was somebody from the new coalition'. The substance of the charge is astonishing, but no less surprising is Ashton's calm response, as if she was not surprised by the revelation that Maidan leaders may have been responsible for the killing: 'I think we do want to investigate. I mean, I didn't pick that up. Gosh.' He goes on to note that a certain Olga (who turned out to be the Maidan activist, the doctor Olga Bogomolets) had stated that

> all the evidence shows that people who were killed by snipers from both sides, among policemen and people from the streets, that they were the same snipers killing people from both sides. It's really disturbing that now the new coalition, that they don't want to investigate what exactly happened.

In other words, the Maidan leaders were not interested in discovering the source of the sniper fire, since it helped rally the opposition. He sums up: 'So there is a stronger and stronger understanding that behind snipers it was not Yanukovych, it was somebody from the new coalition.'[18] Paet is not stating this as his view, but reporting what he heard on his visit to Kiev, while Bogomolets later distanced herself from the inferences drawn from her reported statements.

A German public television (ARD) investigation into who killed the 'heavenly hundred' on 20 February came to similar conclusions on both counts. It reported on 10 April that shots appear to have come also from the Ukraine Hotel, to which only the insurgents had access, thus shooting demonstrators from behind.[19] Aired on the main German channel, the report noted that six weeks after the events, no attempt had been made to get to the bottom of things, and instead the interim Ukrainian prosecutor general, Oleg Makhnitsky (a member of Svoboda), simply asserted that Yanukovych was to blame, while the interior minister Arsen Avakov claimed that Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) agents were directly involved in the killing. A recent scholarly analysis by Ivan Katchanovski comes to the opposite conclusion:

> Analysis of a large amount of evidence in this study suggests that certain elements of the Maidan opposition, including its extremist far right wing, were involved in this massacre in order to seize power and that the government investigation was falsified for this reason.[20]

If confirmed, this would make the credulous partisanship of the Western powers all the more irresponsible.

The repudiation of the 21 February deal marked the moment when protest turned into revolution. Across the country statues of Lenin were demolished, and Svoboda even advocated the removal of a monument honouring General Mikhail Kutuzov, the architect of victory over Napoleon. Over 100 statues of Lenin were toppled, mostly in the south-east, since already in June 2009 Yushchenko had called for the erasure of Communist symbols, provoking a wave of monument destruction in western Ukraine, so there were few left now. The campaign continued throughout the year On 28 September 2014 vigilantes destroyed the statue of Lenin in the centre of Kharkov – which the mayor, Gennady Kernes, promised to restore. All of this provoked a Blue counter-mobilisation from February 2014. Anti-Maidan sentiments across the Russophone areas of the country were inflamed, and in the Donbas so-called 'pro-Russian' militants began to seize government buildings, copying the tactic of the Maidan militants. Yanukovych continued to argue that his dismissal represented a 'coup', although his opponents argue that his flight represented an abdication. A 'coup' is rather too narrow a definition of the seismic changes, although 'revolution' is probably too broad, since the structure of power was not challenged and neither was the social basis of the bureaucratic–oligarchic order. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to talk of the 'February revolution', since the events represented a critical juncture. The overthrow of a legally elected president by a mobilised people represents a turning point of the first magnitude. The usurpation would have grave consequences in regions where there had been enduring dissatisfaction with the nationalising strain of Ukrainian state-building. The 'anti-Maidan' movement across the south and the east in defence of the pluralist reading of Ukrainian politics adopted as its symbol the St George ribbon, the black and orange pattern introduced in 2005 to commemorate the Great Patriotic War, that is, the struggle against Nazi Germany, but which in Ukraine became a sign of resistance to the February revolution. Anti-Maidan sentiment was strongest in Crimea, leading to its incorporation into Russia, which will be discussed in the next chapter, as well as in the putative 'Novorossiya' in the Donbas, which will also be discussed later.

THE SQUARE AND THE CASTLE

The Maidan now constituted itself as a 'people's parliament', acting not just as a check on the new authorities but also to advance policies of its own, notably the lustration of officials considered too close to the old regime, or corrupt, or both. The 'square' of people's power sought to control the 'castle' of government. The square as we have seen was far from homogeneous, and the various contradictions would ultimately be fatal

for the revolution. The key contradiction was between the idealism of the middle-class 'revolutionaries', fighting for dignity and responsible government, and the militants, who tended to come from the margins of society and drew on the ultra-nationalist traditions of interwar Galicia. Both groups aspired to overcome the obvious political and economic stagnation of the country, yet their alliance was trapped in a palpable dilemma: if unity was maintained, then the whole revolution would be tainted by the 'fascistic' features of the right-wing militants; but if it fell apart, then the revolution would be usurped by the restoration of bureaucratic–oligarchic power or diluted by concessions to the pluralists (by now considered tantamount to capitulation to the Kremlin). With the country's territorial integrity under threat, the militant part of the square prevailed over the more pacific 'bourgeois' element – although the territorial threats were in part a response to the militancy of the square in the first place. The alliance was maintained, but the square ultimately brought to the castle little more than a reconfigured form of bureaucratic–oligarchic power, although now espousing the rhetoric of civil society and its ultra-nationalist inflections.

What had begun as a movement in support of 'European values' now became a struggle to assert a monist representation of Ukrainian nationhood. The amorphous liberal rhetoric gave way to a much harsher agenda of integrated nationhood, and the euphoria prompted a rash of ill-considered policies. In the flush of victory, the triumphant opposition forces undertook a number of fateful steps. First, the impeachment of Yanukovych on 22 February was accompanied by armed insurgents strutting around the debating chamber. The formal procedure required the establishment of a dedicated investigatory committee by the procuracy, its conclusions to be reviewed by parliament and then a vote in favour of impeachment if so decided, followed by a decision of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, and, finally – most importantly – a vote by no fewer than three quarters of the constitutional total of the Verkhovna Rada (338 MPs). Instead, MPs were simply instructed to 'sack' Yanukovych. Even then, the vote did not reach the required majority: 328 of 447 MPs (73 per cent), many from the PoR, voted to remove Yanukovych from the presidency on the grounds that he was unable to fulfil his responsibilities, even though an hour earlier on television Yanukovych insisted that he would not resign and at that point had not left the country. Article 111 of the constitution lists four circumstances in which an incumbent president may leave office – resignation, a serious health condition, impeachment, and death – none of which applied in this case.

Second, a 'coup-sponsored' government was created (as its critics put it) by parliament. Parliamentary speaker Alexander Turchynov was selected as acting president, and he in turn appointed Yatsenyuk acting prime minister. This brought to the fore the man already 'pre-selected' by Nuland, rather than the putative German (European)

candidate for the post, Klitschko, giving the new administration the appearance of being little more than an American project. These were far from being a new generation of politicians. Turchynov was a close Tymoshenko ally, having served as SBU head when she was prime minister from February to September 2005. As an old comrade of Tymoshenko's he had been deeply involved in the various 'gas wars' between Firtash's RUE and Tymoshenko's Itera as the gas-trading intermediary between Russia and Ukraine, a battle that had been fought on and off for five years from 2004 and which caused immeasurable damage, including gas cut-offs in January 2006 and January 2009, ending with the deeply flawed settlement of 19 January 2009. Ministers now had to seek approval from the Maidan before being ratified. The square claimed to constitute the 'sovereign' people as a 'people's parliament', overshadowing the discredited Rada. Some 70 MPs from Yanukovych's PoR fled to the east, while 30 crossed the floor to join the victorious coalition. The party as a whole was divided between the Akhmetov and Firtash factions, although both these oligarchs had facilitated 'regime change' by shifting their support away from Yanukovych at the decisive moment. Two days later the Rada dismissed five Constitutional Court judges, a clear infringement of the idea of separation of powers, for allegedly violating their oaths in acquiescing to Yanukovych's demand in 2010 to restore the 1996 constitution.

The so-called 'unity government' turned out to be anything but a unifying force. There was gross imbalance in ministerial appointments, designed to consolidate the victory of the Maidan but thereby alienating the proponents of a more pluralistic interpretation of Ukrainian development. Only two ministers from the entire south and east, covering half the country, joined the 21-person cabinet. Between five and eight (depending on changing affiliations) core ministerial positions were taken by Right Sector and Svoboda, including the top national-security, defence and legal (prosecutor general) posts. The minister of justice and deputy prime minister came from the Russophobic Svoboda party, while its founder, Parubiy, became secretary of the NSDC, and Yarosh, no less, was nominated as his deputy, although he turned it down in anticipation of a higher post. Parubiy as we have seen had a long history of ultra-nationalist activism, having been one of the founders in 1991, along with Tyagnybok, of the Social–National Party of Ukraine, which evolved into the Svoboda party. Parubiy's appointment to head the NSDC was by any measure astonishing, placing him in charge of the country's security policy. Five positions alone were taken by members of the radical Svoboda party, although at the time the party held only 8 per cent of seats in parliament, and another seven were from Batkivshchyna. No posts were given to PoR, even though at the time it held 27 per cent of the seats in the Rada. In addition, five governorships were taken by Svoboda, covering a fifth of the country. It is not unprecedented to have extreme right-wing parties in government, notably the

Northern League in Italy, as well as various groups in Poland and Slovakia, but their radical populism everywhere challenges the foundations of liberal constitutionalism. Svoboda remained an alienating and divisive force.

Third, the ethos of the new government, although liberal on economic issues and keen to adopt IMF stringency on the road to Europe, was conservative and 'romantic' nationalist in social matters. On 27 February the Svoboda MP Alexander Sych was appointed deputy prime minister, a man who had sponsored a bill in April 2013 to ban abortion and who was infamous for his comments that, if women did not wish to risk rape, they should not drink alcohol in questionable company. These traditionalist, conservative views were intended to revitalise the Ukrainian nation, but later took on a more sharply militaristic tone as part of the struggle against the insurgency in the Donbas. The cult of violence as a necessary crucible to forge a cleansed nation took on fascistic symbolism. The representation of Ukraine as a young woman garlanded with a crown of braids, victimised by an oppressor, became universal across the Maidan, and was drawn from the playbook of romantic-nationalist associations of the nineteenth century and integral-nationalist movements of the twentieth. This in turn reinforced a highly traditionalist representation of the role of women in society, and opposed the 'demo-liberalism' of the West with its espousal of gay marriage and non-traditional diversity. As long as the focus was on suppressing 'pro-Russian separatism' and the fight against 'terrorism' in the Donbas these contradictions were suppressed, but came to haunt the new regime, although tempered by the pragmatism of the bureaucratic–oligarchic establishment.

Fourth, in policy terms, the government began with perhaps the worst of all possible moves, given the fragile unity of the country. The law of July 2012 granting regions the right to instate a second official language where there was at least a 10 per cent minority had been forced through against the bitter resistance of the nationalists. On 23 February parliament voted by an overwhelming majority to rescind the law. This was not just an attack on Russia but an assault against all of the country's minority nations, and above all against the Russian-speakers in Crimea and the Donbas. In the ensuing uproar, Turchynov (after an unconscionable delay, during which time power was transferred in Crimea) on 28 February refused to sign and thus effectively vetoed the act, but the damage was done. This was attended by virulent anti-Russian rhetoric in the chamber, and a slew of proposals consolidating the victory of the radicals.

Fifth, the armed militants were given a quasi-official status, patrolling the streets and allegedly providing security in conditions of regime collapse. This did not prevent, for example, them breaking into the headquarters of the CPU and trashing their files and meeting rooms. Two waves of military 'reform' under Yanukovych left the regular army even more unreliable, ill-equipped and poorly trained. To compensate,

in mid-April the interim interior minister, Arsen Avakov, announced the creation of a new National Guard. The Maidan turned into a military recruiting centre, absorbing many of the militants. Although the volunteers were meant to operate under the aegis of the interior ministry, several oligarchs funded their own militias, who were sent to fight the insurgents in the Donbas, imbuing the conflict with elements of a civil war. On 1 May conscription was reintroduced. The Ukrainian revolution moved through all the standard stages of a revolution in an accelerated, almost farcical and certainly tragic manner: from genuine popular enthusiasm for a democratic cause, to radicalisation and the emergence of a revolutionary elite, followed by the seizure of power and punitive operations against 'enemies of the revolution', resulting in counter-mobilisation and civil war. The final phase is accompanied by denunciations of 'fifth columnists' and the fostering of the peculiarly intense hatreds when brother fights against sister, until the revolution implodes in a frenzy of recriminations and an authoritarian stabilisation takes place imposed by a new dictator, either the 'man on horseback' or some foreign-backed usurper.

The interim government sought to bring the Maidan self-defence groups, notably Right Sector, under control. One of the leaders of Right Sector, Alexander Muzychko (better known as Sashko Bily), was infamous for his anti-Semitic, as well as anti-Polish and anti-Russian, rhetoric. On 24 March he was killed in a shoot-out with police in Rovno in western Ukraine. He had earlier been seen on video threatening a local council meeting with a pistol and striking an official. His supporters swore to avenge his death, which they believed was a political assassination ordered by Avakov. Avakov now insisted that all the unofficial armed groups were acting illegally and should turn in their weapons. Instead, on 27 March hundreds of Right Sector militants marched on parliament demanding Avakov's resignation and an explanation for Muzychko's death. Parliament voted for the 'immediate disarming of illegally armed groups' while acting president Turchynov warned that they were trying to 'destabilise' Ukraine, and others warned that they were 'discrediting' the revolution.[21] Muzychko's killing had the desired effect, and thereafter nationalists eschewed anti-Semitic language and instead focused their rhetorical violence on Russia.

Power moved from the square to the castle, and then leaked back to squares across the country. In Odessa in March and April a series of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations were held, accompanied by the creation of an anti-Maidan tent encampment in Kulikovo Pole (Kulikov Field) with some 300 activists. On 2 May a pro-Maidan demonstration was organised in the city centre, including nationalist 'ultra' fans from the Chernomorets Odessa and Metalist Kharkov football teams, who had played earlier. Permission was granted to hold what would obviously be a controversial event. Some 1,500 demonstrators marched through the city centre