

Minima Ucrainica

#3 | 2015

a cura di

A. Achilli, M. G. Bartolini, M. Puleri

AISU - Associazione Italiana di Studi Ucraini

PECOB

Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe
University of Bologna - Forlì Campus

www.pecob.eu

Minima Ucrainica

Aisu - Associazione Italiana di Studi Ucraini

Edited by A. Achilli, M. G. Bartolini, M. Puleri.



Ukraine in Pieces (or How To Dismantle - and Recompose - The National Mosaic)

- *Towards a New Epistemology of Maidan*
- *Language, Identity, Memory*
- *Russophones in Search of a New National Idea*
- *Reforming The Country*
- *Society and Urban Geography*
- *Beyond Ukraine*
and more...

Towards a New Epistemology of Maidan

- Timothy Snyder takes a retrospective look at Maidan and its battle for European values from the vantage point of Ukraine's "eastern capital", Kharkiv, and its major contemporary writer, 40-year old Serhii Zhadan.
- Serhii Plokhy, Harvard Professor of Ukrainian History, discusses the Ukrainian crisis and its historical background.
- In the *New Yorker* Marcy Shore gives a compelling account of Maidan as "the return of metaphysics" through the personal stories of a class of Lviv graduate students reading the works of Tony Judt.
- **Language, Identity, Memory**
 - Krytyka's Kateryna Botanova offers a thought-provoking discussion of the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture as an institution and of its deeper connection with Ukrainian society and its biases about culture.
 - Ukrainian expert on language policies Volodymyr Kulyk gives a comprehensive account of the discussion surrounding the question of Ukrainian language, its uses and controversial relation with Russian.
 - Mykola Riabchuk on Ukraine's "post-colonial syndrome" in an interview from the recent Cambridge Polish-Ukrainian Conference "Past as prelude".
 - *The Nation* delivers an excoriating and highly controversial portrait of Volodymyr Viatrovych, Ukraine's newly appointed director of the Institute of National Memory.
 - While Soviet symbols are being quickly replaced all over the country, both critics and promoters of de-communization laws claim that what is at stake is Ukraine's identity.
 - In Kyiv, not only mosaics displaying communist symbols are facing the risk of being dismantled.

- Serhii Zhadan on pseudo-patriotism in Ukraine.
- Hiroaki Kuromiya on the complex cultural nature of Donbas and its links with the present-day situation.
- **Russophones in Search of a New National Idea**
 - A talk with Volodymyr/Vladimir Rafeenko on language issues, Gogol' and Donets'k at the "Misiats' avtors'kych chytan'" literary festival in Lviv.
 - Iuliia Oliinyk, director of "Tempora" publishing house, on the state of dismay of the Ukrainian book market and on its complicated relationship with Russia.
 - Iurii Volodars'kyi responds to Oliinyk, criticizing her statement about the alleged "non-Ukrainianness" of Ukrainian Russian-speaking literature.
 - Olena Stiazhkina's musings on childhood, Donbas, and the "internal East" of the human soul.
- **Reforming The Country**
 - While a new poll released by IRI found that Ukrainians are dissatisfied with the slow pace of reforms in the country, the *Carnegie Endowment* has assembled an independent team of Ukraine-based scholars to analyze reforms in four key-areas (political and judicial; economic; national security; decentralization). The first memo of the Ukraine Reform Monitor can be consulted here.
 - In the *Atlantic Council*, Kateryna Smaglyi, director of the Kennan Institute's Kiev office, takes a highly critical stance on Serhii Kvit's reforming activity as Minister of Education.
 - A map of the recently established Ukrainian road police.
 - Is Russia (already) annexing Donbas? And how is Kyiv reacting?

- **Society and Urban Geography**

- *Politico.eu* uncovers Kiev's "hipster revolution" and the city's shift towards European cultural values.
- Following a social experiment conducted in Moscow by the creators of Chebu Russia TV, *Bird in Flight* published a video that documents how people react to two young men walking in Kyiv holding hands. In the end, Zoryan and Tymur get attacked by a group of skinheads.
- What is Ukraine's Left today?
- An Italian report on AIDS in Ukraine and the impossibility for Crimean patients to receive methadone after Russian annexation.
- Khmarochos, a Kiev magazine focusing on urban planning and architecture, has collected on its website an interesting selection of cartographic and photographic materials that help track the trajectory whereby Kiev turned from provincial town during tsarist times into "post-Soviet megalopolis".



Kiev before the Second World War

The Larger Picture

- Mariana Budjeryn of Central Eastern European University opens Krytyka's discussion series on the Ukrainian dimension of the Iran nuclear deal, outlining differences and similarities between the Budapest Memorandum and the Iranian deal.
- In a continuation of the series, Ukrainian nuclear experts Olena Pavlenko, Anton Antonenko and Roman Nitsovykh discuss the consequences of the Iranian deal in the context of Ukrainian-Russian-EU relations. The article is available in Ukrainian and English.
- Political analyst Mikhail Minakov on the concept of "Ukrainian crisis" and its actual global implications.
- One year after the shooting down of MH17 *The Daily Beast* put together all the existing evidence in an extensive article that allegedly points to Russia's direct involvement in the accident.
- Are Russian and American think tanks falling victims of the rising ideological tensions separating the two countries over Ukraine?
- What do Russians actually think about the war in Ukraine and the relationship between the two countries?
- In Moscow, a "Committee for the Salvation of Ukraine" has been founded. Its leader is Ukraine's former PM Mykola Azarov.
- Separatist forces in Donbas can now count on the support of the 15th International Brigade, whose leader hails from Abkhazia (in Italian).

Beyond Ukraine

- *Russia*
 - Lilia Shevtsova gives an account of the history of German-Russian relations in the last two centuries, concluding that German 'love affair with Russia' is probably coming to an end.
 - *Foreign Policy* explores the contradiction between Putin's endorsement of "Christian traditional sexual values", including fierce opposition to gay rights, and his backing of polygamy among Muslims in Chechnya.
 - "What governs Russia today is not Putin's will but his ambiguity". In the *New York Times* Ivan Krastev tells us "what the West gets wrong about Russia".
 - Myths and Realities of Sanctions (and Counter-Sanctions) in Russia.
 - With inflation sharply rising, Russia is experiencing the first sustained decline in living standards since 2000, the year Vladimir Putin came to power.
 - Despite a campaign in the Russian media to invite people to spend their holidays in Crimea, the number of visitors is still well beyond the six millions who came in 2013, due to Western sanctions, Ukraine's block of the railroad tracks and poor infrastructures.
 - Vladimir Putin visits Crimea.
 - Russia harshly limits basic civil rights in occupied Crimea.
 - Russia under Western sanctions: IMF predicts Russia will lose 9% of its GDP.
 - In July, Russia has put its self-declared border several hundred meters deeper into Georgian territory.

Beyond Ukraine

- In Moscow, a highly controversial monument to Volodymyr/Vladimir the Great is going to be built.
- Some statistical and sociological considerations on the concepts of “national pride”, “patriotism” and “nationalism” in Russia.
- *Show Trials?*
 - It's the summer of political trials in Moscow, with several high-profile cases (among them that of Ukrainian military officer Nadyia Savchenko) opening a new judicial front in the ideological war between Russia and the West.
 - Prosecutors in Rostov-on-Don have requested a prison-term of 23 years for Oleh Sentsov, a Ukrainian film-director accused of plotting to blow up a statue of Lenin in Crimea.
- *Central Europe and the migrants crisis*
 - Hungary's much-criticized plan to build a fence to deter migrants evokes old identity myths, with conservative politicians calling forth the country's long history of battling Turkish invasion, and memories of the recent past as the fence unfurls where "Communist minefields once cordoned off the Soviet bloc from renegade Communist Yugoslavia".
- *Belarus*
 - Aliaksandr Lukashenka is trying to find a balance between allegiance to Russia and affinity to Ukraine.

Culture

- Viktor Tsoi, front man for the popular Soviet band Kino, died in a car crash on August 15, 1990. Twenty-five years later, his legacy is still alive.
- A website offers a selection of anti-Soviet paintings made by Soviet artist during the 1960s-1990s.
- Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom, a documentary covering Ukraine's revolutionary days between November 2013 and February 2014, will make its world premiere at the 72nd Venice Film Festival in September. The documentary, filmed by director Evgeny Afineevsky, will also be streamed on Netflix on October 9.
- *The Event*, Serhii Loznitsa's new documentary film after *Maidan (2014)*, uses archival material to put together a found footage documentary about an attempted coup d'état in Russia in August 1991. The Event will premiere at the Venice Film Festival.
- Until the end of September, the PinchukArtCentre and the National Centre Oleksandr Dovzhenko will be hosting debates and lectures on the Ukrainian cinema of the late 80s and 90s.
- Nancy Condee, Professor of Slavic and Film Studies at the University of Pittsburg discusses Russian cinema today in a two-part essay that examines the industry's economic health and its dominant trends.
- Lazar Fleishman, Professor of Russian Literature at Stanford, on the independence of Russian culture from the official national discourse.
- *Londongrad*, a TV comedy show which premieres on Russian television next month, explores half-wittingly, half-seriously - the lives of the Russian expats living in London, delivering a portrait of the city through the eyes of its Russian inhabitants.

Photography

- *Beyond Borders*, Italian photographer's Gianluca Pardelli most recent work, explores frozen conflicts in the disputed Transcaucasian republics of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. These photographs belong to a larger project called *Splinters*, which also includes Transnistria, Gagauzia, Donbas and Crimea.
- In the series *Declared Detachments*, Russian photographer Mariya Kozhanova (born 1986) explores the uneasy quest for identity of her generation - a generation "absolutely ideologically naked", as she explains - portraying young Russians who engage with cosplay.
- *Landsleute 1977-1987. Two Germanys* (Kehrer Verlag), a book by German photographer Rudi Meisel, documents everyday life in Germany as a divided state, capitalist and communist. Mr Meisel's thesis is that the two Germanys were actually one and that the similarities were more than the differences. Eighty photographs from his works will also be presented in Berlin.



Sukhumi, Photo by Gianluca Pardelli

Editorial News

- The latest issue of Krytyka (July 2015) is now available, both in Ukrainian and English.
- The latest issue of Zeitschrift für Slawistik is entirely focused on Ukrainian Studies.
- Anna Fishzon interviews Alexander Etkind on his recent book *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford 2013), a cultural analysis of Soviet and Post-Soviet mourning.
- Thomas D. Grant, a lawyer and an academic at Wolfson College, Cambridge, UK, has devoted a monograph to the legal implications of Russia's annexation of Crimea.
- Stephen Velychenko's latest monograph explores the Ukrainian marxist critique of Russian communist rule in Ukraine after the October Revolution.
- CIUS's latest publication on Ukrainian archeological and historical research on Baturyn.

- *Reviews*

- Mykola Riabchuk's reviews David R. Marples, Frederick V. Mills (eds.). Ukraine's Euromaidan. Analyses of a Civil Revolution. Stuttgart 2015.
- Roksolana Sviato reviews Daleki blyz'ki, a collection of twelve intellectual portraits of Western philosophers and writers by Ukrainian philosopher Volodymyr Yermolenko.

- *Scholarly resources*

In January 2015 ASEES commissioned a study, carried out by Professor Ted Gerber at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, on the state of Russian Studies in the US. Read the full report here.

In Memoriam

- Svetlana Boym, Curt Hugo Reisinger Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature at Harvard University, passed away August 5, 2015, aged 56. Tributes written by her friends and colleagues can be found here ([Aseees](#); [The New Yorker](#)).
- [A portrait of historian Robert Conquest](#), the author of “The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine”, who died at 98 on August 4.



Sukhumi, Photo by [Gianluca Pardelli](#)

Cover Photo Minima Ucrainica 3/2015: Mosaics, Kiev

The original picture can be found [here](#).