

Neo-Nazi Organizations in the Ukraine

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Global Research, December 17, 2004

[The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism](#): 1 April 1999

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Religion](#)

▪ Editor's Note

We present to our readers this detailed background study on Anti-semitism and Neo-nazi ideology in the Ukraine. It is important to understand that the Neo-nazi parties are themselves part of the "opposition". They support Yushchenko's Nasha Ukraina coalition.

Antisemitism of the Ukrainian Radical Nationalists:

Ideology and Policy

by

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Abstract

The political parties and movements of the post-Soviet Ukraine developed their platforms during perestroika, when the processes that led to the subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union were unleashed. Both antisemitism and opposition to it became tools in a fierce ideological and political struggle. In contrast to Russia, which remains an epicenter of antisemitic activity, the Ukraine after its proclamation of independence has experienced it much less: anti-antisemitic activities have been much stronger, initiated by Ukrainian intellectuals whose goal was the establishment of a democratic Ukrainian state.

The government establishment drew on the views of the democrats to contrast its own policy toward the Jews with that of the state antisemitism of the now-defunct Soviet regime, as well as the tactical policy of non-resistance to the evil of antisemitism by the leadership of the USSR during perestroika, and of Russia in the post-Communist era.

At the same time, the state of crisis in Ukraine facilitated the establishment of extreme nationalist organizations. Before 1992 these groups resorted to antisemitism only sporadically, but since that time it has been increasingly exploited as an ideological tool for expressing opposition to democracy —traditionally identified with the

West and with Jews. The extremists seek to establish a Ukrainian ethnocracy (natsiokratiia), modeled on the formerly fascist regimes of Germany and Italy. In the footsteps of both "old" and "new" rightists in Russia and the West, the Ukrainian extreme nationalists have created their own version of the Aryan myth in which the Ukrainian nation is seen as the "progenitor of the Indo-European race." Its destiny is to become a superpower that will lead the Aryan world in fighting the forces of evil and destruction, behind which hide the Jews bent on world domination.

Extreme nationalist organizations comprise a growing segment of the political spectrum in Ukraine today, though still of little significance. The extent of their impact will depend on the degree of future destabilization of society as a result of social, economic, and political considerations, as well as other developments in the post-Communist world.

The "Jewish Question" in the Political Life of Independent Ukraine

The "Jewish Question" (in its ideological aspect) is connected to some extent to the real problem of the constantly decreasing Jewish population of Ukraine. Demographer Mark Tolts points to a drop from 487,000 in 1989 to 180,000 in 1996; Jews make up less than 0.4% of the total Ukrainian population of 51,300,000.¹ According to other sources, the number of Jews in the Ukraine is between 280,000 and 510,000; the higher figures include Jews who are eligible for immigration to Israel, but are not considered as Jews by *halakhah* (Jewish religious law).

On August 24, 1991, three days after the suppression of the attempted coup in Moscow, the Ukrainian parliament declared the Ukraine a sovereign state. Over ninety percent of Ukrainian voters approved this decision on December 1. Soon after the declaration of independence and the ban on activity by the Communist Party of the Ukraine, a political platform was aimed at uniting all parties and political movements. The platform was subsequently rejected, a sign of the divergent views held by the various forces that had agreed to resist Soviet-Russian communism and its imperialist claims. A key twofold question divided these forces: what kind of state should the independent Ukraine be, and by what means should it be created?

Various intellectual groups claimed to be the true representatives of the national idea, ready to elaborate the doctrine of Ukrainian statehood appropriate for the spirit and nature of the nation, flowing from, and being a worthy continuation of the nation's history. Traditionally, the "Jewish Question" had been linked to the "Russian Question" and the various approaches to both Ukrainian-Jewish relations and to Ukrainian-Russian relations led to the divide between those in favor of a democratic Ukraine as opposed to an ethnocentric nation. From the time of the Jewish "entry" into Russian culture, they

were perceived as “Russifiers.” [2](#)

At the time of the declaration of independence, the doctrine of the national democrats prevailed, both in public opinion and in official statements. The Ukraine was to become part of the world democratic community, to return to its “European home” and to European history from which it had been torn by Russian (Soviet) expansionism.[3](#) One of the conditions for this return was the destruction of negative stereotypes and myths, like that of the “Ukrainian *pogromshchik*, or the Ukrainian antisemite.” National democrats condemned antisemitism as an alien phenomenon without roots in the country’s humanistic culture, claiming it was introduced by Ukraine’s conquerors, mainly the Russians.[4](#) The Ukrainians were depicted, like the Jews during their long exile, as a stateless people, the passive victims of history. Both nations “often do not recognize how an external power was determining, even planning and controlling their relations with each other.”[5](#) What was decisive in Ukrainian-Jewish relations, it was claimed, was not the few years of undeniably bloody tragedies, but the centuries of normal coexistence.[6](#) Kiev was contrasted to Moscow not only politically, but also culturally. [7](#)

Democratically-inclined high officials emphasized these ideas in their public statements, contrasting the Jewish policy of the Ukraine with the state-sponsored antisemitism of the former Soviet Union and the lack of resistance to it by the Russian leadership during perestroika and in the post-communist period. The Soviet regime’s silence about the Holocaust was countered by the official Ukrainian commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the mass murders of thousands of Jews by the Nazis that took place at Babi Yar. At an international conference on antisemitism that took place in Brussels on July 7, 1994, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk claimed “For the first time in fifty years the curtain was lifted from the silence about the historical truth of the terrible deaths of tens of thousands of totally innocent people, whom the fascists executed only because they were Jews.” Kravchuk also claimed that the independent Ukraine was following a policy of opposition to antisemitism; such a policy had deep national roots and was the continuation of a Ukrainian cultural tradition.

The politicization that during the first “romantic” stages marked the success of the national democratic ideology, subsequently became one of the reasons for its decline. The first independent leaders were blamed for the country’s crisis, and hence, the democratic doctrines they espoused, including those relating to the Jews, lost popular support. The process began during the presidency of Kravchuk, and continued under Leonid Kuchma (elected in 1994), whose positions were similar to those of his predecessor.

Extreme nationalist organizations took advantage of the devaluation of democratic declarations, portraying the democratic regime as not only alien to the Ukrainian nation, but posing a potentially fatal

danger to it. The right-wing nationalists proposed a mono-ethnic state or new empire, since only an ethnocratic government could provide an adequate defense against Russian imperialism and Western “globalism.” The historic mission of the Ukrainian nation—the “progenitor of the Indo-European race—was to lead the Aryan world in its struggle against soulless mercantile chaos, behind which the Jews aimed for world domination. In this version of the “return to history,” democracy would lead to destabilization and demoralization of national life and prepare the way for the fall of the country to alien forces.

Drawing on Nazi and proto-Nazi sources, especially ones, this “Ukrainized” antisemitism became a component of the messianic nationalist ideology of extreme nationalist parties and movements.

Ukrainian Nationalist Parties: A Political Portrait

The following extreme nationalist parties were formed during the period of the breakup of the USSR in the 1990s:

- The Ukrainian National Assembly (*Ukrainska natsionalna assemblya*, or UNA) and its paramilitary wing, the Ukrainian Self Defence (*Ukrainska natsionalna samooborona*, or UNSO). The UNA consists of the Ukrainian National Party (UNP), the Republican Party of the Ukraine (RPU—not to be confused with the Ukrainian Republican Party of L. Lukyanenko and M. Goryn), the Ukrainian People’s Democratic Party (UNDP), the Ukrainian National Radical Party (UNRP), and the nationalist factions of the Union of Nationalist Ukrainian Youth (SNUM), the independent trade union Ednist (Unity), etc.

- State Independence of Ukraine (*Derzhavna samostiyist Ukraini*, or DSU)

- The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Organizatsiya ukrainskikh natsionalistiv*, or OUN)

- The Ukrainian Conservative Republican Party (*Ukrainska konservativna republikanska partiya*, or UKRP)

- The Ukrainian Social-Nationalist Party (USNP)

- The Organization of Idealists of Ukraine,⁸ and a number of lesser-known and less influential organizations.

The UNA originated as the Ukrainian Inter-party Assembly (UMA), but changed its name after the declaration of Independence. According

to the 1996 handbook, by early 1996 provincial committees existed in almost all provinces, and UNA's total membership amounted to 20,000. According to the 1998 handbook, however, by January of that year, the membership was a mere 1,000.⁹ The wide discrepancy may be due to the inclusion in the previous handbook of UNSO members.¹⁰

Considering the political and organizational instability of most of the political parties, from 1993 to 1997, UNA-UNSO was outstanding in the extent of its activities. It succeeded not only in strengthening its position and expanding its influence, but also in becoming the most popular radical right-wing party in the Ukraine. Its image became that of a scandalous, highly active party whose leaders made shocking statements, and which inspired various political actions and provocations, complete with populist slogans and militant calls to arms.

The party's imperialist aspirations were declared at the conference on "New Directions of Ukrainian Geo-Politics" held in Lvov in summer 1993. The party perceived the Ukraine's future being linked to its Eurasian location, its geo-politics associated with pan-Slavism, and its ideological basis related to the "Eurasian" historical, political, and spiritual world.

At the conference, the de facto leader of the party, Dmytro Korchinskii advocated the formation of a bloc of "insulted nations" to be led by the Ukraine in opposing major imperialist systems. To be included were Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and some of the Balkan states. A later suggestion called for the inclusion of Belarus and Chechnya, as well as non-governmental organizations of various countries that do not accept the present international arrangements.¹¹

As for domestic policy, UNA-UNSO preaches a populist melange of left-wing, right-wing, and conservative ideas: social equality, opposition to "fat cats," redistribution of the national income in favor of workers, the active involvement of a strong government in the economy, as well as traditional values of the family, the people, discipline, and the state.

Between 1994 and 1996 UNA significantly expanded its scope. Regional branches were established in all provinces of the Ukraine, in many major regional centers, cities, and a number of settlements. According to Andrei Shkil', chairman of the Lvov provincial committee, a cell of UNA-UNSO even exists in Moscow. Although not registered with the Ministry of Justice, UNSO is registered in Lvov province and in the cities of Rovno and Ternopol. Local authorities generally turn a blind eye to the existence of unregistered UNSO branches in view of the tolerance of UNA by the central Ukrainian authorities.

UNA-UNSO has successfully expanded from the western Ukraine to the thickly settled east — one of the organization's main goals. Their slogans about force, welfare, and order are aimed at the impoverished proletarian masses, which are attracted to strict forms of government and active forms of protest. Having become disillusioned with communism, which promised to establish order, many former supporters now hearken to UNA-UNSO's familiar calls for expropriation of the wealth of the rich, and the need to settle scores with "bitch collaborators and goat democrats."

UNA-UNSO pins much of its hopes on the army — understandable for a paramilitary organization that sees its "divine" destiny in the establishment of an empire modeled after that of the Kievan Rus.¹² The party maintains contact with the National Professional Union of Officers of the Ukraine, which it helped to establish in early 1993 in order to organize opposition to cutbacks in the military academies. This policy brought to it significant support from military officers. One of UNA's priorities has been to analyze decisions of the government and Supreme Court on security and the armed forces. Its propaganda has stressed its role in the release of Ukrainian troops from imprisonment in Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya.

Particular attention has been paid to youth work, through UNA's special youth committee. In 1995 there was an increase in the number of military-sports camps to train young people for self-defense units. Aimed particularly for children 12-17 years old from poor and broken families, the camps train in hand-to-hand combat, tactics, intelligence gathering, camouflage, and techniques for facing police units. Training involves strenuous physical activity and iron discipline: beatings with rods is a common punishment.

Under UNSO's umbrella, forty-six units comprising 1,500 well-trained fighters operated in 1995. When detained by the authorities, UNA-UNSO activists were found to possess firearms and other weapons. UNSO units can be deployed for action, as was demonstrated on July 18, 1995 at the funeral of Patriarch Vladimir of Kiev, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. State authorities had refused permission to bury him on the grounds of Sophia Cathedral, citing its status as a museum and historical site. UNSO's fierce opposition to the government's decision resulted in bloody confrontations with the police.

UNA-UNSO has taken part in several interethnic conflicts that flared up following the breakup of the Soviet Union and in former Yugoslavia. The organization's leaders believe that their involvement will convince the public of the Ukrainian government's helplessness and their own ability to influence military and political events. Although its participation in these conflicts is placed in an ideological framework, inconsistencies can be found: troops were first sent to Abkhazia to fight against Georgia, and then into Georgia to deter Abkhazia, both under the same slogan of opposition to Russian

imperialism. Thus it appears that the paramilitary units are actually only flexing their muscles.

In spite of such inconsistency, UNA has continued to attract electoral support. In the 1994 elections for Supreme Council, three of its candidates were elected: Oleg Vitovich (commander of the UNA-UNSO [region] command), Iaroslav Iliasevich (UNSO Chief of Staff), and Iurii Tyma (chairman of the UNA provincial committee), representing 0.7% of the 450-seat Council. The organization's parliamentary activity is combined with anti-parliamentary actions.

Their emphasis is on "winning minds" by propaganda disseminated through six organization newspapers and the magazine *Natsionalist*, in addition to leaflets, press bulletins, and placards. A weekly television program, "Pravyi bereg" (Right bank) is broadcast as well.

Thus, UNA finances the training of fighters, transportation for them and its leaders, office expenses, a variety of publications, and a television program. It is known that the income from the sales of ipublications cover less thanhalf of expenses, but the sources of UNA's general income has been kept secret.

The *Derzhavna samostiynist Ukrainy* (DSU, State Independence of Ukraine) was established in Lvov in April 1990 as a semi-underground group of no more than 500 members. By the end of 1997 it numbered 2000.¹³ Until December 1992, DSU was headed by Ivan Kandyba, a former political prisoner. At its fourth congress in December 1993, Roman Koval' was elected chairman. In 1994, the leadership was purged, and the DSU changed its name from "All-Ukrainian organization" to "National organization." Koval' became sole leader with unrestricted power. He insisted that all references to democracy be expunged from the charter, and as in the "old days" of the Soviet Union, opponents were referred to as "Zionists." Declaring itself the heir of classical Ukrainian nationalism, the DSU dogmatically repeats the ideology of earlier nationalists. In its position on the extreme Right, the DSU proclaims the superiority of the Ukrainian nation, and its hostility to Russians, Jews, and Americans.

Koval' expressed the DSU's expansionist intentions in a brochure that provided theoretical and philosophical justification for building a "greater Ukraine" by annexing former Ukrainian territories that now form part of other countries:

United under the banner of a hatred which nothing will dare to destroy.... We insist that any enemy of our nation has to be the personal enemy of every Ukrainian. Vengeance on the enemies of the Ukrainian nation is no less sweet than love for our homeland. The sacrifice of our enemies is required for our national ritual. What can be better than the destruction of an enemy of our homeland! Anyone who does not espouse these principles is no son of Ukraine! ¹⁴

In fact, the DSU includes among its enemies not only all non-Ukrainians, but also the majority of Ukrainians, i.e., those who do not support the sacred nationalist idea espoused by the DSU. It claims to represent the “interests of the nation and not just those of a particular social group or party, stratum, or class.”

Even with the split and change of leadership, DSU’s political platform has remained basically unchanged, demanding that the Ukraine withdraw from the CIS, oppose the “gendarme policies of the USA,” and stressing the “lack of Ukrainian interest in integrating into Europe.” Its “Declaration on Ukrainian foreign policy” states that “Ukraine should first of all seek cooperation with the South, the non-Russian East and neighbors to the West. In alliance with the Islamic countries, Europe, China, and Japan, the Ukraine will establish itself in the international arena.” A Berlin-Kiev-Istanbul-Teheran-Beijing-Tokyo axis is espoused.

The DSU supports the establishment of a unitary ethnocratic state, calling for *sobornost* (collectivity) involving the “inevitable union of all ethnically Ukrainian territories which are temporarily under the jurisdiction of other countries.” It also favors firm centralization, and advocates a military dictatorship until the complete victory of the national state:

The Ukrainian military must come to power in the way that is traditional in world history. For a short time it [the military] will determine the borders that define our state. It will subdue the rulers of Crimea and the Donbass which have been taken away from Kiev. It is the military, via the mass media, that will censor and form public opinion and approve decisive action in Ukraine. So-called “democracy” will be overthrown. The system of executive power will become hierarchical and vertical and legislation more strict. A moratorium will be declared on elections, as well as on referenda and plebiscites. Paper for printing will be nationalized and private presses and copying devices will be confiscated — for the benefit of the state. Censorship will be introduced. Emergency regulation will be introduced for the economy. In the mass media, psychological warfare will be launched against the enemies of our state. The majority of opponents of our independence will be gotten rid of, those who continue anti-state activity repressed, and disloyal elements deported. Allocations for the preservation of law and order and for the armed forces will be increased. The police will be beefed up by recruits from Ukrainian villages. The conversion of the military-industrial complex to peaceful purposes and disarmament will both be halted. All top officers will be Ukrainians, etc. [15](#)

In February 1996, the DSU sponsored the founding meeting of the Rovno Union of Ukrainian Entrepreneurs and Property Owners, whose

membership was restricted “solely to Ukrainians by nationality and by spirit”). Conference chairman D. Zakhariuk defined the Union’s purpose: “to unify Ukrainian capital against Jewish capital.” At the meeting, Koval’ spoke:

People say that money does not smell, but there is a smell from several political organizations in Ukraine. You know immediately what nation is holding [money] and what nation it serves. People say that money is international, but OUN...has refuted this cosmopolitan thesis by presenting and realizing the slogan “One’s own [money] to one’s own [people] for one’s own [people].” It is said that it is already too late to build Ukrainian entrepreneurial structures since aliens have already built them in Ukraine.... People talk that way to demoralize us, so that we become used to the idea that another nation will rule on Ukrainian territory. A significant segment of Ukrainians has submitted to enemy propaganda and given up. But can we really give up, we who consider ourselves the elite of the Ukrainian nation?... The struggle for the establishment of Ukrainian capital will be fierce and bloody. There will be a Great Patriotic war against international capital for the establishment of Ukrainian capital.[16](#)

In 1994 at the fifth congress of the DSU, Koval’ called for “a punctilious and well-planned cleansing of our homeland.... When we come to power, first of all we’ll take care of our internal enemies.” By “internal enemies,” [17](#) he means primarily Jews and Russians.

According to DSU figures, 24 issues of *Nezboryma natsia* appeared in 1994 in a total of 160,000 copies, and the DSU issued more than eighty press releases used by sixteen news agencies and twenty-four newspapers. They also publish their materials in other Ukrainian newspapers, and hold press conferences. During 1994, a dozen DSU figures were interviewed on both local and national radio and television, some participating in televised debates. [18](#)

Between 1991 and 1996, the foreign and domestic policy of the Ukraine, its economic strategies, and social developments were determined by liberal democratic, social democratic, socialist, and national democratic parties and movements. All of them advocated integration with the countries of Europe, the establishment of a market economy, and guarantees for political rights and freedoms conforming to international legal norms.

The political role of Ukrainian right-wing extremists (who comprise only 1-2% of those in the highest echelons of power) was marginal. Nevertheless, they did have some influence by making coalitions with the national democrats and/or the Communists:

- when right-wing political forces attempted to maintain in the Ukraine nuclear weapons that had been deployed there earlier by the Soviet government
- during confrontations with Russia (e.g., over the Black Sea fleet, the Crimea, and relations with the CIS), and in debates on Ukrainian geopolitical strategy
- when Ukrainian national values were defended (e.g., vis-à-vis the question of the status of the Ukrainian and Russian languages, education, the official approach to Ukrainian history in instructional materials at all levels)
- in situations of conflict between the Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox Churches, and conflict between the Greek Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church of Western Ukraine
- in propaganda for Ukrainian nationalist (often ethnocentric) values in the mass media.

The Right was heard especially in cases of conflict between society and the government (such as the incidents surrounding the burial of the Ukrainian Patriarch mentioned above), and conflict between the nationally-oriented churches in the Western Ukraine; during coal mine strikes in the first half of the 1990s; and during elections to the Supreme Soviet and local soviets.

Ukrainian national democrats clearly distanced themselves from the extreme Right at the beginning of Ukrainian independence. By the mid-1990s, however, the national democrats proved willing to join any group — no matter how undemocratic — in order to protect Ukrainian independence in the face of potential Communist and socialist influence (particularly in the Eastern Ukraine), as well as tendencies toward integration with Russia, and Russian military pressure on the Ukraine.

The opposition between the Ukrainian Right and left-wing forces derives from their attitude toward the Ukrainian national idea. The Right speaks of “Ukraine above all” whereas the Left identifies with similar forces in other eastern bloc countries in the post-Soviet period, and favors some form of integration with Russia. Most of those allied with the Left live in Central and Eastern Ukraine, and to a significant degree are a product of Soviet-Russian culture and reflect the influence of Soviet thinking.

Although there is no “red-brown” alliance as in Russia, at times the extreme Right and extreme Left do share common interests. Both oppose the liberalization of the economy (they share such traditional

Soviet values as a desire for state paternalism), and both support the military industrial complex. For the Left, arms factories represent their work places, whereas for the Right they symbolize power and a tool for imperialist ambitions. It is unlikely that a greater rapprochement will develop between Left and Right. However, they have both found common ground in an antisemitism that may derive from, or be influenced by, Russian antisemitism.

Ideological Antisemitism of the Radical Nationalists: Sources and Tendencies

The ideological antisemitism of the Ukrainian national radicals does not exist in a vacuum, but is part of a more general — supposedly universal — messianic ideology.¹⁹ As with its Russian religious, and German ethnic-statist predecessors, the Ukrainian doctrine is clearly dualistic and Manichaeic. However, the Ukrainian version differs in that historically its primary struggles have been against the Poles and Russians; Jews were perceived (and attacked) as accomplices of these dominating foreign foes. With the advent of Ukrainian fascism in the 1920s, however, Jews (often together with the other “false messianic” group, the Russians) were perceived as the spiritual and ontological antipode of the “Aryan nation.” Together with an attendant antisemitism, a modernized messianic-statist doctrine has become the basis of contemporary radical nationalist programs; the nature of the antisemitic content varies with the specific model of a fascist state ideal that characterizes each specific group. Initially, an ethnocratic dictatorial, totalitarian state was the model, but by 1993, some differences emerged. UNA-UNSO began to expound a Eurasian imperialist doctrine whose geo-political aims resembled those of the Third Reich, and whose ideas were taken from the Russian “New Right” that developed in the 1990s. The terms “conservative revolutionaries” and “Eurasians” were used by the writer Alexander Prokhanov, one of the first to refer to the “New Russian Right.” Another ideologist was Alexander Dugin, founder and editor of the journals *Elementy* and *Milyi angel*; he stressed the connection between Russian and European “New Rightists.” The DSU and other extreme Right groups, however, continued to believe in the revival of a mono-ethnic Ukrainian state, whose prototypes were the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy, and one of whose main aims would be the “cleansing” of society from the harmful “biomass” of the Jews and Russians.²⁰

Ideologists of the latter increasingly referred to the “world Jewish conspiracy” myth, borrowed mainly from Russian (both Soviet and post-Soviet) antisemitic literature. In contrast, UNA-UNSO employed such themes more rarely, preferring to cite such “authorities” as Hitler.²¹ Following their Russian peers, whose intellectual pretensions they imitate, Ukrainian new rightists speak less of “world Jewry” now and refer rather to “American-Jewish globalism (*mondialism*)” and “Atlanticism” which aims to subordinate the whole

world to a materialistic and mercantile order. The “Kievan Aryan empire” is destined to uproot “Semitic-liberal values” and establish a new world order.[22](#)

Radical extremists of various tendencies show few differences when it comes to their interpretations of just who constitutes the “enemy of the people.” Nevertheless, it is worth exploring the differences that do exist, which reflect divisions within the radical Right both in the Ukraine and Russia — neo-imperialist Eurasians on one side, and neo-slavophile isolationists on the other.

Although they are now separate states, one must not ignore the effect of the long history of the Ukraine and Russia as integral parts (however unequal) of a single empire. The common Soviet heritage and political and ideological developments (including antisemitism) in Russia continues to effect corresponding trends in the Ukraine, and vice versa.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, Ukrainian radical nationalists attribute great significance to mystical and mythical elements in their political ideologies. To support their claims for creating of a Ukrainian superpower, they have constructed the myth of a heroic ancient history, connected to the “Aryan” spirit and origin of the nation. Mysticism is mobilized to serve political ends, and make use of the antisemitic myths of the “Old Right,” particularly those of Dmytro Dontsov, as well as those of Western and Russian para-Nazi ideologues, and of course, those of the Nazis as well.[23](#)

The “Willful” Nationalism of Dmytro Dontsov and his Followers in Today’s Ukraine

The doctrine of Ukrainian nationalism elaborated by Dmytro Dontsov on the eve of World War I had its roots in German romanticism and the philosophy of life later popularized by fascist and Nazi theoreticians. Dontsov transformed the ideas he gleaned from these sources into a “willful (*chynnyy*) nationalism.”[24](#) His book *Nationalism* (1926) has much in common with the first part of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, published at the same time.

Dontsov (1883–1973) began as a brilliant orthodox Marxist literary critic and publicist with a pro-Russian orientation. By the onset of World War I, his orientation radically changed, now looking to the West, particularly Austria-Hungary and Germany, as political allies, and to their fascist nationalism as the only possible solution for the Ukrainians. Close to the *hetman* Skoropadskii and to Petliuria, Dontsov attempted to strengthen the anti-Russian, pro-Western direction of their policies. Dontsov abandoned active involvement in politics, but his views became the basis for the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Following the 1940 split in the OUN, Dontsov associated himself for some time with the extremist faction of the group led by Stepan Bendersa. During World War II, he lived in

Berlin, Bucharest, and Prague and published articles in the Nazi press. He lived for a time in France and in England; in 1947 he went to Canada where he spent the remaining years of his life, and moved “from politics to mysticism” as he put it. He had little influence in the political life of the Ukrainian diaspora. In the late 1960s, however, a number of his works, in which he espoused authoritarianism, elitism, opposition to democracy, opposition to Russia, and antisemitism, were republished. His ideas gained some popularity during perestroika and afterwards in independent Ukraine.²⁵

Dontsov’s goal was the establishment of a Ukrainian state, overcoming its primary enemy, Russia. He opposed democracy, since it had led to the decline of Europe, and he saw the Ukrainian nation as critical for the reestablishment of a new Europe. Ukrainians would have to consolidate the will of the nation for struggle and expansion, to cultivate within themselves the of romanticism, a mystic upsurge, irrationalism, and amorality so that an elite minority could adopt the tactic of “creative violence.” Only the latter could be effective in overcoming the power and influence of “westerners, the race of slaves.” It was “westerners” (“gesheftsmen, who are prepared to serve any power”) who comprise “the democratic-socialist intelligentsia” that was sowing chaos and destroying the spirit of the nation. To these “swineherds” Dontsov contrasts the “Nordic” master race (the Cossacks), a natural elite destined to revive a hierarchical authoritarian society. Thus, Dontsov, who often quoted German racial theorists, actually Ukrainized their ideas.²⁶ Even though the consequences of rule by the “Nordic elite” were made manifest in the Ukraine during the German occupation of the Ukraine, Dontsov continued to hail fascist regimes (those of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco) as models for the Ukraine to emulate: “having liberated the social life of Germany from Judaizing influence, National Socialism (together...with similar movements) in opposition to democracy, to the Western-Jewish Communism of Marx and the Eastern-Russian Communism of Lenin — created its own system that in a basic way changed the face of the German world....”²⁷

He called for reviving the “spirit of Ukrainian antiquity,” thereby transforming the nation and leading the opposition to the “gangrene of democracy, materialism, Bolshevism, Judaizing, and Freemasonry.”²⁸ Dontsov pointed to the Nazi mobilization of mysticism for political ends, using Charles Peguy’s 1910 phrasing: “All begins with mysticism and ends with politics. Politics without mysticism is fruitless.”²⁹ Dontsov perceived the Ukrainians as the real “occidental” people, the bearer of a western spirit, a truly Christian people. Christianity he saw as a creation of the Hellenistic spirit. Stressing the political significance of questions about the origins of Christianity and Western civilization, Dontsov claimed that Jesus was not a Jew, but a Galilean, presumably from a region whose inhabitants differed ethnically and culturally from the Jews; Jesus was an Aryan.³⁰ Dontsov considered the New Testament to be imbued

with Hellenistic and Roman values, fundamentally different from the Old Testament, which he saw as based on materialism and the subjection of human beings to externally imposed laws. Jesus is thus associated with idealism and “internal” human freedom. According to Dontsov, pre-Christian Ukrainian mysticism was related to that of ancient Greece, and so it was natural that Ukrainians would come to accept the teaching of Jesus that arose from a Hellenic basis. Christianity was organically accepted by the “occidental” Ukrainians; ostensibly it could not establish itself among non-Hellenic “oriental” peoples like the Jews and Russians, whose anti-Hellenic attitudes were due to their own innate racism, nomadic spirit, herd instinct, materialism, and anti-westernism.

Dontsov believed that it would be a disaster for Ukraine to submit to the influence of the alien mysticism of “Moscow-shamanistic Eastern Orthodoxy” with its messianic claims of being an “older brother.” Equally dangerous would be to accept the claim of the Jews that their religion is the basis of Western civilization. Whether they were allied or in conflict, the Russian and Jewish messianisms were basically hostile to the Ukraine and the West. Sunk in materialism, Western democracy was unable to draw on the primary spiritual sources of its mysticism. Dontsov asserted that the Ukraine must recognize its destiny, raise the banner of its national identity, and revive its culture inherited from ancient Greece and the New Testament.

Enemies of the Ukrainian nation were named in Dontsov’s article “The Chaos of the Contemporary World and Youth” which was reprinted a number of times, including in the newspaper for youth established in 1991, *Nash klych*. He called on youth to participate in a firm struggle against the “leading forces of East and West hostile to the Ukraine, one of which was Muscovite messianism, the “elder brother” whom Dontsov referred to as “Cain.” The second enemy was democracy, and the third was characterized in a monologue attributed to a “Ukraine-hater” [read: Jew]:

Your nation has long been on my black list, like [Franco’s] Spain has been in the West, since it has opposed me every time that I was in the avant garde — first of Polish imperialism, then of liberal imperialism, then of the red imperialism of Moscow. I curse the names of the Ukrainian heroes Chmielnicki and Petliura. Deny them....[31](#)

In the event that Ukrainians fail to deny them, the speaker threatens them “with his might, which is very great.”[32](#)

Dontsov’s works were banned in the Soviet Ukraine, which served to increase his underground influence. With the onset of glasnost, they began to be widely reproduced individually as well as in nationalist publications. The Ukrainian democrat Leonid Pliushch considers the

“Dontsov phenomenon” to be the source of Neo-fascism in the Ukraine today: “Dontsov impresses second-class Ukrainian patriots with his apparent dynamism, courage, profound spirituality and culture. The colorful style of his works corresponds to teenage complexes of ‘lost souls.’”³³ Dontsov’s apologists say “We are armed with the immortal teaching of Dmytro Dontsov, whom the test of time does not diminish: we accept him without reservation....”³⁴ “It is very timely to read the works of Dontsov, especially his brochure *Khrestom i mechom* and D. Dovganiuk stressed that Dontsov reveals the falseness of the claim that the Judeo-Christian conception is the basis of Western civilization.”³⁵

There exists a certain sensitivity to charges that Dontsov was antisemitic. Anatol Bedrii (living in Canada), sharply criticized the political scientist Taras Kuzo (who lives in England) for referring to Dontsov as an “organic antisemite.”³⁶ Bedrii claims that *Khrestom i mechom* in fact highlights the contributions of the Christian philosophy of life.³⁷ Much more common, however, has been the contemporary tendency toward the ideologization and politicization of antisemitism, accompanied by a “modernization” of fascist ideas.

Following the Inspiration of Russian and Western “New Rightists”

Although Dontsov is a recognized authority for the extreme nationalists, his ideas are being implemented by young nationalists, most of whom are active in the leadership of the UNA. While remaining loyal to the principles of “willful nationalism,” they supplement Dontsov’s arguments with those of the “New Right” and the “Old Right” (proto-fascists and fascists).

Asked whether UNA-UNSO considers itself part of the New Right, D. Korchinskii replied “To some extent, yes,” but noted that, in contrast to European New Rightists, the Ukrainian extremists have attained a “happy union” of action and theory.³⁸ This “happy union” finds expression on the cover of the “popular scientific” magazine *Natsionalist*, published by the Dontsov Supporters’ Club. The Gothic script and the motto “Ukraine Above All” prepares the reader for the ideas expressed inside, while the emblem of the Ukraine SS-Galichina division, which fought alongside the Nazis, recalls the past implementation of extreme nationalism.

Inside, an article appeared, entitled “Nationalism in the World: Past, Present, Future,” written by Andrei Shkil’, editor-in-chief of *Natsionalist*, chairman of the Dontsov Supporters’ Club, and head of the Lvov branch of UNA. Mostly devoted to the New Right, it also mentioned their precursors, including Gobineau, and “his worthy student Walter Darré, who developed the idea of artificial selection [eugenics] to improve the human race.” *Mein Kampf* and its author (whose name is not given) are praised for “reexamining these ideas on the highest level.” Several of Darré’s ideas are applied to the

Ukrainian situation: Christianity's mistaken view of the equality of human beings, the necessity for the revival of paganism as an essential spiritual feature of the nation and as a precondition for the creation of a new national elite, with eugenics as a means of cleansing and renewing the people.³⁹ Thus, the UNA values the experience of the European Right, and other radical regardless of their political orientation.

Like Dontsov, they view the spiritual side of their political program to be of great significance. They appreciate the philosophical underpinnings of German Nationalism, for its philosophy with underpinnings from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Spengler.

In another article, the author cites things that the Ukraine could copy from the German National Democratic and Republican parties: the Neo-Nazi street fighters against foreigners, and the Republican loyalty to the Nazi past, and the NDP's racist "social biology."⁴⁰

Shkil' stresses that France is now the center of New Right ideas, and points to Le Pen as a star of first magnitude. Recounting Le Pen's political biography and electoral successes, Shkil' proposes a similar authoritarian and militant program for the Ukraine, stressing the need for a strong army and opposition to alien "barbarians." The success of the French New Right is attributed to its backbone of social biology. In his idiosyncratic interpretation of the work of the American scholar Edward Wilson,⁴¹ Shkil' makes explicit whom he believes embodies "social biology" in action: "people who place small explosive devices near big synagogues."⁴² According to one UNA ideologist, "There will be a NEW NATIONALISM based on elements of social biology (of course, in a very selective manner). For example, 'People are genetically unequal' assert the Rightists. 'Nations are genetically unequal' we assert."⁴³

Based "on ideas of the German conservative revolution of 1918-1933," Shkil' singles out the "new paganism and occultism" of Alain de Benoist, whom Shkil' quotes as saying, "if Le Pen wants to see the world the way it was before the Great French Revolution, then the New Rightists would like to see it as it was before the birth of Jesus Christ."⁴⁴

From the Eurasian and Russian New Rightists, they have borrowed Neo-imperialist doctrines and some of their views on fascism, as found in an editorial in *Elementy*: "Fascism interests us from the spiritual, idealistic point of view.... We find its ideas of heroism and self-sacrifice sympathetic.... The repressive, chauvinistic aspects characteristic to a lesser or greater degree of Italian and German national socialism are completely unacceptable to us."⁴⁵

A "spiritual" antisemitism has entered the general arguments of ideologues of all stripes who denounce "globalization" and "Old Testament" values. A Russian Orthodox writer, T. Glushkova, calls

herself a proponent of “real antisemitism,” writing in the Russian journal *Molodaia gvardiia* that for Eurasians, “Atlanticism is a means of distracting people from the enemy, a way to the latter’s national ‘disembodiment.’ In conclusion, an ingenuous Russian antisemite...turns out to have no one [to fight against] since there is no enemy whom he is ready to fight for Russia and for his ancestral faith, there is no enemy because he is unrecognizable.”⁴⁶ Later, A. Dugin, in “An Apology for Nationalism,” discussed why “it is the Jews that Russian nationalists see as their mystical antipode and not simply as an alien.”⁴⁷ Elsewhere, Dugin states the the World Order of globalism was based on “Old Testament values and principles” and that it “creates universal alienation...”⁴⁸ Alexander Kovalenko endows the concepts of Eurasianism, globalism, “universal values” and “human rights” with meanings that serve the UNA-UNSO’s own goals for the overthrow of the Ukraine’s “foreign” democratic regime.⁴⁹ Clearly basing himself on the writings of Dugin and other Russian neo-Eurasians, the author states that the sources of the values are “Protestantism, political liberalism, and scientific positivism.” In contrast, “Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Islam consider usury and banking manipulations to be sins...”⁵⁰

Kovalenko was among the first to propound the historical necessity of establishing a “Ukrainian superpower with borders from the Adriatic to the Pacific.”⁵¹ An even more expansive empire (Vladivostok to Dublin) was proposed in the first issue of *Elementy*.⁵²

In many ways, UNA-UNSO ideologists follow the New Rightists. We have already mentioned Alain de Benoist, a co-editor and regular contributor to *Elementy*. Paraphrasing de Benoist’s “first the winning of minds, and then the winning of power,” Shkil’ adds “only after uniting the head with the flexible strong Ukrainian body can we deal with Europe and only then can Europe deal with us.”⁵³

In order to win minds, UNA’s organ *Golos natsii* has given prominence to the Italian book *Pagan Imperialism* by Julius Evola, a well-known fascist ideologist. Evola’s book was published in Russian in 1992 by a leading New Right publisher. In addition, *Golos natsii* republished articles by the late Japanese author Yukio Mishima previously seen in *Elementy*. Mishima wrote *My Friend Hitler*, which, the Ukrainian newspaper claims, shows that “a new military-aristocratic elite” can put a halt to “bourgeois-democratic degradation” and “restore a dictatorial hierarchical regime.”⁵⁴

The proponents of Ukrainian Eurasianism rely not only the ideas of the Russian New Right, but also on those of foreign authorities recognized by the Russians. Despite the constant declared (and actual) hostility toward Russia, the Ukrainian New Right reveals an almost total unanimity of thought with the Russian Right, and in some cases, with their ideological premises, including the key one of who should be considered the enemy of the Russian and/or Ukrainian Aryans. The Ukrainian and Russian Right also largely agree on tactics,

i.e., the means and type of struggle to be employed against this enemy.

In short, Ukrainian Rightists of all stripes see answers to many of their questions in the ample arsenal of Russian sources, among which “Neo-Eurasian” works comprise an important, but hardly the most sizeable component.

The Ukrainian Use of Russian Antisemitic Publications

The most accessible sources of antisemitic literature used by the Ukrainian extreme Right are from Russia. Examples such as the original *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and translations of works by Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg, and Henry Ford, as well as the varied nationalist press, are distributed as freely in the Ukraine as in Russia, albeit on a smaller scale. A significant proportion of these are distributed by antisemitic organizations such as Slavianskii Sobor, Rossiiskii Nationalnyi Sobor, and Partiiia Slavianskogo Edinstva. Among the antisemitic Russian newspapers available in the Ukraine are *Russkii vestnik*, *Russkoe delo*, *Puls Tushino*, *Zemshchina*, *Otechestvo*, *Narodnoe delo*, and *Den (Zavtra)*.⁵⁵ Many of their readers are those who miss Soviet order, and who accept the myth that Jews destroyed the Soviet Union in order to gain control over its remains.

Russian antisemitic material is reprinted by the Ukrainian extreme nationalist press in Kiev and elsewhere, both in party-affiliated publications and in ostensibly independent ones. One of the first periodicals to do so was Lvov’s *Za vilnu Ukrainu* (For a free Ukraine). Originally noted for its democratic orientation and opposition to antisemitism, the newspaper took a sharp turn to the Right in 1992, when UNSO hitmen took it over and replaced its editorial staff with their own. A series of antisemitic articles began to be published from February 1992. Editor-in-Chief Pavel Chemeris began by printing citations from *Mein Kampf* (from a contemporary Russian edition), and added selected anti-Zionist Soviet writings from the 1970s, and items from the pro-Stalinist *Molodaia gvardiia*.⁵⁶ Somewhat later, the article “Russia Vanquished and Wiped Off the Earth,” included quotes from the *Protocols*, the *Catechism of Jews in the USSR*, and other “documents” allegedly discovered in 1919. Chemeris assured readers of the authenticity of “the documents that testify to the plans and goals of the Jews to gain...universal domination over the ‘goyim’...[and] particular joy to the kike conquest and enslavement of Russia.”⁵⁷

Za vilnu Ukrainu and other publications met with protests from the leaders of Lvov’s Jewish organizations, but according to *Za vilnu*’s editor, Bogdan Vovk, the newspaper also received many positive reactions with requests to “continue the series in the same vein.” The newspaper organized a round table discussion that concluded with a proposal to publish the complete text of the *Protocols*, albeit

accompanied by an article about the history of the composition.⁵⁸

Several months later, evidently with no connection to the polemic in *Za vilnu Ukrainu*, but certainly in accord with the aim of using antisemitism for political purposes, there appeared in the Ukrainian language a brochure imported from Paris: *By Whom and How the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" Were Created: According to Materials of an Expert Commission That Has Studied the History of the Writing of this Book*. The cover reproduced the cover of a 1934 French edition of the *Protocols*, on which a bloody-armed Jew grasped the world. Within were selections from a book by L. Frei, who claimed that the *Protocols* were authentic, and had been composed by Ahad Kham [sic]. Note that the writer's name, Ahad Ha'am [Asher Ginsberg] was transliterated in a manner that would suggest to the reader the word "kham," meaning boor or lout.

Reproduction of selections from the *Protocols* in the newspaper *Grono* included the editorial comment that the Jewish plans "are today being implemented with extraordinary precision..."⁵⁹ A reprinting of the *Catechism of Jews in the USSR* in *Neskorena natsiia* added: "Some people believe that since the Jews are few they do not present any danger. This is not really true. Given their ability to cooperate with each other and their zoological hatred for all other peoples, on the one hand, and the passivity and humanism of the 'goyim,' especially Ukrainians, on the other, the Jews are succeeding, just as a small but well-organized gang can terrorize a large city."⁶⁰

Among Russian translations of Nazi sources, one can find Dietrich Eckart's "Dialogues with Adolf Hitler," printed in *Golos natsii* with this comment:

The Dialogues...are not only of historical interest to us.... Eckart was one of the closest comrades of Adolf Hitler, in particular he had great influence on the formation of his political worldview.... Regarding its "antisemitic" contents...is it not true that in Ukrainian history it often happened that the kikes were our enemy or the accomplices of our enemies? Considering the contemporary attitude of Israel to the Ukraine and Ukrainians (one need only mention [the trial of] Demyanyuk, we have the right to respond.⁶¹

The newspaper *Nova Ukraina* (which claims to be a continuation of a publication of the same name that appeared in Kharkov during the German occupation) published a translation of Richard Wagner's *Das Judentum in der Musik* (Jewishness in music, 1850), which had appeared in Moscow both as a brochure and in *Nash sovremennik*. The Kharkov newspaper claims to have published it at the request of a reader who wrote: "The danger consists in the mass inclusion of an alien element, particularly a kike one, in Ukrainian culture."⁶²

Increasing attention has been given, especially in the past two or three years, to revisionist articles about the Holocaust. *Vechernyi*

Kiev was the first to publish such articles; in late 1995, an article by a U.S. resident, Tatiana Tur, stated that no Jews had been executed at Babii Yar; the Germans had simply deported them from Kiev.⁶³ A few months later, the same newspaper cited the work of American “researchers” about the “myth of the mass murder of Jews at Babii Yar.”⁶⁴ The primary source for articles on Holocaust denial has been the Russian press. Five issues of *Za vilnu Ukrainu* reprinted the Russian translation of Jurgen Graf’s *Myth of the Holocaust*, which had appeared in *Russkii vestnik*.⁶⁵ Apparently, in the effort to deny the Holocaust, the Ukrainian nationalist publisher failed to take note that his Russian source views the Russian people as one nation that includes Great Russians, Small Russians (the Ukrainians), and Belorussians; *Russkii vestnik*’s writers would deny Ukrainians the right to consider themselves a separate nation, still less a sovereign nation.

Thus, we find Russian antisemitic materials frequently republished in the Ukrainian press simply because it is easily available, and its themes have been reworked into the Ukrainians’ own messianic/great power myth in which Jews represent the ultimate enemy of the Ukrainian people and state.

Antisemitism in Historiosophic and Political Doctrines:

The Ukrainian Nation: Aryan Prehistory and Historical Mission

Extreme nationalists depict the establishment of an ethnic totalitarian state as the organic continuation of the history of the Aryan race, of which the ancient Ukrainians were the alleged progenitors. The ideologists present such constructs, based on the Nazi model, as the incarnation of the Aryan spirit of the nation with the myth of Ukrainian origins as the prehistory of the contemporary state that is destined to radically remake the world and purify it from Evil.

What kind of nation should the revived Ukraine be in order to fulfill its historic mission? According to the extreme radicals, it would first have to return to its Aryan roots, reviving the militant Aryan spirit and the rich pre-Christian culture. All the extremists agree about the Aryan primacy of the Ukrainians, disagreeing only as to which of their groups most represents the Aryan spirit and is most worthy of serving as the nucleus of the revived nation. In their publications, they stress that all Indo-European peoples derive from the Ukrainians, including the Indo-Germanic groups who erroneously considered themselves the first truly Aryan people. Russians, who also claim Aryan primacy, are excluded from the Aryan family (and in some articles, are not even considered part of the Slavs!); the Russian ethnic and national development was later, and Russia should be referred to as Northeast Ukraine. These nationalists reject the “dogma of imperial history” according to which the “kindred East Slavic peoples” (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians) come from a single “ancient Russian people.”⁶⁷ They deny to the Russians a prehistoric past.

Another key question: against whom did the ancient Ukrainians fight to defend the Aryan spirit and its life-affirming pagan culture? The answer is borrowed from *Russian* Neo-pagan literature, and relates in one way or another to the *Vles Book*—an alleged history of the pre-Christian Russians that appeared in the late 1950s among Russian émigrés.⁶⁸ The *Vles Book* has been proven to be a forgery.

Neo-pagan literature appeared in the USSR in the 1970s during the period of “stagnation” in the Soviet Empire. At that time, Nazi-like ideas began to influence Russian imperialists, and in more refined forms initiated by writers and publicists, these ideas were expressed in a variety of messianic and gnostic artistic works, in popular science and science fiction, and journalism. A flood of publications called for an uncompromising fight against the incarnation of universal evil—the Jews. Traditional pre-Soviet and Soviet Russian argumentation was supplemented by Nazi myth. A primary example is the Russian variant of Rosenberg’s *Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Studying its transplantation to Russian soil within popular science fiction literature, Maya Kaganskaya called the Russian phenomenon the “Myth of the 21st Century.”

In the first stages of development of the myth of the origin of the “Slavo-Russ” descendents of Oriya (the progenitor of the Aryans), there is no differentiation of the ancient Aryans into “ancient Russians” and “ancient Ukrainians.” This accords with the theory that these peoples share a common origin, and that their cultural and linguistic differentiation took place in a comparatively recent historical period. The myth was altered, however, when the Soviet Union began to decline during perestroika, and the possibility arose for an independent Ukraine. What had begun as a covert Ukrainization of the myth in the Ukrainian diaspora, now became intensified and open. Russians were no longer regarded as Slavs, and hence were not Aryans; claims of a common Slavic past extended from prethrough the Kievan Rus were rejected.

Aryan-Ukrainian history was pushed back to the paleolithic “Oriyan” epoch (4,000–23,000 B.C.).⁷⁰ “All Oriyans [Aryans] no matter where they lived, in Iran, Anatolia, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, or India...came from the Ukraine.”⁷¹ These ancient Ukrainians created “the most ancient mythology in the world, which became the basis for all Indo-European mythologies and the Ukrainian language—Sanskrit—became the progenitor of all Indo-European languages.”⁷² “The Aryan religion in the [form of] Ukrainian ritual” based on worship of the sun and its symbol, the swastika, gave rise to Judaism, Buddhism, Hellenism, and Christianity.⁷³ As one might expect, the ancient Ukrainians, as progenitors of the Indo-European race and founder of Aryan culture, became the target of the Semite-Jews, their metahistorical antagonists.

In transplanting the Russian-Aryan myth onto Ukrainian soil, its antisemitism was altered somewhat. For example, the treatment of

Christianity and its relation to Judaism was modified. Russian publications espousing “Veda-ism” almost always present Christianity as a degenerate ideology created by Jews expressly for the gentiles, who are then exploited, weakened, and ultimately enslaved by it. In contrast, Ukrainian “Aryanists” prefer Rosenberg’s “positive” Christianity, which supposedly has nothing in common with Judaism; they substitute Aryan-Ukrainian attributes for Rosenberg’s Indo-Germanic ones, and look to a Ukrainian Jesus descended from the “mighty proto-Ukrainian Etruscan tribe” for the “Nordic martyr.” The “Etruscan” origin of Jesus is highlighted in the *Dictionary of Ancient Ukrainian Mythology* issued in 1993 by the reputable Kiev publisher Ukrainskii pisatel. Its author, Sergei Plachynda explains that the “Etruscans (*Rusiny*) were an ancient Ukrainian tribe which moved from the Carpathian Mountains and Galicia into northern Italy 1,300 years B.C.... Out of the rich Etruscan (ancient Ukrainian) culture grew the classical culture of Greece and Rome.”

Plachynda goes beyond Dontsov’s view of prehistory with his version of the Christianization of the Ukraine, claiming that thanks to “ancient Ukrainian pagan priests” the teaching of Christ was accepted by the Ukrainians a mere thirty-five years after the birth of Jesus and that for 850 years there was tolerant coexistence between Christians and pagans, disrupted in 988 by the “crafty” Prince Vladimir.

Plachynda basically repeats the version of history presented by Vladimir Yemelyanov in *Desionizatsiia* (De-Zionization), published during the Soviet anti-Zionist campaign. Yemelyanov claimed that the “half-Jew” and “Zionist agent” [!] Prince Vladimir had gained the throne through the machinations of Jewish Khazars; the Jews encouraged the spread of Christianity in order to establish spiritual hegemony over the Russian Aryan world, dealing a death blow to their Vedic faith.[74](#)

In propounding an ancient Ukrainian origin of Christianity, however, different but equally nefarious roles are ascribed to the Jews: they are called “plagiarists” and occupiers of ancient Ukrainian territory — Palestine [!]. Iaroslav Oros, writing in the Kiev newspaper *Slovo*, explains how the “ancient Jews” came to have the Old Testament: in approximately 2,000 B.C., a segment of the ancient Ukrainians passed through Mesopotamia and headed toward the Nile. These were the creators of the Rig Veda, who symbolized their devotion to the sun and harmony with the universe by the swastika. While in the process of migrating, they “were opposed by the Semitic king Yosi. After conquering the disunited Aryans, the Semitic chieftain adopted their ideology. Thus the ancient Jews got the Old Testament. This is how people from the territory of present day Ukraine founded the religious philosophy of the Jews.”[75](#)

An alternate version of the conquest of Palestine, and of the non-Jewish origin of Jesus and Christianity comes from Vasillii Barladianu-

Byrladnik. He claims that Semitic tribes forced their way into the Middle East from the Arabian deserts and destroyed the proto-Slavic civilization. The Hittites, Palestinians (?), and other Slavic tribes “were driven out of their historic homeland. The Jews conquered the city of Rusa-Lel (a name supposedly derived from *Rusov Otets* — “father of the Rus” — founded in 1,800 B.C. by Ukrainian-Hyksos, and renamed it “Ierusalim” (Jerusalem).⁷⁶ The Ukrainian, or more precisely, Galician, origin of Jesus is attested to linguistically by Jesus’ final words, said to be of a dialect of the “Carpathian region.” Zarathustra — “who was born somewhere east of Lugansk and Rostov” — predicted the advent of the Christian messiah. Barladianu-Byrladnik cites Dontsov, as well as “Soviet scholars, who deny the Jewish origin of Christ.” He adds that “all references to the Old Testament [found in the New Testament] are later interpolations.”⁷⁷ As with its German and Russian predecessors, the Ukrainian mythology views the Jew as the incarnation of Evil, while its own people are a nation of Heroes called upon to purify the world and establish a new order in it.

As noted, Dontsov remarked that “All begins with mysticism and ends with politics.” His claim that “today’s Ukrainian is the representative of one of the most ancient nations on earth, the ur-mother of European civilization” concluded with a call to restore the “nation of the strong” that is destined to “dominate Europe and the world.”⁷⁸

According to Dontsov, the nucleus for the revival of the “nation of the strong” will be the “Nordic people.” Each of the extreme radical groups of the Ukraine associates itself with a “Nordic minority” that is to lead the nation and guarantee the realization of its historic mission. The UNA states: “Every nation is formed in the depths of an organization, such a nation will exist for ages.... The internal organizational hierarchy must be the womb for the national hierarchy during the period of its formation.”⁷⁹

The DSU would like to create a nation of wolves:

Right now we have a weak nation or none at all.... Only by uniting the nation...only forcing it to become involved in a struggle, only by instigating it to action...only then will we be able to make out of that crowd, that mass, what we want it to be.... We want to see before us a herd of wolves. Perhaps that is not a very attractive image but that is the kind of nation we want.⁸⁰

A similar ideal is expressed by DSU leader Koval’:

Our task is to instill in young Ukrainians aggression, militancy, a spirit of aggression, and lack of pity for the enemy. We have to romanticize confrontation, the struggle against the enemy, to sanctify the feeling of revenge of inevitable punishment. The romanticism of arms, the shedding of enemy blood—that is the most crucial component of willful nationalism.⁸¹

Another UNA ideologue also extolled blood, war, and domination:

There have appeared people who are bored by this grey, ordinary, boring life, who love risk and strong emotions, people who love war and do not faint at the sight of blood, the blood of warriors, the blood of masters. These people will build the Ukrainian State, not some provincial, pocket-sized Ukraine, an object of mockery, but a Ukraine for which our ancestors fought, a Ukraine that will rule the world.[82](#)

The messianic role of Ukraine is the future Europe and the world is a logical continuation of the idea of the destiny of the people: “We shall build a Great Ukraine and establish a New Europe, in which there will be no room for a cult of the lower instincts. We need not a ‘common European home’ but a Europe of nations. The spirit of Ancient Aryans hovers over Ukraine. We thirst for revenge.”[83](#)

Against whom and for what does the nation of Aryans thirst for revenge? Who is the enemy who must be overcome by Ukrainian Aryans in order to fulfill their historic mission? The answer is obvious — the Jews. In Ukrainizing the messianic ethnic-statist ideology, extreme nationalists simply follow the dualistic myth that presents the Jews as the historical and spiritual antipode of the Ukrainian “chosen nation.” Like its Russian and German prototypes, the Ukrainian myth is a modern proof of the Christian antisemitic misuse of the stereotype of “Jewish chosenness” that has become a cultural code in Western civilization.[84](#) The fact that this code appears in political and ideological doctrines independent of the declared attitude toward Christianity (some of the ideologies, like Russian-Communist messianism, reject Christianity), and that it may change form or even be completely replaced by paganism (e.g., in Nazi and para-Nazi messianism), only confirms the depth to which it is ingrained in European consciousness. It is expressed in Ukrainian extreme nationalist propaganda, for example, in an article entitled “The Cleansers”:

We must recognize our messianism, our holy obligation toward Ukraine and all of humanity.... The next millennium will be marked by an aggravation of the struggle between two opposing worlds — the Aryan one and the Semitic one, between the forces of Good and those of Evil. Ukraine, headed by UNA-UNSO should be the vanguard of Aryan civilization. That the kikes are the servants of the Devil is obvious from the Bible, the Talmud, the Torah [*sic*], the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and from the whole history of the kike people. Who created the satanic teaching of Communism? Who built the Evil Empire of the USSR? Who were members of the CheKa? Who destroyed churches, organized the mass starvation and the destruction of the elite of the Ukraine?... The Germans were right when they made their autos-da-fe....[85](#)

As with similar Russian ideologies, the Ukrainian version mixes mysticism and messianism when facing the crises evident in most, if

not all, of the post-Soviet states. The direction that Ukrainian society will take depends largely on how it addresses the challenges of building an independent state. For extreme nationalists, the primary question is, what kind of state can guarantee the fulfillment of the *Ukrainian-Aryan historical mission*?

The Great Ukrainian State, its Allies and its Enemies

The primary aim of the extreme nationalists is to build an ethnocratic dictatorship. Despite disagreements over whether the Ukrainian state should be a new Eurasian empire or remain within its “ethnic borders,” there is a shared anti-democratic platform.

“Ethnocracy” was a key demand of the extreme nationalists during the 1994 elections to the Supreme Soviet. Only a “national dictatorship, a mighty Ukrainian force armed with nuclear weapons will lead Ukraine out of democratic chaos and Communist order” stated the DSU’s Koval’ during the campaign. This was further elaborated by Grigorii Grebeniuk in his article “Osnovy ukrainskoi natiokratii” (The fundamentals of Ukrainian ethnocracy) published together with Koval’s platform. Grebeniuk accused the “Communist ideologues” of cutting the peoples of the USSR off from the West and thereby distorting information about the “fascist movement in Italy and the National Socialist movement in Germany, which they presented as being against the people’s interest and bloody.” According to Grebeniuk, “fascism...revealed the forgotten light of great ideas:... authoritarianism, hierarchy, duty, and discipline.” He argues that for fascism, the nation is an absolute value; identifying the nation with the state, fascism represents the system that guarantees national development. Italian fascism and Nazism strengthened their countries by opposing the degenerate ideas of “Marxist-kike internationalism” and the violence “of all-penetrating kike capital which...has stifled the national economy.” They have shown that national dictatorship, ethnocracy, is the only way to liberate oneself from the foreigner’s alien yoke. An ethnocracy should establish itself by domination the “socially useful strata.”⁸⁶

But what if the “socially useless” or “nationally harmful strata” and others reject the ethnocrats? An answer was provided by Koval’s closest cohort, Anatolii Shcherbatiuk, a member of the editorial board and frequent contributor to *Neskorena natsiia*, who was twice an unsuccessful candidate for the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine. In his article “Osnovy sanatsii” (The bases of cleansing), Shcherbatiuk proposed a new theory of Ukrainian civilization, which he claimed differs fundamentally from all previous and contemporary civilizations which he sharply criticized. He stressed the concept of *rod* (kinship or blood), i.e., the supposedly genetically pure Ukrainian people, and the necessity of purging Ukrainian society. *Rod* leads to the recognition of the law (*zakon*). Enemies who threaten the purity of the *rod* should be categorically destroyed.

Among such enemies in the Ukraine are perhaps three million Russians and 600,000 Jews. Russians are characterized as consumers and parasites, alcoholics with a propensity for theft, vandalism, and aggression, and an inability to appreciate, much less create, culture. Jews are depicted as cautious and suspicious when among others and always ready to take advantage of situations of disorder. Shcherbatiuk views Russians and Jews as able to survive and multiply within the weakened and neglected Ukrainian organism. They should be ruthlessly and immediately destroyed, converted into “biomass” as he puts it. He proposes “cleansing units” modeled after Hitler’s *Einsatzgruppen* and even suggests having these units operate within the territories of other countries to which the Ukraine lays claim. Aggression is a precondition for development that will lead to the survival of the “best.” He calls for bloodshed in the “titanic struggle of a cosmic game” so that the “national idea” will “arouse Ukrainian history from its slumber” so that it does not remain stranded “halfway between the Kike’s church [i.e., the Orthodox Church with its “Jewish” roots] and the Kike’s tavern.”⁸⁷

Arguments in favor of ethnic cleansing appeared in a series of publications following Shcherbatiuk’s panegyric review of Koval’s *Chy mozhlyve ukrainsko-rossiikee zamyrenia?* (Is Ukrainian-Russian rapprochement possible?).⁸⁸ Praising Koval’s categorical rejection of any such possibility, Shcherbatiuk writes “Only such people who are unspoiled by priest’s Kike-Christian morality can hate that way.” He provides an apology for Neo-paganism, claiming that Christianity is the “offspring of Judaism and our spinelessness,” and calls for practical steps to purge the Ukraine of its “parasitical biomass” so that a monopolistic rule of the “nation” can be established.⁸⁹ He proposes an Islamic-type religious-political system be adopted in place of the degenerate Western, Judeo-Christian model, based rather on that of Iran and Iraq whom he views a promising allies for his country — a view found among some Russian New Rightists and Neo-Eurasians who openly admit that their views share the geopolitics of the Third Reich. He even ponders the possibility of a nuclear war between Israel and the Arab nations as part of the clash of two hostile psychological and biological worlds.

Clearly the UNA-UNSO has borrowed ideas from Russian Neo-Eurasian ideologues, departing from their originally proclaimed goal of a national dictatorship in a “Ukraine for the Ukrainians,” as well as the establishment of other ethnocratic European states. From 1993, however, UNA began to call for the establishment of a Eurasian Ukrainian empire with borders from the Adriatic to the Pacific, with its capital in Kiev. In May of that year, at a “scientific” conference on “Ukraine’s new geo-politics” held in Lvov, Andrei Shkil’ called for the state to adopt the Aryan myth and use it to unite “Ukrainians of the West and Far East.” Such a scheme is similar to that envisaged by the well-known Russian nationalist Zhirinovskii, whose Eurasian Russian empire would stretch “from the English Channel to

Vladivostok.”[90](#)

Ukrainian imperial ambitions are not restricted to Slavic peoples or to unifying peoples under Ukrainian domination: “Ukrainian pan-Slavism aspires to a confederation that might not only include Slavic states,” asserted UNA chairman Oleg Vitovich. “The only salvation for the Ukraine is the establishment of a new super-ethnos...with a continent of its own, a culture of its own. It is even possible that there will be a new civilization....”[91](#)

Borrowing from *Elementy* without indicating his source, Alexander Kovalenko (editor of *Zamkova gora*) Ukrainized Russian pan-Slavism and the belief in an destiny, as well as the traditional Russian opposition to the West:

“Ukraine is destined to renew itself as a superpower. The millennial cycle of Slavic history has been completed. As in the 10th century, we are again at a turning point, but on a higher level. Our own agenda is the reestablishment of Kievan Rus-Ukraine, with borders from the Adriatic to the Pacific. We have proclaimed ourselves the descendants of that empire not only in a static sense, but in a dynamic one as well. Russia, Moscow, that chaotic mixture of races and people, is simply not capable of serving as the basis for an Empire of a new type, an Empire that will be based on a Ukrainian ethnocratic nucleus, an Empire in which, finally, the main slogan of Ukrainian nationalists —Sobornost (collectivity) will be realized as a step to a higher goal, that of Ukraine as the center of all Slavs, the expression of pan-Slavism.”[92](#)

Citing the Russian right-wing intellectual Lev Gumilev, Kovalenko claims that territorially and historically “Russia-Moscovy” is less the “rightful heir of Rus than of the Golden Horde, less of Europe than of the East, less of Rome than of Sarai.” Kovalenko accused Russian Eurasians of “racial crimes” since they seek support “not from Slavs in the West, but from Turks in the East,” and calls for the creation of a single living space (*lebensraum*) with non-White races.”[93](#) All this criticism of Russia and the New Right apologists for a Eurasian empire were dropped when Kovalenko’s article was reprinted in *Elementy*. Furthermore, the text published there added a conclusion in a quite different spirit:

It is extremely important for us to have a dialogue with the true Great Russians because we shall live with them within a single empire, and nationalists can not fight against their fellow countrymen.[94](#)

These are quite new ideas about Russia as a potential ally. In the *Elementy* article, Kovalenko reasserts the old conclusions about the danger to the Slavs of a pro-Western or pro-American orientation, and the alien nature of those who appeal to “Old Testament” values. In another article published almost simultaneously, Kovalenko cites *Mein Kampf* and writes about Jewish aspirations for world

domination.[95](#)

The same issue of *Elementy* also published an interview with Korchinskii, who espoused the advantages of an alliance based on the “recognition that we [the New Rightists in Ukraine and Russia] have common interests and common enemies.”[96](#) The enemy is “globalism” whose proponents in Russia and the Ukraine are democrats.[97](#)

Interviewed for *Moskovski novosti*, Korchinskii stated that UNSO fighters should be sent to aid those who are defending the [Russian] White House from the forces of President Yeltsin.[98](#) Also in a militant vein, *Elementy* wrote of the desirability of a civil war in which “nationalist statist forces” would overcome the “global lobby” that aimed to weaken Russia and liquidate her “national mission.”[99](#)

After adopting Russian New Right imperialism and then recognizing the common interests between Russia and the Ukraine, they have also altered the image and doctrine of the enemy that they inherited from the Ukrainian old Right. On the one hand, they have not only maintained, but have strengthened their anti-Russian arguments which they employed as the ideological base for armed action against the Russians in Georgia, the Dniester region, and Chechniya. On the other hand, while borrowing the Aryan messianic myth of a great power, the Ukrainian New Rightists have changed their former hierarchy of enemies: Russia and the Russians have been superceded by the West and globalism. “Spirituality” and “national tradition” are now opposed to materialism and “Old Testament values.”

In the more primitive antisemitic propaganda, one encounters direct references to “kikes” and *zhidovstvo* (“Jewishness” in a negative sense). Russians, as well as Ukrainians, are depicted as victims of the Jews. “Russian imperialism” for example, was described as a smoke screen used by the Jews — those who were “really” guilty of the mass repressions and the Great Mass Famine. Iurii Popov, a member of the Kiev soviet cited familiar “proofs” from Russian antisemitic publications:

In Lenin’s government only 11 of 454 members were Russians, the rest were Kikes.... Was it not the Kikes under the leadership of Stalin who caused the famine in Ukraine that killed over 10 million people?... All these crimes are a direct consequence of the “laws and norms of Divine closeness” set forth in the holy book the Shulhan Arukh.[100](#)

Similar ideas are expressed not only in small-circulation Party newspapers, but also in mass circulation papers such as *Vechernii Kiev*[101](#) and *Za vilnu Ukrainu*. One writer in the latter cited Zhirinovskii to the effect that “the [Russian] parliament elected by the people” was routed “with the help...of special Israeli and American military units secretly brought to Moscow, with the support

of the government of Russia and illegal armed units of [the Zionist movement] Betar.”[102](#) Agreeing with Zhirinovskii, Chemeris in the *Za vilnu Ukrainu* article adds that “the semi-underground organization of kike racist fighters Betar takes care of the interest of its tribe” in the Ukraine as well.[103](#)

Calls are issued to form a united front against the Jews. In April 1993, the Lvov branch of the Organization of Idealists of Ukraine called for Christians of all denominations to help Ukraine “purify itself from the fatal kike-Masonic danger.” Only by a united effort, the authors wrote, can we “do away with the Judeo-Zionist threat of world domination and attain true brotherhood, love, and mutual understanding between all peoples of the planet earth.”[104](#) Ironically, a similar appeal came from the political opponents of the “idealists,” the heads of the Kiev Pecherskaia Lavra, the center of Moscow-oriented Russian Orthodoxy in the Ukraine. In a brochure issued soon after the proclamation of Ukrainian independence, the clergy of the lavra stated: “The Jews are preparing the advent of the antichrist” whose goal is the destruction of Eastern Orthodoxy and its kingdom, the Russian state:

Those raised by the synagogue are carriers of an element that is destructive of all states. They have to their credit two major revolts — the Judean War [against Rome] 63-76 A.D., and the Bar Kochba Rebellion, which amounted to subversion in the interests of Persia, which was the enemy of Rome....[105](#)

Turning to modern times, the brochure lists a number of destructive acts of “neo-Judaizers” including the accusation that they “drum it into the heads of people who are historically illiterate that a Holy Russia never existed, and that originally only Ukraine existed there.”[106](#)

The Lvov local authorities attempted without success to prosecute the leaders of the Ukrainian Idealists, but the group was legalized in 1994. On March 20, on the eve of elections to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, it organized a meeting aimed at forming a Christian Front. Preceding the meeting was a demonstration with placards reading “Russian Brothers, let’s unite against the Kikes,” “The Kikes are ruining Ukraine,” and “Kikes Out of Ukraine!” Their pre-election appeal published in *Za vilnu Ukrainu* asked for votes for the implacable opponents of the “Masonic-Mafia forces” — extreme nationalists such as Andrei Shkil’, Anatolii Shcherbatiuk, and Korchinskii.

Admiration for such representatives reveals the impact of primitive antisemitic stereotypes on the New Right ideology, despite its intellectual pretensions. At the same time, the myth of the Great Aryan nation, destined to revive spirituality in a world threatened by materialism, through romanticism and the cult of force and youth compensates for a national inferiority complex and evokes widespread response among intellectual circles, especially among

young people. The thesis of the alien nature of democracy (traditionally associated with the West and with Jews) is significantly encouraged by the awareness of widespread corruption among self-proclaimed democrats of the newly independent states.

These are some of the factors that have facilitated the growth of right-wing extremist ideology, with its characteristic antisemitism. Whether the effect of these factors will further increase or decline depends on a whole constellation of domestic and foreign policy circumstances and their evolution in Ukraine over the next few years.

Conclusion

The Ukraine's first years of independence from the Soviet Union have been far from easy. The country has experienced a serious decline in industrial production, as well as conflicts in the process of establishing democratic institutions — the establishment of new governing bodies, parties, and movements, elections at all levels, and the development of a free press. Difficulties have been apparent both in the formation of a national elite. This has been accompanied by an aggravation of social problems, a decline in the standard of living, a rise in unemployment, and growing poverty (including among the intelligentsia), alongside the breakdown of ideology and a commonly-accepted value system. Such a situation often leads to bloody conflicts, but Ukraine, fortunately, has succeeded in avoiding violent opposition to the authorities, as well as ethnic conflicts that could prove disastrous for a country whose population consists of more than ninety ethnic groups. Political life since independence has been dominated by centrist, rather than extreme, ideologies of both Left and Right — national democracy, liberalism, social democrats, and neo-orthodox Communists — as indicated by the election results at all levels.

Sociological surveys also indicate a centrist orientation among the public. Only 2-3 % of the population define themselves as ultra-nationalists, which corresponds with the percentage of representation in the Supreme Soviet.[107](#)

A similar picture emerges from an analysis of the ideological orientation of national and regional television, radio, and the press. Antisemitic publications constitute only a small proportion of the Ukrainian press, which tends to ignore the Jewish question altogether, or else to deal with it objectively to the best of its ability. The overall proportion of antisemitic publications has changed only slightly, even though the actual number of them has increased from 1-2 per month in 1992 to 20-30 per month in 1995 and 1996. Research on inter-ethnic relations in the country indicate a comparatively high degree of tolerance toward Jews.[108](#)

Thus we may conclude that in its first years of existence as an independent state, Ukrainian antisemitism has been largely a

marginal phenomenon. “Asemitism” — a neutral attitude toward Jews — however, has come to replace the anti-antisemitic speeches and declarations of Ukrainian-Jewish solidarity that some Ukrainians espoused based on a sense of having a common or similar fate. Russian-Soviet antisemitism was seen to be a “foreign” import brought into the society as a result of Russian imperialism. Ukrainian democrats tend to ignore antisemitism in the form of ethnic-state ideas. This “non-resistance to evil” may be attributable to the insignificant scale of Ukrainian antisemitism as opposed to Russian antisemitism; as well as the fear that resistance might lend the phenomenon a popularity that it lacks on its own.

Such an approach is not acceptable to all. Leonid Pliushch, a leading Ukrainian democrat, believes that under conditions of social and political instability that is often accompanied by mass neuroses, the activity of UNSO (which he associates with Nazi storm troopers) “may become a point of crystallization for a new myth of the 20th century,” with consequences like those associated with the Nazi Rosenberg’s myth about the Jews.[109](#)

There seems little chance that such fears may be realized, although one cannot say that they are unfounded. At present, aggression might be less directed against Jews as such (and with emigration, their numbers are diminishing in the Ukraine), than against everything seen as negative or hostile. In accordance with traditional stereotypes, for example, the nouveaux riches of the Ukraine are called “Jewish” regardless of their origins. In parallel, supporters of democracy — seen by the radical nationalists as “alien” and “destructive” — are therefore associated with a “Jewish” desire for global domination.

The possible shift of such ideologies closer to the center of Ukrainian political life and the transformation of their programs from propaganda to action will depend largely on the degree of social instability that leads to “social madness” as well as the “mystical” trend that encourages political, national, and religious extremism.[110](#)

A number of factors would contribute to destabilization leading to increasing influence of the extreme nationalists: deterioration of Russian-Ukrainian relations due to conflicting claims in the Crimea and the ships of the former Soviet Navy in the Black Sea; unresolved economic problems; a rise in unemployment; aggravation of social conflicts; a further decline in productivity; increasing poverty of the population; a crisis in Ukrainian culture; and/or conflicts within the power structure.

The weakness of the state and the inefficiency of the judicial system, along with the lack of a developed civil society make it impossible to guarantee the security of citizens in general, and Jews in particular.

It is not possible to predict the future of extreme nationalist groups in the Ukraine. This will be determined by the respective strength of opposing forces both in the Ukraine itself, and to an equal degree, in all of the former Soviet Union, especially Russia. The world has become more interdependent than ever before. Thus, the hour of the extreme nationalists will come in the Ukraine only if the hour of their peers arrives in Russia and in Europe.

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