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## Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity and Imperial Aggression

The 3R (Three Ukrainian Revolutions) Symposium: *Revolution, War and Their Consequences*. Warszawa, Poland (March 16–17, 2018), College of Europe in Natolin.

**Abstract:** The paper reports *The 3R (Three Ukrainian Revolutions) Symposium: Revolution, War and Their Consequences*, which took place in Warsaw (Poland) on March 16-17, 2018. This multilayer event was organised as a part of the project named *The 3R (Three Ukrainian Revolutions)*, initiated in the College of Europe in Natolin (Warsaw) in 2015, to provide the comparative studies over three revolutions witnessed in Ukraine in the last three decades. The 2018 conference gathered current and former politicians, diplomats, practitioners, scientists, journalists and social activists coming from mostly Ukraine and Poland, as well as the other states around the globe.

**Keywords:** *Ukraine; Revolution of Dignity; international armed conflict in Donbas; annexation of Crimea; the Russian Federation*

The 2018 3R: *Revolution, War and Their Consequences* was the second conference organized within the *3R Project*, dedicated to the comparative analysis over the three different Ukrainian revolutions: the Revolution on Granite (1990), the Orange Revolution (2004/2005) and the Revolution of Dignity (2013/2014), also known as the Euromaidan protests. Conference itself was devoted to the issue of the Revolution of Dignity and its most significant outcomes: on the one hand, a visible switch in the Ukrainian internal and foreign politics, trying to shift away from Russia's orbit, while on the other, the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation, as well as the outbreak of the still ongoing (international) armed conflict in Donbas. Therefore, it is worth underlining that

the principal investigators of the project – Dr Paweł Kowal, Professor Georges Mink and Professor Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski of the College of Europe in Natolin – managed to invite almost 200 participants, including not only academics, experts or analysts from many disciplines (political and social sciences, history, legal or cultural studies), but also the direct actors and witnesses of the Euromaidan events and the war located in the two eastern *oblasts* (provinces) of Ukraine.

First day of the symposium was officially opened by Ewa Ośniecka-Tamecka, deputy rector of the College of Europe Natolin, who gave the floor to the special guests of the conference: François Hollande, former President of the Republic of France, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, former Prime Minister of Ukraine and His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

In his speech, François Hollande highlighted his personal experience in the process of signing the so-called Minsk Accords (Minsk-II, at particular) on February 12, 2015, that partially suspended hostilities in the East of Ukraine. Hollande underlined the role played by France and Germany (represented by Chancellor Angela Merkel) in convincing the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, to sign the document and, at the same time, not letting the so-called pro-Russian separatists – since 2014 forming the unrecognized quasi-states of 'Donetsk' (DNR) and 'Luhansk People's Republic(s)' (LNR) – to become one of the parties to the Minsk Accords. What is more, François Hollande referred to the positive aspect of sanctions imposed by Western states on Russia and his decision to block the Mistral warship deal with Kremlin that cost France a loss of more than 1 billion euro.

The second special guest of the conference, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, concentrated his thoughts on bringing the participants closer to the extraordinary conditions and circumstances of his term as a Prime Minister of Ukraine in the aftermath of the Revolution of Dignity. Yatsenyuk emphasized that the will of the Ukrainian population – materialized during the protests held on *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* (Independence Square) in Kyiv from November 2013 to February 2014 – to fight for the human dignity, justice and the democratic European Ukraine (prolonged during the conflict in Donbas, while standing up to Russian aggression) is in fact the common challenge for all of the European countries. The former head of the Ukrainian government concluded his speech by referring to the necessity of rejecting the Nord Stream-2 project by the European Union, since its clearly anti-Ukrainian, anti-Polish and, generally speaking, anti-European dimension, serving just for the political and economic interests of the Russian Federation.

The following special guest of the *3R Project*, His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, attempted to determine the role played by different churches during the Revolution of Dignity as a spiritual aid for the protesters. Archbishop Shevchuk ensured that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church strongly supports the post-Maidan transformation of the Ukrainian society and underlined the possible contribution of the church in forming the civic society.

Hollande's, Yatsenyuk's and Shevchuk's speeches created in fact a great link to the discussions provided within the following segment of the conference, considering the international

consequences of the 2014 Revolution. Distinguished panellists, including, Daniel Fried, former Sanctions Coordinator at the US State Department (2013-2017) and former US Ambassador to Poland (1997-2000), Borys Tarasyuk, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (twice: 1998-2000 and 2005-2007) and Professor Przemysław Żurawski vel Grajewski, an advisor to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, agreed that an ongoing conflict in Ukraine shall be named as international, with the Russian Federation as an aggressor. Disputants also shared a view of the substantial contribution of the Western sanctions against Kremlin as a (geo)political instrument of pressure on the Russian authorities, however, represented a different standpoint regarding the attitude of the two US administrations (Barack Obama's and Donald Trump's) towards the resolution of the conflict.

Next sessions held during the first day of symposium were dedicated to the issues of illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation (joined, for instance, by Refat Chubaruv, a Ukrainian politician and leader of the Crimean Tatar national movement in Ukraine and worldwide); the military consequences of the armed conflict in Donbas (with the presence of Mykhailo Koval, an Ukrainian general); and social consequences of the Revolution of Dignity (discussed by, among others, Professor Aleksandra Hnatiuk and Professor Yaroslav Hrytsak).

Moreover, it has to be mentioned that in parallel to the panel discussions, a special poster session was organised within the framework of the conference. Posters were related, *inter alia*, to the issues of: the transitional justice perspective of reintegration of Donbas into Ukraine (D. Tomasz Lachowski, University of Łódź), the Ukrainian Radical Right Nationalist Movement in post-Maidan Ukraine (Craig Proctor, University of Glasgow) or the question of Russian Neo-Imperialism affecting the Ukrainian sovereignty (Dr Ostap Kushnir, Łazarski University in Warsaw).

The second day of the conference commenced with the panel devoted to the issues of justice and politics of memory at the time of transformation. Invited experts, including Professor Serhii Plokhii of Harvard University; Dr Igor Lyubashenko of SWPS University in Warsaw and Andriy Kohut, the Director of the State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine, expressed their attitude to the current shape of the politics of memory and a post-Maidan transitional justice toolbox implemented by the Ukrainian authorities.

Thereafter, the symposium deliberations moved to the issue of the possible new post-Maidan identity of the contemporary Ukrainian nation, addressed by Oksana Zabuzhko (a renowned Ukrainian writer), Professor Andrzej Szeptycki (University of Warsaw), Professor Mykola Riabchuk (Institute of Political and Nationalities' Studies in Kyiv) and Taras Voznyak (the National Lviv Gallery).

The last panel of symposium gathered scholars and journalists working in the field of propaganda and information warfare (a notion of hybrid warfare). Artem Bidenko, a representative of State in Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine, described the Ukrainian efforts in overcoming the Kremlin-backed disinformation. Bidenko's co-panellists, *inter alia*, Professor Taras Kuzio (the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta)

and Dr Yevhen Mahda (the Executive Director of the Center of Social Relations in Kyiv) affirmed the undertaken endeavours by the Ukrainian authorities, however emphasized that Ukraine is continuously losing the information warfare with Kremlin on the battlefield located somewhere between Western capitals.

Last but not least, the *3R Project* hosted Ahktem Seitblayev and Ivanna Diadura, authors of the movie “Cyborgs: Heroes Never Die”. It is a story of the Ukrainian soldiers of regular troops and military volunteers, who defended the Donetsk airport before the joined Russian, pro-Russian and mercenary troops for almost four months (from September 2014 till January 2015).

To conclude, *3R: Revolution, War and Their Consequences* was an extraordinary multilayer event, combining the academic reflection with the practical experience concerning the last Ukrainian revolution – Revolution of Dignity – and its direct outcomes. Principal investigators of the 3R Project ensured all gathered participants of the forthcoming three-volume book titled “Three Revolutions: Between Mobilization and Change”, currently being edited for publication, based on the *3R Project* studies.

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