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### Publication Date

2010

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Reforming the Nation: Law and Land in Post-Soviet Ukraine

by

Monica Elizabeth Eppinger

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Laura Nader, Chair  
Professor Paul Rabinow  
Professor Alexei Yurchak  
Professor Robert Cooter

Fall 2010



Abstract

Reforming the Nation: Law and Land in Post-Soviet Ukraine

by

Monica Elizabeth Eppinger

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Laura Nader, Chair

This dissertation investigates law and land reform in post-Soviet Ukraine, focusing on the period after passage of the 2001 Land Code privatizing agricultural land ownership. The line of inquiry follows how legal reorganization of physical space – namely, the creation of national territory and private property -- reconfigures the social and affects performance of the self in contemporary Ukraine. This inquiry is situated in investigation of speech acts, place, and practice. These, in turn, lend insight into interrelationships between subjectivity, sovereignty, and power. I analyze law, commonly thought of as a genre of “performative utterance,” as an emergent frame of performance in a context defined by rupture. The principal field sites in which I conducted this fieldwork are Parliament, decollectivized collective farms, and urban properties.

In tracing the effects of land privatization, I look at an antecedent social form, the collective farm, and find practices adhering to several subsequent social forms arising in its wake: confiscation, provision, and the sovereign; recollectivization and the corporation; self-sufficiency and the family; roaming and the commons. In my analysis of shelter, urban spaces provide the setting for performances of self and sociability. After exploring a Soviet form of friendship, the informal *kollektiv*, I describe links between its post-Soviet eclipse and certain changed background structures like the state and its legal guarantees, private property, and new experiences of time. In addition to property, I propose several settings for performance of different forms of the self, including: the present as a shelter for the past, and the synthetic future as a shelter for speech acts neither performative nor parasitic, but still creative of a discursive space for a democratic polity.

I investigate ways that law and other discursive practices in post-Soviet Ukraine mark boundaries and produce spaces of inclusion and exclusion. The Soviet Union was defined, in part, by common spaces. This dissertation investigates what happened to forms of the social and the self when those common spaces fragmented.

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## Preface

This dissertation reflects experience and fieldwork in Ukraine at several different times and under different auspices.

I first lived in Ukraine from February 1995 to June 1997 working in the United States Embassy as a U.S. diplomat. Ukraine had only become an independent state in December 1991. Most state institutions in foreign affairs were at very formative stages; many institutions of multi-party governance were as well. Ukrainians themselves still seemed generally stunned at the unexpected emergence of an independent polity. It was an exciting time. For the first nine months, I worked in the Consular Section adjudicating travel permission requests. For the rest of my time, fifteen months, I worked in the Political Section, where my primary responsibility was to act as Embassy liaison to the Ukrainian parliament (*Rada*). At my level, the job is for the most part journalistic. One has a portfolio of institutions and issues to follow and on which to write cables reporting developments back to Washington. I was fortunate. The year that I was the *Rada* liaison, the Ukrainian parliament drafted and passed Ukraine's post-Soviet Constitution, and it was my job to become acquainted with parliamentarians, to find out what they were thinking, to understand their choices and omissions.

I chose Ukraine for several reasons. The first was that, the situation in Ukraine seemed very unsettled. It was not clear whether Ukrainians would opt for integration with structures and institutions connecting countries outside of the former Soviet space (from free markets, NATO, the WTO, to educational exchanges), structures usually referred to as "Western" in tacit acknowledgement of going patterns of hegemony; or whether Ukrainians would choose would turn inward and refuse connections outside of their borders; or, stay tightly integrated with Russia, its neighbor to the East whose capital, Moscow, had long governed Ukraine's territory, both under the Soviet Union and beforehand in the Russian empire. Of all the former Soviet states outside of the Baltic countries, Ukraine seemed most like the "swing state." Would the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, reconstitute? That was what was at stake in Ukraine. The second reason, related to the first, was that working in a U.S. Embassy in Ukraine seemed more likely to make a marginal impact on important trajectories than serving at a U.S. Embassy in a country more settled on a track, like Italy or Singapore. Finally, I had trained in Russian language since middle school and anthropology in college, hoping to become a diplomat and work on ameliorating Cold War tensions. The Cold War had ended, leaving in its place an open question. I wanted to investigate, and to play a positive role if I could. I repeat this catalogue of tropes and categories here without much reflection, as an honest representation of the straight-forwardness with which I undertook my analysis then. The most critical thinking applied by that diplomat, making that decision, could be summarized in this: I did not presume I had the knowledge or the right to indicate which way Ukrainians should decide; I went committed not to reform, but to an effort to understand and to report.

What I found was an open-ended place, really funky, full of surprises, warmth, intelligence, and good humor. I was hooked. I also found lots of U.S. personnel, a few U.S. government employees of USAID and scores of other private citizens, working on lucrative contracts for USAID, who were in Ukraine precisely to reform it. My joke at the Embassy was that, if one wanted to be the smart kid in the room, in response to any question, raise your hand and answer either “Markets” or “Democracy.” Those two were presented as the panacea for all that ailed Ukraine. That, too, fascinated me. It was my first immersion into the culture of American lawyers (and economists). I wondered if the emperor had any clothes.

I traveled back to Ukraine a couple of times after my tour of duty ended, once in transit during a work trip to Central Asia and once for a two-week vacation, in 1998. When I left the diplomatic corps in 2001, I left to take up a dual degree in law and anthropology, to follow what happened in Ukraine after it took the path of markets and democracy and to investigate more fundamentally, does the emperor have any clothes? My fieldwork started with three years of legal education at Yale Law School.

My fieldwork continued in Ukraine. My second period of relatively long-term residence in Ukraine was a six-week stay, from late May to early July 2002, nine months after the new Land Code passed the parliament privatizing land ownership for the first time since the Soviet Union dissolved. Finally, after some training in anthropology at U.C. Berkeley, I returned to Ukraine for fifteen months of fieldwork from September 2006 – December 2007.

That summarizes the periods of residence and inquiry that inform this work. In the course of my last fifteen years’ engagement with Ukraine, the ambient language of its capital city has slid from Russian to Ukrainian (eroding but not displacing the city’s indigenous *surzhik*, a creole which mixes the two). The official designation of the city, transliterated into English, has also switched from the Russian Kiev to the Ukrainian Kyiv. I use both spellings in this dissertation to indicate time, linguistic milieu, or mindset in which an event or conceptualization took place; to mark with some precision the frequency with which identity codes switch in Ukraine these days; and to give the reader lived experience of some amount of the messiness and play involved in emergence and creation of a new place through, in part, speech acts. Regarding human subjects, with only a few exceptions at the express permission of those quoted, I have used pseudonyms throughout.





## Acknowledgements

This dissertation, a product of discourse, exists thanks to several collective formations, *kollektiv*, that have been instrumental in its formation.

I wish gratefully to acknowledge those organizations that provided financial support for this project. The Olin Program in Law and Social Science of Yale Law School, the Yale Agrarian Studies Program, the Yale European Studies Program, and U.C. Berkeley Program in Eurasian and Eastern European Studies (BPS) contributed summer research grants. These grants prove the rule: every little bit helps. The U.S. Department of Education, through a FLAS (Foreign Languages and Area Studies) fellowship, funded one year of coursework at Berkeley. The National Science Foundation Program in Law and Social Science and the Fulbright-Hayes Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant supported fourteen months of fieldwork in Ukraine. May the fields of scholarly endeavor they support someday be at least as well-funded as the University of California, Berkeley undergraduate football team.

Several other formal *kollektiv* have had a hand. Long ago, not forgotten: I wish to acknowledge the camaraderie and professionalism of members of my first *kollektiv* in Kiev, my Department of State colleagues, the first who knew me as “the daughter of the *Rada*,” Eric Rubin, Eric Green, Bob Patterson, Jim Schumaker, Andrey Bobrov, Volodymyr Pasichnyk, Victoria Sloan, Natalie Jaresko; and those who offered help afterwards specifically with this research, Carlos Pascual, Steve Pifer, Jon Elkind, and William Miller. Their collegiality, openness, and enthusiasm for difficult projects is clearly contagious.

My ability to conduct this research was fundamentally enabled by those who gave me the means to bridge the linguistic gaps with Ukrainians and supported my hopes, even during the most coldly uncommunicative days of the Cold War, that it would someday be possible to transcend divides to mutual benefit and co-construction: Larry Lonard, Faith Adams, Donald Singleton, Svetlana Evdokimova, Vladimir Golstein, Viktor Ponomarenko.

In Kyiv, two labor *kollektiv* proved exemplary of the form, providing the infrastructure and interest in my project necessary to see me through. The team at the Fulbright Office in Ukraine, including Myron Stachiw, Inna Barysh, and a whole host of luminaries, and the resourceful and intrepid team at CNFA led by Lina Dotsenko (and previously Nikolai Gordychuk), were generous with networks, contacts, and ideas, as well as supplying everything from workspace to help finding physicians when I needed medical care. A fieldworker needs a home-away-from-home, and these two *kollektiv* opened their doors to me and made themselves mine. *Shchiro dyakuyu*.

Among my informal *kollektiv*, several have offered indispensable forms of support, as the Russian idiom goes, both *material'no i moral'no*, material and moral. It is no small matter to leave a thriving professional life mid-career to take up a dual degree. In some respects, leaving professional life to become a graduate student resembled one of Erving

Goffman's experiments in intersubjectivity: how does stepping into a different frame affect how others relate to one, how they hear or do not hear, how they speak or do not speak, how they evince respect, ease, and friendliness or disrespect, discomfort, and social distance? I wish to thank those who stood by me in the years of chosen poverty that constitute an apparently indispensable part of the graduate student experience in the United States, starting with those who took me in and gave me lodging: Andrei Bobrov, Masha Yovanovych, Alexandra Teitz, Sarah Sievers, the Cooksey family, Lisa Sherman, Elizabeth Colson, Judith Justice, Maria Bobrova, Janice and Alex Stalcup, and Margarita Bobrova. Jenny Heim gave me shelter and great good cheer for the final three months of this project, and helped prepare me for this research by giving me thirty previous years' experience in the wealth of friendship.

Others showed kindness that evokes the gratitude that only, perhaps, the financially or logistically strapped may understand. Mary and Alex Nemerov, for housing my earthly goods in their New Haven basement during my two years of anthropology coursework in Berkeley. Chris Kutz and Jessica Riskin, for noticing my stir-craziness and loaning me their car for a semester. Oleksandr Yelyashkevych, for the not-insignificant gesture of helping me move to third-floor walk-up in the heat of a steamy Connecticut August.

Three sets of people stand out for special mention in Ukraine. The first are those who inspire. Semyon Gluzman, psychiatrist and reluctant sage. Oleksandr Yelyashkevych, parliamentarian and teller of uncomfortable truths. Sergei Kiselyov, journalist and much-missed seer. Serhiy Mirniy, Chernobyl' liquidator and comic playwright. The good humor and creativity with which they take up care of the self, including the collective self, rouses my own; their courage gives me fresh energy. I extend to them my respect, thanks for their work, and thanks for their interest in mine.

The second set are all of those who allowed me to observe, query, and delve into their public and private selves. To all of you, whose identities are protected by pseudonyms herein but whose lives are etched in my memory, my sincere thanks.

The last is, of course, my informal *kollektiv*. Bobrov, Petrenko, Rita, Sveta, and the rest of my home crew. They gave me something to describe that is not easily flattened into two dimensions, paper and ink. They are part of my life and are written through this work. Margarita Bobrova, *tseluyu*.

Taking up this project entailed the normal disruption and sacrifice; perhaps at mid-life I felt it more keenly than I would have at a younger age. I did it because I wanted to think seriously, in particular about rupture and how to go on, two qualities that seemed inherent in the Ukrainian experience after the end of the Soviet Union. Specializing in law provided an intellectual domain and a field of practice that seemed particularly salient to this kind of context in our time. I took up this project because I wanted to learn, but even at that, I was surprised with how much I did learn. My mentors at Yale Law School cultivated a marvelously stimulating milieu. I particularly thank Bob Ellickson and Carol Rose, professors whose work in property, on the nexus between the material and the social, particularly resonated with the approach I was cultivating; Eduardo Penalver, who

reminded me that land has memory; Susan Rose-Ackerman, whose thoughtful engagement with honesty and trust in former Socialist spaces of Central Europe catalyzed thought in unexpected ways; Jim Whitman, whose rigor in comparative method is worthy training for an anthropologist anywhere, and Alex Stone-Sweet, my fellow social scientist, whose common interests provided space for thought and writing; and John Langbein, who provided a fruitful model of how comparative consciousness can inform seemingly unrelated projects. I wish to acknowledge the support of Dan Kahan for independent work I undertook in law and culture. I also want to thank Bob Cooter, at the University of California Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law, for his long and lively interest in anthropology of law and for his support for this project. In the Yale Anthropology Department, Joe Errington's seminar in language and power nourished thought, and I am truly grateful for the warm welcome and support from my undergraduate advisers in anthropology at Yale, William Kelly and Helen Siu. I thank my Conflicts-of-Laws professor Annelise Riles, anthropologist of law who braves both disciplines with analytical rigor and bracing vigor. I particularly thank Harold Koh, who together with Hope Metcalf and Jonathan Freiman provided a productive outlet for shaping the post-9/11 national security state.

For intellectual companionship, I thank Oleksandr Merezhko, Vsevolod Rechytskiy, Myroslava Antonovych, Serhiy Mirniy, Orysia Kulik, and Faith Hillis, for wonderful walks and talks around Kyiv. Several *kollektiv* at U.C. Berkeley provided milieux for thought, including Alexei Yurchak's post-Socialism *kollektiv* (especially Alex Beliaev); my cohort in anthropology, especially Angie Heo, Meg Stalcup, Nicholas Langlitz, Carlo Carduff, Cindy Huang; the Institute for Slavic, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies (ISEES) and BPS, led by the dauntless Yuri Slezkine and Ned Walker; and the Anthropology of Contemporary Research Collaboratory (ARC), for early and powerful experiments in bringing collective methods to bear on intellectual labor. For sustenance in Berkeley, I thank my *kollektiv* of Nader femmes, Laura Bathhurst, Liza Grandia, and Rachael Stryker in particular; and the *kollektiv* of Dundes grrrlz, Jenny Michael, Lisa Sherman, and Judith Bishop, for helping me keep it together.

The Berkeley Department of Anthropology is a case of stars in a constellation. I was fortunate, mostly, to be illuminated rather than burned. I thank Aihwa Ong and Bill Hanks for their tuition. Bill Hanks' seminar in linguistic anthropology was one of those magic experiences that opens a new world. As comfortable as a well-formed discursive structure like linguistic anthropology can be, the emergent, spontaneous, malformed, or dead-end discursive space has its own charm and salience for my areas of interest. Alexei Yurchak is one of the most successful teachers of the ineffable I have had the fortune to meet. His seminar in post-Socialism spoke a world I knew and loved; his seminar in Performance and Performativity spoke an intellectual world into being for me. Finally, Paul Rabinow: mentor and co-laborer. Though Rabinow does not give directions, when I got to the field, I found lines of inquiry Rabinow-shaped.

To Laura Nader, I express wonder. How can a person have such a strong sense of right and wrong, such energy for work, such passion for justice, such clear-sightedness and synthetic thinking, and, at the same time, lead with such light touch and so determinedly

leave others to form their inner voice? Professor Nader was the adviser to this dissertation and navigator of my graduate project. She covered my back, every single time; she never failed, with a recommendation, a word of advice, or a well-placed warning or correction. She is a workhorse, a dynamo; her undergraduate classes are packed, her publications, relentless. For me, Professor Nader is a model of patriotism, scholarly leadership, and care. I thank her for all of that, and more.

Finally, my family, affines and sanguines. Walt Menninger, in addition to material and moral support, offered encouragement and enthusiasm as a reader. I thank him. My sisters, mensches all, deserve acknowledgment for their various generous contributions. Damaris Cooksey, for sharing her home and family with me (and Jerry Cooksey, for sharing his expertise in farming), over my second summer. Stephanie Eppinger, for acting as my business manager and address of record during my fourteen months in Ukraine and the awkward transitions before and after. And Priscilla, who provided what every dissertation-writer most wants for: a discerning, discreet, eager readership. Priscilla urged on every new chapter and helped me through nearly every challenge of the writing stage in our daily phone conversation as I puffed home up the precipitous hill behind U.C. Berkeley. Finally, my parents. How can one capture the contributions of parents in mere words? Paul and Sybil Eppinger have showed unflagging enthusiasm for my decisions, my project, and my personhood. I live in a world shaped for the better by their energy, emotional stability, and dedication to a wider good. They have my love and respect.

Anthropology as a discipline is committed to an open-ended mode of inquiry. The opposite of a catechism, it depends on fieldwork to generate questions as well as answers. David Menninger left northern California to accompany me on open-ended inquiry to gritty New Haven, unknown Ukraine, and points beyond. He catalyzes thought and action merely with his willingness to be present. His aesthetic sensibilities, sensitivity and kindness to others, and warmth have fed and sheltered my project and personhood. To him, my open-ended thanks.

## Introduction

The line of inquiry in this dissertation follows how legal reorganization of physical space – namely, the creation of national territory and private property -- reconfigures the social and affects performance of the self in post-Soviet Ukraine. This inquiry emanates from the intersection of speech acts, territory, and practice. These, in turn, lend insight into the production and interrelationships of subjectivity, sovereignty, and power.<sup>1</sup>

“Performative speech acts,” where, in speaking a person does not describe reality but rather creates it,<sup>2</sup> provide a starting point. The performative speech acts of three key dates shape the rupture and emergence at issue in this dissertation: December 8, 1991; June 28, 1996; and October 25, 2001. Each is the date of passage of a law reframing the relationship between people and land on the territory of an emergent political entity, Ukraine. The first marked the secession of Ukraine from the Soviet Union, setting an international boundary dividing its territory from that ruled from a capital in Moscow.<sup>3</sup> The second dawned<sup>4</sup> with the parliament in Kiev passing a framework document constituting an independent Ukraine, a polity to cover the territory of the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>5</sup> The last rang with fistfights on the floor of the parliament as a ferociously contentious Ukrainian parliament passed a comprehensive Land Code that conferred private property ownership on rural residents (which was one key piece of the implementing legislation required to realize the social and political framework laid out in the 1996 Constitution.)<sup>6</sup>

By Austin’s definition, to be felicitous (that is, successful in creating social reality), a performative speech act must be fully and sincerely carried out according to recognized convention by an authorized speaker. For example, a would-be bride or

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<sup>1</sup> For anthropological inquiry starting from speech acts, territory, and practice to interrelationships of sovereignty, and power, see UGO MATTEI AND LAURA NADER, *PLUNDER: WHEN THE RULE OF LAW IS ILLEGAL* (2008).

<sup>2</sup> JOHN L. AUSTIN, *HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS* 6–7, 12 (1962 [1955]).

<sup>3</sup> On December 8, 1991, the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed the Belavezha Accords which declared the Soviet Union dissolved. Treaty in Establishment of Commonwealth of Independent States, Dec. 8, 1991 *Vedomosti S'ezda Narodnykh Deputatov RSFSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR* [Bulletin of the Congress of the People's Deputies of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic and Supreme Council of the RSFSR] ND and VS RF, 1991, No. 51, art. 1798. The signing was based, on Ukraine’s part, on a December 1, 1991 referendum in which a majority of the population of Ukraine had voted for independence. See, *A Referendum on the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine* (December 1, 1991), which itself refers to an act of the Soviet Ukrainian parliament declaring the independence of Ukraine from the Soviet Union, *Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine* (August 24th, 1991). The unraveling of the Soviet Union was effectuated in final on December 25, 1991, when Soviet President Gorbachev resigned as the president of the USSR, declaring the office extinct. This act was acknowledged by the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of the Russian Soviet Republic in a special piece of legislation renaming the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic the “Russian Federation.” See *Law of the RSFSR #2094-I* (December 25, 1991). See also Michael Dobbs & Don Oberdorfer, *Gorbachev Resignation Ends Soviet Era; U.S. Recognizes Russia, Other Republics*, *Wash. Post*, Dec. 26, 1991, at A1.

<sup>4</sup> Literally: the Ukrainian parliament had stayed up all night to beat a threatened Presidential deadline for drafting a constitution, passing the last articles of the post-Soviet Constitution around 6 in the morning.

<sup>5</sup> CONSTITUTION OF UKRAINE, Chap. 12, art. 148.

<sup>6</sup> LAND CODE OF UKRAINE, 2001 Laws No. 2905-III (adopted Oct. 25, 2001, signed by President Kuchma Nov. 13, 2001, and published in *Uryadovy Kur'yer* [Government Courier, the official reporter of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine] Nov. 15, 2001).

groom in the United States who departs from the recognized convention of an Anglo-American wedding ceremony by refusing to utter “I do” may be considered to have declined the marriage contract and therefore not actually be married. Likewise, if a wedding ceremony is conducted not by an appropriate authority with unmarried participants who intend to wed each other and instead is conducted by an actor playing a priest in a play on a stage, the “bride” and “groom” are not married to each other at the end of the performance. An Austinian performative, by definition, depends on pre-existing social forms, convention and authority. Under conditions of rupture, though, pre-existence is exactly what is called into question. The felicitous execution of the performatives at issue in this dissertation, the legal acts of secession, constitution, and legislation, depends, then, on a remarkable continuity in legal forms and conventions that have carried over from Soviet times. Continuity is a strange and deceptive beast in a context like post-Soviet Ukraine, though, marked as it is by discursive rupture, disorientation, and misrecognition. Another necessary precondition for the production of an Austinian performative, authority (or an authorized speaker), by contrast, suffers in this context. Even narrow analysis of legal forms demands inquiry into the production of convention and authority in this kind of context. Subsequent chapters address both the controversial continuity of Soviet legal formalism and the blighted production of post-Soviet authority and legitimacy.

Other genres of speech and performance create reality too, of course, just not necessarily in the compressed temporality definitional of the performative. The creation of post-Soviet Ukrainians and Ukrainians is characterized by emergence over long duree. It is in observation and analysis of practice that we understand the production of subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

Spaces have boundaries, constituting both metaphorical and physical limits, at which discourses of inclusion and exclusion become gatekeepers. What I will argue is central here is that these are not only discourses *about* inclusion and exclusion; they are discourses that *produce* inclusion and exclusion. Scholarship on the late Soviet period offer valuable starting insights. Alexei Yurchak identified the production of *svoi*, meaning “us,” “ours,” or “those who belong to our circle,” as a central practice in late Socialism.<sup>7</sup> *Svoi* was an emergent quality, produced discursively, through the performance of certain speech genres; whether a person would end up as *svoi* or not in a concrete context was often unclear in advance, emerging only in the course of interaction.<sup>8</sup> Oleg Kharkhordin introduces the canonical figure of the *kollektiv* as the primary unit of Soviet social life.<sup>9</sup> A *kollektiv*, according to an influential Soviet educator, is not just a group of interacting individuals, but rather has three necessary characteristics: it is “a goal-oriented complex of persons”; they are “organized” (in contrast, say, to a spontaneous street mob oriented around the goal of breaking a window and looting a store); and together they “possess the organs of the *kollektiv*.”<sup>10</sup> (While the

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<sup>7</sup> ALEXEI YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, UNTIL IT WAS NO MORE: THE LAST SOVIET GENERATION 103 (2006).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 112.

<sup>9</sup> I will follow Kharkhordin’s persuasively argued practice of using the transliteration from Russian to distinguish “the collective” in the particular social form it took in Soviet practice from standard usage in English. OLEG KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA 77 (1999).

<sup>10</sup> ANTON MAKARENKO, *SOCHINENIE* [WORKS] VOL. 5 207 (1950-52), cited in OLEG KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA 91 (1999).

last characteristic in the definition is unhelpfully tautological, the dual nuance of the term “organ” as both governmental and biological indicates that the *kollektiv* is a sort of body.)<sup>11</sup> These three characteristics stayed at the core of the definition of *kollektiv* in Soviet dictionaries and social sciences. Writer Galina Andreeva added a fourth characteristic in a popular primer from the late 1970s, describing the *kollektiv* as a “specific type of interaction that fosters the development of an individual personality.”<sup>12</sup> In the language of Western social science, then, the *kollektiv* was both a unit of social structure and a genre of communicative practice. In Soviet parlance, the “*kollektiv*” initially referred to a labor or housing *kollektiv*, but came to be used to refer to groups in other contexts, one of which, the *informal kollektiv*, is the object of analysis in one chapter to follow. More generally, the topic of this dissertation in every chapter is the fate of the *kollektiv* and the discursive production of inclusion and exclusion reflected in the reconfiguration of one organizing point of material culture, physical space.

The two halves of the dissertation are organized around what Ukrainians found important about property: not land itself but the food and shelter working with it provides. The two halves are united by one intermediate chapter on Mobility. In the Food section, I look at one antecedent social form, the collective farm, and trace practices adhering to several particular social forms arising in its wake: confiscation, provision, and the sovereign; recollectivization and the corporation; self-sufficiency and the family; roaming and the commons. In the Food section, I take objects as the analytical starting point. Types of food provide the object for analysis: the ecological demands or predilections of different kinds of plant life, thriving on an extensive or intensive margin, requiring domesticity or wilderness, and the kinds of human labor required to grow, gather, or process food for distribution and consumption -- prefigure some forms of social organization. Put differently, different forms of social organization correspond to different forms of organization and scale of landholdings of different foodstuffs. In the Shelter section, urban spaces provide the setting for analysis of performances of self and sociability. Here, practices rather than objects provide the analytic starting point.

The Soviet Union was defined, in part, by common spaces. A national government united fifteen republics in a particular organization of space. An economic order depended on the creation of common holdings. These particular forms of sociality – *svoi*, *kollektiv* -- and versions of the self made possible through them emerged in common spaces. I wanted to know what happened to those forms of the social and the self when that common space fragmented. The following chapters share some of what I found.

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<sup>11</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 91 (1999).

<sup>12</sup> GALINA M. ANDREEVA, *SOTSIOL'NAIA PSYCHOLOGIIA [SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY]* 291 (1980), *cited in* OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 97 (1999).

FOOD



## Chapter 1 The Object of Decollectivization

The legal reform at issue in my research, the creation of private property in land, is focused on breaking up collective holdings and parceling them out among the resident farmers. Both advocates and opponents expected big changes in affect and practice from decollectivization.<sup>13</sup> Western proponents of decollectivization and Ukrainian adherents assumed that people wanted to own property, that people were eager to become owners, and that in short order they would reorganize their conduct around efficiency. Parallel expectations ran in the discourse of opponents of decollectivization. Old-school leftists, for example Communist and Socialist Party members of the Ukrainian parliament, also assumed that people would want to own property because they are mistaken about their own interests; individuals, they thought, would seize the opportunity to own property like a false bargain. They feared the dominant affect would be avarice and associated practices would be organized around exploitation. Neither of these positions captures the range of changes in affect and practice, nor the continuities, that are the domain of exploration of this dissertation. To start with, though, my curiosity was piqued at a response that followed no one's prediction: a widespread response of nostalgia accompanied by practices of flight.<sup>14</sup>

*I would go back in a minute.*

Serhiy was a young agricultural specialist whom I interviewed to get a better idea of the flight from private property so pronounced among the young. He was an excellent source: his father had a seat on the local committee in charge of parcel allotments on their collective farm when it disbanded and so could secure choice holdings for them; Serhiy had gone to an agricultural college, earning a degree in farm management; and he expressed a personal preference for living on the farm. Yet here he was, parked in a back office in the leaf city center of Kherson, selling seeds and fertilizer to farmers as manager of the southern regional operations of a Jordanian agricultural inputs supplier. It was hard to find someone of Serhiy's generation in most villages. Why had people abandoned their farmlands so soon after receiving private property rights in them? Why had he?

*No one organizes anything any more. Meaning? We used to have cinema, right there on our collective farm, every weekend the latest films; dances in the summer; soccer games between our boys and the neighboring farm. Now it's all fallen apart. The work; the play. Nothing is organized. You go there and you're on your own. And it's too much to organize everything yourself, without counterparts on other farms or help from the center. There's no one to send us films, much less seeds or*

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<sup>13</sup> JANINE R. WEDEL, *COLLISION AND COLLUSION : THE STRANGE CASE OF WESTERN AID TO EASTERN EUROPE* (Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Analysis of the flight from property of approximately 10 million of 17 million recipients follows in Chapter 6 on Mobility.

*tractors. Kids like me would be happy to go back to the village if someone were organizing things.*<sup>15</sup>

Serhiy's analysis of his own sentiment offers a striking reminder that land tenure regimes, and the forms of social organization and self-hood they underwrite, are not "natural." They take a lot of effort. This section is an exploration of that effort.

The collective for which some post-Soviet Ukrainians long was a particular form of social organization, entailing a particular material base, ethical structures, and practices of sociability and selfhood. In order to understand the complicated lived experience of decollectivization, including nostalgia, in this chapter I describe the object of the retrospective affect (and target of legal reforms), a form of social organization predicated on a common land holding called the "collective farm" [*kokholz*, in Soviet Russian]. *Kolkhoz* is a compound noun made of the first syllables of the adjective *kollektivnyi*, "collective," and the noun *khoziaistvo*, "economy" or "production." (Given its relationship to the noun *khoziain*, "master," the abstract noun *khoziastvo* may also carry the nuance of "mastery.") Members of a *kolkhoz* are *kolkhozniki*.<sup>16</sup> Under Soviet law there were two forms of farm organization, the "state farm" (the favored form, under state provision of inputs, wherein the farm was owned by the state and its resident farmers were wage-laborers) and the "collective farm" (wherein the farm was owned by the farmers who provided for their own subsistence and cash needs out of the farm proceeds). However, after independence Ukrainian law had collapsed both forms into only one, the "collective farm," and hence I will refer hereafter only to the "collective farm" as the object of decollectivization even though both types existed in pre-independence Soviet Ukraine.

The *kolkhoz*, product of a previous time, was the result of the vast, energy-consuming Soviet effort to end private property ownership and pool land into holdings for common use, as well as a complex of abandoned policies, unintended consequences, and purposeful adaptations. Each collective farm was a unique artifact, an accumulation of local actions, feelings, and relationships, but every collective farm across the country started from the same point: a national project of collectivization. In order to understand contemporary forms of experience under decollectivization, in this chapter I lay out with greater specificity, What was collectivization, and what were some of its results?

As a preliminary statement of the outlines of the problem, I characterize collectivization as a group of actions and practices aimed at the creation of group ownership and group operation of agricultural land in the Soviet Union. One set of actions and practices is the set of legal measures and policy decisions taken by the highest governmental authorities and political leaders. Without them, other actions and practices that constituted collectivization at republic, regional, and local levels would not have been set into motion. This second, derivative set in turn entailed two steps: first, taking farmland from private owners, either by eliciting voluntary contributions or by confiscation; and second, constituting an administrative unit called the "collective farm"

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Serhiy Haydyuk, Regional Manager, Agrimatko agricultural inputs supplier, (Kherson city, Kherson oblast', Ukraine, June 5, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> RUSSIAN-ENGLISH DICTIONARY (Russko-Angliyskiy Slovar') (O.S. Akhmanova, ed., 1973) (Entries for *kolkhoz*, *kollektivnyi*, *khoziaistvo*, *khoziain*, *kolkhoznik*).

around land to be used in common, as one operation, by local occupants. While I will refer to decisions of the first set, my analysis is concentrated on actions and practices of the second set. This chapter, then, focuses on two steps of collectivization: destruction, and construction. A manifestation of the modernist aspirations of the Soviet state and the bureaucratic nature of its operations, these steps resulted in a Soviet farming system – and now, for post-Soviet Ukrainians, an organization of the past -- with some generalizable features.

## COLLECTIVIZATION: DESTRUCTION

In this first section of this chapter, I will briefly review the logic that made collectivization the answer to a problem, some of the performative speech acts and dialogic practices that set it in motion, and milestones in the process itself, in order to give an idea of the results. This field is rich with tropes to be unpacked – policy, five-year plan, Central Committee, statistics, secret police – but I will focus on only one from the story that bears particular importance to Ukraine, the creation of a semantic and legal category, the “kulak.” Some of the material for this historical review is fresh post-*glasnost*’ work on documents in newly-opened archives of the Politburo, KGB, and other state organs; historians, scholars, and journalists, waiting to pounce, have produced shelves of books as materials documenting the period became available. By contrast, oral histories – at least in Ukraine – come from a trip to the village, from a close friend, from the intersection of reluctance and intimacy. To introduce the historical materials, I start with contemporary (oral) accounts. Later, I reflect on these accounts to make the connection between the historical and the now, between old documents and present experience, between Soviet policy and contemporary forms of subjectivity and sovereignty.

*Gruzenskoye*: “As soon as people smell death, they smell property.”

Gruzenskoye: the name sounds like an adjective. What does it mean? “Ummm, it’s how you describe someone or something that got stuck, like in a swamp.”<sup>17</sup> The name is not only metaphorical. The village had historically been surrounded by a bog, at least until post-War years when villagers cleaned out the peat to burn for warmth. I’m getting an introductory tour through the village of Gruzenskoye in September 2009. We came northeast three hours by electric train from Kyiv towards the border with Russia, strolled through the station town, and hiked five miles through woods to the village. We’re here for me to spend time in a decollectivized collective farm as well as to meet Suzanna’s beloved auntie and uncle (and difficult cousin). Her auntie and uncle are my parents’ age, mid-70s, and they are her great-aunt and great-uncle and her cousin is actually her third cousin or something like that. Anyway, we’re walking down the dirt road of the village, one of three branches of a Y that make up this village of 400-some (by village count). Each house is free-standing, wooden, surrounded by yard and in some cases a few fruit trees or a patch of flower garden. A high wooden plank fence separates

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Suzanna Zayetseva, (Kyiv office manager) and Valeriy Smolyar’ (Suzanna’s cousin, a farmer-resident of Gruzenskoye village in his mid-40s), September 18, 2009, in Gruzenskoye village, Ukraine.

family's front yard from public road, and split-rail fence separates the back yard from the family vegetable plot behind. These fences, marking zones of privacy or facilitating surveillance, prove significant.

It seems that most homes on this stretch of the Y are or were occupied by relatives of Suzanna. "We used to dance in the clover patch on the right there, remember Valeriy? And Uncle Kostya would sit on the bench across the road, right in front of his house, and watch us and laugh! What a lovely person!" Valeriy gives me a sidelong glance. "They sent Uncle Kostya to prison camp in Siberia in 1931 for stealing a pocketful of grain from the collective farm field. His kids were starving. One pocket! He got eight years," he spat. I ask what happened next, fearing further horrors might spill forth. "What could happen? He came back home." "They took him back?" [*Ego prinyali? They accepted him?*] "What choice did they have? He was the husband, the father, the brother. Where else could he go?" Valeriy muses before returning to his obsession, his bitter ire at the Soviet government. Somehow the ire is directed in part at Suzanna, his cousin, who doesn't share his unmitigated condemnation of the Soviet period. "Eight years for a pocket of grain! Starving kids! That! that! is the power we had, Monika," Valeriy spits again, sarcastically. "Power" [*vlast*] is short for the idiom "Soviet power," a Soviet-era synonym for "government," although in Valeriy's sentence the word slices with the sarcasm of the double meaning. Uncle Kostya's kids moved to the city a decade ago and the beautiful wooden house, empty, is leaning precariously.

Next house, across the road. Suzanna's babushka's (grandmother's) house. Another story. Suzanna starts with a laugh, "Remember, Valeriy, when we dropped the bucket down 20 meters to the bottom of the village well and couldn't retrieve it? We never 'fessed up. Oy, Monika, of course I didn't tell Babushka. She was a terror!" Valeriy laughs, but in response to my question about who lives in the house now, Suzanna continues.

*Babushka's husband – my dedushka, although I never knew him – was sent to Siberia for an offense against the collective farm. He was a leader in the collective farm at the beginning of it. Then he did something, was accused of some act of petty corruption, and sent to Siberia. He didn't get out until the war [World War II], when they released people to come back and fight. He was in Siberia something like 1932 onward.<sup>18</sup> He had his*

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<sup>18</sup> Post-Soviet analysis of the archives gives some insight into the conditions under which Suzanna's *dedushka* and other peasants like him relocated from Ukraine (and elsewhere) to camps run by the secret police. "With the beginning of industrialization and collectivization, the number of forced laborers of the Gulag grew tremendously. ... The rapid expansion of the Gulag required organization of supply to the forced laborers. Over time, procedures regarding their provisions took shape. This remarkable evolution can be seen in the provisioning of peasant 'relocations' (*spetspereselentsi*) who lived in OGPU [pre-KGB secret police] settlements and were forced to work in factories or on state farms. These were peasants who either refused or were not permitted to enter collective farms. The regimen in the settlements was not as harsh as in prison work camps. However, *spetspereselentsi* were still prisoners who had to follow orders and could not change jobs or residences. ... [D]ue to the Gulag's rapid growth and increasing importance, the Politburo raised supply norms for the prisoners, making them nearly equal to those of free workers. In May 1930 the Council of Labor and Defense and Trade (*Sovet Truda i Oborony*, STO) and Sovnarkom issued a decree to provide Gulag internees with the clothes and shoes needed to fulfill their work quotas and raise their [food] supply norms to [equal] free workers'." ELENA OSOKINA, OUR DAILY BREAD: SOCIALIST DISTRIBUTION AND THE ART OF SURVIVAL IN STALIN'S RUSSIA, 1927-1941 64 (Kate Transchel,

*own family there, in Siberia! Yes! More than one, actually. He married some tribal [indigenous Siberian] woman and had a whole passel of Asiatic-looking kids. Then they moved him and he had another, and so forth. He had several families in Siberia.*

*Anyway, when Dedushka came home, Babushka was several months pregnant. Some local man from the village. He was married and had his whole family already here in the village. Did people know whose baby it was? What are you talking about?! Of course people knew. The whole village knew that he was the father of the baby. But he stayed with his family? Yes. As far as I know, he and Babushka never met again in public or in private. Then out of nowhere Dedushka comes back from Siberia and finds Babushka pregnant. She sends the kid to live with the father. The kid grew up and eventually went to live in a town about 15 kilometers away and never came to see Babushka, his real mother. Ever. And Dedushka and Babushka, they're all the time trying to scrape up to send something to the families Dedushka left behind.*

This village, post-collective, still seems to live under the shadow of circling vultures. Babushka died three years ago. The house stands vacant because of a property dispute among the tangled descendants. "These days, with private property, as soon as people smell death, they smell property."

Suzanna takes a few more steps down the dirt road. The whiff of stigma rises: "See, Monika? That's the kind of family I come from." [*Vot, takoye semya.*] I had been friends with Suzanna for fourteen years, it was nearly eighteen years since Soviet power had slipped safely into the past, before she shared this part of the family history, grandparent generation sent to Siberia for this or that infraction. In fact, in my previous period of residence in Ukraine (1995-1997), I neither heard, nor heard of, any particular Ukrainian family that had suffered exile, imprisonment, or hunger during collectivization. I knew the outlines of the history but none of my acquaintance identified themselves with specifics. Telling this kind of story has only recently become part of post-Soviet Ukrainians' conversations. With Suzanna, resignation seems stronger, but shame does color her summary of the family history, or rather, her characterization of her family. I am overwhelmed with the upheaval and pain and dislocation those people suffered for such minor sins. A pocket of grain. A petty act of favoritism with collective farm property. Supremacy of Law [Верховенство права] (*Verkhovenstvo Prava*), is the translation for the English idiom, "the Rule of Law." Soviet Rule of Law was supremely strict indeed.

Other American friends treated to village tours when visiting friends or relatives in Eastern and Central Ukraine report the same experience. Previously, and even now absent a close contact, these stories had not come out. But by 2009, a tour of a village with a friend is studded with stories of property and family tragedy. They all start at collectivization.

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ed. & trans., Greta Bucher, trans., 2001) (abridged and edited version of ELENA OSOKINA, ZA FASADOM "STALINSKOGO IBOBILIIA": RASPREDELENIE I RYNOK V SNABZHENII NASELENIIA V GODY INDUSTRIALIZATSII 1927-1941 [BEHIND THE FAÇADE OF "STALIN'S": DIVISION AND MARKET IN THE EQUIPING OF THE POPULATION IN THE YEARS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION 1927-1941] (1999).

### *The Logic of Collective Action*

Both private and collective ownership of rural land in Ukraine were products of Moscow's legal imagination. Regarding private ownership, for most of recorded history, Ukrainian peasantry were not enserfed, meaning they had the right own land. The right, in principle, to own land had been translated into actual land ownership with the pre-Revolutionary, tsarist-era reforms that allotted land to working farmers (the so-called "Stolypin reforms" of 1907-09).

After the Revolution, collective ownership in agricultural land made sense to Soviet decision-makers for two main reasons. The first was the Marxist argument that private property is the source of bourgeois exploitation. For Marxists, private property ownership is "like original sin," in historian Timothy Snyder's phrase,<sup>19</sup> in that it alienates us from each other in allowing people to employ, and therefore exploit, each other for personal gain. Abolition of private property and establishment of collective ownership was an end in itself for the Soviet government.<sup>20</sup> Collective ownership was a matter of conviction for some individual Bolshevik leaders<sup>21</sup> and collectivization was an aspiration, a matter of what Yurchak calls the "internally persuasive discourse" that held for many Socialist subjects.<sup>22</sup> However, amidst a host of other emergencies during the Socialist Revolution, civil war, and state formation, action to eliminate private property was largely postponed.<sup>23</sup> Collectivization may have been an aspiration for state leaders and believing Socialists but it was not a matter of active policy for nearly a decade after the 1917 Revolution.

Anthropologist Gregory Bateson identifies two kinds of causality, conditional causality and precipitating causality.<sup>24</sup> In the case of collectivization of rural land in Ukraine, the beliefs of the Socialist leadership and the programmatic teleology of a Marxist Socialist state served as conditional cause, the oxygen in the room, awaiting a struck match, a precipitating cause. That came when Stalin called for collectivization of

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<sup>19</sup> Timothy Snyder, Professor of Modern Central European history at Yale University, Address at Yale University, New Haven, Conn. (November 8, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Decree of All-Russian Central Executive Committee, On Socialist Land Reform and on Measures Leading to Socialist Farming, *Sobr. Uzakon. i Rasporiazh. RKP RSFSR* No.4 It. 43 [Collection of the Laws and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] (1919), (reaffirming the government's intention to outlaw individual types of farming and set collective land use as the destination for law and policy in the Soviet Union), *reprinted in* IDEAS AND FORCES IN SOVIET LEGAL HISTORY 118 (Zigurds L. Zile ed., 1992).

<sup>21</sup> ALEXEI YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, UNTIL IT WAS NO MORE: THE LAST SOVIET GENERATION (2006).

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Otvét na zapros krest'ianina [Reply to a Peasant's Inquiry]*, in POLNOE SOBRANIE SOCHINENII [Complete Collection of Essays] 1953 (1919).

<sup>23</sup> The fledgling Soviet power authorized confiscation of crown and church estates for redistribution to local peasants in one of its first acts after the Revolution, but this act did not touch other kinds of private lands like smaller peasant holdings. Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets Decree On Land, *Sobr. Uzakon. i Rasporiazh. RKP* No. 1, It. 3 [Collection of the Laws and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government] (1917-1918), *reprinted in* IDEAS AND FORCES IN SOVIET LEGAL HISTORY 116-117 (Zigurds L. Zile ed., 1992).

<sup>24</sup> GREGORY BATESON, STEPS TO AN ECOLOGY OF MIND: COLLECTED ESSAYS IN ANTHROPOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY, EVOLUTION, AND EPISTEMOLOGY (1972).

agriculture as part of the campaign for rapid industrialization in 1927.<sup>25</sup> The government needed capital to invest in building industry. To obtain capital, in the absence of foreign direct investment or loans, the government fixed its hopes on securing export revenue from one of the country's main exported goods: grain. At the same time, the new industrial workplaces demanded workers, and workers demanded bread. Just as the authorities came to see an urban bread supply as indispensable to its plans for industrialization, bread prices in urban markets rose. Government grain purchases from private growers and grain traders came to be seen as inadequate to the needs of export and urban supply. Stalin became convinced that structural measures were imperative. Collectivization of rural land ownership was an organizational measure to consolidate grain production, previously fragmented among rural smallholders, into fewer, larger units. This, in turn would facilitate collection of grain from the countryside by state agents. To fund industrialization and feed urban workers, collectivization was a means to an end.<sup>26</sup>

### *Performance, Persuasion, and Performatives*

These priorities, in conjunction with a divergent set of factors and rationale,<sup>27</sup> prompted Stalin to take action on pre-existing Bolshevik convictions on the justice, and even eventual inevitability, of collective ownership. "Taking action" meant, first, to engage in speech acts to persuade the ruling collective at headquarters in Moscow of the necessity of a certain course. Those in favor of collectivization had to problematize its absence, and Stalin here took the role of problematizer-in-chief. There was "no way out" of the grain procurement crisis and its impact on industrialization but through a transition to collectivized agriculture, he persuaded delegates at the Fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927.<sup>28</sup> Delegates adopted a Party line as suggested by Stalin, and the ruling

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<sup>25</sup> Decree of USSR Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars "On Collective Farms," *Sobr. Zakon. i Rasporiazh. RKP SSSR* No. 15 It. 161 [Collection of Laws and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] (1927).

<sup>26</sup> Argument on the genesis of the decision to collectivize Soviet agriculture *summarized from* Lynne Viola, *Introduction, in WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 1-20* (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Reviewing newly opened Soviet archives, historians largely agree on three: a crisis in procurement of grain to feed the cities resulting from peasants' refusal to sell grain to state procurement agents; a war scare with Poland; and Stalin's push to defeat his last remaining rivals, the so-called rightist-deviation. On the grain crisis, *see, e.g.*, U.S.S.R. People's Commissar of Trade A.I. Mikoian, "On the Progress of Grain Procurements," Speech to Collegium of Trade Commissariat (October 3, 1927) (transcript available in Russian State Archive of the Economy, f. 5240, op. 9, d. 102, ll. 45-49), *reprinted in part in WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 27-29* (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005). *See also* R.W. DAVIES, *THE SOCIALIST OFFENSIVE: THE COLLECTIVIZATION OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE 1929-1930 39-40* (1980). For a summary of the historical evidence of both the Polish threat and the Soviet government's reaction to it, *see WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 9, 16-18* (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005). On Stalin's opportunism in using collectivization as a means to defeat political rivals, *see* V.P. Danilov, *Vvedenie, in TRAGEDIA V SOVETSKOJ DEREVNI: KOLLEKTIVIZATSIA I RAZKALUCHIVANIE. DOKUMENTY I MATERIALY, 1927-1939, 5 VOLS., VOL. I. 25* (V.P. Danilov et al. eds., 1999-2003).

<sup>28</sup> *XV S'ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b). Stenographicheskiy ochet.* [Fifteenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik). Stenographic Record.] 56 (1928), *cited in WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 386 n. 24* (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

government bodies responded accordingly, authorizing an official policy of collectivization.<sup>29</sup>

What did adoption of a Party line mean on the ground? In my view, it had three consequences that restructured the relationship between rural residents and the geographically remote state. First, it highlighted deficiencies of rural citizenship. Whereas previously, rural communities were allowed to form cooperatives and collective farms voluntarily, now, they were directed to do so. Rural denizens, however, did not make the connection between the Party directive and their own daily behavior or local forms of social organization. Despite exhortation at the top, only a meager 1.7% of peasant households had joined collective farms by June 1928.<sup>30</sup> Rural dwellers were not yet active participants in changes directed by Party and state; if defined by participation, they were not yet fully Sovietized citizens.

Second, pursuing this new Party line formalized Party advocacy and state production in the countryside. Party leaders decided to push local organizers – party and state employees, as well as local intelligentsia like teachers and doctors, as well as World War I and Red Army veterans, who formed the core of those who listened to the Party in the countryside -- hoping momentum would snowball. In addition, the Party made agricultural production, not just the social and class reorganization of the countryside, its business: for the first time, a five-year plan for agriculture was formulated and adopted in April 1929.<sup>31</sup>

Third, adoption of this Party line marked an end of voluntarism regarding rural citizens' responses to state plans. Shortly after the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1927, government bodies revised targets of peasant households to be collectivized by the end of the first five-year plan in 1934 to 85%.<sup>32</sup> This was a drastic increase in incorporation of households into collectives, from 1.7% of 1928 to 85% in 1934. To reach that target, heretofore voluntary contributions of land and membership in collectives would be insufficient. How would the state collect lands and collectivize peasants? That became the key framing question for Ukrainians in the countryside.

### *Internal Orientalism: an Early Soviet Exercise*

Once the Party abandoned voluntarism as the primary mechanism for forming collectives in the countryside, a primary organizing trope for the collectivization offensive became renewed focus on a Bol'shevik enemy, the “*kulak*.” Some detail about

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<sup>29</sup> Decree of USSR Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars “On Collective Farms,” *Sobr. Zakon. i Rasporiazh. RKP SSSR* No. 15 It. 161 [Collection of Laws and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] (1927)/

<sup>30</sup> This took place at the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Viola, *Introduction* to Chapter 3, *The Great Turn, 4 May 1929 – 15 November 1929*, in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 122 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Viola, *Introduction* to Chapter 3, *The Great Turn, 4 May 1929 – 15 November 1929*, in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 122 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>32</sup> In June 1929 the USSR Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) instructed the central planning agency, Gosplan, to prepare new plans by October setting a target the 85% target. R.W. DAVIES, *THE SOCIALIST OFFENSIVE: THE COLLECTIVIZATION OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE 1929-1930* 112, 147 (1980); KAK LOMALI NEP. 2, 8 STENOGRAMMI PLENUMOV TSK VKP(B), 1928-1929 [HOW NEP WAS BROKEN: STENOGRAPHIC RECORD OF PLENUMS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ALL-SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY], 5 VOLS., VOL. 5 (V.P. DANILOV ET AL. EDS., 2000).



the *kulak* is in order because this part of the campaign came to have particularly heavy consequences for residents of the Ukrainian republic, both for their formation as Soviet citizens and for identity, social structure, and daily life in post-Soviet Ukraine. The following will illustrate that many of the tragedies Suzanna related as we walked through Gruzenskoye had to do with Bolshevik treatment of kulaks.

The term “kulak” was not a product of Soviet, or even nineteenth century Marxist, discourse. The term appeared in Russian language by the thirteenth century. Even in its earliest attestations, “kulak” has two meanings: “fist” and “rich peasant.” Two possible derivations are proposed for “kulak.” One, from Indo-European \*kaud- meaning “strike,” would have its first meaning in Russian as “strike force,” proposing that the both meanings “fist” and “rich peasant” came thence. The other proposes the influence of Turkic (cf Turkish *qul*, “hand”) as the single origin of “fist” and “rich peasant.” In either case, the violent, metonymic association between “fist” and “rich peasant” is left to the imagination,<sup>33</sup> “Kulak” had always been a relative notion. The kulak was not identified by an absolute set of properties, unlike, say, a “landowner” (according to which by definition one must own land). The kulak was identified by having relatively more than a local norm. Bolshevik terminology added two more categories to the countryside: “bednyak,” the poor peasant, and “serednyak,” the middle peasant. By setting up a series, the new Bolshevik terms invited not only perception of the relative (e.g., wealth) but of the comparative (i.e., wealthier). While the kulaks had long been a specter of orthodox Bolsheviks’ imagination even before collectivization, the ancient term took on sinister valence in the new categories and the work they were made to do.

“Kulak” became a legal term, a group legal designation (an “estate,” *soslovie*),<sup>34</sup> in collectivization edicts. Here we see the importance of “kulak” being a relative rather than absolute term. If one were designated a kulak based on a particular property or behavior, like owning a pig or employing harvest labor, then one could divest of the property or stop the behavior, drop out of the kulak class, lose the designation, and evade further legal consequences. However, if designation as a “kulak” is not based on set parameters, the definition is slippery and “dropping out” of the kulak class is not a clearly demarcated process.

This is what happened across Ukraine: To be labeled a “kulak” had legal consequences. Initially, kulaks were singled out for economic isolation. This was articulated in measures like the 1927 decree that ordered “struggle against attempts of kulak elements to disguise their exploitative farms as pseudo-collective.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Terrence Wade, *RUSSIAN ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY* 101–02 (2002 (1996)), (entry for *кулак*, [*kulak*]).

<sup>34</sup> For explanation of *soslovie*, see Monica Eppinger, *Governing in the Vernacular: Eugen Ehrlich and Late Habsburg Ethnography*, in *LIVING LAW: RECONSIDERING EUGEN EHRLICH* (Marc Hertogh, ed. 2009) 21-48.

<sup>35</sup> Decree of USSR Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars “On Collective Farms,” *Sobr. Zakon. i Rasporiazh. RKP SSSR* [Collection of Laws and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] 1927, No. 15, It. 161.. Struggle against kulak elements’ attempts to disguise exploitative farms as collectives was to be accomplished by specific technical and organizational measures: (a) restricting privileged terms for the purchase of machinery to machine associations of “poor and middle-sized elements”; (b) not permitting “pseudo-cooperatives made up of closely related persons”; (c) increasing to ten the required minimum number of founders for associations established to acquire tractors and other complex machinery; and (d) excluding persons who do not enjoy electoral rights [which normally would exclude designated kulaks] from being members of

In these and similar calls to action, the Soviets invited practice of “internal orientalism.”<sup>36</sup> Instead of constructing a foreign “other,” a category geographically outside, in order to define an inside group or collective identity, in this instance, the “other” stood in the midst of the group. Urban elites trying to engineer revolution in the social order among a majority-rural population made one segment of rural dwellers into “an other” in order to galvanize neighbor against neighbor on behalf of those far-away elites. Where geography does play a role brings chills. There is some evidence to suggest that Stalin, Molotov, and a few other top Soviet leaders saw rural Ukraine as a heartland of kulaks.<sup>37</sup> Once the concept of “kulak” was developed and deployed, a new, ominous word entered the vocabulary: *raskulachivanie*, “dispersal of the kulak,” de-kulak-ization.<sup>38</sup>

I find myself working from a feeling of defensiveness as I write the upcoming sections. Acknowledgement of a famine itself and the attendant lethal statistics - quantities of grain confiscated; numbers of procurement agents dispatched; numbers of Ukrainians displaced, incarcerated, starved – are all matters of dispute and political import in contemporary Ukraine. Which figures one believes or repeats are taken as a political stand: against the Soviet project, for Ukrainian independence, against colonization by Moscow, for exoneration of Russian and Soviet leaders. I find myself practicing scholarly defensiveness, double-checking sources, over-specifying numerical ranges, over-citing alleged facts. This complex of affect and practice, too, are part of the discursive formation around the Famine in contemporary Ukraine.

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managing bodies or founders of a collective farm. Decree of USSR Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars “On Collective Farms,” *Sobr. Zakon. i Rasporiazh. RKP SSSR* [Collection of Laws and Orders of the Worker-Peasant Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] 1927, No. 15, It. 161.

<sup>36</sup>EDWARD W. SAID, *ORIENTALISM* (1978).

<sup>37</sup> State practice in food distribution during the years of rationing, 1931-35, for example, reinforced some people’s suspicions of the leadership’s anti-Ukrainian bias. Rationing set up a hierarchy of geographical location and enterprises within geographical location. From the beginning of rationing in 1931, geographical areas were provisioned according to four groups: special, first, second, and third. Called “lists of cities,” in reality they were groupings of enterprises and organizations. (Factories of the same city would be on different supply lists.) The special and first lists had priority, constituting only 40 percent of the total number of people on rations but receiving nearly 80 percent of all state supplies. The only special- or first-list enterprises in Ukraine were in the Donbass, the coal mining region in the southeast. Even after the period now designated as famine, rural areas received lower levels of food supply. Farmers and office workers in villages, primarily those employed on state farms, endured worse conditions than city residents. Most rural workers were on the third list of supply. ELENA OSOKINA, *OUR DAILY BREAD: SOCIALIST DISTRIBUTION AND THE ART OF SURVIVAL IN STALIN’S RUSSIA, 1927-1941* (Kate Transchel ed. & trans., Greta Bucher Trans., 2001) (abridged and edited version of Elena Osokina, *ZA FASADOM “STALINSKOGO IBOBILIIA”*: RASPREDELENIE I RYNOK V SNABZHENII NASELENIIA V GODY INDUSTRIALIZATSII 1927-1941 63–64 (1999). Even in these 1936-1939 years of “open trade,” the state trading agency, Narkomtorg, divided supplies among the republics proportionate to population; Ukraine got 20% of the total. Then supplies were distributed within republics and rural areas received less than towns. And “open trade” referred to modes of distribution and consumption. State procurement continued: “during the second half of the 1930s, the state took for itself the entire crop of beets and cotton; 94 percent of the grain; up to 70 percent of the potatoes; half the meat, lard, and eggs; and approximately 60 percent of the milk.” *Id.* at 150.

<sup>38</sup> Russian-English Dictionary (Russko-Angliiskiy Slovar’) (O.S. Akhmanova, ed., E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc. 1973) (entry for *raskulachivanie*).

*Kulaks, Collectives, and the Right to Exclude: Collectivization and the Mobilization of Violence*

Stalin advocated “economic measures” to limit the “the known growth of the kulak” as late as December 1927,<sup>39</sup> but by 1929 the secret police (OGPU) authorized local authorities to arrest “kulaks” and others suspected of speculating in grain.<sup>40</sup> This switch from biopolitical technologies taking a population as their object, to disciplinary technologies taking individuals’ bodies as their object, had profound consequences for Ukrainian villagers. The rather loose term of “kulak” came to be used to single out any rural resident who opposed collectivization.<sup>41</sup> Arrests and property seizures, as well as so-called self-dekulakization (rushed property sales, family division, and flight) brought *de facto* dekulakization to large swaths of the countryside even before the government declared an official campaign to do so.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of 1929, to reach the 85% target, the Party called for “wholesale” (*sploshnaia*) collectivization.<sup>43</sup> As a tandem measure, on January 30, 1930, the Politburo issued a top-secret decree asking 2500 party members from urban centers to go out to villages by February 20, 1930 and effect *dekulakizaton*.<sup>44</sup> The same decree chillingly

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<sup>39</sup> *XV S"ezd vsesoyuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b). Stenographicheskii ochet*. [Fifteenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik). Stenographic Record.] 60 (1928), cited in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1 : THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 386 note 22 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).] However, shortly thereafter he would authorize the OGPU to direct the arrest of all those engaged in grain speculation. [OGPU Directive to arrest private grain procurement agents and merchants, January 4, 1928 (Central Archive of the State Security Service of the Russian Federation f. 2, op. 6, d. 982, l. 99. Telegram.) reprinted in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1 : THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 45 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).] The next day, by Central Committee directive, Stalin imposed additional strict measures on local Party officials to spur grain collection and short-term measures to put the squeeze on peasants.

<sup>40</sup> By early November 1929, the OGPU reported arrests of 28,344 in the countryside during grain confiscation exercises. OGPU data on the number of those arrested during grain procurements, Tsentralniy Arkhiv FSB RF [Central Archives of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation], f. 2, op. 7, d. 42., l. 1. reprinted in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1 : THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 150 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>41</sup> Smearing recalcitrants or perceived opponents as “kulaks,” as a discrediting measure with legal consequences, took place not only in rural villages, but throughout the Party-state bureaucracy up to the highest levels. For example, in May 1931, with a poor harvest of winter-sown wheat looming, several of the most prominent experts on grain statistics, Mikhailovskii, Dubenetskii, and Obukhov, were accused of having assisted ousted statistician Groman in his “wrecking” work on harvest evaluations and of supporting the former “kulak” network of village statistics *rapporteurs*. The three were dismissed from their positions at the state planning agency, Gosplan, and expelled from the trade union. Groman was condemned to imprisonment in the “Menshevik Trial” of March 1931. DAVIES AND WHEATCROFT, *YEARS OF HUNGER*, 69-70.

<sup>42</sup> LYNNE VIOLA, *PEASANT REBELS UNDER STALIN: COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE CULTURE OF PEASANT RESISTANCE*, 79-81 (1996).

<sup>43</sup> “Wholesale” meant no less than 75% of a village. Decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party “On the Pace of Collectivization and State Assistance to Collective-Farm Construction,” January 5, 1930, KPSS V RESOLUTSIAKH I RESHENIYAKH S'EZDOV, KONFERENTSIYAKH, I PLENUMOV TSK, VOL. 5, 72-75 reprinted in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1 : THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 201 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Politburo decree “On Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak Farms in *Raions* of Wholesale Collectivization,” January 30, 1930. RGASPI (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archive of Social and Political History], f. 17, op. 162, d. 8, ll. 64-69 reprinted in

spelled out what was meant by “dekulakization”: the “liquidation” of kulaks as a class. Local agents were to confiscate kulak property and sort local kulaks into three categories: (I) those whom agents would summarily execute or incarcerate into concentration camps; (II) those whom agents would send into exile in remote areas of the U.S.S.R.; and (III) those whom agents would resettle within their home regions but exclude from the new collective farms. This last category could work on forest maintenance, on road-building projects, or in rural state enterprises but was to be excluded from the collective life of agricultural production.<sup>45</sup>

The decree authorized hiring 800 new secret police agents and endowed the secret police on the local level with extrajudicial punitive powers, including execution. It set minimum quotas for concentration camp incarceration and exile, per republic. Despite some latter-day allegations that collectivization and de-kulakization were exclusively attacks on Ukrainians from outside Ukraine, We should note that the state did not lack for volunteers from all the major Ukrainian cities. Normal white-collar and blue-collar workers – from Kharkiv, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kiev, Odessa – volunteered to go to villages and uproot or physically annihilate kulaks.

The concentration camp and exile quotas for Ukraine was two to six times higher than for all other republics, setting a goal of rounding up 15,000 Ukrainians for concentration camps and 30-35,000 for exile.<sup>46</sup> This was not merely an external visitation. This brings us back to the topic of “internal orientalism” and forces us to look more closely at its production. The mechanisms for liquidating kulaks should cure us of any Romanticism regarding local management of a commons, or presumptions about the warmth of face-to-face relations. The lists of specifically whom to send to concentration camps or to exile were to be drawn up on the local level by the newly collectivized farmers, *kolkhozniki*, and poor peasants, *bedniaki*. The assets and cash of those incarcerated would be confiscated (with personalty assumedly to be split among the local informants/survivors).<sup>47</sup>

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WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1 : THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 228-234 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>45</sup> Stalin explains this point further in contemporary articles and speeches. “In order to eliminate the kulaks as a class, a policy of restricting and eliminating individual sections of the kulaks is not enough. In order to eliminate the kulaks as a class, we must *break down* the resistance of this class in open fight and *deprive* it of the productive sources of its existence and development (the free use of land, means of production, leases, the right to hire labour, etc.). Therein consists the *turn* toward the policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class.” J. Stalin, “On the Policy of Eliminating the Kulaks as a Class,” *reprinted in* J. Stalin, *Building Collective Farms* (New York: Workers’ Library Publishers, 1931) 62-69 at 68.

<sup>46</sup> OGPU Order on Measures for the Liquidation of the Kulak as a Class, February 2, 1930, No. 44/21, GARF (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Government Archive of the Russian Federation] f. 9414, op. I., d. 1944, ll. 17-25. *reprinted in* WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 238-245 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Politburo Decree *On Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak Farms in Raions of Wholesale Collectivization*, January 30, 1930 (Russian Government Archive of Social and Political History f. 17, op. 162, d. 8, ll. 64-69) *reprinted in* WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1 : THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE 228-234 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005). When possible, kulaks of the younger generation were to be saved by setting them against older exiled family members by “the use of such methods as the gathering of newspaper subscriptions and literature, establishing libraries, setting up common canteens, and other cultural and general service measures. It is possible in certain cases to recruit specific groups of young people to perform jobs as a volunteer activity for local soviets, to support poor peasants, etc. ...” Politburo Decree *On Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak Farms in Raions of*

This method of purifying the body politic – naming the pollutant (kulaks), decentralizing surveillance and detection, and empowering locals to rid the body of the disease – bears some resemblance to earlier models of extending state-sponsored public health programs to rural populations. Even more closely, by taking the body politic as the object of its cleansing,<sup>48</sup> dekulakization presaged measures taken in the Party purges of the mid- and late-1930s.

Compared with the purges, however, several important differences mark the dekulakization of the collectivization drive as a much more lethal exercise. First, the purges acted to cleanse a small subsection of the population, the Communist Party, whereas dekulakization was meant to extend to 100% of the population of the territory outside cities and towns. Second, a purge exercise against an individual could have a negative or positive outcome. 76.4% of persons passed their purge exam, affirmed (at least temporarily) as possessing a revolutionary self.<sup>49</sup> Dekulakization, as a procedure, had only negative outcomes: there was no procedure for contesting it or stripping oneself of the kulak label, once it stuck. Third, the regularity and kind of reflection in the two exercises differed radically. The purges were conducted as public exercises of self-revelation and self-criticism accompanied by evaluation and correction by others. Only rarely do we find record of “self-dekulakization,” which was not a public ritual but rather a matter of weighing one’s odds against the good graces of fellow locals and then absenting oneself from the public gaze: going into hiding, taking flight. Finally, whereas the purges were a public ritual, run according to a fairly standardized format, procedures for “dekulakization” were not specified. Dekulakization was spontaneous and creative. It could range from rituals of public humiliation, to midnight arrest in secret, to on-the-spot execution.

With de-kulak-ization, *raskulachivanie*, to provide mechanisms for seizing private land and creating collective farms, the storm of collectivization struck in just two months, between January and March 1930. As of January 1, 1930, only 16% of farmland in Ukraine had been collectivized. By March 11, 1930, 64% had been.<sup>50</sup> By the end of 1930, some 377,000 families in Ukraine had been subject to some form of dekulakization.<sup>51</sup> The rural population did not take the violence lying down. In Ukraine, the secret police (the OGPU) reported more than one million acts of peasant resistance to collectivization in the first quarter of 1930.<sup>52</sup> Seeing reports of the thoroughness of collectivization violence, the Soviet leadership realized it had pushed too hard and brought on a moment of great vulnerability to the state. Stalin placed an article in Pravda calling a halt to collectivization.

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*Wholesale Collectivization*, January 30, 1930 (Russian Government Archive of Social and Political History f. 17, op. 162, d. 8, ll. 64-69) reprinted in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927-1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 228-234, 231 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>48</sup> For general discussion of the purges, see OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* (1999).

<sup>49</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 215 (1999).

<sup>50</sup> Timothy Snyder, Address at Yale University (November 8, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> *TRAGEDIA V SOVETSKOI DEREVNI: KOLLEKTIVIZATSIA I RAZKALUCHIVANIE. DOKUMENTY I MATERIALY, 1927-1939, 5 VOLS., VOL. 2, 746* (V.P. Danilov et al. eds., 1999–2003).

<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the feared “Polish front,” long-rumored aggressive designs from the U.S.S.R.’s western neighbor, blended with the Ukrainian “peasant front”: during this period. Timothy Snyder, address at Yale University (November 8, 2005).

Claiming it had succeeded so well that everyone needed a breather, Stalin reported in Pravda that the Party was “Dizzy with Success” and criticized local officials for “excesses.”<sup>53</sup> This article resonated deeply with a peasant population that had been kept in the dark about the Soviet leadership’s role in ordering collectivization. With the “Dizzy with Success” article, ironically, Stalin became the hero of the day among a peasantry who saw him as a protector from tyrannical local officials. The article was passed from hand to hand; peasants rode miles, and paid up to 15 rubles, to obtain a copy.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, for those left behind in the collectivized countryside after dekulakization, an ominous indicator of worse times to come went largely unnoticed: socialized farms, expected to provide a mere 12.7% of national grain needs under the 1929 plan, fell short even of that.<sup>55</sup>

*Urban Food, Rural Famine: Making Live, Letting Die*

Within two harvests after collectivization, 10% of the Ukrainian population (by conservative estimates) would be dead of starvation.<sup>56</sup> The initial outlook in the first harvest obscured that horror. The weather in 1930 had been unusually favorable to crop production, and fall 1930 yields were the best that Soviet Ukraine had ever enjoyed.<sup>57</sup> As People’s Commissar for Supply Mikoyan said in a fall 1931 speech to the Central Committee plenum, recalling the expectations of six months earlier, “We awaited the season of the grain collections with rainbow perspectives.”<sup>58</sup> That apparently reinforced unrealistic expectations for the gains from collectivization that Soviet and Party leaders were already predisposed to believe would result. In 1931, the weather was closer to normal and some of the consequences of the violence of collectivization on the local level were more noticeable. Fall 1931 crop yields fell dramatically, but Soviet authorities blamed neither weather nor collectivization, because they did not believe yields had actually fallen. They thought peasants had enjoyed a bountiful harvest and were hiding grain. Moscow continued to order aggressive confiscation of grain even though peasants did not then have a surplus. Starving children. A pocketful of grain. Eight years’ exile to a forced labor camp.

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<sup>53</sup> I.V. Stalin, *Dizzy with Success: Concerning Questions of the Collective Farm Movement*, PRAVDA, March 2, 1930, at 2.

<sup>54</sup> LYNNE VIOLA, *BEST SONS OF THE FATHERLAND: WORKERS IN THE VANGUARD OF SOVIET COLLECTIVIZATION* 123, 125 (1986).

<sup>55</sup> R.W. DAVIES, *THE SOCIALIST OFFENSIVE: THE COLLECTIVIZATION OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE 1929-1930* 104-05 (1980).

<sup>56</sup> Total registered deaths (which likely reflects under-reporting) for 1931-33 in Ukraine is 3,091,809, reflected against an estimated 1930 population of 28,710,628. See R.W. Davies’ latest calculation at [www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger](http://www.soviet-archives-research.co.uk/hunger). Davies and Wheatcroft, adjusting for statistical birth and death rates, estimate 1.54 million “excess deaths,” i.e. people who died from famine who would not otherwise have died at that time, in 1932-1933 alone in Ukraine. R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 415 (2004).

<sup>57</sup> For a historical and statistical comparison of the 1931 harvest with the better harvest of 1930, see *The 1931 Grain Harvest*, in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 48-78 (2004).

<sup>58</sup> A. I. Mikoyan speech to Central Committee plenum, October 31, 1931, in RGASPI (Rossiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial’no-politicheskoi Istorii, [Russian Government Archive of Social-Political History]) f. 17, op. 3, l. 484, 60, quoted in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 69 (2004).

By spring 1931, some peasants were already too hungry to work in the fields. By summer, peasants were committing suicide to avoid starvation and the OGPU<sup>59</sup> started sending scattered reports of cannibalism in the countryside back to Moscow.<sup>60</sup> Stalin's men made the Ukrainian Communist Party renew grain targets for 1933.<sup>61</sup> State documents indicate that the actor envisioned by Party leaders switched from urban (confiscator) to rural (surrenderer) as the mechanism for getting grain to cities: The 1933 grain-supply decree switched the mechanism of rural-to-urban grain transfer from "confiscation" (*zagotovka*) to "compulsory delivery" (*obyazatel'naya postavka*) of an in-kind grain tax.<sup>62</sup> This was not a merely semantic difference. Besides transferring responsibility for compliance to farmers, for rural producers the difference between the two is that the latter theoretically created incentives for peasants to produce more grain because they owed a stated amount, established before the crop was sown, instead of a percentage of whatever harvest resulted. As the implementing decree read, "all surpluses of grain delivery after the fulfillment of the obligations to relinquish grain to the state shall remain at the complete disposal of the kolkhozy, collective farmers, and individual peasants themselves."<sup>63</sup> The lethal bottom line persisted, however: grain was confiscated to an extent that resulted in peasants starving to death. Moscow's penalty against the largely-urban Party membership for not enforcing state grain surrender quotas amounted, at the least, to "political death" in the form of expulsion from the Party. (In 1933, 120,000 people were removed from the Ukrainian Communist Party.)<sup>64</sup> This does not include those, like kulaks, who were already "disenfranchised," i.e., stripped of legal rights because of pre-revolutionary socio-economic status.

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<sup>59</sup> The OGPU is the Russian acronym for the "Unified State Political Administration," an organization in which were combined two predecessors, the CheKA (secret police, whose full name translates as the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage) and the GPU (State Political Administration)).

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., "Cases of Cannibalism in Uman district, Kiev Region," Special Communication of Deputy Head of the Ukrainian GPU, January 28, 1932, TsDAGOU [Central Government Archive of Civil Organizations [Unities] of Ukraine] f. 1, op. 20, l. 6274, 32; Kiev GPU Report March 12, 1932 in *HOLON, 1932-33* (Kiev, 1990) 433-437; GPU Report from Dnipropetrovsk, March 5, 1932, in *HOLON, 1932-33* (Kiev, 1990) 409; Report of Information and Sowing Group of Ukrainian Party Central Committee, April 1, 1933, in *HOLON, 1932-33* (Kiev, 1990) 480-481; all discussed in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 421-424 (2004).

<sup>61</sup> "On the Compulsory Delivery of Grain to the State by Kolkhozy and Individual Households," joint decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), January 19, 1933, *Sobranie Zakonov* [Collection of Laws], 1933, art. 25, cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 250 (2004).

<sup>62</sup> "On the Compulsory Delivery of Grain to the State by Kolkhozy and Individual Households," joint decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), January 19, 1933, *Sobranie Zakonov* [Collection of Laws], 1933, art. 25, cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 250 (2004).

<sup>63</sup> "On the Compulsory Delivery of Grain to the State by Kolkhozy and Individual Households," joint decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), January 19, 1933, *Sobranie Zakonov* [Collection of Laws], 1933, art. 25, cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 250 (2004).

<sup>64</sup> DAVIES AND WHEATCROFT, *YEARS OF HUNGER*, 250.

While thousands of kulaks had been killed during collectivization and tens of thousands more exiled to Siberia or Central Asia, the worst losses came from actual famine. The weather was not ideal, but farming conditions were merely suboptimal, not disastrous. Death came from state confiscation of the harvest, from the dislocation of hundreds of thousands during the growing season, and from the loss of managerial expertise and the installation of chaos from dekulakization. Economist Amartya Sen identifies two cases of death from famine: food availability decline [FAD], meaning a net loss of foodstuffs available to a consumer, and food entitlement decline [FED], wherein food exists but hungry people's access to it has declined to starvation levels.<sup>65</sup> Ukrainian villagers in 1931-33 suffered from food availability decline, as harvests faltered because of the loss of managerial expertise and personpower with dekulakization and because of the violence and interruptions of collectivization. Even more drastically, however, Ukrainian villagers died from food entitlement decline, from policy decisions in Moscow to strip the Ukrainian countryside of grain to feed urban workers. Of a Soviet Ukrainian population of 33 million, 3.5 million starved to death between 1932 and 1933.

Property became a mark of stigma and a setting of struggle. Kulaks had been the rural property owners, either of real property or of relatively more personalty, before collectivization; property marked them as targets. Then, *kolkhozy* themselves became the setting for struggles between local residents and state agents and Party volunteers come to confiscate grain. Suzanna had said, These days, as soon as people smell death, they smell property. I wondered if, back at the formation of the collective farms, as soon as people smelled property, they smelled death.

#### *Latecomers: Collectivizing Western Ukraine*

The foregoing retells the post-*glasnost*' narrative of collectivization and famine in Soviet Ukraine. It bears remembering that all of those deaths, some 3.5 million, took place in a Ukraine that at the time was two-thirds the size the country is now. (At present, Ukraine's territory is roughly the size of France.) When Western Ukraine was added to the Soviet Union with World War II, collectivization policy there followed a strikingly similar steps as in the East, even with the death of Stalin in 1956.

*Nobody would register us. (Nam nekuda pripisivat'sya.)*

That was the explanation I got from the beekeeper in the Western Ukrainian city of Lviv for why he spoke Russian so fluently. His grandfather had owned a large parcel of land. When Soviet authorities confiscated it in 1949, it was split into three collective farms. None of them would "register" his family, stigmatized as kulaks; none would accept them as members of the new collective farms. Who exactly was in charge of registering? The local authorities? "No," he told me. "*MVD* [Ministry of Internal Affairs]. *Komitet Gosudarstvenoi Bezopasnosti* [KGB]." He was a newborn. His parents and grandparents were desperate. Where could you exist when noplac would allow you to attach your registration, no one would allow you to list them as a place of residence in your passport and documents? "You know they had those mines then, in Kazakhstan? They were looking for people willing to go into the mines." That's where he spent his childhood. Fearing the lingering equivalence of "Ukrainian" with "kulak," his parents had not even told him of his ethnicity or geographic origins, nor spoken with him in Ukrainian, until he was older. That was his explanation for his fluency in Russian,

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<sup>65</sup> AMARTYA SEN, *POVERTY AND FAMINES: AN ESSAY ON ENTITLEMENT AND DEPRIVATION* (1981).



despite his family's native tongue and his own nativity in the geographic heartland of Ukrainian. Russian was the native language of Moscow and the common tongue of peoples thrown together in far-flung corners of its empire.

Land confiscation, stigmatization, dislocation, constituted forms of violence during the collectivization of Western Ukraine. Importantly, though, Western Ukrainians suffered neither mass grain confiscation nor wholesale famine, assimilated as the region was in the 1950s when other regions were already supplying grains and the decimation of the War had reduced demand.

*Return to Stuck: The Spatial Organization of Discourse and the Location of Tragedy*

Grandmama summer, *baba leto*. That's the Russian idiom for Indian summer. In the Gruzenskoye village of 2009, the air is warm, the village quietly winding down the day, mild late afternoon sunlight making the village seem, to our city-squeezed senses, idyllic. As we continue our walk down the road, despite Suzanna's displaced shame with the misdeeds of that generation of her family, I am struck not by how unusually badly they behaved but with how normal their experience is in the village. In my tour of the village, Suzanna and Valeriy overflow with stories. Every house, practically, had one member or another sent off during collectivization, either to Siberian exile or Siberian prison. Many of them returned. Others were "sent off" to prison, disappeared, relatives thinking to somewhere in Siberia but me thinking, given the numbers of extermination ordered for Ukrainian villages in 1932, simply shot in the woods surrounding the village. We had set off for Suzanna to give me a tour of the village; I expected to be shown defunct property of the former collective farm – deserted cattleshed, repurposed administration office – as well as still-functioning local clinic, school, orchard, and other village landmarks. Instead, as we traverse her family's branch of the Y, a story of collectivization disappearances emerges from each homeplace. Down the street. Another house. Another disappeared family member. So pervasive the pattern, Suzanna seems unconscious that she is taking me on a tour of a ghost town.

I can understand that. Suzanna never lived here when all the atrocities were going on. She wasn't even born yet, and she grew up far from here. Gruzenskoye was just the magical summer village where her family came to visit the beloved aunt and uncle, take swims in the local brook and hunt berries and mushrooms, through summer vacations before returning back to the provincial city where they lived.

And yet, even though she was no eyewitness to the starvation, the thefts, the favoritism, the exiles, and the war, as she walks down the street, she talks of all of these things as if from a first-person perspective. Many did come back from exile. Many did survive the war. Stories from the 1970s and 1980s are family folklore: "Remember when Dyadya Kostya would sit there and watch us?" "Remember Valeriy when we dropped the bucket?" Stories of feral kittens, childhood pouts, games, garden work, the stuff of happy childhood summer memories. By contrast, stories from the 1930s are epochal: grand tragedies, strict justice, separations and heartache, family messes surviving to the present day from those dislocations and the coping strategies. Each picturesque wooden house seems to shelter another epic tragedy.

This is part of the experience of property in post-Soviet Ukraine. Walking and remembering. The ghosts of the twentieth century whisper their stories. One can not get acquainted with the village without making their acquaintance too. Richard Bauman,

adopting Goffman's terms from performance analysis, describes different ways that a performance of verbal art is *keyed*.<sup>66</sup> In this village, public and private are criss-crossed. Family folklore is located in public spaces -- at the roadside, in clover patches, at the village well, in the woods -- whereas each house keys recitation of a memory shared village-wide. It is striking that the most private space for a person in the village, the setting of intimate life, the home, cues a shared, general memory. Houses are a mnemonic of stories whose tragedy lies in the wrenching of a loved one or intimate out of the family to be cast far away, among strangers. Stories of the 1930s, all stories of dislocation. Another house, another story. Family property -- homes -- are mnemonic of the visitation of public policy like the angel of death calling at each gateway, culling.

Myron, my historical preservationist friend in Kyiv, has shared with his Ukrainian colleagues an American article on the importance of ruins. In Suzanna's village, the houses stand. What's in ruins is the continuity of male lineage in a given place.

Families in Ukrainian villages are patrilineal. The Russian idiom for "wedding" is gender-specific. A man "enwifes himself" [*zhenitsya*]. A woman "exits following a husband" [*viidyet za muzh*]. When Tyotyа Dyusya married Dyadyа Lyonya, her experience was typical of Ukrainian village tradition: The bride exits her family's compound, her family's courtyard, in many cases her home village, following her husband to his family's. It is the husband who stays put. Or at least it was until the 1930s.

The tsarist draft, in those areas of Ukraine that had historically been part of the Russian empire, also caused gendered dislocation, of course, but it does not enter into the oral performance of memory in post-Soviet Ukrainian villages. Hatred of the tsarist draft may be preserved in song or lie in the origin of gestures, but it is not close to the surface of rehearsed and recited memory. Most recitation in this village revolves around stability, continuity -- or, at least, the protagonists of village stories are members of rooted families. But those stand as background, stark contrast to the stories of the 1930s, stories of dislocation whose uprootedness falls preponderantly on adult males.

After collectivization, the War [World War II]. Most of the territory of present-day Ukraine fell to Nazi forces in the first three months of the War (meaning, here, the phase of World War II opened with the German invasion of the Soviet Union). The residents of Ukraine suffered the terrors of genocidal occupation for four years and were liberated by a Soviet Army composed in part of "Ukrainians" -- meaning the mix of ethnic Russians, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Tartars, Ukrainians, and others from pre-War Soviet Ukraine. The liberating Soviet Army fought against a retreating Nazi army and small bands of Ukrainian-nationalist partisans, the latter fighting either against a return of Stalinism, with Hitler, or for a politically independent Ukraine. While that legacy, of Ukrainians fighting on both sides of the front, has haunted Ukraine in various visitations since the War, only one side has been valorized in official memory; the other, the specter of native-Ukrainian Nazi sympathizers or anti-Soviets, remained a target of Stalin's mass retribution and a figure of Soviet historiography through the post-War decades.

Public performance of war memory is pervasive in post-Soviet Ukraine. These stories are cued not by place as much as by time, by commemorative days: Soviet Victory Day, the day the war started (June 22, 1941), Red Army Day (February 23). On

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<sup>66</sup> Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance*, AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST 77:2 290, 295 (1975), citing ERVING GOFFMAN, *FRAME ANALYSIS: AN ESSAY ON THE ORGANIZATION OF EXPERIENCE* (1974).

Victory Day every May, veterans go to their village square for a commemoration of their valor, to receive laurels for their heroism and sacrifice. The march West, driving the Germans out - BAH! My friend Pavel's grandfather was eventually forbidden by his doctor from going to the village elementary school on Victory Day: reciting his war stories to the children, the muscle memory, their rapt attention, got him too excited and raised his blood pressure too high. He still went, of course.

From the War era, the stories of the women, elderly, and kids left behind in occupied Ukraine are usually not a part of public performance. What happened to them, how they survived – why they survived, instead of dieing with their boots on fighting the Nazi invaders to their last drop of blood – is a silent subtext of public performance. I see wartime reminiscences by elderly Russian women on t.v. with some regularity, heroes who survived the siege of Leningrad or kept the factories of Moscow humming despite German bombardment. Not so here in Nazi-occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian village keeps its women's secrets.

The difference in war experience between Russia and Ukraine may also be reflected in friendship. Kharkhordin, in his notes on Soviet friendship, proposes, "Another test of friendship, which of course fused friends for life, was common experience of trench warfare in the Second World War. Anecdotal data suggest that [later] threats of [Soviet] state violence hardly affected wartime friendships, but a historical study would be useful."<sup>67</sup> Ukrainians who served as soldiers may share some common bonds of friendship and those who served in the Soviet Army found the milieu that forged these intense bonds valorized in Soviet historiography. For other Ukrainians, soldiers who served in groupings opposing the Soviet forces and civilians who survived occupation through a variety of means including incarceration in Nazi camps, forced labor in German *osterbeiter* factories, staying local and keeping quiet, or outright complicity and cooperation, the official retrospective treatment of the formative milieu of their friendships has been hostile or ambivalent at best. These various experiences of wartime, the subsequent treatment in public discourses of a particular war experience as heroism or guilty secret, and the post-war fate friendships forged in experience later stigmatized or valorized, remains to be studied. In any case, the Ukrainian experience of the War and its friendships is much more problematic and ambivalent than that pronounced by Kharkhordin for Russia.

After all that, the 1930s and the War -- fifteen years, an entire generation's childhood -- the stagnation [*zastoi*], the staying put of Late Socialism, is a relief. Stagnation is the setting of late Soviet childhood memory, families intact and up to their usual squabbles. In retrospective discourse, economists and policy commentators castigate this period of post-War and late-Soviet stability as prelude to the end of the Soviet Union; but the lived experience of stagnation in the village was, on the whole, relief, founding normalcy, recultivating male rootedness after nearly two decades of dislocation. There is an affect of relaxation associated with memory of post-war village life.

The structure of that normalcy was set through some of the largest experiments with restructuring agricultural production in human history. A sense of tragedy associated with that earlier collectivization period is new, post-Soviet. This new interpretation, or at least the public airing of it, is the main source of discord between

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<sup>67</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 319, text in n. 115 (1999).

Suzanna and her cousin Valeriy. Suzanna remembers Soviet power as the setting of a happy, stable childhood. Valeriy is “difficult” in part because he seems constantly irritated by the earlier Soviet exercises. He insists on reminding Suzanna of them. Valeriy’s experience of a Nietzschean *ressentiment*<sup>68</sup> and insistence on a public airing of it -- and my presence as a foreign, Western, audience to the discord over how to tell the Soviet story -- are all very recent phenomena.

This public airing and the characterization of these events as tragedy, both post-Soviet phenomena, are linked. Discussion of starvation in connection with collectivization was previously not a matter of public, or authoritative, discourse. Soviet authorities took care early on to control the course of the narrative about collectivization and conditions in the countryside. The Politburo restricted foreign correspondents who had previously traveled and reported on conditions in the countryside in February 1933<sup>69</sup> after Stalin wrote to his deputies Molotov and Kaganovich complaining that American Moscow correspondents reporting on famine in a region of Russia “cooked up calumnies.”<sup>70</sup> At the same time, the Soviet media presented evidence and narrative that the standard of living in the U.S.S.R. was continuously growing as a result of successes of socialist transformation.<sup>71</sup> Alternative narratives were marginalized and kept from public consumption.<sup>72</sup> The famine was never mentioned in the press apart from the rare after-the-fact mention of “food difficulties.”

Complaining about hunger or famine in the countryside was so stigmatized that local authorities practiced self-censorship in communiqués, even top-secret communiqués with higher-ups. A letter to the U.S.S.R. Communist Party Central Committee dated March 3, 1933, from the First Party Secretary from Dnipropetrovsk oblast’ in Central Ukraine, M.M. Khataevich, shows the extent of this self-censorship.

It was not merely that until the middle of February no one paid any attention to all these cases and facts of swelling from hunger and deaths from hunger. It was considered anti-party and reprehensible to react to this. I have just personally established that the secretary of the Verkhnetokmak village party cell Comrade Zinchenko (of Bol’shetokmak district) swelled up from hunger and did not

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<sup>68</sup> FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in BASIC WRITINGS OF NIETZSCHE (Walter Kaufman, ed. and trans., 1968 [1887]).

<sup>69</sup> Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI, Russian Government Archive of Social-Political History) fond 17 [Tsentral’nyi komitet KPSS (Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union)]/13/916, in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* xiii (2004).

<sup>70</sup> R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* (2004).

<sup>71</sup> R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, xiii–xiv *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* (2004).

<sup>72</sup> For example, in 1933, an attempt to indicate that real wages had declined was suppressed. R.W. DAVIES, *THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF SOVIET RUSSIA, VOL. 3: THE SOVIET ECONOMY IN TURMOIL, 1929-1930* 307–09, 356–57.

inform the district party committee about this, fearing he might be accused of ‘opportunism.’<sup>73</sup>

The 1930s restrictions on the Soviet press from making any mention of the famine and self-censorship among Party and state leaders reflects Stalin’s own practice in his private communications. The only occasion uncovered so far of his using the term “famine” was in a 1932 letter to the Politburo referring to an aberration caused by insufficient implementation of government policy by locals.<sup>74</sup> Contemporary evidence suggests that, while Party leaders in the Ukrainian republic and regional and local government officials scrambled to find food to send to the worst famine-struck areas,<sup>75</sup> the top Soviet leadership in Moscow doubted that there were problems with adequate grain supply to the countryside or blamed any hunger on sabotage by “kulaks” hoarding grain in order to re-sell it to desperate peasants.<sup>76</sup>

At the height of the campaign for renewed grain confiscations, ordered at the end of November 1932 and setting the stage for the worst of the 1933 famine, the Politburo approved a resolution saying:

In a considerable number of districts in Ukraine and the North Caucasus, counter-revolutionary elements – kulaks, former officers, Petlyurians, supporters of the Kuban’ *Rada* [the Ukrainian word for Council] and others – were able to penetrate the *kolkhozy* as chairmen or influential members of the board, or as bookkeepers and storekeepers, and as brigade leaders at the threshers, and were able to penetrate into the village soviets, land agencies, and cooperatives. They ... try to organize a counter-revolutionary movement, the sabotage of the grain collections, and the sabotage of the village.

The Politburo directed local officials to root out the saboteurs “by means of arrest, imprisonment in a concentration camp for a long period; do not refrain from VMN [*vyshaya mera nakazaniya*, “highest measure of punishment,” i.e., the death penalty] for the most malicious.” Local party members who demonstrated insufficient effectiveness in procuring grain from fellow villagers, “saboteurs of the grain collections with a party card in their hands,” were to be sentenced to 5-

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from M.M. Khataevich to U.S.S.R. Communist Party Central Committee, published in *Holod 1932-1933* 401-406 (1990). *Excerpt reprinted in* R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, xiii–xiv THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933 205 (2004).

<sup>74</sup> Referring to the 1931 harvest, Stalin wrote that in Ukraine, as a result of poor organization of grain collection by state agents, “a number of districts with good harvests were in a state of ruin and famine.” STALIN I KAGANOVICH: PEREPISKA, 1931-1936 GG. (Khvelnyuck, O.V. et al, eds., 2001) at 279, cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933 xv (2004).

<sup>75</sup> R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933 424–426 (2004).

<sup>76</sup> Rossiskiy Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial’no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI, Russian Government Archive of Social-Political History) fond 17 [Tsentral’nyi Komitet KPSS (Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR)]/3/911, 42, cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933 190–91 (2004).

10 years in a concentration camp or, as judged necessary by local agents and volunteers, to be executed by shooting.<sup>77</sup>

Others who linked local starvation to republic-wide death-rates, and who extrapolated their own witness of hunger to theorize that there might be mass starvation beyond a local problem – in short, those who conceptualized what they saw as “famine” – practiced self-censorship. For example, the secret police (GPU) reported one doctor in the countryside in Russia saying, “we do not write memoranda about death from famine because we are afraid that we doctors may be accused of some kind of wrecking.”<sup>78</sup> Rural medical practitioners such as this doctor understood that their words carried weight – that they enjoyed certain forms of authority in biopolitical discourse – enough weight to be dangerous to the doctors themselves if they contradicted the official word in publication, even in limited-circulation memos. Were doctors’ opinions more threatening than others? One must wonder if words from medical authorities caused particular worry to a state increasingly concerned with a biopolitics containing its own interior contradictions. The observations of a doctor, concerned with health, contradicted the judgment of a collective political leadership concerned with food security. Health versus food supply; these discourses differ not only in origin, but in differing sources of biopolitical authority, diagnoses of problems, and calls for action.

Local secret police and political officials did report extensively on the famine, in great detail, in reports of limited distribution within state and Party organs in regional centers. Summaries of these reports were regularly forwarded to Moscow. These reports were not shared between regions, however, and none were made available to the general public. Some archival records of the top policy-making bodies were opened to Soviet historians in the Khrushchev years (after Stalin’s death in 1956), but the information in those archives was limited to records of policy decisions. Reports of conditions on the ground remained locked in closed archives until 1990, when the Ukrainian Soviet Republic published the first volume of documents from formerly-closed archives.<sup>79</sup>

The first foreign scholarship documenting the experience of hunger at the beginning of collectivization and calling it “famine,” Robert Conquest’s 1986 study, Harvest of Sorrow,<sup>80</sup> was based primarily on contemporary émigré memoirs and reports by foreign diplomats. A generation of graduate students at U.S. and U.K. history departments, inspired by Conquest’s work, had already taken up debate about the famine when the opening of Soviet archives at the end of *glasnost*, and then the end of the

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<sup>77</sup> Rossiskiy Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial’no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI, Russian Government Archive of Social-Political History) fond 17 [Tsentral’nyi Komitet KPSS (Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR)]/3/911, 42, cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 190–91 (2004).

Unlike most Politburo resolutions, this one was printed and intended for wide circulation within the Party. R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* 191 n. 224 (2004).

<sup>78</sup> V.P. Danilov, R. Manning, and L. Viola, eds., *TRAGEDIYA SOVETSKOI DEREVNI: KOLLEKTIVIZATSIYA I RASKULACHIVANIE: DOKUMENTY I MATERIALY V 5 TOMAKH, 1927-1939, VOL. III, KONETS 1930-1933* 661(2001), cited in R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* xv (2004).

<sup>79</sup> R.W. DAVIES AND STEPHEN G. WHEATCROFT, xiv *THE YEARS OF HUNGER: SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1931-1933* (2004).

<sup>80</sup> ROBERT CONQUEST, *THE HARVEST OF SORROW: SOVIET COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE TERROR-FAMINE* (1986).

Soviet Union itself, led to a landslide of new studies synthesizing, recounting, and analyzing the voluminous documentation of suffering. As it turns out, the KGB and local State and Party officials kept detailed records. Once opened to scholars, they ended up in a discursive landslide, carrying past narratives of progress, sacrifice, “enemies of the people,” Party leadership, and Ukrainian backwardness with them.

Until *glasnost*, the effect of this discursive formation, of these patterns of production of knowledge and circulation of discourse, meant that those families with forebears in the Ukrainian countryside, as well as now-elderly rural survivors, experienced the hunger and dislocation from dekulakization and collectivization as personal or family failings. Suzanna’s experience of stigma and shame are emblematic of three generations of Ukrainians’ memory. Bitterness or a sense of injustice, like Valeriy’s, circulated locally if at all, until Ukrainian independence. The characterization of these experiences as “tragedy” is particularly a post-Soviet ascription of affect.

The tragedies that Suzanna recites in the warm September afternoon, house after house, come out of experiments with remaking the cultivation of plant and animal life and the cultivation of new forms of human life and the human. This intrusion of the state and state policy into forms of life involve *bios*, life, and the *polis*, political organization. The 1930s initiated the Soviet biopolitical in Ukrainian villages and the gendered dislocations it brought.

#### COLLECTIVIZATION: BUILDING COLLECTIVE LIFE

The foregoing might make one call into question my suggestion that there is nostalgia for the collective. This should be clear: I never heard any person express nostalgia for the period known as “collectivization,” that brief time during which land was seized and thousands were arrested, shot, or sent into exile. However, analyzing “collectivization” from a social science perspective, recall that I proposed that the process of creating collective farms entailed two steps, destruction and construction. Destruction lasted for about five years, construction for five decades. This section gives some insight into the latter.

#### *Agricultural Science and Its Publics*

The famine in Ukraine was the tragic end of the phase of setting up collective farms as administrative units, the establishment of a system of deliberate commons in agriculture within a modern state. That was not the end of the process of collectivization, however. Unlike a large percentage of the first inhabitants, collective farms survived as an organizational feature of rural life. They were to operate as unit, not merely as an agglomeration of lands held in group ownership. And so, after its violent inception, another extraordinary movement is associated with Soviet collectivization: building a modern collective life. Some of this looks familiar to Western eyes, like the establishment of a Soviet apparatus for agricultural research and dissemination of its information to the countryside. This was the equivalent to a vast “extension service,” working on seed and soil improvement, irrigation questions, and other topics that would be right at home in an American extension service. However, some of the perceived challenges, methods for meeting them, and specific projects of Soviet agricultural science administration would have been beyond the imagination of their rural American

contemporaries. Many involved the cultivation of individual practices, that, multiplied on a mass scale, helped to found the new way of life of the collective.

A prime example of the latter is, simply, literacy. For a new government intent on building an modern industrial economy supported by and incorporating breakthroughs in applied science, the Soviet power inherited a disastrously illiterate population. Literacy had been on the rise in the last decades of tsarist rule before the World War and the Civil War. Although some contemporary observers had concluded that because literacy “gained significance for peasants only in a community environment,” inhabitants of a geographically remote farmstead or village, were likely to be illiterate,<sup>81</sup> statistics suggest otherwise. Literacy rose from 21% of the population of the Russian Empire in 1897, according to the census of that year,<sup>82</sup> to an estimated 40% on the eve of World War I.<sup>83</sup> One scholar sees a direct link between land rights and literacy: any rise among rural dwellers, writes Jeffrey Brooks, may be attributed in part to the increased importance of documents and deeds after emancipation of the serfs in 1861, institution of locally-elected *zemstvos* in 1864, and land reforms of Kiselev (1837-1858) and Stolypin (1906 and 1910).<sup>84</sup>

Still, segments of the population varied widely in their literacy, and at the time of the Soviet Revolution, the rural population still lagged. For example, youth aged 12-16 in European Russia enjoyed literacy rates of 71% for boys and 52% for girls according to the 1920 Soviet census.<sup>85</sup> Literacy among the rural population, on the other hand, only rose from an estimated 6% in the 1860s to roughly 25% in the 1910s.<sup>86</sup> After the revolution in 1917, the Soviet government made illiteracy an object of combat.

To combat rural illiteracy, in the 1920s the Soviet government supported a new institution, the “cottage reading room” (*izba-chital'nia*), where illiterates would be taught to read and political and scientific information would be disseminated. The rural reading room was also meant to provide a venue for lectures by local authorities, on medical, agricultural, or technical matters;<sup>87</sup> it was, in the words of one villager, a “*muzhitskii universitet*” [peasant university].<sup>88</sup> These early efforts enlisted the help of local teachers and other interested rural literates. Until the “army” of twelve million illiterates (as of 1925/26) was taught to read, one pamphlet urged the rural volunteers, it could not help

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<sup>81</sup> JEFFREY BROOKS, *WHEN RUSSIA LEARNED TO READ: LITERACY AND POPULAR LITERATURE, 1861-1917* 8 (1985), (citing V.S. Dokunin, *O vlianii zakona 14 iyunia 1910*, *UCHITEL' I SHKOLA*, nos. 11-12 (1914)).

<sup>82</sup> *Id.* at 4 (citing VSEOBSHCHAIA PEREPIS' NASELENIIA ROSSISSKOI IMPERII 1897 G. OBSHCIII SVOD PO IMPERII REZUL'TATOV RAZRABOTKI DANNYKH, VOL. I 39 (1905)).

<sup>83</sup> *Id.* at 4 (citing A.G. Rashin, *Grammotnost' i narodnoe obrazovanie [sic] v Rossii v XIX ii nachale [sic] XX v*, *ISTORICHESKIE ZAPISKI*, vol. 37 50 (1951)).

<sup>84</sup> On the rise in literacy during this period and its relationship to rural reforms, see BROOKS, *WHEN RUSSIA LEARNED TO READ*.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.* at 4 (citing D. ERDE, *NEGRAMMOTNOST' I BOR'BA S NEI* 193 (1926); TSENTRALNOYE STATISTICHESKOYE UPRAVLENIE, *GRAMMONTNOST' V ROSSII* 10-11, 29 (1922)).

<sup>86</sup> *Id.* at 4, (citing A.G. RASHIN, *NASELENIE ROSSII ZA 100 LET* 295 (1956)).

<sup>87</sup> 3 *RABOTNIK PROSVESHCHENIIA [WORKER OF ENLIGHTENMENT]* 22-23 (1926), cited in CHARLES E. CLARK, *UPROOTING OTHERNESS: THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN IN NEP-ERA RUSSIA* 121 (2000).

<sup>88</sup> *KREST' IANSKAIA GAZETA [PEASANT NEWSPAPER]*, June 29, 1924, at 5, cited in CHARLES E. CLARK, *UPROOTING OTHERNESS: THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN IN NEP-ERA RUSSIA* 121 (2000).



develop the agricultural economy because the troops could not read the latest scientific literature on farming methods.<sup>89</sup>

In a book not published before his death, Michel Foucault focused on *le souci de soi*, “care of the self.” He takes this theme from his reading of classical Greek literature, beginning with Plato’s *Alcibades* in which, according to Foucault, one finds the first elaboration of the Greek notion of *epimeleia heautou*, “care of the self.” Among the papers *Le Souci de soi* would include, the first he lists is the role of reading and writing in constituting the self.<sup>90</sup>

Certainly, reading and writing would become key practices in the care and constitution of the self in Soviet times. Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin’s widow, acknowledged the role that reading and writing – literacy as a vehicle for self-study – was to play in the guides for reading and writing that she wrote for young citizens aspiring to become Communists.<sup>91</sup> How should one study? She gives the following six points. First, “one should not hurry or, as people used to say, one should ‘hurry slowly.’ In self-education, hastiness is very harmful.” Second, “one should take care *clarify all incomprehensible places*. To do that one should resort to encyclopedic dictionaries, ask people who know, consultants.” Third, “*One should re-read the material one has studied*; that applies particularly to what one learned on the previous occasion.” Fourth, “*One should not study with long intervals*, particularly at the beginning, when what one has studied has not yet been engraved in his memory. One should study regularly.” Fifth,

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<sup>89</sup> I. KUZ’MIN, KAK ORGANIZIROVAT’ I POSTAVIT’ RABOTU IZBY-CHITAL’NI [HOW TO ORGANIZE AND SET TO WORK A RURAL READING ROOM] 54–55 (1926), cited in CHARLES E. CLARK, UPROOTING OTHERNESS: THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN IN NEP-ERA RUSSIA 118 (2000).

<sup>90</sup> Michel Foucault, *On the Genealogy of Ethics*, in ETHICS: SUBJECTIVITY AND TRUTH (Paul Rabinow, ed., 253, 255 (1997).

<sup>91</sup> See, e.g., “The Organization of Self-Study,” first published as a brochure in the series “Chto chitat’ i chemu učit’sya,” [What to read and why to study] (Moscow, 1922), reprinted in N.K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogicheskie Sochinenie v shesti tomakh, tom vtoroi*, (Moskva: Pedagogika, 1978) pp. 132-154 translation my own. In this work, Krupskaya cites most heavily William James, and American psychologist and author of a theory of emotion and consciousness as well as, in philosophy, of the subjective idealist and “one of the founders of pragmatism.” N.K. at note 4, 5, 7, 8, 11. Krupskaya also cites here Frederick Taylor, whom she describes as an American engineer who conceived a system for maximizing efficiency during the workday. N.K. at note 1.

See also “Instructions to One Studying Independently,” (*Povsym Gramotnost’* [Literacy to All] magazine, no. 3, 1934) and “On Self-Education,” (*Yunyi Kommunist* [Young Communist] magazine, No. 4, 1935) both reprinted in N.K. Krupskaya, *On Education: Selected Articles and Speeches* (trans., G.P. Ivanov-Mumjiev) (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957) at 243-245 and 246-254.

See also “Kak učit’sya? (Pis’mo k molodyozhi),” article first published in the journal *Young Communist*, March 16, 1919, No. in *Ped Soch* at pp. 48-51; “Likvidatsiya bezgramotnosti,” article first published in the daily “People’s Enlightenment,” June 19, 1920, No. 65-68, in *Ped Soch* pp. 59-61. reprinted in N.K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogicheskie Sochinenie v shesti tomakh, tom vtoroi*, (Moskva: Pedagogika, 1978) translation my own.

See also Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Kak učit’ pisat’ sochineniya*, in N.K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogicheskie Sochinenie v shesti tomakh, tom pervyi*, (Moskva: Pedagogika, 1978) pp. 49-52. (At p. 52: “The great writers know how to see, and the knowledge of how to see gives them the capacity to find the exact, concrete words to describe that which they see. The language of these writers is extraordinarily well-formed [obrazen] and full of concrete terms. In order to teach children to speak a living, well-formed language, one must first of all teach them to *look* and to *observe*. If you propose to a child to describe a forest, river, street which he sees, the child can not but accomplish that; he immerses himself in a mass of details, he can not exercise the actual, typical. And so such a picture can help teach him to see.”) (italics and emphasis is the authors; translation is my own)

“*Extracts help to remember.* It is necessary to write down in one’s copy-book the most important parts of what one has read, explanations of incomprehensible words and expressions, names of towns and people, figures. One should re-read one’s notes more frequently. One should write legibly, so as not to waste time in deciphering what one has written.” Finally, sixth, “It is very good to use, if that is possible, correspondence course text-books which provide advice and help in mastering the subjects studied.”<sup>92</sup> These points emphasize two points: that the learner is not alone in his or her efforts and that she should rely on outside resources and authorities; but at the same time, the learner is undertaking work of solitary reflection, that extracts are meant for one’s own reference, not to show off to someone else. In Krupskaya’s conception, notes are notes to one’s future self more than to others. Learning, and self-study, are central acts of constituting the self.

That said, we would misunderstand the significance of literacy if we ignored that Soviet campaigns took literacy first as a tool in construction of the *kollektiv*. Krupskaya herself, writing in 1935, repeats words that she first wrote just after the Revolution in 1919: “It was not ‘by sitting in an office, but by participating in collective activity that one could best educate oneself.’”<sup>93</sup> Participation in the activity of a *kollektiv* is not merely an act of pedagogical efficiency, however. “In the conditions of a developing socialist society and scientific-technical revolution the task of constantly renewing the knowledge of every member of society becomes an important social task.”<sup>94</sup> With these words, editors of a 1970s collection of Krupskaya’s works explain articles of the July 1973 law of the Soviet Union, “‘The Fundamental Legislation of the U.S.S.R. and United Republics on People’s Education,’” particularly a special article supporting self-education, Art. 12 (“With the goal of co-operation of self-education and raising the cultural level of citizens, people’s universities, lectures, courses, schools of communist labor, and other social forms for the dissemination of political and scientific knowledge are hereby organized.”)<sup>95</sup> Article 19 of the same 1973 law supports the efforts of middle-schoolers to “perfect their knowledge and know-how so as to self-sufficiently add to that knowledge and put it into practice.”<sup>96</sup> Literacy, reading, and the reader became figures of Soviet

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<sup>92</sup> Instructions to One Studying Independently,” (*Povsym Gramotnost’* [Literacy to All] magazine, no. 3, 1934) reprinted in N.K. Krupskaya, *On Education: Selected Articles and Speeches* (trans., G.P. Ivanov-Mumjiev) (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957) at 246-254.

<sup>93</sup> On Self-Education,” (*Yunyi Kommunist* [Young Communist] magazine, No. 4, 1935) reprinted in N.K. Krupskaya, *On Education: Selected Articles and Speeches* (trans., G.P. Ivanov-Mumjiev) (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957) at 246-254, quotation at p. 246.

<sup>94</sup> Editorial note to Nadezhda Krupskaya’s “The Organization of Self-Study,” in N.K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogicheskie Sochinenie v shesti tomakh, tom vtoroi*, (A.M. Arsen’eva, N.K. Goncharova, and P.V. Rudneva, eds.) (Moskva: Pedagogika, 1978) p 418 translation my own.

<sup>95</sup> Editorial note to Nadezhda Krupskaya’s “The Organization of Self-Study,” in N.K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogicheskie Sochinenie v shesti tomakh, tom vtoroi*, (A.M. Arsen’eva, N.K. Goncharova, and P.V. Rudneva, eds.) (Moskva: Pedagogika, 1978) p 418-419, citing Art. 12, “‘The Fundamental Legislation of the U.S.S.R. and United Republics on People’s Education,’” Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., July 1973 published as *People’s Education in the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow: 1974), p. 96-97, translation my own.

<sup>96</sup> Editorial note to Nadezhda Krupskaya’s “The Organization of Self-Study,” in N.K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogicheskie Sochinenie v shesti tomakh, tom vtoroi*, (A.M. Arsen’eva, N.K. Goncharova, and P.V. Rudneva, eds.) (Moskva: Pedagogika, 1978) p. 419, citing Art. 19, “‘The Fundamental Legislation of the U.S.S.R. and United Republics on People’s Education,’” Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., July 1973, published as *People’s Education in the U.S.S.R.* (Moscow: 1974), p. 96-97 translation my own.

social science, important subjects in their own right, through the end of the Soviet government<sup>97</sup> and into the post-Soviet period.<sup>98</sup>

The “imagined community” of the Soviet polity was dialogic.<sup>99</sup> Literacy provided the vehicle for the Communist Party and the Soviet state to convey persuasion, exhortation, and promises as well as to receive the messages that Soviet citizens sent. The Communist Party took citizen messages seriously when formulating and correcting the Party line; the Soviet state incorporated citizen suggestions and complaints into state policy and practice.<sup>100</sup> Although reading and writing might have taken on a valence of “care of the self” for some, they were also always in service of the “care of the *kollektiv*,” whether formal (on levels from local production unit, to Party-state) or informal.

During *dekulakization*, local secret police agents were instructed to turn younger kulaks against their elders, *inter alia*, by providing reading materials and setting up local libraries.<sup>101</sup> In a less sinister vein, measures to promote literacy in order to facilitate the dissemination of applied science intensified after collectivization. Literacy created readerships, through which common bodies of scientific knowledge circulated.<sup>102</sup> Both through reading and lectures, agricultural techniques within farming communities were standardized. Starting in 1931, for example, the authorities instituted a system of five-times daily reports on each collective’s agricultural activity (for example, the activities of reaping; binding and stacking; and threshing during the harvest were chronicled separately). The farm self-reports, published in the daily newspapers, were accompanied by recommendations on how to cope with difficulties or deficiencies in the work.<sup>103</sup>

Reading was just one technology through which life and labor became modernized and standardized on collective farms. Other institutions were introduced to

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<sup>97</sup> See, e.g., N. FRID’EVA AND D. BALIKA, *STUDY OF THE READER: EXPERIMENT OF A METHOD* (ed. M.A. Smushkova) (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Doloi Negramotnost’ [Down with Illiteracy Press], 1928); *Kniga, Chtenie, Biblioteka: Sovestkie issledovaniya po sotsiologii chteniya, literature, bibliotechnogo dela, 1965-1985 gg.* [Book, Reading, Library: Soviet Research in the Sociology of Reading, Literature, and Library Affairs, 1965-1985, an Annotated Bibliographic Guide (Moscow: V.I. Lenin Memorial State Order of Lenin Library of the U.S.S.R., Bureau of Theory and Methods of Work with Readers and Propaganda of Books) (compiled by A.I. Reitblat, T.M. Frolova); *Sovietskiy Chitatel’ (1920-1980e gody): Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov* [The Soviet Reader (1920-1980s): Collection of Scholarly Works] (ed., E. Ya. Zazerski) (Sankt Peterburg: Ministerstvo Kul’turi Rossii, Sankt Peterburgskiy Gosudarstvennyi Institut Kul’turi, 1992).

<sup>98</sup> See, e.g., *Kniga v Prostranstve Kul’turi: Tezisy Nauchnoi Konferentsii* [The Book in the Space of Culture: Theses of a Scholarly Conference] (G.P. Mel’nikov, L.A. Sofronova, eds.) (Moscow: Institut Slavyanovedeniya i Balkanistiki [Institute of Slavic Studies and Balkanistics], 1995); A.E. Shaposhnikov, *Istoriya Chteniya i Chitatelya v Rossii (IX-XX vv.)* [The History of Reading and the Reader in Russia, IX-XX centuries] (Moskva: Libereya Publishing House, 2001).

<sup>99</sup> See, for comparison, Benedict Anderson, *IMAGINED COMMUNITIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGINS AND SPREAD OF NATIONALISM* (1983).

<sup>100</sup> For an example of the dialogic process in the formation of agriculture policy in late Socialism, see, e.g., Valentin Litvin, *The Soviet Agro-Industrial Complex: Structure and Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), esp. “The Reform of 1976: the Decision-Making Process,” 71-82.

<sup>101</sup> Politburo Decree “On Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak Farms in *Raions* of Wholesale Collectivization,” January 30, 1930 (Russian Government Archive of Social and Political History f. 17, op. 162, d. 8, ll. 64–69) reprinted in *WAR AGAINST THE PEASANTRY, 1927–1930, VOLUME 1: THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE* 228, 231 (Lynne Viola et al. eds., 2005).

<sup>102</sup> For an analysis of some effects of creating a reading public, see BENEDICT ANDERSON, *IMAGINED COMMUNITIES: REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF NATIONALISM* (2006 (1991)).

<sup>103</sup> Five-times daily report system described in DAVIES AND WHEATCROFT, *YEARS OF HUNBER* 71.

standardize labor practices. For example, agricultural workers in the collective farms were trained to arrive to work “on time,” like factory workers, both to eliminate perceived unfairness due to disparities in hours worked by different *kolkhozniki* and to help coordinate group efforts in agricultural production. “Comrades’ courts” were introduced to collective farms, to provide a forum where fellow farmworkers could admonish truants and job shirkers.<sup>104</sup>

### *Division of Labor and Individual Effort*

In addition to being a site of applied science and standardized labor practices, the collective farm became the site of careful division of labor,<sup>105</sup> particularly after the first wave of collectivization had settled down and the Party began to concentrate on increasing productivity through personal discipline, heroic effort, and feats of individual will. The Stakhanovite movement, inspired by a heroic coal mine worker in the Donbas region of Ukraine (Aleksei Stakhanov), has been characterized as a movement of extreme individualism (of course, notably different from Western individualism).<sup>106</sup> Among their other strivings, rural Stakhanovites sought to bring both rigorous measures of self-discipline and cutting-edge applied science and specialized knowledge to their fellow collective farm workers. As “advanced” peasants, rural Stakhanovites had a duty to excel and to educate.<sup>107</sup> The Stakhanovite movement began in heavy industry where, adapting methods of Taylorism, factory workers tried to achieve maximum efficiency and productivity by analyzing their physical movements in very small increments in order to streamline motion and action, and to maximize coordination between man and machine. They concentrated on how to effect an efficient division of labor, how best to position one’s machines, how most quickly to move around them, how to coordinate work across different machines, and how to keep machines in good running order.<sup>108</sup> These lessons were propagated through mass media targeted at industrial workers.<sup>109</sup> The level of uniformity was not possible in agricultural labor, which demanded a wider variety of tasks and physical motion; but the thrust was the same. Rural Stakhanovites did not neglect diesel mechanics and upkeep, but in addition, they instructed collective farmers in how more efficiently to sow and gather harvest; how to cultivate a caring relationship with cows, pigs, and sheep; how best to massage the udder for productive results; how to

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<sup>104</sup> See, e.g., 9-10 *ZA TEMPU, KACHESTVO, PROVERKU* [FOR TEMPO, QUALITY, AND QUALITY CONTROL] 35 (1933), *photo reportage reprinted in* OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 281 (1999).

<sup>105</sup> For description of collective farms and patterned on the labor practices of heavy industry, see R.W. DAVIES, *THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF SOVIET RUSSIA, VOL. 2, THE SOVIET COLLECTIVE FARM, 1929-1930* (1980); SHEILA FITZPATRICK, *STALIN’S PEASANTS: RESISTANCE AND SURVIVAL IN THE RUSSIAN VILLAGE AFTER COLLECTIVIZATION* (1994).

<sup>106</sup> See, e.g., LEWIS H. SIEGELBAUM, *STAKHANOVISM AND THE POLITICS OF PRODUCTIVITY IN THE U.S.S.R, 1935-1941* (1988).

<sup>107</sup> MARY BUCKLEY, *MOBILIZING SOVIET PEASANTS: HEROINES AND HEROES OF STALIN’S FIELDS* 115 (2006).

<sup>108</sup> MARY BUCKLEY, *MOBILIZING SOVIET PEASANTS: HEROINES AND HEROES OF STALIN’S FIELDS* 119 (2006).

<sup>109</sup> For example, the magazine *STAKHANOVITE* carried new lessons for different machines in every edition. *STAKHANOVITE* cited in MARY BUCKLEY, *MOBILIZING SOVIET PEASANTS: HEROINES AND HEROES OF STALIN’S FIELDS* 133 n. 21 (2006).

manure the land; and how to tackle weeds and pests.<sup>110</sup> Teaching a peasant how to milk a cow?! Some of this reflects the thoroughness with which rural workers tried to apply scientific and efficient methods to collective farming. Some of it may also reflect the real crisis in rural knowledge that resulted from the deaths of so many millions during the violence and famine of collectivization.

Two enduring legacies of the rural Stakhanovites, then, were a new rural veneration of scientific learning and interest in learning cutting-edge “best practices”; and a scientific division of labor on collective farms, aimed at maximizing individual efficiencies through specialization, routinization, and spatial proximity to worksites. The collective farm became organized much more like an urban factory than a site of Jeffersonian yeoman-individualists.

This distinction became even more pronounced with the general intensification of collectivization throughout the Soviet economy in the late 1950s. In agriculture, intensification was manifest in two policies: the curtailment of private plots (and cattle ownership) in 1958-59 and the creation of a new administrative organ, the “link,” as the main organizing unit of the collective work effort.<sup>111</sup> The “link” united the existing primary labor units into a single group of agricultural brigades. Its mission was to coordinate all stages of the production process. Where each brigade had previously been paid upon completion of intermediate tasks according to a contract for each task, the “link” would be paid by final sale of the product (with revenue then divided up between brigades). Interbrigade “peer pressure,” horizontal surveillance, would eliminate the need for external discipline, since each brigade’s take would be dependent on the price that the whole “link” got for its final product.<sup>112</sup> Measures like these increased and intensified cross-cutting associations within a collective farm.

These associations found a home in common spaces within which they held collectively-held use rights; their practices were based on common ownership of material means of production. Use rights over common spaces and ownership rights over common tools were enforced with a well-articulated legal code. Agricultural labor was controlled by a particularly effective registration and documentation regimen without which a worker could not obtain permission to rent housing, use public utilities, send children to school, or receive employment, wages, or ration coupons. In the Soviet Ukrainian experience, the commons of the collective farm was not open-access. Documentation organized access to, and engagement with, the cultivated commons.

### *Space, Sovereignty, and Subjectivity*

The foregoing account of building collective life advances three main points that illuminate our consideration of the Soviet rural commons. First, creating a commons meant a profound transformation in the place that was the object of collectivization. Villagers still, for the most part, lived in the same separate huts they had previously occupied and were allowed the same small kitchen gardens for personal consumption; but

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<sup>110</sup> MARY BUCKLEY, *MOBILIZING SOVIET PEASANTS: HEROINES AND HEROES OF STALIN’S FIELDS* 119 (2006).

<sup>111</sup> KARL EUGEN WADEKIN, *THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN SOVIET AGRICULTURE* (2d ed. 1973), cited in OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 281 (1999).

<sup>112</sup> Description of the “link” in OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 281-282 (1999). On Khrushchev’s enthusiasm with “links” and further literature on them, see GEORGE BRESLAUER, *KHRUSHCHEV AND BREZHNEV AS LEADERS* 94 (1982).

the fields were radically transformed by agglomeration. Economies of scale, the introduction of industrial agriculture, mechanization, and vast application of fertilizers and pesticides became the rule.

Second, creating a commons meant a profound transformation of the individuals who were given occupancy and use rights over it. Commenting on the work of Soviet Ukrainian educator A.S. Makarenko, famous for rehabilitating hard-bitten war-abandoned street children (many of them felons) through collective enterprise, Oleg Kkarkhordin makes an observation of more general significance:

Makarenko's techniques that aimed at objectifying an individual by means of group pressure corresponded to the general matrix of Soviet power. He stressed the crucial point: if one forms a *kollektiv*, one also forms a specific individual; engendering *kollektiv* [collective both in material organization of life and in consciousness] and *lichnost'* [personality] are two sides of the same coin.<sup>113</sup>

Kharkhordin emphasizes that Makarenko was a man of his times, and Soviet society “moved along the lines of the formation of the Soviet individual, parallel to what Makarenko proposed but largely independent of his influence.”<sup>114</sup>

In the case of the Ukrainian *kolkhoz*, rural workers came to see themselves as members of a modern industrial enterprise, specialized individuals integrated into an interdependent operation. Just as a *kolkholz* reconceptualized his or her relationship with fellow *kolkhozniki*, the individual of the Ukrainian *kolkhoz* also re-imagined his or her relationship to the extra-local and authoritative. Words spoken far away, trusted or not, came to be understood as capable of exerting local force. Respect for the force of performative speech acts is not confined to the traumatized generation that endured collectivization. Our host auntie in Gruzenskoye, Tyotyа Dyusya, has a radio which she plays in every room of her compound: kitchen, bedroom, living room, milking stall. She keeps it tuned exclusively to the parliamentary channel so that she hears every debate and vote in the Ukrainian parliament same-day, real-time. When parliament sleeps or recesses, she listens to the replays. Tyotyа Dyusya refers to the radio in local (Ukrainian) idiom, the carryover term that Ukrainian villagers adopted for the voicebox of Radio Moscow during Soviet times: the брехунь (*brekhun'*), the liar. She literally never turns it off.

A third point bears on our general discussion. A commons is created, not just found, and the practices by which a commons is created matter. In the case of Soviet Ukraine, the process of creating the commons – dekulakization -- eliminated the segment of the rural population with the most experience managing pools of land, animals, and labor. Creating collective farms after dekulakization entailed, to some extent, creating a workforce to farm them. Long after lands were pooled, “collectivization” meant forging a modern industrial enterprise of farmers marked by education, specialization, division of labor, and the inculcation of mutual responsibility for the finished product.

## COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE CONTEMPORARY

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<sup>113</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA 211 (1999).

<sup>114</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA 211 (1999).

Creating collective property and collective life in the Ukrainian countryside re-schematized the spatial organization of sovereignty. Plans and policies were national; implementation was local. Ideas, quotas, categories, Party lines came from outside. Confiscation, accusation, categorization, theft, rejection, return, discipline, learning, applying science were taken up locally. The Party-state achieved an unprecedented presence in the daily life of villagers. Now, decollectivization, the contemporary experiment, involves fragmentation of authoritative discourses and parties, a withdrawal of the state, and the death of organizational features that used to transcend the local.

Collectivization entailed drastic destruction and decades of careful construction. The *kolkhoz* was the product of economic pragmatists, secret police recruits, agricultural extension agents, diesel mechanics, literacy volunteers, and a host of specialized workers – as well as the farmers and lands that were the object of their attention. Modernist Soviet planning made destroying a class or building a new form of village life, an intentional project. By contrast, current rural reforms of post-Soviet Ukraine amount to a revolution without agents. Law is the agent of destruction, outlawing collective farms, setting boundaries, establishing the new jurisdictions that put Ukraine beyond the reach of the (long since dismantled) Moscow agencies that had planned inputs and allocated outputs.

Recall the young manager of the seed distribution company in Kherson, sitting in a city office, pining for the village. No one forced Serhiy to move, unlike Suzanna's forebears. No one arrested him, or put him on a truck, or otherwise picked him up. Yet he feels his choice circumscribed, or, rather than circumscribed, his preferred way of life eliminated. Decollectivization as a project does not work in the same way that Soviet modernist projects worked. This is less Alexandra Kollontai than Chinua Achebe, a process of changing the conditions of possibility and allowing things to fall apart. This chapter gave an outline of the process of composition in order to expose some of the elements of the composition. The rest of the dissertation follows processes of decomposition and that which is emerging from it.

## Chapter 2

### ***Khlib*: Grain and Wheat, State and Society**

*Khlib*, a wonderful metonymy. Ukrainian has one word that means both bread and wheat. If you ask a farmer, What's that you're growing in your field?, he is most likely to answer "bread," *khlib*. If you had asked a Ukrainian farmer in 1931 what state agents had just stripped the village of, she would have answered *khlib*, "bread." There is a technical name for the crop (*pshenitsya*), but I have only heard it in Russian, which is not the language Ukrainian villagers tend to use when talking about their crops and other local matters. There are other sorts of bread than wheat; there is dark rye, and a light one that looks and tastes like it is studded with caraway seeds, and other variations on the standard loaf. To designate them, you say "*khlib* of something." Simply "*khlib*" means bread, made of wheat, unless it is growing, in which case it means wheat before it is made into bread.

*Khlib* is elemental. To say "the bread and the cup" during communion liturgy in Ukrainian literally means simultaneously to say "wheat and cup." *Khlib-sil*, an offering of bread and salt, the ceremonial Ukrainian welcome, is practically a cliché. While there are many kinds of foods, there is only one staple: *khlib*. While there are many kinds of *khlib* to eat, for consumers in Ukrainian cities, towns, and even villages, in another sense there is actually only one kind of bread: "state bread," also called "social bread." This chapter explores the state and the social wrought by bread.

While there is only one kind of bread, paradoxically, these days, there are many sorts of growers. In this chapter I argue for a particular form of significance for bread in contemporary Ukraine, with evidence ranging from village folklore about continuity to urban folklore about grain exports. I then describe the investment of knowledge that both farmer and seeds represent, with a portrait of the new, sometimes unwilling, wheat farmer introduced by land reforms and the seeds not at his or her disposal. Finally, I tell the story of how bread, despite its elemental significance, disappeared from Ukrainian ovens. The theme of this chapter is circulation of grain, seed, and germplasm, both in material and discursive forms. The channels of circulation circumscribe domains of practice where subjectivity and sovereignty are being created. In the previous chapter, we examined the creation of collective life on farms in Soviet Ukraine. By the end of this chapter, I will make some specific claims about two forms of collectivity salient in contemporary Ukraine, society and the state.

*Eve of Epiphany, January 17, 2007*

Irina, a colleague, chair of the Law Faculty at Kyiv's prestigious private university Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, has invited us for second *sviatvechir*, holy night, the eve of the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas. There are seven places set at the table: for Irina, her husband and two teenage daughters (who love to tweak their father for his encyclopedic, didactic explanations of Ukrainian traditions); for me and my partner David; and for *didus'*, "granddaddy." *Didus'* refers to a sheath of wheat, specifically the sheath of wheat gathered from the last scythe-sweep of the last corner of the last field harvested in last summer's harvest. The point is to collect that last-fallen wheat into one sheath, keep it in the kitchen, the coziest part of the home, all winter, and then to use it as seed for the first planting the following spring.



This is more than just a safe system for gathering and storing seed wheat, however. The plural form of the word for seed, *semena*, is the same as the colloquial word for sperm. This particular sheath of wheat is named *didus'*, grandfather. He represents the collected hybridization and plant breeding of the forebears and the promise of the next-generation spring planting. In between fall and spring, *didus'* gets a seat at the family table at the two midwinter holy meals, Christmas Eve and Epiphany Eve feasts. The family sets a place at the table for *didus'*, like American families may leave out a plate of cookies and eggnog for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. And so, even Ukrainian village families who do not raise wheat and some urban families, like Irina's, who do not even have a garden plot, obtain a *didus'* for their holiday meals. *Didusi* sold in the covered markets in Kiev in midwinter. Compared to other village traditions, the *didus'* rarely makes an appearance in post-Soviet Eastern and Central Ukrainian cities. I had read about him but never met in person before our dinner at Irina's. She, however, comes from a "proper" Ukrainian family in the far Western Ukrainian city of Ivano-Frankivsk, a region of the country thought of as a bastion of authenticity and Ukrainian nationalism. Her husband tells me that as soon as he saw her mom set a table, he decided to propose to Irina though he barely knew her, because that was enough to show him she came from a proper family that practiced proper forms of hospitality and cultivated a food culture that signified honesty, dependability, loyalty, and other traits he desired in a spouse. Even after their move to Kyiv, the *didus'* does not miss a meal at their winter holidays.

*Old New Year's Eve, January 12, 2007*

We travel out to a town in Western Ukraine, way up in the Carpathian mountains, to observe part of the winter holidays. It seems like a mistake. These mountains are the only place in Ukraine for downhill skiing, and this year, thanks to global climate change, for the first time in anyone's memory or recorded history, the whole place is a rainy mush. There is no snow whatsoever, just buckets of rain and mud ankle-high. Only the main road through the village is paved, and we are not sure we will be getting our rented car out of the mosh pit it has slid into. The absence of snow, picturesque mountain villagers pulled behind one-horse open sleighs, and the soft glow of moonlight and starlight bode ill. I am convinced I'm in for one more disappointment in my quest for something that feels like an indisputably anthropological experience.

It seemed like we could not go wrong. It's the eve of "old new year," *staryi novyi rik* [Russian: *stariy noviy god*], marking the turn of the calendar year as calculated by the Julian calendar. Calculating leap years regularly (without an adjustment to keep the vernal equinox at March 21), the Julian calendar got further and further behind the Gregorian, 13 days to be exact, only rectified when the Soviets reset the clock at the Great October Revolution in 1917. (The Great October Revolution happened before the reset, though, so it was actually in early November.) In Ukraine, New Year's Eve is celebrated on December 31. Christmas (or, for Catholics in Ukraine who observe December 25, "old Christmas") falls on January 6. And Old New Year's is on January 13. January 12 is Old New Year's Eve, and we've come 500+ miles to find it.

We squish through the mud-parking lot of a hideous Soviet-built concrete block hotel, the only one in town. Of course, I think, as the front desk attendant informs me they are sold out of rooms. Of course. But then, the miracle unfolds. "Wait, miss!"

Anatoliy, her old classmate's friend, has just built a guest house. She calls, finds out he has a room available, and gives us directions out the back, steep mud-slick exit of the parking lot, over a one-lane bridge, and into what will no doubt prove to be a sea of mud beyond. A room. Miracle number one. Miracle number two: leaning against the wall in the corner of the ugly, dark hotel lobby, a chintzy device, what appears to be a broom handle with a tinfoil scythe affixed to the top. "What's that?" I ask, hope rising. "That's for our *vertep*," she shrugs. "Tonight is *vertep*." Whoopie! She's heard of *vertep*. This sounds more promising.

Hope fades again after we have checked into our little room at the guest house and slogged through the dark muddy lanes of the village, pelted by cold rain, vainly seeking out the *vertep*. Where is it? Either it has been rained out or, oh anthropological embarrassment, it is going on just around the corner and we will have come all the way from Kiev just to have missed it by a whisker. Only when I returned from fieldwork did I read Bela Bartok's account of trying to conduct fieldwork in folklore.<sup>115</sup> After trudging through the cold dark sog for an hour or more, Dave and I give up and return to our room at the guest house. At least it is snug: warm, dry, new pine construction and heated floors.

Then, around 9 p.m. or so, a little commotion invades the yard out front. Dave yells, "There's some kid outside," there is a ferocious banging on the door, and voila! *Vertep* has come to us. I had understood it to be something like a Christmas pageant, with characters adapted from stock figures of the Austro-Hungarian state that had governed this part of Ukrainian until World War I: Mary, Joseph, the baby, shepherds (dressed as Hutzul or Lemki Carpathian mountain folk), soldiers (dressed like Austro-Hungarian officers), Jews (dressed like a Hasidic Jew of Western Ukraine, circa 1800), one or more cross-dressers (men dressed as women), and death, toothless, in a black hood and carrying a scythe.

*Vertep*, "the turning," is performed to celebrate Old New Year's Eve. What I did not realize is that it is more like a cross between a Christmas pageant, all stock characters and story line, and Halloween, and Christmas caroling. (Folklorists refer to this kind of performance genre as the "home invasion.") Mummers come in a band, going from house to house, knocking on doors and demanding sweets. At the same time, they sing songs that purportedly relate the tale of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt to escape Herod's murderous soldiers; but the songs, at least those we heard, actually lyricize pre-Christian midwinter vocatives and performatives. Oh Solstice! Oh sun, come back to us! Oh Father Frost! Generously keep our nights!

The band of mummers is well-made-up and in recognizable costume, fifteen or so kids ranging in age from roughly seven to seventeen, accompanied by a couple of adults in traditional Hutzul garb who kept the whole thing going by playing accordion accompaniment, marching the child mummers through their repertoire, and getting them out of the courtyard and on to the next house once they had gotten some kind of token reward. In addition to the child with the tin-foil scythe who made quite a display of miming toothlessness, the group includes a kerchiefed girl carrying a doll, a boy wearing devil horns and a cape, two kids in very hot-looking giant woolly goat heads, (the goat is

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<sup>115</sup> BELA BARTOK, Letter to Stefi Geyer, in BELA BARTOK LETTERS 70-74 (1971), reprinted in Bela Bartok, *A Dialogue in Gyergyó-Kilényfalva*, in INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORISTICS: CLASSIC CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE FOUNDERS OF FOLKLORE, 63 (Alan Dundes, ed., 1999).

the good guy in this pageant), someone in a black hat and long black coat with forelocks, and a mass of other rowdy costumed teenagers. They see us peeking out, launch into a group song, and rush the door. *Vertep* occurs on *Shchedriy Vechir*, Generous Night. What gets translated as “Christmas carols” from Ukrainian into English are, literally, *shchedryki*, “generouses.” The lyrics have little to do with Holy Scripture and much to do with eliciting generosity from the listeners.

Instead of sweets, we gifted them an acceptable substitute, small-denomination *hryvnya* bills in return for the songs and wishes. On the receiving end, it felt like we were seeing a very well-organized group costume, out on a very determined round of trick-or-treating. But singing carols. (The carols themselves, not religious, are a separate genre of secular mid-winter motifs and good wishes sung specifically on *stariy noviy rik* (Old New Year’s) eve. Christmas carols are *kolyada*; *stariy noviy rik* carols are *shchedriy*.) The whole thing is a pretty lively pagan hang-over that makes only nodding reference to the Christian holidays of the season.

It was near chaos, a bedlam of children singing and death demanding sweets and a portly accordionist mired in the mud outside our door. They mummered. We paid each kid a small amount of money, and filmed, and smiled. We went to sleep happy and satisfied. Anthropology, authenticity, at last.<sup>116</sup>

We were not ready for the follow-up. The next morning, mid-morning, another knock on the door, this time less raucous but still confident. A little girl, about nine, and a boy about two years younger. Upon our opening the door, without greeting or explanation except the query *Vy nas priimete?* [Are you receiving?], the girl launches into recitation of a verse, at the same time reaching into her pocket and throwing – or rather casting underhand, more like sowing -- wheat onto the floor. When she has finished, the little boy does the same. Our floor is nearly covered in wheat by the time they are done. The verse is a blessing, asking grandfather wheat to sow the coming year with bounty.<sup>117</sup> *Vertep*, the Turning, begins with giving alms and ends with getting wheat’s blessing. That’s the way to start Old New Year.

We return to Kyiv after the holiday weekend. The Tuesday after Old New Year, I’m rushing to an appointment with a property specialist at the oldest cathedral in Russian orthodoxy, St. Sophia’s (now a state museum).<sup>118</sup> In 1996, when I last lived in Ukraine, a property dispute between post-Soviet Ukrainian orthodoxies erupted around the funeral of a Ukrainian-diaspora (i.e., Ukrainian-American) patriarch whose followers wanted to bury him at St. Sophia’s, as a way of staking a property claim to the cathedral. State security forces, deployed by a government canny (and anxious) not to take sides in a sectarian fight, kept them outside the gates. Zealots from opposing sects, particularly the pro-Moscow patriarchate, amassed on the other side of the funerary procession. Fists

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<sup>116</sup> Other American friends reported seeing bands of mummers, *vertep*, in Ukrainian Carpathian villages they drove through the same day. Email to author from George Kent, political officer at U.S. Embassy Kyiv, January 18, 2007 (on file with author). See also Nikolai Gogol, *The Night Before Christmas* (part of Gogol’s first collection of Ukraine-focused stories) for a description of *kolyady*, Ukrainian Christmas caroling, replete with devils and witches. Gogol’, a Russophone writer from East-Central Ukraine writing in the mid-1800s, notes that Christmas Eve carolers of his day tended to mix *kolyady*, Christmas carols, with *shchedryki* (or, in Gogol’s dialect, *shchedroki*), the “generouses” of Old New Year’s Eve.

<sup>117</sup> This day and performance on Old New Year’s Day was referred to as *Vasil’kiy*, which is the adjectival form of a male given name, Vasiliy [in English, Basil].

<sup>118</sup> See Chapter 8 for description of the contested status of St. Sophia’s.

were thrown. Babushki were bonked on the head. The matter ended when the dead patriarch's followers procured pick-axes and shovels, dug up the sidewalk just outside the gate to St. Sophia's, and buried him there, where he remains replete with marble slab to this day. As I rushed to my appointment at St. Sophia's, a strange site greeted me. A homeless person, in ragged garb and untrimmed beard, stood at the foot of the patriarch in the 20° F cold. He was audibly mumbling. Torn between my American wariness at the homeless schizophrenic and my extreme curiosity, I edged closer. Then I saw him withdraw hand from pocket, fist full of seed, and scatter wheat across the marble graveslab. After repeating the *Vasil'kiy* verse and covering the slab with wheat, he turned to me and smiled. "I'm a pilgrim [holy fool]," he said. "It's the season of Old New Year's, my daughter. I'm here to bless the patriarch." It takes wheat? "It takes wheat. Without wheat, words mean nothing."

I was beginning to see a motif of wheat-centric performative speech and gesture. Among other things, wheat speaks reproduction, a future provided for, materially and socially.

### *Discourse and Bomba: Grain Confiscations*

Into the field of Ukrainian market reforms, a *bomba* landed a week after I arrived in Ukraine for fieldwork in September 2006. New Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich seized the year's grain export, wheat already loaded onto ships for export at the port of Odessa. This bold move sent markets, the political elite, and journalists into an uproar.

The *bomba*, best rendered in colloquial English as "a bombshell," is a recognized tool of infighting among the Ukrainian political elite. Yanukovich's Prime Ministership was itself a *bomba*. A *bomba* has two defining features: it is completely unexpected yet completely comprehensible to its audience. That is, it is a signal that depends on calibrated difference for significance. Differentiation is the first necessary condition. Differentiation of a signal conveys information, using Bateson's characterization of information as the difference that makes a difference.<sup>119</sup> The *bomba* fits enough within a continuing discourse to be recognized as a gesture within an ongoing conversation, but its content is not repetition or retelling. The *bomba* is close enough in form or content to constitute a signal, understood as such, to interlocutors within a conversation. The second condition is that the difference is a calibrated, designed to take listeners by surprise. The *bomba* does not shut down or foreclose. It keeps the conversation going but in terms crafted by the one who launches the *bomba*. As an unexpected yet comprehensible signal, a *bomba* changes the valence of content and the trajectory of discourse.

The example of Yanukovich's 2006 Prime Ministership offers a potentially helpful example. Yanukovich had been Prime Minister (PM) before, and it was as Prime Minister running for president that he became the stooge of the 2004 presidential elections. Under the Ukrainian constitution, the president nominates a prime minister, who is then subject to confirmation by parliament. Yanukovich, the last prime minister chosen by term-limited President Kuchma, had the advantages of executive incumbency going in to the 2004 elections. Skeptics thought Yanukovich's prime ministership and candidacy a devious attempt by Kuchma to appoint a successor whom he could

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<sup>119</sup> GREGORY BATESON, *STEPS TO AN ECOLOGY OF MIND: COLLECTED ESSAYS IN ANTHROPOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY, EVOLUTION, AND EPISTEMOLOGY* (1972).

manipulate. Kuchma, they suspected, was keen to avoid accountability for the unsolved crimes of his presidency, including the beheading of an opposition journalist (a hit clandestine tapes had caught President Kuchma ordering). Conspiracy theorists further ascribed Yanukovych's candidacy in the 2004 presidential elections to an active Russian government, intent on derailing the pro-European candidate, Yushchenko, and generally bent on installing an inferior and more manipulable Yanukovych in Kyiv. The opposition protested the 2004 elections as stolen and engineered an "Orange Revolution" which exceeded all expectations. By December 2004, Yanukovych was branded as a man on whose behalf the elections were said to have been stolen; against whose extra-electoral coronation a quarter of a million people protested in the snowy streets of Kiev; and who lost on the re-run of the elections. The Orange Revolution resulted in Yanukovych losing the presidency to his opponent, Viktor Yushchenko, in December 2004.<sup>120</sup>

However, by summer 2006, parliamentary elections of March 2006 had altered the political landscape. Yushchenko had failed to maintain coalition with his Orange Revolution partners, PM Yulia Tymoshenko and parliamentarian Oleksandr Moroz. Moroz, convinced that Yushchenko was reneging on promises to support him as speaker of parliament, broke. PM Tymoshenko, who had stormed through the parliamentary elections with formidable gains for her party and subsequently planned on aggrandizing the power of the prime minister at the expense of an increasingly marginal Yushchenko presidency, found her hard-won powers handed off to the loser of the 2004 elections. Yushchenko shocked his supporters by reaching an agreement with the man he had fought so hard to defeat in the 2004 street protesters; on August 4, 2006, Yushchenko made Yanukovych prime minister. This was a *bomba*.

The result of the summer machinations was a weakened President Yushchenko, a deposed Prime Minister Tymoshenko, a restored Speaker Moroz, and a newly installed Prime Minister Yanukovych. Yushchenko had run for President on a strange split-sovereignty platform, with promises of independence from military and economic alliances with Russia, military and economic integration with NATO and the EU, and greater participation in international trade and commerce. By constitutional compromise, Ukraine's president controls the "power ministries" (ministries of defense, foreign affairs, internal affairs [meaning domestic crime fighting and security, along the lines of the FBI], and the national security council). The prime minister controls appointments and policy in the non-power government ministries like Transport, Education, Energy, and Agriculture. What would Yanukovych, the new head of government ministries, favor? Kyiv clears out in August; after Yanukovych became Prime Minister, residents, journalists, and politicians alike decamped to beaches and summer retreats, discussing what the change might bring.

Which brings us to Yanukovych's *bomba* at the end of September. Yanukovych's Economics Ministry delivered an ultimatum to the giant trading companies that buy Ukrainian grain for export to their overseas buyers. This business had grown in importance over the course of Ukraine's independence until, by 2006, by official statistics Ukraine was the sixth-largest supplier of grain to world consumers. Multinational companies would sign prior contracts with overseas consumers to provide

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<sup>120</sup> The poisoning of Yushchenko during the 2004 campaign is addressed in Chapter 5 on Honey, Mushrooms, and Berries. One consequence of the violence captured on the clandestinely-made tapes was the flight of Sasha, chronicled at the beginning of Chapter 6 on Mobility.

wheat, corn, or rye; and then, in Ukraine at harvest time, buy supplies on the spot market. Yanukovich's government delivered an ultimatum that the grain exporters sell 300,000 tons to the state's "strategic grain reserve" at a price \$15 below prevailing world market prices (then \$168/ton).<sup>121</sup> The large grain traders, which include the U.S.-based Cargill, German-based Topfer, and Netherlands-based Bunge, refused and called the government's bluff. In response, on September 28, the Yanukovich government suspended free trade in wheat and introduced a new requirement that grain traders operate under government-issued license.<sup>122</sup> All of the major traders applied for license. None were granted.

In effect, by requiring and then denying export licenses in the midst of harvest time ship-loading, Yanukovich seized the year's grain export. At the port in Odessa, ships were forbidden to embark on their voyages of export. Kyiv exploded in a flurry of speech acts, performative, serious, and otherwise: press releases, business protests, ministry explanations, recriminations from the presidential administration against the Cabinet of Ministers.

The opening salvo came in the form of a press release, recast as a print news article put out by the government's own press service, the Ukrainian News Agency. Dates and genres are important. Under Ukrainian legal formalism, a government policy is only official and obligatory if published as a memorandum that takes effect seven days from the date of signature. The public learned of the government's September 28 action in its own news agency's October 2 report of a Ministry press release that announced the policy to take effect October 3. The news in the press release struck with the alacrity of an earthquake. Its text is nearly incomprehensible.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY PRAISES  
INTRODUCTION OF GRAIN EXPORT LICENSING AS  
TIMELY AND GROUNDED

Viktoria Miroshnychenko, Ukrainian News Agency  
Kyiv, Ukraine, Monday, October 2, 2006

KYIV - The Ministry of Agrarian Policy has described the  
introduction of grain export licensing as timely and grounded.

Ukrainian News learned this from a statement by the Ministry of  
Agrarian Policy, the wording of which was made available to the  
agency.

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<sup>121</sup> Stefan Wagstyl and Roman Olearchyk, *Ukraine Halts Wheat Exports in Price Dispute*, FINANCIAL TIMES, Oct. 11, 2006, archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP., (E. Morgan Williams, AUR #772 Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

<sup>122</sup> Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1364 of September 28, 2006, amending Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1304 of December 30, 2005, confirming the list of goods for which the Ukrainian government requires a license to export in 2006.

The statement reads that the introduction of the grain export licensing meets the tendencies of the world market, where the demand for food grain tops the offer at present and the price is adequate.

The ministry said the decision on grain export licensing had been discussed with producers, traders, bakers, and other participants of the market. Late in August, a relevant governmental committee mulled over the issue also.

"Grain exports have grown significantly year-on-year. As for the export structure it doesn't meet the structure of grain harvest of this year," the press service said.

The press service said the Economy Ministry would issue licenses with the obligatory agreement with the Ministry of Agrarian Policy. The ministry stressed that the license would not restrict the volume of grain exports.<sup>123</sup>

Finding reliable information on the Cabinet of Ministers' decision, and what it might mean, required following a torturous trail. A non-governmental news agency reporting on the policy depended on a "draft government resolution" for details of which crops would be subject to how many tons' quota. The same news service had to follow information to sources even further removed, to a "memo to the draft resolution," for explanation of the reasoning behind the policy and the government's goals.<sup>124</sup>

Exporters whose grain was stalled on the ships provided more direct commentary for news reporting. "No licenses for exports have been issued [since being introduced on September 28]. Wheat is not being shipped for export," the president of the Ukrainian Grain Association (a group of more than 60 local and international companies) Volodymyr Klimenko told news organization Interfax-Ukraine October 9. Klimenko claimed that grain exporters did not know why the licenses are not being issued, and they had no information on when the situation would change.<sup>125</sup> Jorge Zukoski, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kiev, told a reporter from the Financial Times of London, "This has caused tremors throughout the agricultural sector. For us it also

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<sup>123</sup> Viktoria Miroshnychenko, *Ministry of Agriculture Policy praises Introduction of Grain Export Licensing as Timely and Grounded*, UKRAINIAN NEW AGENCY, Oct., 2006, archived in ACTION UKRAINE REPORT, (E. Morgan Williams), AUR #772, Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), , available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

<sup>124</sup> *Ukraine may Introduce Quotas on Exports of Wheat, Barley, Corn and Rye*, INTERFAX-UKRAINE, , Oct. 3, 2006, archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. (E. Morgan Williams), Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

<sup>125</sup> *Ukrainian Grain Traders Alarmed over Lack of Export Licenses for Exporting Bread Wheat,* INTERFAX-UKRAINE, Oct. 10, 2006; archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. #772, (compiled by E. Morgan Williams), Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

exemplifies fears that the new government could slide back into the negative anti-market attitudes we have seen before in Ukraine."<sup>126</sup>

Yanukovich responded to anxieties that his government lacked commitment to free trade in an interview to the London newspaper *The Financial Times* (FT) October 10 in which he promised, "We will uphold the principles of the market economy. These problems which now exist [in the grain market] are linked with domestic procedures which exist in every country." Yanukovich "insisted Ukraine had a surplus of wheat for its own market and for sale for export."<sup>127</sup> Yanukovich's sanguine responses played the nerves of those on the receiving end of his order. Western grain traders told the FT that eleven loaded ships were standing idle in Ukraine's Black Sea ports, accumulating charges at a rate of \$30,000 per vessel a day, with fifteen more ships, already contracted to transport Ukrainian grain, on their way.<sup>128</sup>

The blocking action was clear but the way out was not, and reasons the government gave failed to persuade the exporters.<sup>129</sup> Licenses were to be issued by the Economy Ministry after agreement with the Agriculture Ministry.<sup>130</sup> When licenses were blocked, it was not clear whether the Agriculture Ministry was holding up agreement or the Economy Ministry was simply failing to issue. The arrested export shipments stayed in suspended animation for months.<sup>131</sup>

The reason Yanukovich gave for his policy *bomba* was that he wanted to ensure that Ukraine had enough wheat for its own domestic bread needs through the winter. He, or his newly installed Cabinet and their advisers, looked at a boom in exports and a drop in harvest and decided to take action. The Agriculture Ministry had forecast the 2006 national wheat yield at around 15 million tons, compared to 18.7 million tonnes the year before.<sup>132</sup> Against falling production, export commitments had risen. In the 2005/2006 marketing year (July-June), grain traders had exported almost 13.2 million tons of grain from Ukraine, which was 19.3% more than the previous year. The lions' share of growth

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<sup>126</sup> Stefan Wagstyl and Roman Olearchyk, *Ukraine Halts Wheat Exports in Price Dispute*, FINANCIAL TIMES, Oct. 11, 2006, archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. #772, (compiled by E. Morgan Williams), Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine, available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>).

<sup>127</sup> Wagstyl and Olearchyk, *Ukraine Halts Wheat Exports*, (Oct. 11, 2006).

<sup>128</sup> Wagstyl and Olearchyk, *Ukraine Halts Wheat Exports*, (Oct. 11, 2006).

<sup>129</sup> *Ukraine Sets Up Grain Export Licenses to End of 2006*, UKRAINIAN NEWS AGENCY, Oct. 3, 2006 (government news agency reporting the Economics Minister as saying introduction of export licenses will facilitate stabilization of prices on the domestic grain market); archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. #772 (E. Morgan Williams), Oct. 11, 2005 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>. *Ukrainian Grain Traders Alarmed over Lack of Export Licenses for Exporting Bread Wheat*, INTERFAX-UKRAINE, Oct. 10, 2006 (reporting that the Ukrainian government introduced the licensing of grain exports to "raise the reliability of supply on the domestic market."), archived in ACTION UKRAINE REPORT #772 (compiled by E. Morgan Williams), Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

<sup>130</sup> *Ukrainian Grain Traders Alarmed over Lack of Export Licenses for Exporting Bread Wheat*, INTERFAX-UKRAINE, Oct. 10, 2006; archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. #772 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine, at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>).

<sup>131</sup> See, e.g., *Zerno Problemi: Ukraina stave vidomoyu svitu yak kraina, de ne rakhuye zbytkiv* [Grain Problems: Ukraine becomes known in the world as a country in which one does not account for follies] DEN' [THE DAY], No. 213, 6 Hrudnya 2006 [6 December 2006], <http://www.day.kiev.ua/173624/>.

<sup>132</sup> *Ukrainian Grain Traders Alarmed over Lack of Export Licenses for Exporting Bread Wheat*, INTERFAX-UKRAINE.



in grain exports came from wheat, export of which grew by 50%, to 6.48 million tons, between 2005 and 2006.<sup>133</sup>

International news media put the situation of Ukrainian wheat in global context, explaining anticipated effects on total world stocks of wheat and on consumer prices at the corner market.

US [*sic*] wheat prices struck a 10-year high yesterday on fears of a further decline in global production at a time when world stockpiles are near 20-year lows. The latest rise is expected to lead to higher food prices. Wheat harvests from Australia to Argentina, Europe and North America have been affected by drought, heatwaves and, in Ukraine, infestation from the Eurygaster beetle. Global wheat supplies have fallen about 5 per cent – or 30m tonnes - from last year. Also Ukraine's wheat exports were stalled after authorities in Kiev insisted that grain traders apply for export licences.<sup>134</sup>

Shockwaves from the *bomba* did not take long to reverberate. Less than a week after the Ukrainian news agency published the Cabinet of Minister's press release, wheat futures in Chicago rose more than 13 per cent in two days, driving up prices already high from drought in the U.S. and Australian wheat-growing regions. "The US department of agriculture [*sic*] is expected this week to lower its assessment of global wheat stockpiles. Its current estimate of 126m tonnes - about 57 days of global demand - is the lowest level of demand cover in more than 20 years." Experts wondered if dry weather would continue the following spring. Analysts said flour and food prices would rise. "Analyst Andrew Saunders at Numis, the investment bank, said: 'Food producers will seek to pass this on to the retailers and in turn consumers will bear the brunt.'"<sup>135</sup>

Grain confiscation; someone, somewhere, bearing the brunt. This rings ominously familiar.

### *Holodomor*

Can a slow process of months' duress have an anniversary? In November 2006, led by President Yushchenko, the Ukrainian government marked the first seventy-fifth anniversary of the *Holodomor*. The Famine. "*Holodomor*" is one of those rare Ukrainian nouns that lacks a Russian equivalent. It is a compound word, from *holod*, meaning hunger, and *mor*, truncated form of the root *mord-*, meaning death. *Holodomor* means specifically mass death by starvation. When capitalized, in contemporary Ukrainian

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<sup>133</sup> *Ukrainian Grain Traders Alarmed over Lack of Export Licenses for Exporting Bread Wheat*, INTERFAX-UKRAINE.

<sup>134</sup> Kevin Morrison & Lucy Warwick-Ching, *Hot Year Helps Wheat Prices Soar*, FINANCIAL TIMES, Oct. 11, 2006; archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. #772 (compiled by E. Morgan Williams) Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

<sup>135</sup> Kevin Morrison & Lucy Warwick-Ching, *Hot Year Helps Wheat Prices Soar*, FINANCIAL TIMES, Oct. 11, 2006; archived in ACTION UKRAINE REP. #772 (compiled by E. Morgan Williams) Oct. 11, 2006 (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine), available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1>.

usage, *Holodomor* refers to the specific historical incident of the 1930-33 mass deaths caused by collectivization-era Soviet grain confiscation. (The closest equivalent in English is “famine.” However, famine can entail hunger without death. For these reasons, I will use the Ukrainian or capitalize the English to indicate the specifically named historical incident.) *Holodomor*: In the span of two harvests, one in ten Ukrainians dropped dead of starvation.

Collectivization itself was a well-publicized matter in Soviet life and a well-documented matter in Soviet historiography. The policy of grain confiscation itself was not treated as a secret. The mass rural death from those confiscations and dislocations, however, were a blank spot in Soviet history. Family folklore on the subject was rarely analyzed as culture-wide phenomenon or understood as part of a widespread historical event. Individual Ukrainians may have known what had happened in their families or circle of acquaintances at the beginning of the 1930s, but they did not read about it in history texts, see it mourned in film, nor hear it lamented in music.<sup>136</sup>

One of my interlocutors, a self-identified Ukrainian nationalist, had reflected deeply on the relationship between discourse and identity. Historiography about the Famine had figured large in his own subject-formation. Pan Oleksandr had run for a seat in the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian S.S.R. in what turned out to be the last Soviet election in 1990, and therefore was member of the parliament that had voted Ukraine independent. We had had a testy beginning. I had just arrived in Kyiv for fieldwork, and both my Ukrainian and my Russian were fairly rusty, my Ukrainian weaker than my Russian. A friend had given me Pan Oleksandr’s number as someone interesting and willing to talk about his experiences as a lawmaker. When I phoned to make the appointment, for the first time in my nearly three years’ prior experience dealing with hundreds of speakers in Kyiv, Pan Oleksandr called me on speaking Russian. He understood Russian perfectly, he said in English that was about as stilted as my Ukrainian, and he understood that my Russian was better than my Ukrainian, that both of us spoke Russian better than we spoke each other’s alternatives, but he refused to speak Russian. If we were to meet, it had to be in English or in Ukrainian. When we met, I apologized for having offended him and asked him about his language convictions. In answer, he described his coming to national consciousness.

*Here’s how it happened to me, Pani Monika. I was a student at Kyiv State University in the late 1970s. One of our required courses was history of the Soviet Union. Normally, all of our lectures were “read.” What that means is that the professor read his or her lecture notes out of a notebook that was put together by state education authorities. The education was very standardized: if you studied history in Kyiv or Kazakhstan, you should learn the same history. And the professors’ lecture notes repeated what was in our textbooks. Class was very boring, but attendance was mandatory, so we all went. Well, Pani Monika, that semester, we sat up in astonishment when the history professor started his lecture. He was telling things that*

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<sup>136</sup> See Chapter 1 on Collectivization for a description and analysis of *Holodomor* in the context of collectivization.

*we had never heard before, that weren't in our textbooks. He spent many lectures describing the Famine in Ukraine as a famine; he told about the policies, the grain confiscation, the industrialization, the priorities. That was the first time anyone had ever told me or any of my classmates about the Famine, but we all knew it was true. We had all had grandparents or aunts or uncles who had died from it. We all knew our own family had had a hard time. But that was the first time anyone told about mass starvation, and what's more important, about Soviet starvation. It was like a bomb fell on my consciousness. We all felt that finally, someone was telling the truth. And once you hear someone telling the truth, then you wonder how many other truths are there. And, what is the cost of the lies? That was the beginning of my consciousness of being Ukrainian. I never made a difference between Ukrainian and Soviet before that. I started to understand that not everything Moscow did, was done for us. Some of it was done against us; some of it was done to us. Through the early 1980s, and then through hlasnist' [glasnost', the Gorbachev initiative of governmental opening in the 1980s], I read and talked and felt more and more that I was Ukrainian, not Soviet. We found out later that our professor had been diagnosed with cancer. He knew he was going to die soon. That's why he dared to speak the Famine. They couldn't do anything to him anyway, and as a historian, he had analyzed it and he had something to say.*

In post-Soviet Ukraine, particularly after the 2004 Orange Revolution, President Yushchenko's government was working to name and explain the Famine. Many Ukrainians had never had an experience of coming to consciousness like Pan Oleksandr's about the Famine. It is a matter of surprise for many Ukrainians that their own family history of tragedy, deprivation, difficulty, death – throughout the Soviet period, considered personal tragedies or faults -- were part of a mass experience. Adriana Petryna writes of a Ukrainian practice of complaint, *skarha*, adopted by Chernobyl sufferers in order to make claims on the government for medical care and financial support.<sup>137</sup> With the first 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Famine,<sup>138</sup> the government was sponsoring commemoration of the Holodomor as a public expression of *skarha* towards the past, towards the Soviet leadership, a previously unspoken wave of complaint against Moscow, against Russians, as outsiders who did this to “us.”

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<sup>137</sup> See ADRIANA PETRYNA, *LIFE EXPOSED: BIOLOGICAL CITIZENS AFTER CHERNOBYL* (2002).

<sup>138</sup> This phrasing, as puzzling as it sounds, is correct: the following year, in 2007, the government commemorated the second 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Famine. As the Famine, in current Ukrainian historiography, is recognized as running from 1930-1933, having more than one “75<sup>th</sup> anniversary” is possible. It indicates the preference for “saving” large public commemorations for years at a multiple of five from the antecedent event: a fifth-year anniversary is more likely to be noted than a ninth, etc.

Slate-grey overcast twilight. I make my way up the cobblestone streets from the working-class section of Kyiv where I live to the old city on the hill, the ancient district of lords and cathedrals, what one friend calls the “sacred section” of the city (on the hill across the ravine from the “secular section” of present-day government buildings). As I ascend from the secular to the sacred, I hear crows, unseen, cawing. Other pedestrians are mostly trickling up the hill, going my way; all walk in silence. There is a soberness in the grey twilight that keeps us quiet and self-contained, even half a mile or more away from the cathedral square of St. Michael’s.

A block away from the cathedral square, another sound steals into the cobblestone silence. The crows are near, loud, grating. The soft sound, growing louder as I near the square is peculiar, disturbing, beautiful. It is the sound of an operatic soprano, sobbing, broadcast over loudspeakers into the square. I join a crowd standing in silence at the edge of the square, and walk quietly up the steps of the State Diplomatic Academy to get a better look. A state ceremony involving a choir singing funereal dirges and a short address by President Yushchenko has just finished, and the dignitaries – President, ministers, parliamentarians, leaders of religious communities in black robes and tall bishopric hats – assemble themselves off the dias and into a mass to march the quarter mile through the sacred space to the other cathedral on this axis, the oldest standing cathedral in Kyiv, St. Sophia’s. I realize as they shuffle off in black somber that they are performing a funeral cortege, the way that villagers carry and accompany a coffin from church to graveyard.

We who are left behind on the square listen quietly to the musical sobs. We number in the thousands. I notice people moving silently to vans parked off to the side of the square. Red glass globes containing candles are being distributed from the back of the vans to any who want. I do not get the significance until the following March, taking an overnight train through Western Ukraine. At certain holidays, the family is obligated to go to the cemetery, leave candy or fruit for the dead, and leave a lighted candle. This may happen on days of personal commemoration, but there are certain holidays where almost every able-bodied person visits a family grave and the graveyard is lit by flickering lights by evening’s end. The favored form of candle is a votive in a red glass holder that protects the flame from evening breezes. That is what is being distributed from the vans. The government has paid for tens of thousands of candles. Although this is a useful object, I do not see anyone pocket one. The young man in the van efficiently lays them out on boxes stacked behind the van or hands them to petitioners; they are free for the taking. Receiving one, you walk back to the square, leave it next to a line already formed, and light it. The distribution has just begun and there are already rows of thousands of candles.

No one leaves candy or fruit as one would when leaving a lit candle graveside in a family cemetery, but near a small statue-memorial to the famine-victims, I do see a couple of large arrangements that look like a flower arrangement but made entirely of a sheaf of wheat. Tied with a ribbon, each is a kind of spectacular, glitzed-up version of a *didus*. In the President’s address, broadcast by radio to all who could not attend the ceremony, Yushchenko urged all citizens of Ukraine to leave a lit candle in their window that night in memory of those who starved to death in the Famine.

An act of personal commemoration, publicly performed, joining one’s own candle, the suffering one is claiming personal heritage to, with all others claiming their

own suffering: this is the performance of complaint against the Soviet past that the government of independent Ukraine has organized. It is 2006. Fifteen years of independence have passed before the government has initiated ceremonial, public commemoration of the Famine.

### *Commemoration and Conversation*

A woman, a younger woman, and a little girl are standing on the steps next to me by the candle-lit cathedral square, discussing how they are going to get home. “No, no, that won’t work, because the trolleybus doesn’t run the same route as the minivan express.” Coming to the commemoration has taken them to an unfamiliar part of town, outside of their normal transport routes. “Shall we put a candle, Babushka? Can we walk around, Mama?” Loathe to interrupt their outing but cursing myself as a poor anthropologist if I do not, I take a deep breath and plunge in. “Pardon me. I’m a foreigner here. Would you mind explaining to me what’s going on, what this is about?” A good-natured chuckle from Babushka and an incredulous question from Mama: “From the very beginning? You don’t know what’s going on, from the very beginning?” mild disbelief in her voice.<sup>139</sup> “Baba, BABA, I want to put a candle. BABUSHKA,” the little girl pulls on her grandmother’s sleeve, clearly seeing a boring adult conversation in the offing and trying to derail it.

*This ceremony is to mark – for the first time, to take public notice of, or maybe it’s the second time, but anyway – to pay serious attention [zamechat’ seriozno] the Holodomor [the Soviet famine] in Ukraine. Ten million people perished, or something like just up to ten million people.<sup>140</sup> Different political parties are quarreling amongst themselves. The nationalists are emphasizing the Famine. The Communists don’t admit there ever was a famine. In general. No such thing.*

“BABUSHKA, listen to ME, Babushka!” The mom takes the little girl by the hand to get a candle while the Babushka deals with me.

*They [the naysayers] say either there was no intention to cause death by starvation, or just simply that in general there were no deaths from starvation. But those who know are sure that it happened. I, for one, KNOW that there was a famine.*

Is that because you yourself witnessed it, or ... ?

*I know people who knew themselves. For example, my own mom – I hadn’t appeared on the scene yet, but my sister was already here*

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<sup>139</sup> The following notes are taken from my interview with Pani Inna, participant in the first seventy-fifth anniversary Famine commemoration, St. Michael’s Square, Kyiv, Ukraine, Nov. 25, 2006.

<sup>140</sup> This claim exceeds even Soviet-critical famine death estimates by 300%, but it gives a sense of how contemporary Ukrainians are experiencing the memory of the die-off.

– my mom went all the way to Moscow, looking for something to eat. Yes? Yes! Here there was nothing at all to eat.

From which city, I ask, thinking this may be a case of deictic confusion, that maybe in a smaller city deprivation was more marked.

*Here, in Kiev! I was born in Kiev.*

*Even in Kiev there wasn't anything to eat?!*

*There was NOTHING. Well, ok, in the center of Kiev they gave out some things to eat – 100 grams of bread per day [considered a bare minimum for survival]. But that was only for real Kievans. They set up perimeter border around the city, to keep the peasants out who were coming looking for food. The food rations were only for Kievans.<sup>141</sup> They didn't let anyone in from the villages, and they cleaned all those village people out of the city. Around here there wasn't even a carrot.*

*So Mama went to Moscow to look for something to eat, to get provisions. She had acquaintances there with whom she could stay. And, that way, she imported provisions herself from Moscow back to Kiev.*

And there was something to eat in Moscow?" Her voice gets quiet, intense, sad, almost bitter.

*In Moscow, they had everything. [V Moskve, vsyo bylo.]*

*I wanted to tell you, I had a co-worker, an older woman, a medical orderly [sanitarnichka] worker in the hospital. She herself lived through it. She's from Sumi oblast',<sup>142</sup> from the city of – I don't remember which city, but some not-so-big town. They came around every day, inspecting [subject of the sentence omitted; means the authorities], to find out why they hadn't died. Everybody else was dieing, they'd clear out and carry off the dead bodies, but my friend and her people hadn't died yet. She told me. You know, it was the CheKA [state security service/secret police, the predecessor organization to the KGB]. They checked them over every day but they couldn't find whatever was keeping them secretly alive. And here's the secret. They had coal in the yard of their house. You know what "coal" [ugol'] is, right?*

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<sup>141</sup> By "Kievans," she means registered residents of the city, about which more in the Mobility section.

<sup>142</sup> Sumi is a province in northern Ukraine, bordering Russia and Belarus', in which, coincidentally, Gruzenskoye village is located.

A corner? I gesture with my hands. *No, no, like the mines supply us.* (Coal and corner are almost homonyms, easily confused by the non-native speaker.) From the dim recesses of my passive vocabulary, I recognize the word for mines and then remember coal. Yes, ok, I got it now. To help me out, she gives me the word in Ukrainian, *Vuhillya, in Ukrainian.* Got it.

*They had coal in a non-functioning stove, one of those black things, a Schpeiker, a warmer. Do you know what a warmer is? because they don't have them 'beyond the border' [meaning "abroad"].*

My language credibility is now in doubt, having missed the word for coal on the first pass, and she's taking care. I got it.

*You know, right? It's a kind of tulpa [a word I've never heard before but that she thinks will help me understand – I feign comprehension because I've got the gist and I don't want to lose the thread before her demanding granddaughter returns].*

So they hid something there?

*Yes, in the dust of the coal in that derelict cast-iron warmer in their yard, they hid grechka [buckwheat], and at night, they would go dig out mukaishki [lukaishki?], it's that cruel stuff, and boil it. That's how they saved themselves, stayed alive. And the secret police couldn't find it because that coal dust is so black, the stuff would be covered in it and blend in and they couldn't see it.*

And how did she come to tell you this? I wondered if it was forbidden or dangerous or stigmatized to talk about, later in the Soviet century.

*She told me that on the streets the CheKA rode around, stopped everyone, inspected everyone, searched everyone. Anyone who didn't give up their foodstuffs right away was dragged around the town streets by horses, to scare everyone into giving up their food. And that was a form of punishment? Yes.*

What forms of punishment were there for those who didn't surrender their food? Sent to prison? *Nope. Right on the spot.* Restrained them? *Nope. Killed them.*

My God. I didn't get every bit of what she was saying about the horses until I listened to the recording months later, but when she said, nope, they murdered them, I thought, My God, how can we just talk about this? Between strangers? It's so terrible, and unbelievable, and real for her.

*They didn't take anyone to prison! They'd have to feed you there. And who was that, meting out the punishment? Was that local somebodies? No, that was the CheKA. They were all come in from Russia. They were all Russians.*

And your co-worker, who told you about all this ...?

*She was a little girl at the time. That all happened right in front of her eyes. Did she just recently tell you about this, or a long time ago? Long time ago. You know, we started working together. I asked her. I myself took interest. I asked her. She was of the age where she had to have lived through that time.*

The granddaughter is back and I have taken enough of their time. "Babushka, HUSH!! BABUSHKA!!"

Thank you very much. *Of course.* She hesitates, and continues her thought, ... *It's just that these days, on t.v., they're having debates all the time. Was there a Famine? Wasn't there a Famine? And, if there was, why should we turn our attention to it? Out times are hard in their own right. And what do you think? Is it worth paying attention to? Yes, definitely. It's worth it. At the very least because it was a genocide. It happened in Ukraine, it was in the Kuban region of Russia where the majority population was Ukrainian, in Kazakhstan in those places where Ukrainians were settled. You know, there were re-settled populations of Ukrainians, going all the way back to when Katerina was Tsaritsa and resettled people (referring to Catherine the Great, who headed the Russian absolutist state in the late 1700s), when they dispersed out Cossacks out of Ukraine. You know, there were those places [in the Soviet Union] where they [Ukrainians] lived as 'compact populations, usually populations resettled by the Russian state. And in those very regions where Ukrainians were concentrated, that's where they didn't give anyone anything to eat. And that's where they then resettled Russians, in those empty depopulated villages, completely emptied, where everyone had died. And that's where they resettled Russians? Yep. And you think that has some kind of significance now? Yes, I do. I think that does have meaning now. The thing is, we're just starting to work on our self-governance. We're just starting to govern ourselves. All the time [before], it was just Russia, then the Soviet Union, and before that, the Mongols!*

Mongolian bands of Genghis Khan's descendants sacked Kiev in 1240 and ushered in several hundred years of complicity and struggle between local leaders



and Mongol bannermen-captains.] She chuckles at her own train of thought, tracing disruption of Ukrainian self-governance, of sovereignty, all the way back to the early medieval Mongols.

*And now the Russian government has become so aggressive. You think it's more aggressive than ten years ago? Yes, indeed. Under Putin, yes. Under Yeltsin', there wasn't such enmity towards us because we don't want to unite with them. There wasn't any enmity. But now, my goodness! And so now we have to observe those events of long ago. Because the Famine, it was all led from there, from Moscow, against us. So as not to repeat? Exactly.*

“Well, thank you very much.” “You’re welcome. Now, where did my people go?” and with a chuckle, she sped off through the crowd to find her daughter and granddaughter at the minivan stop.

The commemoration of the Holodomor launched the Famine into thousands and thousands of conversations, news articles, televised debates, and other discursive spaces. It became a way of problematizing the past, of calling into question the place of Ukraine in the Soviet Union and the place of Moscow’s authority over Ukrainian territory. It was another exercise of orientalism, creating an “other” -- in this case, those “outsiders” who starved “us” – in attempt to create a self. Once again, grain and control over grain stands at the center of constructed notions of sovereignty.

### *The Reluctant Wheat Grower*

Leonid Finberg is an unlikely farmer. An engineer by education, never having lived outside a capital city, he is the picture of an urban hustler. Leonid is, reluctantly, a corporate officer among the ranks of giant corporate farming interests that are taking over growing “technical crops,” those grains, oilseeds, and sugar beets, that are grown in mass quantities on fields that stretch to the horizon and depend on intermediary processors to transform crop into food.

Leonid got into wheat by accident. He and his co-investors acquired a sugar-beet factory, that is, a factory that refines sugar from sugar beets.<sup>143</sup> After they had acquired control of the sugar beet factory, they realized they needed to ensure a steady supply of beets and the only way to do that was to lease the land around the factory to grow beets. In the course of becoming beet farmers, they realized that the normal practice – which, as scientists by educational background (albeit petrochemical engineers), they approved – was to rotate tilling different kinds of crops and leaving land fallow. The rotation out of beets explains how, this day in June, I found myself in the middle of the Leonid’s vast fields of ripening grain. Although he had not wanted to take up wheat growing, Leonid applied himself to managing the wheat operation with the same attention and heavy hand that he used in the rest of his company’s farming.

Two factors were beyond his control. One was the perceived need to rotate crops, in order to preserve soil fertility on a vast monocropping operation, the thing that got him into wheat farming in the first place. The second was the disposition of the crops. These

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<sup>143</sup> The story of the sugar beet operation is covered in the next chapter.

large-scale “technical crops” are, largely, not consumed as-is. They depend on a process of converting the raw material into something of value, something that people eat. The food processing step introduces another link in the chain between land, food, and dinner table. That link has also been a site of intense scrutiny by twentieth-century social designers. The case of post-Soviet Ukrainian bakeries is exemplary.

*The Rise of Social Bread: Household Chores, the Role of the State, and Family Sovereignty*

It’s the first Saturday in December 2006. Thanksgiving (U.S. Thanksgiving) came late this year. A Berkeley Anthropology friend who was in Turkey to give a talk came up to Kiev, bringing her lover, for Thanksgiving week, so after the Fulbright turkey dinner we had a few friends, U.S. and Ukrainian, over for Thanksgiving desserts. Pies, mostly, and an excellent pear and almond tart. Our idea of making a cake was thwarted when our neighborhood mega-grocery store was out of baking powder.

A week later, I decide to spend a weekend afternoon making Christmas cookies to share with “the girls” at work. Neighborhood mega-grocery: still out of baking powder. The store selling basic staples on the ground floor of our apartment building: nothing. Spice kiosk at the giant covered market: nope. Almond extract, if I want to make another tart, is there. Whole cloves and cardamom. Anise. Different types and grades of flour: rough-cut wheat, finely-milled rye. All kinds of things I do not know the words for, either in Slavic or in English. But no baking powder. Sellers are polite, even friendly, but unhelpful. No, I don’t know when we’ll get some in. No, I don’t know where you can find any.

Is this a lingering vestige of the famously unhelpful Soviet salesgirl demeanor? None of my colleagues know where I can find any baking powder. Friends, even housewifely-minded friends, have never used it nor come across it. Finally, I ask Tanya, a caterer who cooks for my American friend Jim; Tanya also runs the largest catering service for elite receptions in Kyiv and, rumor has it, is one of the larger investors in a new, local, up-scale bakery chain that is the talk of Kyiv. “Tanya, where can I find baking powder?” “Oh boy, Monika, I’m surprised you even know that word. You can get it at the center of Kyiv, in the central grocery under the Pinchuk Art Center, but they usually run out as soon as they stock it, so they usually don’t have any.” Tanya gave me a good lead. The central grocery store, the most posh in Kyiv, stocking the widest selection of exotic ingredients, does have it, in principle. A saleswoman does know the shelf of baking ingredients where it would be, if they had it, but they don’t. *Redko byvayet*: “It happens rarely.” Inspired now by a mystery, I retrace my steps and fan out. Baking soda: at least people have heard of it, although it is not too widely carried. But baking powder? No one, with the exception of Tanya, seems to know exactly what it is. They’ve kind of heard the expression but do not know precisely what it is; it is not part of anyone’s active vocabulary. I check with friends, men and lots and lots of women: a few have bought baking soda, mostly for cleaning purposes, but no one has ever bought baking powder (except Tanya, who buys several tins when the posh store does carry it).

Inspiration strikes and I check all my grocery and information sources afresh. It turns out yeast is a rarity also. Here in the breadbasket of Europe, I can not find a rising agent. Checking on this becomes a habit as I travel to other towns and villages over the

next year. I find yeast on two or three rare occasions, and at least people do know the word and what one would do with it, but never baking powder.

It dawns on me that, of all the home-cooked meals and potlucks I have been invited to, I have never eaten anything baked by a friend. I recall with fresh mind's-eye the wonder of Ukrainian consular colleagues back in my Embassy days when our American boss, Maria, would bring in home-baked cookies or brownies in honor of someone's birthday. This performance of astonishment was repeated after I fetched baking powder from Poland in December 2006, finally baked my Christmas cookies, and brought them in to work at CNFA. *Monichka! Sama sdyelala?! Molodtsa! Umnitsa!* [Monica! You made these yourself?! Excellent! Clever girl!] The response and the fuss went beyond the bounds of normal effusive appreciation. As I thought over the absence of rising agents, I came slowly to realize that this reaction was more than appreciation for a gift of home-cooked food. Baking itself seemed to astonish.

Bread and baked goods are all around in the cities and villages of Ukraine. In fact, I have never sat down to table in a Ukrainian home without sliced bread on offer. Baking, however, is nowhere, neither in town nor village home. There is a deeply entrenched incorporation of baked goods in the culture of eating and a virtual absence of them from the culture of cooking. Historical data, as well as folklore and memoir, confirms that bread baking was a primary, practically daily, activity in Ukrainian homes through the beginning of the nineteenth century. The oven, used both for cooking and for heating, is still a central architectural feature of every Ukrainian village home.

How baking, formerly a central activity of hearth and home, was eliminated from daily life in Ukraine is central to understanding subjectivity and sovereignty in the post-Soviet Ukrainian state. This tale offers a concrete example of how an accumulation of various modernist programs in early Soviet life still shape daily practices and expectations in Ukraine today. I identify two causes for the disappearance of baking from Ukrainian homes.

The idea to get rid of home-baking came, as far as I can trace, from turn-of-the-last-century Bolshevik activist Alexandra Kollontai. Kollontai had a clear vision of the conditions of life for women during the transition from peasant to worker, from rural to urban. She worked to turn diagnosis of social ill into a program of action that shapes life in Ukraine to the present day. Reviewing her argument and the consequences it had when made into state policy, gives us some insight into why I could not find baking powder to make Christmas cookies in Kyiv, and why, despite its mythic proportions and import in village homes, it is not unusual to find a kitchen in a Kyiv apartment without an oven. Finally, it illuminates how, through food, the Soviet state reformed family life in ways that bear on conceptualizations and practices of sovereignty eighty years later in post-Soviet Ukraine.

The absence of baking starts with Kollontai's assessment of women's work, published in pamphlets and repeated in speeches between 1915 and 1920, and a plan to re-form the intimate sphere of the home to correspond to the goals of building an egalitarian, collective Socialist society. This, in turn, ultimately re-shaped the role of the state. Kollontai proposed that in the pre-industrial age, the national economy benefited from the housewife's activity because she produced things "which had a value as commodities that could be sold on the market." Men valued these contributions and "tried to find a wife who had 'hands of gold'" [*imet' zolotiye ruki*], an idiom still used in

the Russian of Ukraine to describe a woman skilled in housewifely accomplishments. In Kollontai's analysis, women's household productivity was not just a family affair. "The interests of the whole nation were involved, for the more work the woman and the other members of the family put in ..., the greater the economic prosperity of the country as a whole."<sup>144</sup>

Capitalism and mass production had changed all this. "The machine has superseded the wife. ... What was formerly produced in the family is now produced by the collective labour of working men and women in the factories."<sup>145</sup> Machines did not just improve efficiency, in Kollontai's damning assessment; they render the family itself counter-productive. While cleaning, cooking, childcare, and laundry "still serve to keep the family together," they are "of no value to the state and the national economy, for they do not create any new values or make any contribution to the prosperity of the country."<sup>146</sup> She concludes that the family has become like a parasite: "The family no longer produces; it only consumes."<sup>147</sup>

The impact on the woman was equally dramatic. The woman who is wife, and mother, and worker "has to work the same hours as her husband ... and then on top of that she has to find the time to attend to her household and look after her children. Capitalism has placed a crushing burden on woman's shoulders: it has made her a wage-worker without having reduced her cares as housekeeper or mother," a "triple load."<sup>148</sup>

In Kollontai's view, unlike preindustrial household labor that produced indispensable commodities (like woven garments), in the industrial age, women's housework is Sisyphean, yet worthless. "The housewife may spend all day [in labor] ..., and she will still end the day without having created any values. Despite her industry she would not have made anything that could be considered a commodity."<sup>149</sup> The bottom line for Kollontai: "Even if a working woman were to live a thousand years, she would still have to begin every day from the beginning. There would always be a new layer of dust to be removed from the mantelpiece, her husband would always come in hungry and her children bring in mud on their shoes. Women's work is becoming less useful to the community as a whole. It is becoming unproductive."<sup>150</sup>

Kollontai is not nostalgic for the old order; nor does she, as liberal feminists have since, call for a re-valuing of women's housework and payment for domestic labor. Instead, she pushes for a reformation of the relationship between woman, household, and society in which the state can play a key role. "The individual household is dying."<sup>151</sup> It

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<sup>144</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, in *SELECTED WRITINGS OF ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI* 254 (Alix Holt trans., 1977 (1920)).

<sup>145</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 254 (1977 (1920)).

<sup>146</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 254 (1977 (1920)).

<sup>147</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 254 (1977 (1920)).

<sup>148</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 252 (1977 (1920)).

<sup>149</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 254 (1977 (1920)).

<sup>150</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 255 (1977 (1920)).

<sup>151</sup> Similarly, Kollontai theorizes abortion in a way radically unfamiliar to the American reader. In taking on a question which is "closely connected with the problem of maternity," i.e., the question of abortion and Soviet Russia's attitude to it, Kollontai notes, "On 20 November 1920 the labour republic issued a law abolishing the penalties that had been attached to abortion. What is the reasoning behind this new attitude?" she fumes. "Russia, after all, suffers not from an overproduction of living labour but rather from a lack of it. Russia is thinly, not densely, populated. Every unit of labour power is precious. Why then have we declared abortion to be no longer a criminal offense. Hypocrisy and bigotry are alien to

is giving way in our society to collective housekeeping. ... In Soviet Russia the working woman should be surrounded by the same ease and light, hygiene and beauty that previously only the very rich could afford. Instead of the working woman having to struggle with the cooking and spend her last free hours in the kitchen preparing dinner and supper, communist society will organize public restaurants and communal kitchens.” Housework is “doomed to extinction with the victory of communism. And the working woman will surely have no cause to regret this.”<sup>152</sup>

Kollontai would be the first to claim that hers was not a feminist critique. Feminism, to her and other Bolsheviks, was an ultimately futile project of Liberals to secure equal political rights within a class structure that rendered political rights at best transitory and at worst part of a legal and ideological superstructure that helped perpetuate exploitation. Rather, Kollontai cast her argument as a pragmatic analysis for Bolsheviks about where to find an untapped proletariat, possible members to increase Communist Party rolls after the Socialist Revolution. Her answer was women. Kollontai analyzed what stood in the way of women joining the urban workforce, swelling the ranks of the proletariat and adding to the Communist Party’s strength. She identified two main obstacles that kept women at home: taking care of children and baking bread. Other household responsibilities could be delayed until after a workday or ignored. Children and bread demanded time during the day. Responsibility for managing raising children or rising bread tied women to the home. Kollontai had pragmatic suggestions for the new Soviet government. Why should each woman have to solve these problems on her own? Communist society could organize communal services. If the state provided childcare, meals, and bread, and if women were retrained to understand they could delegate those functions, then women would join the workforce and contribute to the building of a modern industrial state. Kollontai’s idea of equality between the sexes was less a utopian vision than a proposal for action by the Bolshevik government.

Lenin heard Kollontai’s arguments and agreed. The Soviet state established norms for a crèche -- kindergarten and pre-kindergarten day care -- in every urban residential neighborhood. A cafeteria, attached to a factory or white-collar workplace, became *de riguer* for midday meal convenience for urban workers. And the state began to assume the functions of making bread.

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proletarian politics. Abortion is a problem connected with the problem of maternity, and likewise derives from the insecure position of women (we are not speaking here of the bourgeois class, where abortion has other reasons ...). Abortion exists and flourishes everywhere, and no laws or punitive measures have succeeded in rooting it out. A way round the law is always found. But ‘secret help’ only cripples women; they become a burden on the labour government, and the size of the labour force is reduced. Abortion, when carried out under proper medical conditions, is less harmful and dangerous, and the woman can get back to work quicker. Soviet power realizes that the need for abortion will only disappear on the one hand when Russia has a broad and developed network of institutions protecting motherhood and providing social education, and on the other hand when women understand that *childbirth is a social obligation*; Soviet power has therefore allowed abortion to be performed openly and in clinical conditions. Besides the large-scale development of motherhood protection, the task of labour Russia is to strengthen in women the healthy instinct of motherhood, to make motherhood and labour for the collective compatible and thus do away with the need for abortion. Alexandra Kollontai, “The Labour of Women in the Evolution of the Economy,” in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai* (Alix Holt, trans.) (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1977 (1920)). 142-150, at 148-149.

<sup>152</sup> Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 255-256 (1977 (1920)).

The Soviet government began to build state bakeries to supply low-cost bread for family consumption at home. Under the New Economic Policy, the Soviet government's compromise with a market economy in the early 1920s, the government built the first "bread factory" in 1925.<sup>153</sup> In the years of rising bread prices and famine, local governments had instituted caps on bread prices and, concomitantly, restrictions on the amount of bread individuals could purchase per day. Beginning in 1931 and running until 1935, the Politburo instituted nationwide rationing for staples and commodities, including bread and wheat, legalizing and regulating the regional rationing systems.<sup>154</sup>

Because ration levels were not uniform, rationing created a complicated hierarchy of groups and subgroups. The amount of bread allotted to a person per day depended on how important the person's labor group was to industrialization. Instead of dividing people into classes by purchasing power, as a market rationale would, or dividing people into ethnic groups as a phenotypic/historical identity rationale would, rationing introduced division of people into groups of bread-eaters based on their usefulness to state policy.<sup>155</sup>

By the same logic, rationing also set up a hierarchy of geographical location and of enterprises within geographical location. The "special" and "first" lists, with 40% of recipients, received 80% of state food supplies in the U.S.S.R.; enterprises on those lists included key industries in Moscow, Leningrad, Baku.<sup>156</sup> The only ones in Ukraine were in the Donbass, the coal mining region in the southeast. Even well after the period now designated as Famine, rural areas received less food. Village white- and blue-collar workers endured worse conditions than city residents. Most rural workers in Ukraine, the majority of the population, were on the "third list," third in line for priority of food supply.<sup>157</sup>

An end to rationing was announced at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR in November 1934.<sup>158</sup> The kinds of rationale Kollontai had advanced persuaded the state to include "food processing" – which, besides milling, largely had previously been the work of women at home – on its list of industrial priorities. The state created a "food industry," with its own commissariat of its own and other state organs of planning, monitoring, and control.

Whereas during the Famine, the secret police (CheKa) had served as the hands of the state in rural grain confiscation, at the end of rationing the public security officials (the NKVD) became the eyes of the state, surveilling the new system of "open trade."<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Elena Osokina, *OUR DAILY BREAD: SOCIALIST DISTRIBUTION AND THE ART OF SURVIVAL IN STALIN'S RUSSIA, 1927-1941* 6 (Kate Transchel ed. & trans., Greta Bucher trans., 2001) (abridged and edited version of ELENA OSOKINA, *ZA FASADOM "STALINSKOGO IZOBILIIA": RASPREDELENIE I RYNOK V SNABZHENII NASELENNIA V GODY (sic) INDUSTRIALIZATSII 1927-1941* [BEHIND THE FAÇADE OF "STALINIST ABUNDANCE": DISTRIBUTION AND MARKET IN PROVISION OF THE POPULATION IN THE YEARS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION 1927-1941] (1999)).

<sup>154</sup> Osokina, *OUR DAILY BREAD* 58 (2001).

<sup>155</sup> Osokina, *OUR DAILY BREAD* 61-62 (2001).

<sup>156</sup> Osokina, *OUR DAILY BREAD* 63 (2001).

<sup>157</sup> Osokina, *OUR DAILY BREAD* 63-64 (2001).

<sup>158</sup> Osokina, *OUR DAILY BREAD* 231, n.5 (2001).

<sup>159</sup> A brief note of explanation on the NKVD, CheKa, and OGPU.

The NKVD, Russian acronym for what translates as People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennykh Del), was the Bol'shevik's successor organization to the Tsar's Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del, or MVD) after the Bol'shevik Revolution in November

On the first day that bread rationing ended, January 1, 1935, groups of militia and NKVD officials began raiding bread stores, checking stock, prices, quality of bread, length of lines, and the buying public's mood. One post-Soviet Russian scholar described the state's interest in bread provision thus:

Yagoda [People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, which included oversight of both the regular as well as the secret police] received all this information in reports to Moscow, and sent summaries to Stalin and Molotov. NKVD reports about open sales of bread resembled frontline dispatches. During the first days reports came in on an hourly basis – 'As observed at 1 p.m.' 'As observed at 10 p.m.' These reports were delivered immediately, under the seal 'absolutely confidential,' marked with large letters BREAD, INFORM IMMEDIATELY, and underlined with a red pencil. Stalin got a complete picture of the campaign in various regions. ... He knew the names of the salespeople and bakery employees who were responsible for the poor quality of bread, increase bread prices, late opening of stores, and spontaneous recurrences of bread rationing. The information was very detailed, even indicating which sort of bread was lacking in store no. 5 of the Pervomaiskii district or that the bread in store no. 32 of the Leninsky district was stale. Violators were prosecuted, getting one or two years in prison for raising the price of bread by ten kopecks without authorization."<sup>160</sup>

Providing bread became a matter of criminal law. The state brought criminal proceedings against those who tried to cheat customers or limit sales. "Such cases came under NKVD jurisdiction. Even the simple announcement hanging on the door of a shop,

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1917. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, and hence its Bol'shevik successor NKVD, included the police as well as supervision of local governments, firefighting, and a host of other matters of local government protective services.

During the Civil War following the Bol'shevik Revolution (1917-1921), the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Republic realized that it was left with no capable security force outside of local police, organized city by city, or the Red Army, busy with armed conflict against Tsarist loyalists and other counter-revolutionary forces. The Council of People's Commissars created a secret political police, the CheKa (acronym for Chrezvychaynaya Komissiya, the "Extraordinary Commission"). ("Extraordinary Commission" was itself a short form of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (Vserossiiskaya Chrezvychaynaya Komissiya po Bor'be s Kontrevolutsiei i Sabotazhem)). The CheKa had the authority to undertake quick non-judicial trials and executions if deemed necessary to protect the revolution.

In 1922, the CheKA was reorganized as the State Political Directorate, acronymed GPU (Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoe Upravlenie), and placed within the NKVD (i.e., the Ministry of Internal Affairs with authority over other public police forces). In 1923, the U.S.S.R. was formed and the GPU became the OGPU, the Joint State Political Directorate.

Many organizations and reorganizations of these structures ensued. As shorthand, the CheKa, or GPU, or OGPU can be read to refer to the secret political police. The NKVD can be read to refer to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which includes local police, firefighters, and other local agents of public security.

<sup>160</sup> Osokina, OUR DAILY BREAD 139-140 (2001).

saying, ‘There’s no bread, and no bread is expected,’ was considered a provocation and sufficient reason to arrest and try the [shop] administrator.<sup>161</sup>

It was at this point that the state created a whole system of bakeries that eventually became the giant bakeries making thousands of loaves per day to supply cities and regions, and set up the ubiquitous bread retailers that still deliver the goods to Ukrainians, both urban and rural. When it lifted rationing, the Politburo had put local administrators in a difficult situation, leaving them only one month to prepare the country for open bread trade. (The plenum of the Politburo, where the decision to lift rationing was made, took place in November 1934 and bread rationing was supposed to be canceled on January 1, 1935.)<sup>162</sup> Of the many problems the regional *oblast’* committees (*obkomy*) had to straighten out within that month, the unequal production of bread “posed a particular problem.”<sup>163</sup> Older neighborhoods and villages had relied on the older practices of home-baking longer; they had theretofore been supplied with flour instead of bread. Most bakeries were located in newly constructed neighborhoods. Regional authorities tried to rise to meet the challenge. “Within a month thousands of small and medium-sized bakeries had to be built, employees had to be trained, new shops had to be opened, and the vegetable and potato trade had to be increased to reduce the demand for bread.”<sup>164</sup>

#### *Mechanisms and Modes of Power: Bread and the Contemporary Sovereign*

We see in Ukrainian folklore and its performative genres a preoccupation with securing bread, or wheat. *Khlib* is emblematic of both the needs in a given day, daily bread, and also the needs of the future, food provision, seed-wheat. The organization of production and bread supply became an occupation of the states whose territory included twentieth-century Ukraine. Concepts offered by Michel Foucault in his 1977-78 lectures, *Security, Territory, and Population*, give some purchase on how those Soviet efforts inflect organization of the social and of space, and the exercise of certain modes of power in Ukraine today.

The Ukrainian Famine showed several modes of power exercised in regard to *khlib*. In a juridical mode, there was the creation of a binary of categories of rural residents, *kulak* and non-*kulak*. The category, *kulak*, was analogous to Foucault’s example of the exclusion of lepers in the Middle Ages.<sup>165</sup> “A juridical combination of laws and regulations brought about a ... binary division”<sup>166</sup> in this case between those who were *kulaks* and those who were not. Like the medieval leper, “category 1” *kulaks*, were considered unredeemable, and excluded from the collective life of the countryside, in the case of those *kulaks*, by execution or exile. During collectivization, the Soviet state penetrated the Ukrainian countryside, inflecting forms of life and daily practice across this territory.

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<sup>161</sup> Osokina, OUR DAILY BREAD 142-144 (2001).

<sup>162</sup> Osokina, OUR DAILY BREAD 139 (2001) (citing Resolution of the Sovnarkom of the SSSR of 7 December 1934, “On the abolition of the rationing system for bread, flour, groats, and the system of provisioning industrial crop producers,” *Resheniia partii i pravitel’sva po khoziaistvennym voprosam* [Decision of the Party and Government on Economic Questions], vol. 2 510–11 (1967))

<sup>163</sup> Osokina, OUR DAILY BREAD 139 (2001).

<sup>164</sup> Osokina, OUR DAILY BREAD 139-140 (2001).

<sup>165</sup> MICHEL FOUCAULT, SECURITY, TERRITORY, POPULATION 9 (20004).

<sup>166</sup> MICHEL FOUCAULT, SECURITY, TERRITORY, POPULATION 9 (20004).



In a disciplinary mode, there was the creation of dangers who could be quarantined, treated, and then sometimes re-integrated. For example, category 2 *kulaks* sent into exile were allowed to return to their home regions (like the family of the L'viv beekeeper described in the previous chapter), some even to home villages, after a period of discipline in remote regions. After collectivization, the village, the collective farm, became a zone of discipline. As Foucault notes, while not exclusive of other modes of power working on other levels, discipline works on individual bodies. The collective farm worked through specialized members, themselves disciplined and undertaking self-reporting as a *kollektiv*, as well as mutual scrutiny and self-appraisal, education, and evaluation within. Grain production became one measure of those efforts.

Finally, in the mode of security, in the grain confiscations, the state calculated necessary levels of urban food provision. Although actions taken in its name on the local level affected individual bodies catastrophically, in figuring food provision and policy, the Soviet leadership calculated on the level of the population. On the whole, even if not affirmatively out to murder by starvation, their efforts came to make live and let die. At the same time that the state was seizing grain from Ukrainian peasants, it was relieving the household, specifically women, of the responsibility for producing bread.

In Ukraine today, the disciplinary organization of rural space into collective farms has begun to unravel with land privatization. Some modes of mutual surveillance still function to shape rural life, but on the whole, no apparatus “outside” village life is set up to monitor the practices of individuals in the countryside. On that level, no one cares.

Urban consumers and the state still on the hook to provide them with bread, do care about probabilities, correlations, and trend lines in regard to scarcity for domestic consumers' bread supply. In this mode, a concern with circulation, of people, of grain, of practices, has come to dominate concern with concentrations.<sup>167</sup> The spaces of food security are structured for practices of circulation more than concentration.

In 2006, the sign on the ground floor store underneath my apartment in the old working class neighborhood of Kyiv reads *Khlib*, bread. Like most residents of Kyiv, I live less than five minutes from a bread store. Three enormous bakeries still serve the capital city, a population of roughly 6 million. Small bakery trucks deliver fragrant, fresh loaves twice a day to the courtyard in back of my building. The loaves are loaded into bins in the store, not wrapped in plastic, not sliced. Downstairs, the saleswomen cut the loaves to order. One need not be wealthy enough even to pay for a full loaf of bread; one can buy a half-loaf or a quarter loaf. There are some fancy, specialty loaves that cost more, but most of the stock is the state-subsidized kind, thick and filling, sold for *kopieki* [pennies]. That subsidized bread, that originated in Kollontai's ideas about emancipating women from baking and came into widespread deployment with the hundreds of centralized bakeries and the thousands of bread retailers local governments rushed into being to fulfill the Politburo's 1935 order for ration-free bread sales: that cheap, ubiquitous bread is what the saleswomen in the store downstairs call “social bread.”

After the War, when the Soviet state had to re-construct residential housing to replace the bombed-out remnants for a Ukraine that had been the front several times over,

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<sup>167</sup> On the work of disciplinary power to concentrate, as opposed to the work of a security apparatus to modify circulations, see MICHEL FOUCAULT, SECURITY, TERRITORY, AND POPULATION 9-23 (2004).

it was not unknown to simply leave ovens out of the kitchens. Who needed to bake any more? After all, those times were passed.

Under these circumstances, it would practically be more surprising to find baking powder in every corner market than not to find it. Some tasks are still removed from the shoulders of individual households, even in post-Soviet Ukraine. The neighborhood day-care centers, another part of Kollontai's vision, still provide remarkably cheap, high-quality childcare to any family registered in a given neighborhood. (In Kyiv, in the same neighborhood where a two-room apartment rents for US\$800 per month, full-time neighborhood daycare costs US\$15 per month for a family registered in that neighborhood.) And "social bread" precludes families from having to provision themselves with the staple of the Ukrainian diet. Providing bread, wheat, *khlib*, is of particular significance in Ukraine. It became a matter of security, in Foucault's use of the term, wherein security involves keeping a certain undesirable trait, say, shortage of cheap bread for a given population "within socially and economically acceptable limits and around an average that will be considered as optimal for a given social functioning."<sup>168</sup>

In 2006, many explained Prime Minister Yanukovich's seizure of the country's grain exports as muscle-flexing, a move to check his rival and co-executive Yushchenko. Yushchenko, who had nominal authority over foreign affairs, held the expansion of open trade as one of his higher priorities. Yanukovich flexed his power, one might say, by mobilizing the domestic "security" apparatus over Yushchenko's "sovereignty" apparatus. Other commentators explained Yanukovich's grain seizure as a street-smart response to electoral realities. Yanukovich had lost one humiliating election in the 2004 Orange Revolution. He could better secure his own future electoral prospects by appeasing urban workers with low bread prices. No one that I read or talked with noticed the irony of Yanukovich's populist grain confiscation policy, meant to feed Ukrainians, that started the same autumn as Yushchenko's first annual official Holodomor commemoration, marking a grain confiscation policy gone horribly wrong for Ukrainians.

In a different sense, one could see Yanukovich's action not as muscle-flexing, but as forced by conditions of possibility set up long ago. Many urban Ukrainians no longer have ovens in their kitchens; stores do not sell baking powder and uncommonly offer yeast. Even in the village, no one bakes. Everyone buys their bread daily from the village store. Even small commercial bakeries are nearly absent from Ukraine. Daily bread is dependent on the large centralized bakeries. Yanukovich as head of government has limited a range of options, and given the switch in export position of grain, might have seen himself forced to continue to provide low-priced bread and therefore to seize grain exports. By this reckoning, Yanukovich is not forcing Yushchenko; he is being forced by Kollontai.

Wheat symbolizes a form of continuity of crop breeding and forms of knowledge in which ancestors invested and passed on to the present day. The action of scattering seed during the *vertep*, the turning of the Old New Year, and ideologies symbolized in practices around the *didus'*, perform the awareness of the reliance of the present on the past going into an uncertain future. The *didus'*, the patriarch, encapsulates a form of sovereign power within the home intimately connected with security and food supply in the form of bread. The Ukrainian government under Yushchenko had further used grain,

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<sup>168</sup> See, e.g., MICHEL FOUCAULT, SECURITY, TERRITORY, POPULATION 5 (20004).

anxieties over uncertainty, and castigation of a pernicious sovereign that chose to provide for urban outsiders over Ukrainians, in performances of renunciation of the Soviet past. Bread is loaded. Government power is estimated in part by the government's power to supply bread. Internal conceptualizations of sovereign power internally inflect external exercise of Ukrainian sovereignty and shape its emergent forms. The link between sovereignty, society, and bread gives bread a special significance.

An act like Yanukovich's asserts insiders and outsiders, domestic consumers against foreign consumers. Those asserting the *Holodomor* as a historical fact might say that this too asserted insiders and outsiders, those living inside cities for whom bread is destined, and those outside cities from whom grain is confiscated. In contemporary Ukraine, some cast the *Holodomor* as an issue of sovereignty, an issue of control over national territory, a matter of securing borders against a pernicious outsider. The new *Holodomor* commemorations, for them, are an exercise in de-colonization of the mind. The problem is that sovereignty in Ukraine is not so simple. As Ukrainian psychiatrist and writer Semyon Gluzman noted when the first official *Holodomor* commemorations were conducted in 2006, those pernicious people of the past, those Communists who preyed upon "us," were us: some Ukrainian Communist Party leaders participated in the decisions to support rapid industrialization; Ukrainian villagers were themselves implicated in violence at the local level; many local volunteers went from Ukrainian city to countryside to effect de-kulakization and grain confiscated. This is not to ascribe a "Ukrainian" origin to the famine, but rather, Gluzman argues, to recognize a deeper truth. We of this place and time are not innocent of that past. "We" are victims of this story, but we are not only victims. "We" are also perpetrators. If decolonization is called for, we must decolonize ourselves from ourselves.<sup>169</sup>

Economic calculations do not override cultural significance, as we see when we compare bread with sugar. Although sugar from sugar beets is more important to Ukraine's GDP than grain as a hard-currency earner, developments in the social organization of sugar production are virtually ignored in public discourse. This is the case, despite profound effects of new forms of sugar production are having on restructuring rural life and national power structures. The story of sugar is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>169</sup> Semyon Gluzman, *Holodomor*, in KRITIKA (NOVEMBER 2006).

### Chapter 3

#### Beets: Sweet Corruption

Enterprise privatization predated land privatization in Ukraine. Through the mid-1990s, state enterprises were transferred to the ownership of their workers, auctioned, or allotted to investors whose business plan was most highly evaluated by the State Property Fund. The facilities for food storage and transport (like grain elevators) and food processing (like mills) upon which farms depend to get their produce to consumers were privatized. The village of Zhashkiv is home to a sugar-beet sugar factory upon which the farmers of the surrounding countryside (organized into two collective farms) depend to process the most valuable of their crops. This is the story of how the Sugar Beet Factory of Zhashkiv (although privatized to its workers through the privatization process) and the land of the surrounding collective farms (although privatized to their farmers through land privatization) has ended up under the *de facto* control of a clan implicated in organized crime. This chapter will relate how land privatization is being implemented in Ukraine in one locale. This selection is not meant to imply that this is the only version of land privatization in Ukraine. It is meant to illuminate how implementation of land privatization allows or precludes organized crime and clans to end up with rural land assets of value, and how that in turn will affect political cultures and democratic developments in Ukraine.

#### *UCF's Zhashkiv Sugar Beet Factory*

The Ukrainian Foodstuffs Company (known by its Ukrainian acronym UCF), a subsidiary of the Brovarych corporation, owns 19 sugar-beet sugar factories nationwide, of a Ukrainian total of 170. UCF and four other holding companies own 40% of the sugar factories in Ukraine, but the remaining 60% of the factories are so run-down or lacking sufficient supplies of beets that UCF and its four competitors control 70% of the market in sugar-beet sugar.<sup>170</sup> Even a well-equipped factory is only in active production for one and a half months per year, during the sugar beet harvest in the autumn. UCF's Zhashkiv factory is typical, turning 2 1/2 tons of sugar beets per day into 30,000 tons of sugar during its annual six-weeks run. The Zhashkiv factory is over 150 years old, and has depended on the same surrounding farmlands (in the beginning, owned by landlords and farmed by villagers) for its beets since its inception.

When the three founding members of UCF started investing in sugar beet factories in 1995, the beet supply was unreliable. All the equipment was 15-20 years old, ("and it was not that great to start with")<sup>171</sup> and the farms had no liquidity or credit to purchase operating capital like seeds, fertilizer, and herbicide.<sup>172</sup> UCF decided in short

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<sup>170</sup> Figures are from June 2002. Interview with Mark Tomych, Director of Ukrainian Fertilizer Import Company (June 6, 2002).

<sup>171</sup> Interview with Mikhail Leonidovich Goldenberg, founding partner of Ukrainian Foodstuffs Company (June 17, 2002).

<sup>172</sup> Credit from a bank was unavailable: "Who's going to give a *kholznik* [collective farmer] credit? They didn't have any official claim individually to land at all until the 1995 Presidential decree. Even after that, they're fourth out of four classes of creditors banks consider. No money in the bank, no history with the bank, and if they don't pay you back the most you can get is a plot of land that even the local farmer couldn't make work. Even now [2002, post-land certification and privatization law], it would be hard for them to get access to credit." Interview with Goldenberg (June 17, 2002).

order to dispense with buying beets from the collective farms and turned to wet-leasing the land. (Wet-leasing refers to the practice of renting a piece of property, like an airplane or a hectare of farmland, together with the labor to run it, like pilot and crew for an aircraft. Here, wet-leasing land is a way of saying UCF rents land together with the resident farmer-owners to cultivate it.) Brovarych, through UCF, brought in capital for the agricultural production. While Kievans may think of Brovarych as a corporate front for an organized criminal group, the workers and farmers of Zhashkiv may not have that association. They do know that the UCF directors inexplicably have money to invest when no one else does, that they come from outside the village, and that they behave differently than other bosses -- shouting, swearing, threatening managers with physical violence.<sup>173</sup>

A sugar beet factory's productivity and profitability depend on the "zona" around it. The "zona" refers to the collective farms that in Soviet times were obliged to supply beets to a particular factory and is an organizing principle still used by the new capitalists.<sup>174</sup> When I asked if the *zona* were arranged by contract, the answer was a decisive "No!" The *zona* is a way of conceptualizing an area of land, specifically an area accepted as the "natural" periphery surrounding a defined central object. Now, in this case, it describes an aggregation of individually-owned land parcels "naturally" serving the local sugar beet factory, that transcends this particular transaction between UCF and the Zhashkiv collective farms. The context in which one most frequently hears the term *zona* in contemporary Ukraine is in relation to Chernobyl': the *zona* is the evacuated, restricted region contaminated by radioactive fallout surrounding the Chernobyl' Atomic Energy Station.

In the case of Zhashkiv, the *zona* comprises two collective farms (meaning two neighboring small villages, Zhitniki and Pugachovka, and the land that belongs to the farmers resident there) with a total of 70,500 hectares that span eight different local government areas (*raion*) in two different provinces (*oblast'*). UCF has also contracted to wet-lease an additional 1500 hectares from neighboring landholders outside the *zona*.

UCF rents the land from the local farmers around Zhashkiv on five-year leases.<sup>175</sup> Each shareholder (former collective farmer, or *kolkhoznik*) who received the right to a certificate under the 1995 executive order holds from 1-10 hectares, but for the most part, by 2002 (when the wet-lease of the *zona* was in already full operation) the plots had not been demarcated and the shareholders did not know physically where their own parcel lay. Although some had exercised their right to secede from collective production and enforce exclusive access to their own plot, the overall number was negligible,<sup>176</sup> despite the apparent bargaining power of holdouts. Although collective farms were formally disbanded by Presidential decree in December 1999, when I asked the UCF directors with whom they negotiated the land leases, they answered in both cases, with the "collective farm director" who negotiated on behalf of the *kollektiv*. A hold-out problem had not emerged, although in principle UCF is vulnerable, owning a stationary asset dependent on neighboring farmers who could hold out individually or collectively for a higher price.

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<sup>173</sup> I was witness to such behaviour (June 2002).

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Goldenberg, *id.*

<sup>175</sup> In areas around some of its other sugar beet factories, UCF has signed ten-year leases. Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

<sup>176</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

However, “The *kokholzniki* are desperate for investors. We get propositions from others [other *kokholzes*] all the time.”<sup>177</sup>

Fear of social costs vies with desire for control for investments when UCF directors considered whether they would buy land outright when it is legally available (which, during my Zhahkiv interviews in 2002, they expected after 2005). One notes, “No, it’s way too expensive. You buy enough land to farm with 40 or 50 people; 200 people live there, and you have to take care of all of them: health care, schools, the whole range of social services.” Although the obligation to provide social services is not explicitly required by law, it is keenly felt: “No, the obligation does not come from the law. But for 70 years, we lived like that – people expected if you give them work, you give them social services. What are you going to do? Suddenly throw them out on the streets?”<sup>178</sup> By contrast, another founding partner said that UCF would “much rather” buy land after 2005, in spite of or perhaps in hopes of ignoring social services costs. “We’re investing in land now [providing inputs for agricultural production] but we have no control over the results of the investment. We could invest \$100 but get \$20 worth of produce from it if the owner treats his land badly.”<sup>179</sup>

The level of investment is one of the most striking features of the relationship between the sugar beet factory and its collective farms after the land privatization legislation passed in 2001. UCF bought three German-made Holmer combines in August 2001 (when land privatization legislation looked certain to pass in the coming legislative session) and seven more in March 2002 (after the Land Code passed in November 2001), at a price of 293,000 euros (then, \$280,000 dollars) apiece. UCF also purchased six “beet-gathering wagons” for its farms in spring 2002. UCF made the purchases in addition to the operating expenses for inputs for the farms and for the other operations associated with the sugar factory itself. Spending in 2001-2002 on capital equipment for the *zona*, which UCF does not own, exceeded \$3 million. UCF decided to purchase it because the Land Code passed, which provided UCF and its creditors with sufficient assurance that the farmers’ ownership and UCF’s rental rights would be backed by the courts. In contrast to investments in agricultural production on its leaseholds, UCF has been chary with the sugar factory itself. The factory director explains, “We’re putting all our investment in land now. Fertilizer, seeds, herbicides, pesticides. Combines. We’re reducing the threats to production to the normal agricultural risk, the weather. Everything else we can do, we’re doing. Later, we’ll work on sugar-factory equipment: centrifuges, vats, vaporizers, conveyor belts, pumps. Finally, we’ll do aesthetic improvements. Right now, we paint and clean [the factory], just to make it look as nice as we can for cheap.”<sup>180</sup>

The relationship between the UCF Zhashkiv factory and the town and *zona* resembles that of a Soviet factory. The level of horizontal integration with other

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<sup>177</sup> In his first 18 months on the job, the sugar-factory director claimed he had perpetually had 2-3 competing propositions on the table from other *kolkhoz* wishing to be the beet supplier for the sugar factory. Interview with Valentyn Sergeevich, director of Zhashkiv Sugar Beet Factory (June 17, 2002) This balance, favoring outside investor, was emphatically repeated to me in other regions of Ukraine, for example at the *Avan Garde* farm in Kyrohrad oblast’ in May 2007 discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Sergei Aleksandrovich Sitnikov, Executive Director, Ukrainian Foodstuffs Company (June 14, 2002).

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Valentyn Sergeevich, director of Zhashkiv Sugar Beet Factory (2002).

enterprises in the town would be unusual for a western firm. Driving through Zhashkiv itself, the UCF director gave a guided tour: “in that field, those are our cows, our pigs [For “internal needs. The plant has a cafeteria.”]. That’s our school, that’s our workers’ club.” Do you run a private school? “No, not our school literally, but there’s a crisis in the country. Somebody has to teach our workers’ kids.”<sup>181</sup> A Western firm would be unlikely to match the amount UCF donates makes to keep local schools running. The sugar factory shouldered a substantial amount of the expenses of a local K-12 school when the school principal asked for help. “Why did you say yes?” “How can you say no? That’s our school. Our kids go there [meaning, his own as well as his workers’ kids]. We don’t do everything, but we do what we can. We supplied gasification [gas lines for heat] last winter, we computerized two classes. Also, in the two villages where we rent, we give assistance. We supplied computers there. Our schools are the first in the local government area to have computers.”<sup>182</sup> The sugar beet factory director was a young, active man with a round belly and a thick, dark moustache. He spoke to his Kyiv boss in Russian with a strong Ukrainian accent. To me, away from his boss, he spoke in Russian until he became lost in thought or enthusiasm, at which point he seemingly unconsciously switched into Ukrainian.

During my interview with the sugar factory director, I happened to witness a telling ritual. There was a knock on the door to his office (which is located in a building in the center of town, not out at the sugar factory outside of the town center). At his “Come in!” bellow, the door timidly opened. Three girls, mid-teenage in age, identically dressed in demure but above-the-knee black skirts and spotless white blouses, entered the room and approached the factory director’s desk in synchronized movements. I was startled to see all three wearing the large white chiffon bows in their hair, an emblem of Soviet schoolgirls but one that I had only seen once in Kyiv, on high school graduation day. The three girls saluted the factory director and repeated, one after another, in verse an invitation to the director to attend their school’s end-of-year closing day ceremonies. Each voice, too, had the practiced “carry” and lilt that I associated with video footage of Soviet schoolchildren in holiday recitations. The director received this performance with a serious expression and a slow blush creeping up his neck. The girls finished their invitation-verse with a uniform chorus (another Soviet school-recitation performance convention); one handed him a large white envelope, presumably with invitation card in side; and the three backed away from his desk in unison, not turning their backs on him until reaching the door, where they spun around and marched out in line. The director looked simultaneously immensely pleased and terribly embarrassed. This had all transpired, after all, in front of me and in front of his boss, the UCF founder, from Kyiv, home the girls had more or less ignored. He was clearly being treated as a “big *shishka*” [lit.: “big pinecone,” meaning a big shot] in this town.

UCF owns substantially all the other functioning enterprises in Zhashkiv, all of which were privatized in the 1990s and most of which are related to food processing. Raising sugar beets requires regular crop rotation, so the rented fields regularly produce wheat or corn instead of beets. Accordingly, UCF owns a controlling packet of shares in the Zhashkiv grain elevator, is a separate operation from the sugar-beet factory. UCF

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<sup>181</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Valentyn Sergeyevich (2002).

partner Mikhail Leonidovich explains the governance structure. “They can’t get a new director without my vote, can’t spend more than 10,000 hryven [about \$2000] without my vote, but otherwise, they make their own decisions. The sugar factory, on the other hand, is my property. In place, they can make decisions up to, say, 500 hryven, but beyond that they have to come to me. All the finances are with us in Kiev. We control all decisions.”<sup>183</sup>

### *The Origins of UCF and its Capital*

UCF, from its inception in 1995 until 2002, had 4 employees: three founding directors and a secretary. Mikhail Leonidovich Goldenberg, one of the UCF directors, relates his personal story of how he became associated with Brovarych. He came from Turkmenistan in 1994. His grandfather was from Ukraine. His own father had been in the Soviet military, and, as in a game of musical chairs, when the Soviet Union fell apart he and his family happened to be in Turkmenistan. Goldenberg was educated in Turkmenistan to be an engineer in the natural gas sector. By 1994, he, his wife, and his daughter were feeling the economic pinch and were apprehensive about the political and economic future in Turkmenistan, especially for non-Turkmen like themselves. At his wife’s urging, they moved to Kiev, where he looked for work: “No apartment [meaning, no connections through which to establish rights to an apartment before the private housing market started]; no job; family to feed; for the first few months, I scrambled. Whatever I had to do, I did.” Through a friend, Kostenko, also a Turkmenistan-transplant with Ukrainian roots who was a philologist by training, he started working for Brovarych in 1995.<sup>184</sup>

Brovarych was already a major player in the Ukrainian economy, which by 1995 consisted largely of importing essential raw materials for subsistence (heating oil, floor, sugar) and bartering them for the few “*valutnyi produkty*” (hard-currency earners) still produced in Ukraine. In the early 1990s, Brovarych was one of the major energy traders in Ukraine. Brovarych bought refined oil from the Odesa refinery, diesel (*mazut*) through the port of Odesa, or natural gas from Russian transporters, and supplied those products to consumers. “But the Russians moved into the market and put enormous pressure on us. It was impossible to resist.”<sup>185</sup> (Russian investors ended up buying the Odessa refinery in 1998.) “Brovarych was being driven out of the barter market for oil products and was looking for other things to do. We always had *mazut*, because there aren’t as many customers for it. Sugar factories all used it. We were used to dealing with them, we had relationships with them. We four were looking for something to do, for a new direction, that others weren’t doing, and Brovarych was too. So we decided to try sugar products.”<sup>186</sup>

The four -- two Turkmen of Ukrainian descent who returned in desperation to Kiev when the U.S.S.R collapsed and one other scambler, economist Sergei Andreyevich Sitnikov, together with their secretary -- went into the sugar-factory business. As Sitnikov expressed it, “Some privatized sugar factories approached us about

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<sup>183</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Goldenber (2002).



becoming owners.”<sup>187</sup> None of the four had prior experience in agriculture or food processing, but they knew some sugar-factory directors and they knew Brovarych director Hrihoriy Medved, who had access to capital. That bridge would seem to be the basis of a profitable venture-capital enterprise. Medved provided the start-up capital, but UCF had to make its debt payments to Medved and turn a profit from the first year. For investments in some of its earlier acquisitions, UCF turned to Ukrainian banks, which charged an average 18% compounded annual interest in 1998. To purchase combines for the Zhashkiv *zona*, UCF obtained loans from an Austrian investment bank, which gave them a much better interest rate, largely because of the 2001 changes to the land law.

The results in Zhashkiv have been remarkably profitable and socially constructive. Since UCF acquired it in 2000, sugar output at the factory has risen from 54 tons in 1999, to 78 tons in 2000, to 130 tons in 2001, which Goldenberg attributes to UCF’s investments in the *zona*: seeds, herbicides, fertilizers, and, after the Land Code passed, combines. For consumers of Ukrainian sugar, certainly, the lower price would be a mark of success. For residents of Zhashkiv and the two collective farm villages nearby, the advent of UCF’s investment has been a godsend. Of the 15,865 residents of Zhashkiv itself,<sup>188</sup> approximately 500 are directly employed by the sugar-beet factory,<sup>189</sup> and most of the remaining workforce, by other enterprises in which UCF has invested. For five years, from 1992 until 1997, the workers at the factory did not receive a single paycheck. Since UCF acquired the factory in 2000 through the period of my Zhashkiv research in summer 2002, the workers had not missed a payday. Before that, in the first five years of Ukrainian independence from 1992-1997, workers generally went unpaid; when they were paid, remuneration was rendered in sugar, which they took to the market and sold. (As no one had access to a vehicle, they took it to the local Zhashkiv market, which resulted in extremely low prices for the workers.) “The last two years (2000-2002), everything is better. We get paid on time, every month [although the plant is only in operation for six weeks during the fall]. People work, our pensioners are paid. The factory does not officially provide health insurance; there is a medical office at the plant, and so far, for anything that requires more extensive treatment, even an expensive operation, the plant has paid for.”<sup>190</sup>

The overall picture is one of a reversal of an inefficient drain of local resources: a sugar-drain, sold at the local market to petty traders at below-national-market prices; a combine-drain, as existing farm equipment, in the absence of reinvestment, was cannibalized for parts; a brain-drain, as the most talented, ambitious, or hungry of the area outmigrated. “Did you tell her?” the principal of the town school asked the sugar factory director. At the silent blush he received in reply, the principal beamed with pride as he spoke to me of the factory director. “He’s one of ours (*nash*), a Zhashkiv boy. He’s the first one in fifteen years who left the town to attend university or work, and came back to us. We need more like him.” (The factory director returned to Zhashkiv in October 2000 as an employee of UCF/Brovarych.)<sup>191</sup> Similarly, whereas Ukrainian sugar from sugar beets was exported over the first seven years of independence to

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<sup>187</sup> Interview with Sitnikov (2002).

<sup>188</sup> Population figure as of 2001 from the Association of Ukrainian Cities, *available at* www.auc.org.ua.

<sup>189</sup> Interview with Misha Kukel, driver for Zhashkiv Sugar-Beet Sugar Factory (June 17, 2002).

<sup>190</sup> Kukel interview (2002).

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Ivan Ivanovych, principal of Zhashkiv central school (June 17, 2002).

provide a source of hard-currency in a barter economy starved for cash, by 2000 then-Prime Minister Yushchenko's reforms had stabilized the Ukrainian currency and domestic demand had recovered to the point that sugar-producers no longer found it more profitable to export. "It's not about hard currency now. The demand is here, in the internal market. Demand has grown some, because of increased production in other sectors of food processing that require sugar; but in general, the difference comes from stability in the currency and in the legal basis of ownership."<sup>192</sup>

The dependence on "valutniy produkty" vanished as reforms converted the barter economy to cash and domestic demand recovered. Even environmental costs and losses to efficiency have been stemmed: with new investment, nearly all of the 170 sugar-beet factories in Ukraine have converted from *mazut* to natural gas, because it is so much cheaper; as an added benefit, gas-run plants produce considerably less air pollution than *mazut*-run plants. The situation in Zhashkiv has turned around thanks to UCF's investment. UCF, in turn, praises the Land Code as the most important development that has aided its enterprises. "Before the Presidential decrees, you could agree with someone to 'rent,' to give him inputs, and then if he doesn't give you beets, what can you do? You couldn't take him to court. Even with the Presidential decrees, yes, we worked hard, but it was hard to plan; the decree could in principle be reversed or changed. Now you can rent from someone and trust it. A decree plus a law is hard to change. And after 2005 [anticipating an end to the moratorium on agricultural land sales which did not, in fact, transpire], it will be very solid."<sup>193</sup>

#### *How UCF Acquired the Zhashkiv Sugar Beet Factory*

The story of successful economic development through land privatization is not that simple, however, for two complicating reasons. The first is the means by which UCF acquired the Zhashkiv factory and its other plants. The second is the place of parent company Brovarych, and its owner, Medved, in the social structure of Ukrainian politics.

The Zhashkiv factory had been privatized and formally belonged to its worker-shareholders by the end of the decade. It had also, like collective farms, been subject to a national property tax for the first time since pre-Soviet times, during a time when the collapsing economy meant that revenues could not keep up with its property tax debt.

The four employees of UCF made it their business to research the sugar-beet factories of Ukraine. Their research covered two areas, mainly. First, they researched which factories had the largest profit potential based on longitudinal studies of Soviet-era production. They learned that, while tinkering with plant equipment can reap marginal increases in efficiency, the largest determinant of productivity and profitability is the fertility of the land around a sugar-beet factory. A given plot of land produces beets that yield sugar at a fairly stable ratio. The *zona* around Zhashkiv typically yielded sugar at a rate of roughly 12 kilos of sugar per kilo of beets. Many other areas yielded a much lower ratio. UCF's first step was to locate sugar factories whose surrounding area yielded a much higher ratio than other factories'. This information rested largely in local and national archives not organized to facilitate public access. Finding the correct records depended on the expertise, and sometimes the permission to search, of archivists.

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<sup>192</sup> Interview with Sitnikov (2002).

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Goldenberg (2002).

The UCF employees secured archivists' cooperation partly through bribes and largely through the fear or respect inspired by Medved' reputation.

Second, UCF manipulated the tax collection process to acquire the plant at a non-public auction. In order to do this, the three directors ascertained the tax debt owed by those factories whose *zona* promised the highest profit potential. The law is silent on the privacy of tax records, but as a matter of practice, tax records are not publicly available in Ukraine. Finding out tax debt information meant cultivating contacts in the tax administration at the local government (*raion*) level and activating Brovarych contacts in Kiev. Armed with figures on tax arrears, UCF would draw the attention of the Tax Inspectorate in Kiev to a plant's tax debt. The Tax Inspectorate, responsible for inspecting and collecting on tax debts nationwide, is overwhelmed with enterprises in arrears. During the later years of the Kuchma presidency that ended in 2004, well-documented accounts from opposition journalists alleged that the Tax Inspectorate often chose which enterprises to investigate under executive-branch orders to target businesses of political rivals or take-over targets of the President or other higher officials in the Presidential administration. The Tax Inspectorate is often feared by enterprise directors and owners, as it has the authority to seize real property or other assets to satisfy tax arrears. Rather than a damaging, cannablistic partial seizure of assets that could reduce a plant's productive capacity, UCF would propose an alternative solution: a quiet seizure of the plant by the tax authority and subsequent "auction" to a buyer willing and able to satisfy the tax debt. The tax authority would agree to this arrangement (and often, the plant director would be notified), and the entire seizure and resale would be effected in a single day, without public notice.

This process accomplished three purposes. It allowed UCF to acquire plants that had already been privatized and which were not currently "for sale" (either because the worker-owners did not wish to sell, or because, given the paucity of investors, there was effectively no market for enterprises in Ukraine after the first generation of privatization had just taken place, so debt-ridden workers did not bother trying to sell). Second, it allowed UCF to acquire plants without attracting potential competitive bidders, for prices well below the market valuation (upon which, *inter alia*, the property tax had supposedly been based). Finally, it allowed UCF to acquire plants without attracting the attention or ire of Brovarych's political and economic rivals as participation in public auction might have done.

UCF found it prudent to keep a low profile because, among other reasons, Hrihoriy Medved is a clan leader whom some also consider heavily implicated in Ukrainian organized crime. Medved is a well-known public figure, heralded owner of one of the flagship Ukrainian professional soccer teams. However, in his other extensive business deals, Medved avoids the limelight. He raised his initial capital through construction projects and various black market dealings in the late Soviet and early independence periods; UCF was one of the agricultural subsidiaries through which he laundered those profits after 1994.

Medved provided three essential assets to the four employees of UCF. He supplied them with contacts at the tax inspectorate and elsewhere, to learn what they needed about tax arrears and to make trustworthy deals on the tax-arrear auctions. He supplied them with a fierce reputation, so that none of their interlocutors at the local level or in Kiev would cross them. Finally, he supplied them with start-up capital, with which

to purchase the tax debt for the first UCF plants and cover other initial costs.<sup>194</sup> American legal scholar Michael Heller identifies the fragmentation of property rights in the former Soviet Union as a major impediment to productive re-use of property: any of the many overlapping claimants may veto a proposed use or user. Heller describes such fragmentation as an “anti-commons.”<sup>195</sup> All three of the assets Medved supplied UCF, I would argue, are necessary for leveraging the anti-commons in Ukraine. Without all three, it would be difficult to construct or conduct a profitable business larger than a small town enterprise.

#### *Patron-Client Networks, Clans, and Corporations*

The previous discussion raises three forms of social organization deserving closer examination: patron-client networks, clans, and corporations. I received some insight into patron-client networks from a man I will refer to as Igor Ilych, a former member of parliament (MP), who agreed to an interview on the condition that I not disclose his real name.

*The hardest part of the job? No question, the hardest part of the job was vokrug [voting district, constituency] week. The last week of every month, Parliament did not meet in Kiev so we could go to our vokrug and meet voters. That was killing! You show up at your district office before 8 a.m. and you're just sitting until after midnight, non-stop, hearing out voter after voter.<sup>196</sup>*

As an MP, Igor Ilych had belonged to the Communist Party faction, the most conservative in parliament, elected from the coal-mining province of Donetsk, the most unreformed region of Ukraine. Donetsk has a reputation for entrenched networks and physically violent competition between would-be patrons for access to the spoils of state-capture. In asking him about a typical day and a typical week as a law-maker, I stumbled onto a subject about which he spoke with some passion: the travails of being a patron.

*You listen all day long, fifteen, sixteen hours a day, for four days straight. You do that one week every month. Most of it is voters complaining about things you can't do anything about, anyway: some traffic cop asked someone for a bribe, that's the usual thing. But you never know what people are going to ask for, and they are depending on you. People expect so much!<sup>197</sup>*

When asked how he decided to run for Parliament, he smiled.

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<sup>194</sup> NB: Medved did not provide other financing for operating expenses or further investments. UCF has relied on Ukrainian banks for loans collateralized by the initial sugar-factories. For the combine purchases, UCF secured a loan from an Austrian bank at a rate of 18% annual interest in 2002; despite the high rate, UCF expects to turn a profit on the combine investment.

<sup>195</sup> Michael Heller, *The Tragedy of the Anticommons*, 111 HARV. L. REV. (JANUARY 1998).

<sup>196</sup> Interview with Igor Ilych, Member of Parliament of Ukraine 1994-2006, March 4, 2007.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Igor Ilych (2007).

*I didn't choose. They chose me. You know, we guys who manage factories and mines in my district, we know each other. We hung out together sometimes. When it came time for elections, we all got together. We knew someone was going to have to run. Well, we talked it over, and I lost.*<sup>198</sup>

As much as the exercise of meeting with voters every month exhausted him, Igor Ilych declined to re-run for Parliament when the Parliament voted a new election law. The new law eliminated representation from a particular district, switching instead to a system of national party lists of candidates elected by the percentage of a national vote the party as a whole received.

*Those lists are a joke. You don't know who elected you. We, we had to go back to the vokrug and face our voters every month. If you did something they didn't like, you heard about it! And you were responsible to them, responsible for them, in a physical sense. If a plant closed, you knew you were in trouble. You had to make sure people had food, health care, schools. If you didn't provide, your life that one week per month was going to be hell. Now, all those party-list guys take off for western Europe or the beach one week a month. They don't have to listen to anyone, provide for anyone. Well, I had opposed that law switching to party lists so strongly, when they switched to it, I knew I couldn't run. I would have won, but I did not want to be part of it.*<sup>199</sup>

Scholarship on Soviet networks suggests features that would make them difficult to penetrate or reconstruct: typically, in a “network,” one person would only know the adjacent person in a chain of acquaintance.<sup>200</sup> An exception, I suggest, is a patron-client network, in which the patron knows many more (though certainly not necessarily all, especially in a network as large as, say, Medved’) members of the network than any one client does. Medved’ reputation and networks, more than individual bribes, allowed UCF to obtain from public officials information not otherwise available and to use it in ways not available to other members of the public. His reputation raised the perceived costs to individual officials of not cooperating; perhaps equally importantly, it raised confidence that they would be protected from subsequent sanction by their supervisors.

It is important to remember that patron-client networks are marked by practices of exchange, not merely one-way extraction. A particular form of patron-client network that

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<sup>198</sup> Interview with Igor Ilych (2007).

<sup>199</sup> Interview with Igor Ilych (2007).

<sup>200</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA: A STUDY OF PRACTICES* 315-316 (1999) (“In this network each individual knew an adjacent friend but rarely knew a friend of a friend. No one knew all the members of the network. Asking the name of a friend’s friends was highly improper.”)

became a prominent figure in Ukrainian public discourse in the mid-1990s was the “clan” (to which, in order to distinguish from technical kinship terminology, I will hereafter refer by the transliteration of the Soviet word *klan*.) By the mid-1990s, “financial-industrial groups” became a feature of Western and post-Soviet discussions of business organization across the former Soviet Union. Ukrainian analysts call the most powerful political and economic alliances *klani* (clans).<sup>201</sup> *Klani*, like the mafia, are creatures of post-Socialist private property rights, although the relationships between core members usually originate in the social networks of late Socialism.<sup>202</sup> The typical *klan* unites several forms of private property -- a private bank or other institution specialized in arranging credit or formalizing informal financial arrangements; a powerful industrial enterprise or sector; media outlets -- and several conduits to elected officials or state bureaucracies. The metaphor of “social structure” is not sufficient to understand these configurations of patron-client relations; “structure” implies something static or solid, whereas performances of the self and attendant sociabilities are keyed, fluid, and emergent. A practice orientation is more useful for distinguishing different frames of performance of the self.<sup>203</sup> The same person in different performance frames may act as a *klan* member, friend, family member, parliamentarian, profit-motivated businessperson.

However, notions of social structure in the sense of networks do have some salience for understanding patterns and configurations of contacts. The networks of relationships that form the lines along which clan sociability runs are observably based in Ukrainian *klan* members’ regions of origin in late Socialism. Individual political affiliations change and *klan* ambitions for national office fluctuate with a *klan*’s relative strength, but the regional bases of Ukrainian *klans* -- Kiev, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk -- has endured. The concentrations of late Socialism, manifest in part in provincial capitals, structure the geography of disciplinary configurations that have endured and now shape some of the emergent patterns of affiliation and circulation that are coming with biopolitical apparatuses of security.

The concept of *klani* helps explain how members of the political elite take collective action on a given problem. For example, interest groups including *klans* hotly contested the texts that each other proposed for the 1996 Constitution, acutely aware of the long-term importance of the state structure the constitution would create. The stakes were high: the first post-passage generation would establish the rules for access and use of a preponderance of the productive assets and material resources in Ukraine. (In fact, the awareness of the stakes and an actual competition over them is one reason Ukraine took longer than its sister republics to draft and pass a post-Soviet constitution. Study of the 1996 Constitution as an artifact of relations, including competition, between affiliations and networks has yet to be undertaken.) Affiliation with an interest group

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<sup>201</sup> See, e.g., SLAVKO PIKHOVSHEK, DNIPROPETROVSK VS. THE SECURITY SERVICE (1996). For a description of “clans” in other regions of the post-Soviet space, see EDWARD SCHATZ, MODERN CLAN POLITICS: THE POWER OF “BLOOD” IN KAZAKHSTAN AND BEYOND (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004)

<sup>202</sup> For description of how these networks became active in the post-Soviet context in Russia, see, e.g., Alexei Yurchak, *Entrepreneurial Governmentality in post-Socialist Russia: a Cultural Investigation of Business Practices*, in THE NEW ENTREPRENEURS OF EUROPE AND ASIA (Victoria Bonnell & Thomas Gold, eds., 1999).

<sup>203</sup> Alexei Yurchak, “Entrepreneurial Governmentality in post-Socialist Russia: a Cultural Investigation of Business Practices,” in Victoria Bonnell and Thomas Gold, eds., *The New Entrepreneurs of Europe and Asia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).

serves other important functions in a time of discursive rupture for those emerging from the Soviet *apparat*. Particularly in the case of former Komsomol members who became active in the formation of decision-making bodies and implementing bureaucracies of the new Ukrainian state, affiliation informs his or her own identity during a period when former associations and identities central to the constructed self are eliminated or altered beyond recognition. While affiliation is fluid, the telling constant is that those active in Ukrainian politics do not let themselves fall through the cracks; they maintain some affiliation with one interest group or another. (The key role of affiliation in identity is one reason that self-imposed exile has only been the resort of those under extreme duress or in the face of imminent physical harm.) Affiliation also serves as a signaling device, to let others know with whom an actor is associated, what resources back or protect him or her, and what his or her ethical orientation is.

Over the economic contraction that marked the first eight years of Ukrainian independence, three products from the former command economy earned reliable export revenue: sugar (from Ukraine-grown sugar beets), metals (from enormous smelters along the Black Sea coast), and natural gas (imported from Russia and Turkmenistan). These three were known as the “*valyutniye produkty*,” or “hard currency goods,” and long chains of barter chased them. In the first few years after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., clans battled each others’ attempts to monopolize the *valutniye produkti*.<sup>204</sup> Positions in the Soviet bureaucracy afforded access to these products, from which many *klani* garnered their initial wealth. Barterization has been supplanted by monetization of the economy, involving displacement of Socialist circuits of gift and exchange; at the same time, the number of reliable revenue-producing goods in the Ukrainian economy has grown beyond the original three. As in Russia, the acquisition of these profitable enterprises and land through privatization has become a focus of *klan* interest.<sup>205</sup> The “sticks” for which *klani* compete until recently have largely been those of the state: access to punitive, regulatory, and security agencies that may be used against rivals. With the emergence of private sectors in post-Soviet economies, *klan* ethics are become a *mélange* of those oriented to a market economy and those oriented towards the exercise of state power, which in turn may be sovereign, disciplinary, biopolitical, or other.<sup>206</sup>

With the exception of the few years following the December 1999 re-election of President Kuchma, Ukrainian political culture was marked by an absence of physical violence exceptional in the post-Soviet world. The methods, and to a large extent the personnel, of organized crime had stayed out of politics and most evidence seemed to indicate that politicians had stayed out of organized crime. It is less clear that *klani* concentrated on the legal economy and left the secondary economy (or black market) to criminals. How privatization and other reforms may be changing this is central to the changing nature of subjectivity in Ukraine.

There is evidence that *klani* are increasingly taking on the forms and practices of corporations, including de-personalization and bureaucratization of practices interior to

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<sup>204</sup> Interview with Viktor Pinchuk, (entrepreneur, son-in-law to former President Kuchma) (April 12, 1997) (now listed by Forbes Magazine as one of the 500 richest persons on the planet with a networth estimated at \$12 billion).

<sup>205</sup> Merritt B. Fox and Michael A. Heller, *Corporate Governance Lessons From Russian Enterprise Fiascoes*, 75 N.Y.U. L. REV. 1720 (2000).

<sup>206</sup> For an outline of sovereign, disciplinary, and biopolitical modes of power, see MICHEL FOUCAULT, *SECURITY, TERRITORY, AND POPULATION* (2004).

the *klan*, audit practices and transparency to non-*klan* members, and systematization or routines. While these practices may be undertaken to attract forms of participation, notably, credit, from outsiders, all of these practices mark interior and exterior, in Yurchak's terminology, *svoi* [our own] from *vne* [outside].<sup>207</sup>

*Benevolent Brokers, Pernicious Patrons: Democracy and Corruption as Emergent Features*

To review, the argument that I make in this chapter is that first, while the land privatization law and previous decrees and executive orders provide a necessary foundation for investment in agricultural production in Ukraine, they are not sufficient to explain who controls agricultural use and production. The efficiency gains predicted from production on privately-owned agricultural land are contingent upon the funnels that get agriculture to market: food storage, transport, and processing facilities. Second, while market incentives may shape the activities of investors in the agricultural sector, their behaviour cannot be explained without reference to Soviet (and perhaps pre-Soviet) norms of paternalism of owners to farmers and workers. Banks are not making loans to the new landowners to purchase combines and farm equipment. They are making loans to the cosmopolitan "brokers" who are mediating provision of capital between the Ukrainian countryside and international capital. Finally, crime has provided the initial capital and corruption has shaped the early patterns of legitimate investment in the agricultural sector, and set certain groups using certain criminal methods on a trajectory of ownership and influence in the future. It is clear that establishing a market, and relying on market incentives alone, will not result in an optimally functioning economy or democracy. In fact, supplying organized criminal groups with fixed legal assets may put both the economy and the political system on trajectories for a distinctly worse future. We can not say that democracy is "imperiled" by practices of corruption and networks of criminals; in the case of some patrons, it is inseparable from them.

When wheat exports skyrocketed in 2006, the new government paid attention. And when PM Yanukovich seized grain exports in 2006, grain traders and markets the world over paid attention. Wheat was the talk of Kyiv. Not so with sugar. While wheat steals the limelight, sugar and its profits are underwriting the entrenchment of patron-client networks, *klani*, and corporations – an oligarchy -- that may have greater long-term consequences for social and political organization.

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<sup>207</sup> ALEXEI YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER 102-108 (2006).



## Chapter 4

### Vegetables: Family Plots, and Parcels

*Avan Gard* farm in May 2007 is nearly deserted. Nothing distinguishes this landscape from the neighboring emptiness, save a sign next to the two-lane highway, giant concrete letters spelling out in Cyrillic *AVAN GARD*, the name of the former collective farm and imagined subject position of a now-defunct entity. Besides the sign, the scene is impressive in its uniformity with other declining villages across the countryside. A couple of late middle-aged women diligently hoeing rows of beets in back of their cottages. These beet fields are not corporately farmed. They are family plots, and families have shrunk. As I converse with the women, a wizened man, also in his mid-50s, wanders up and points out what one would find here, as in most villages: land plots and homes, now categorized as villagers' private property; old Soviet combine harvesters, long since cannibalized for parts; middle-aged and elderly farmers — but no youth. Everyone who could leave, had left.<sup>208</sup>

In a country of rolling farmland, where fields stretch out to the horizon as if contoured for an agriculture built on the economies of scale that marked the late Soviet period, an unlikely hero has emerged from land privatization and the restructuring of Ukrainian agriculture: the household vegetable garden. The household plot, as compared with the fields of symbolically significant wheat or lucrative sugar beets, produces a larger share of total agricultural production than any other sector in post-Soviet Ukrainian agriculture. In 2005, village households working small plots (0.5 – 2 hectares) produced **66.7%** of all agricultural production,<sup>209</sup> mostly by hand, rarely with the assistance of draft animals. Advocates of land privatization and capitalist reform of Ukrainian agriculture trumpet this as evidence of the virtues of neoliberal reform. Industrious Ukrainian peasants, once they are freed from the shackles of the collective farm bureaucracy, are out-producing all others.<sup>210</sup>

It does not take much inquiry or thought to cast serious doubt on this triumphalist narrative. One ready rejoinder is that, just because the household plot has risen as a percentage of total agricultural production is not only, possibly, a testament to its rising productivity. It does not even necessarily mean that it got better. It could mean, of course, that everything else got worse. There are a couple of mysteries in the garden, then. A greater mystery has to do with the hidden hero of agricultural productivity: the elderly. Where petrol-fed machinery, large investments of capital, and small ratios of humans-to-hectare formerly characterized rural production, with the end of collectivization, agriculture has switched to horticulture. And the hands that hoe are middle-aged or older.

Soviet property law left villagers the right to cultivate their own vegetable plot, that garden located adjacent to the home called the *usad'ka*. When collective farmlands were decollectivized, each family belonging to a former collective farm received a share, typically 2-10 times larger than the *usad'ka* they already owned. This share is called a

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<sup>208</sup> Interview with Halya Prikhoda, Irena Kirova, and Petro Kiyashko, farmers, former Red Star collective farm, in Kirovograd oblast', Ukraine (May 31, 2007).

<sup>209</sup> FARM REFERENCE HANDBOOK FOR UKRAINE (USAID Kyiv Mission) 19 (2005).

<sup>210</sup> Interviews with Bohdan Chomiak, (June 2002) and (February 2007). See generally Ray Morton et al., FARM REFERENCE HANDBOOK FOR UKRAINE (USAID Ukraine 2005).

*pai* in Ukrainian; distribution of the collective farm landplots, the converse of the consolidation of lands that happened in the late 1920s and early 1930s, is called *raspaiuvannie*. For families whose villages have not received outside investment, one common practice has been to let the *pai* lie fallow, go to weeds. Another common practice is to extend the vegetable gardening of the *usad'ka* to the *pai*.

As a counterpoint of agricultural-practice continuity in a landscape of rupture, the household and its vegetable plot might provide some insight by contrast with other relationships between land, person, and group changed more fundamentally through legal changes. The household vegetable plot is the agricultural land most proximate to a village home and most intimate to household management and nutritional well-being. The rest of this chapter explores some features of this more durable form of land use; how its patterns of circulation link urban (and newly urbanized) Ukrainians to village; and what the intensification of horticulture and household has meant for post-Soviet Ukrainians as other *kollektiv*y have atrophied or been disbanded. A village producing without outside investment, a decollectivized *kollektiv* without a corporate sponsor to recollectivize it, also shows the workings of local political and social development in the absence of external or big-business candidates and agendas.

The beet crop of *Avan Gard* is not destined for sugar refineries. It will be stored in family root cellars dug into the back yard of each cottage in the village for winter *borshch*-making supplies. Central, eastern, and southern Ukraine are suffering an abnormally dry spring this year. It is late May, winter food stores are nearly eaten up, and spring has not produced. The women of *Avan Gard* are turning over the soil around their beet plants, trying to take advantage of moisture from a freak rainstorm the previous night to save the nearly-wilted sprouts.

*You see this?* asks Pani Halya. *This beet should be the size of a fist at this point in the spring*, she says, pointing to something the size of a ping-pong ball. The women tell me they are exhausted. *The weather. The isolation. But mostly, the work.* It is back-breaking and, mid-50s, they feel they are too old for it.

Pani Halya and Pani Irena introduce me to the man as “*nash traktorist*,” “our tractor-driver,” although they had not had a working tractor for more than five years, nor a joint farming operation for more than eight years. The collective farm had disappeared but two things remain: *kollektiv* identity, marking “*nash traktorist*” as “ours” and the land, now divided into long, narrow household plots in which each woman struggles to grow beets in back of their cottages.

### *Foraging: The Shell-shock of the Everyday*

I am walking to work at the U.S. Embassy on my first full day as a diplomat in Kiev, February 23, 1995. My boss, an intrepid American 30-something former journalist with whom I am staying for a couple of weeks until my apartment is ready, is showing me shortcuts in the walk from her apartment building to work at the Embassy. She is undaunted by walls, gates, interiors, and other normal boundary markers. We duck through archways, into apartment-building courtyards, back out the other side onto the next street. She cuts a good 15 minutes off of her walk to work by going through rather than around buildings and blocks. We pass others doing the same. Folks in the archways and courtyards do not look disturbed to see strangers traversing “their” property; they do not look trespassed against.

Walking down Saksahanskogo Street, a short thoroughfare in the old section of Kiev, is like swimming upstream against a tide of humanity. Everyone else has gotten off trolleys at the end of the line at Lviv'ska Ploshchad' (Lviv Square) and is heading towards us, towards the city center. We are nearly alone in walking against the tide, walking towards the dead end of the road to another courtyard cut-through which will take us to a quiet residential street, down past city government motor pool lot, across from a hospital building and park, to the building that just three and a half years earlier was the regional Communist Party Headquarters (*Raikom*) and is now the chancery of the U.S. Embassy.

I am unbelievably excited. Growing up, learning Russian, hoping to become a diplomat, I never dreamt that the day would come when I could be in a part of the U.S.S.R. and experience life without space or security restrictions. Walking without escort, wherever I wanted, swimming among everyday people doing everyday things like going to work, had been beyond my imagination in the era of Cold War restrictions. I am also immensely curious. What is life like for these newly post-Soviet folk? I had invested years in technologies, like language and diplomatic credentials, that would allow me to get closer to these people, to overcome Cold War boundaries and the dangers I though Cold War formations posed to all of us. I have heard anecdotes from language teachers, read literature, studied histories, drinking in every second-hand source I could. I am intensely curious and I really care about these post-Soviet people, at least as a group; I don't know any individuals yet. I pay close attention to the people streaming by me in their daily routine.

Everyone is wearing boots, an overcoat, and a hat. While colors, shapes, styles, and relative newness vary, I see uniformity in the ensemble of outerwear. It seems everyone got the same memo on how to dress for that morning's weather. The boots might be leather, pseudo-leather, or (on older folks) rubber, but no one is wearing hiking boots, sneakers, loafers, or pumps. Boots, hat, and overcoat: it is only when I return to Ukraine as an anthropologist in 2006 that I realized how standardized daily dress is, how uniformly Kievans switch to dressing for the weather, how strong a marker of "normal" one sends with outer clothing.

Back in 1995, what I found even more than striking than dress, is uniformity of facial expression. My sister, a psychologist, described one symptom of a schizophrenic [American] client as having "flat aspect." The Kievans streaming past me that morning, to my eyes, shared a facial expression so uniform that it almost seemed symptomatic. This "aspect" was not at all flat; I could only think "shell-shocked." Face after face, coming towards me, breath steaming in the 20-degree February air, seemed similar in certain respects. Shell-shocked eyes. Facial expression not flat, not blank, but shell-shocked. What I read, correctly or not, conveyed the sense of a people who had had the rug pulled out from under them, who had been fundamentally shocked by life and then shocked and shocked again in myriad unexpected ways.

I was agnostic about what I would find in Kiev, an attitude that the Ukrainian-American who ran our regional studies orientation back in Washington -- who had been the first President Bush's U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine -- found hard to take. He played a constant two-note refrain of triumphalism ["We won the Cold War," "We defeated Communism," "The captive nation is liberated"] and blame ["Those people [i.e., citizens of independent Ukraine] can't get their act together," "Those people have been

brainwashed by the Communists,” “Those people better get over their Soviet mentality”]. That first morning and subsequent mornings on my rush-hour walk to work, I saw neither a newly liberated people rejoicing in the air of freedom, nor a mob of brainwashed zombies. What I saw on people’s faces that morning was a people who had reached the limits of tolerance for change. “No more,” was what I read in those faces. After shell-shocked, another uniform pattern to the faces struck me: every adult, young and old, had wrinkles or bags of saggy skin hanging down underneath his or her chin. I saw a population who looked like they had all just lost 20 pounds.

My friends Viktor and Alla, the first friends I made in Kiev, confirmed the latter when I asked if I were imagining it. They told me that between independence in December 1991 and 1994, a period when economists coined the term “*gallupuyushaya inflatsiya*,” galloping inflation, to describe prices rising against currency at rates of 1000% per year or more, people still had money but were trying to figure out how to spend it. The trick was to convert cash into a big-ticket item – a refrigerator or television set – that would hold its value. When cash was needed, one could resell the thing at its new, higher price and thereby protect one’s savings against devaluation from inflation. At the same time that people with any savings were looking for durables in which to invest, necessities with short shelf-life were increasingly difficult to find. Soviet-era supply chains were disrupted, and family members spent each day trying to find a shop stocked with edibles.

*Oy Monika! The trick was to go to work and leave your overcoat over your chair, so that your boss could cover for you, say that you were there and had just stepped out of the office. Then you spent the whole day going to any store that you heard had food. It was hard to find fruit, even vegetables or meat, that first year [after the Soviet Union broke up]. If you could find something that would last, like candy or sausage, you bought it. A lot of people didn’t have money, of course. Our rubles [the defunct Soviet currency] were nearly worthless. But even people who had some savings could not find food to buy. People went racing around, spending hours a day in line or telling family members where food was rumored to be, so someone could stand in line there. We all lost 10 kilos.*

The strongest association with “independence” was food disappearing from grocery store shelves. The aspect of a “newly independent” people was not flat but crash-dieted.

Another incident of independence: Two weeks later, when my shipment had arrived and I was ensconced in my own apartment, I hosted an elderly friend of a friend to tea. My Ukrainian teacher at the languages institute had only recently emigrated from Kiev; he and his wife were worried sick about his father, who had a heart condition and no access to nitroglycerine after Soviet medical care was disrupted. They sent some supplies with me, together with the phone number of a neighbor who would be willing to pick them up for him. That was how elderly Pani Olga, their neighbor, came to be sitting in my living room in the diplomatic high-rise in her finest proper daywear, shoes polished and nary a hair out of place, sipping the tea I offered for her trouble. I was also trying to play the role of diplomat hosting respected host-country citizen and had laid out tea, cookies, sugar. What broke my heart, as I stepped out to the kitchen for cream, was

coming back round the corner to see the rigorously polite Pani Olga furtively snatching slices of lemon off the plate and gnawing fruit off the rind with near-compulsive quickness. It was March. It turned out she had not had any citrus for the whole winter. The sight of fresh lemons proved nearly irresistible. Stricken, I send her home with all the fruit I had in the house.

Bessarabskyi Market  
March 4, 1995

Three large covered markets serve this city of three million people. Other, smaller markets dot different neighborhoods, but they are mere concentrations of outdoor stalls, exposed to elements above and mud below; even more importantly, at only the three covered markets does the Ukrainian government assure it checks incoming produce with Geiger counters to screen out food contaminated by the still-radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl' nuclear disaster. In Kiev by 1995, there are also two new genres of retail food outlets. One is a Western-style grocery store, where one can shop for many kinds of processed foods and groceries under one roof, with goods stacked on long rows of shelves open to consumers; and the second is the 24-hour minimarket, something like a 7-11 in the United States. The grocery stores seem like merely larger versions of the minimarkets. They have lots of chewing gum and cookies but little to offer in the way of nutrition. The canned foods that they do carry are all imported from Western Europe or the United States: Heinz ketchup, Helman's mayonnaise. Is the whole country on Ronald Reagan's nutrition plan, where condiments count as vegetables? The only fruit I find in mini-marts or grocery stores is, somewhat inexplicably, bananas and kiwis. I have never eaten kiwis before. Kiwis in dessert tarts, kiwis and banana fruit salad, kiwis as garnish. I grow sick of the taste of kiwi over the next two years that I live in Ukraine. There are two such supermarkets, as far as I can find, in Kiev. Prices are high, Ukrainian clientele, rare. The supermarket charges cash and coin but gives sticks of chewing gum as change at the cash register. My friend Ihor saves two sticks of gum, which the supermarket gives him as the equivalent for 25 kopeks, and uses them to pay a bill the following day. The cashier balks. Ihor insists: if gum is currency to him one day, it should be accepted as currency from him the next. The supermarkets are overpriced, overlit, scantily stocked with imported processed food and empty of local patrons. The atmosphere feels artificial. The food is terrible: processed, expensive, stale. I avoid them.

I check through my other grocery options carefully. Through check and re-check, the covered markets are the only places that I find any vegetables in stock, here at the tail end of winter. The largest of the three markets, Bessarabskyi, is two blocks from my apartment. The salesmen (as all of the sellers are men, with the exception of flower sellers) behind the counters are mostly Armenian, the vegetables, imported from Egypt. Vegetables are priced by kilo and denominated in dollars. Eggplant is \$36 per kilo, roughly \$18 per pound. The average salary of a Kiev office worker, if his or her workplace has the cash to pay its workers, is less than \$200 per month. A pot of ratatouille for four would cost roughly five days' wages, more if made with meat. By contrast, bread stores can be found on nearly every residential block; each has a daily

supply of bread; and bread, denominated in kopeks (Ukrainian cents), costs the equivalent of 20¢ U.S. per half-loaf.<sup>211</sup> People are living on carbohydrates, I imagine.

*Foraging: Feast Days*

Kyiv

International Women's Day (March 8), 1995

I am terribly excited. I am invited to some Ukrainian friends' International Women's Day get-together.<sup>212</sup> When I walk into the one-room living quarters of our hosts, the lush table spread before me belies what one would expect from the exorbitant prices at the food markets. Granted, it is holiday, not everyday, fare; but the very existence of so many different dishes surprises me. I am told that the foods are "typical Ukrainian cuisine." It is early March, ice still on the ground (temperature still "of frost" [*gradusi moroza*], below freezing, as the Ukrainian idiom goes), a couple of months before the earliest local vegetables might appear. I realize that the dishes depended on either wheat, meat, or winter storage crops. Cabbage, carrots, beets, potatoes are the only vegetable matter, and raisins and *kompot*, the dried-fruit ingredients, are the only fruit. The following year, I contribute a fresh pineapple, newly available at the covered markets for those who have the cash. It is the first pineapple any of my mid-30-something year-old friends has had.

May 13, 1995

May 9 is Victory Day, a big holiday in Ukraine every year and even bigger this year at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of driving out the Nazis. I notice at the beginning of the work week after the holiday weekend that everyone in Kiev looks like they just got a tan, compared to the months of pallor I had seen since my arrival in February. The weather had been fine, sunny and cool spring days, but not warm enough to tempt one to sunbathing. One of my consular colleagues laughs. "Well, Monika, you know how everyone celebrates victory day now? Everyone goes to their grandmother's village to plant potatoes." Over the course of the rest of the spring and summer, we joke that post-Soviet Kiev has the best suntanned white-collar workforce in the world.

I make it a habit to ask, and I do not find any Kievan who has family in a village, or has access to land for a small garden plot, that fails to spend weekends planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting. Those who do have village relatives or other access to a garden plot more distant than a weekend round-trip bus seem to make a point of spending at least part of the August work vacation period working in the more distant gardens. At the end of summer and early fall, intracity buses are full of folk on Sunday night carrying back 10-litre jars of preserved peppers, pickled cucumbers, raspberry preserves, or sacks of potatoes, carrots, or beets. The secret of my friends' holiday-laden table becomes a little clearer.

Kyiv

April 18, 1998

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<sup>211</sup> See Chapter 2 on *Khlib* (Bread/Wheat), for analysis of this supply.

<sup>212</sup> The circle of friends whom I met that evening was an "informal kollektiv," subject of Chapter 7 in the second section of this dissertation.

I left my diplomatic posting in Ukraine the summer before, and the following year, I return on vacation to visit, bringing a traveling companion. Friends meet our plane. On the way home from the airport, down the road that I used to walk to work every day, we stop in front of what had been, in my time, a small plumbing-hardware store of empty shelves. It is now a new, small store, something like a miniature supermarket. What a wonder: one used to have to run all over Kiev to find the number of things packed into one store. In response to my curiosity if there's any nostalgia for the old Soviet plumbing store, Vitaly lays that to rest. "No question, we're glad it's here. It's really convenient." The supermarket has a deli counter at which one may buy block or sliced meat and cheese, a dairy case of milk, yoghurt, and sour cream, a bread section, and the usual shelves of imported olives and ketchup. It seems like a combination of the long-life local perishables one could buy in one of Kiev's covered markets and the imported stock of the newly post-Soviet overlit supermarkets, but at accessible prices. Fresh fruit and vegetables are absent, but nonetheless, my friends are enthusiastic. Many Kiev neighborhoods, it seems, now have this kind of "local supermarket."

June 2, 2002

On a research visit back to Ukraine, my friend who has picked me up at the airport stops on the way home, which I realize is becoming a pattern, at a grocery store. This one is enormous. Housed in a new, giant, one-story building, it has a remarkable artifact in front, an artifact I've never seen before in Ukraine: a parking lot. (The only exception was the official parking lot for the Cabinet of Ministers motor pool, opposite my old workplace, the U.S. Embassy, but it was surrounded by a high fence and guards, and was not accessible to private cars nor visible from the street unless the gate swung open to admit an arriving or departing car.) It is after 9 p.m. on a Saturday night. The store is not only still open, it is packed.

I am almost intimidated by throngs of Ukrainian shoppers wielding shopping carts, another innovation, as fearlessly as the busy parking lot would indicate. A Foreign Service friend had once defined for me the difference between First World and Third World: you know you're in the First World if you can see the curvature of the earth down the potato chip aisle. By that measure, Ukraine is now a First World country. Row after row of long shelves, loaded with cans, jars, and boxes, stretch out to refrigerated cases lining the perimeter filled with cuts of meat on shrink-wrapped Styrofoam plates and bordered by displays of fruits and vegetables: in short, a normal grocery store, normal by U.S. expectations. I am astonished.

Kyiv – on Podil

September 22, 2006

I have returned to Ukraine for an extended stay of fieldwork in anthropology. From my rented apartment in a working class neighborhood of older (mostly pre-1900) buildings, I venture out to the neighborhood grocery store. It is sizable, not as large as a suburban U.S. store but more densely shelved. There are foods I have never seen for sale in Ukraine, like several shelves of dried pasta and jars of pasta sauce; and other foods that I have seen, but only in people's kitchens as home-made offerings, like varenniki, now prepared, frozen, and ready to pop into boiling water. The most astonishing thing to me is that all of this prepared food is made in Ukraine. The jars have Ukrainian labeling and

Ukrainian factories of origin. For the first time, I may exist on food prepared in Ukraine that I or a friend have not made from scratch. An entire grocery store of processed vegetables, fruit, and flour products, made in Ukraine. This is an entirely new development, in my experience.

The following week, I learn more from Nikolai Gordichuk. Nikolai is the director of a non-profit organization known by its English-letter acronym, CNFA, Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs. In Ukraine, CNFA has won contracts from USAID for a farmer-to-farmer advising program. CNFA contacts Ukrainian farmers to find out what kinds of consultations on private farming might be useful. Then, via its website, CNFA solicits volunteer American farmers to come to Ukraine to teach their Ukrainian farmer counterparts in the requested area of expertise. CNFA Ukraine had had an American director for its first fifteen years of existence, but just a month before my arrival had handed the Ukraine operation over to its first Ukrainian director, Nikolai. Nikolai is relatively young, under 30, urbane, and well-spoken in English. As it turns out, Nikolai built his resumé with a first job out of college working as a translator for a Swedish food processing concern, Sandora. I recognize the name from the fruit juice boxes in my neighborhood grocery store.

*Yes, Sandora was the first one, actually, to process food in Ukraine. I was the third employee, after the two young Swedish guys who founded it.*

*How did it get started? Those two guys came to Ukraine, saw lots of vegetables and fruits and no local processed food in the grocery stores. They built a food processing plant in south Central Ukraine and bought Ukrainian fruits and vegetables for it. I was their translator from the beginning. The company is now huge. All those jars of pasta sauce, jam, boxes of fruit juice, that's all Sandora. The number of food processing companies is still relatively small compared to other countries the size of Ukraine. Now there are competitors within Ukraine, though. Sandora was first and is still one of the largest in most categories.*

I heard that the vegetable sector is the most productive sector in Ukrainian agriculture, because people have private plots now. Is it the boom in vegetables from privatization that's driving the development of the processed foods industry?

*It's interesting. They make all the things that people make for themselves: jam, sauce, preserves for winter. It's the grocery stores in the city that are creating the demand for processed foods. And why are there grocery stores in the city? Because of all of the people who have left the farm.*

I realize the success of Sandora and other new Ukrainian food processing companies filling the store shelves of Kiev, and, in fact, the existence of the store shelves themselves, are indeed "because of" private property, because of decollectivization.



There is a link, but not the one I had originally proposed to Nikolai. Decollectivization is not first driving a boom in village production. It's driving a boom in urban consumption. The explanation is not in more supply, it is in more demand.

The revival of dependence on rural domestic arts seems a throwback to pre-Revolutionary economic organization as analyzed by Kollontai.<sup>213</sup> "In our grandmother's day," peasant women's labour – cooking, washing, cleaning, mending, spinning wool and linen, weaving cloth and garments, knitting stockings, making lace, preparing pickles, jams, and other preserves for winter, manufacturing candles – was necessary to the family and beneficial to the national economy.<sup>214</sup> In the industrial age, however, machines and mass production could make clothing and process food more efficiently than women. Women's labor for family good was less efficient and wasted her time. Moreover, she produced for a household that consumed but did not produce anything of value for the wider *kollektiv*; the family (and women's obligations to labor for and maintain it) had outlived its usefulness for society. By these arguments, Kollontai added her voice to those in the Bol'shevik government pressing for industrialization of food processing, bread baking, and clothes-making. The state would provide them for society, instead of woman doing the same for the family.<sup>215</sup>

The effects of Kollontai's analysis and Soviet response has lasted, to some extent. In the village in 2009, people only wore machine-made clothes, most made in China and imported through the giant port of Odessa in southern Ukraine. Hand-woven flax linen and hand-loomed cloth was considered a rarity and a true hand-craft, available only at the folk art market in Kyiv for dear prices. Some forms of local knowledge and practice, like spinning, weaving, and baking had fallen into desuetude. One point of Kollontai's program did not stand the test of time, however. In regards to fruit and vegetable production, the village household feeds itself and most of the nation.

After the Soviet Union fell apart, household autarky flourished as provision of foodstuffs under the former state networks and systems faltered. Food distribution networks from state farms serving urban markets and workplace cafeterias feeding urban workers in state-enterprise proved unreliable when the state that had provided them disappeared. Village family gardens, root crops, and preserves sustained urban and rural household alike. In some cases, family networks grew more closely entwined with the steady visits of city relatives to the countryside for food.

Of course, increased contact does not always result in increased appreciation. My colleague Oleh, the chief assistant in the political section, is in a horrible temper because he has had to spend this weekend with his mother-in-law, towards whom he expresses sincere-sounding hatred, because she has a garden plot of two hectares outside the city. Oleh rides a city bus four hours outside of Kiev to his in-laws plot every Friday night, where he, his wife, and his young son spend every weekend gardening to raise enough vegetables for their winter supply. He spends the first few days of every workweek rehashing his ire at his mother-in-law. I heard a similar resentment, milder in tone but not unlike in kind, on the other side of the urban-rural relationship from a housewife in a village an hour south of Kyiv in October 2007. *Look at our carrots. Potatoes! Beets!* Pani Marta said to me proudly, showing off her early-autumn root cellar. All of the

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<sup>213</sup> See Chapter 2, *Khlib* (Bread/Wheat), for more on Kollontai and her program.

<sup>214</sup> Alexandra Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*, 253–254.

<sup>215</sup> See generally, Alexandra Kollontai, *Communism and the Family*.

vegetables filling the bins in her cellar were grown by her and her husband, both of whom looked to be no younger than in their late 60s, in the plot roughly 15 yards wide and 40 yards long stretching behind their house.

What do you do with them? Wait for winter prices in Kiev and sell them?  
*No way! We feed them to our pigs and cow. Our daughter and grandkids in town always want to come out to see us in the autumn, but I told them not to come. They take carrots by the sackload! They don't forget potatoes or beets either. We need them for the livestock.*

The Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991. Household autarky in winter food provision flourished through the 1990s. The setting changed with the passage of the new Land Code in 2001 legalizing private property ownership and dissolving the collective farms. Villagers subsequently abandoned village and property in droves and moved to cities. According to Nikolai Gordichuk, that was what prompted the construction of urban supermarkets, which, in turn, provided retail outlet and profit motive for domestic food processors like Sandora. The period of urban reliance on village extended family for winter provisions, what I call the period of household autarky, waned. Patterns of village vegetable production and storage for village needs, however, remained.

#### *Svitofor and "Second Bread"*

In Gruzenskoye, the northern Ukrainian village that we visited with Suzanna in 2009, Tyotyia Dyusya (Aunti Dyusysa) runs a tight ship. She herself stays busy with household food cultivation, harvest, preservation, or preparation from the time she wakes, before 6 a.m., until she goes to bed after 10 p.m. Tyotyia Dyusya is 72. I have not seen her sit down, except to milk a cow or to eat. She makes sure the two men, her husband Dyadya Lyonya and her son Valeriy, never slack off either. Like every other family in the village, they keep a small vegetable garden behind the back fence of their yard. In late September, it is still producing tomatoes, green peppers, and cucumbers, but Tyotyia Dyusya knows the days are numbered for fresh vegetables. The family takes care to eat fresh vegetables at every lunch and dinner, and often at breakfast as well, both to relish the sense of the fresh and raw and to ensure that no produce from the garden spoils. She inspects each plant every day for ripe vegetables, leaf rot, or insect pests. Any vegetables not eaten immediately are preserved, "canned" in big jars, for winter: cucumber pickles with dill, stewed tomatoes, and preserved green and red peppers. In addition to the fresh vegetables, the family harvests gourds, both squash and pumpkin, by the score and stores them in a giant heap in the kitchen-yard. Valeriy, Suzanna's cousin, was an all-Soviet champion distance runner. Now, a quarter-century later, Valeriy is still health-conscious and nutrition-educated. *Every day, Monika. One traffic light every day.* When I ask him to explain, he repeats what his Soviet coaches taught him: the human organism needs to eat at least one fresh fruit or vegetable of each color of the traffic light – one red, one green, one gold – every day.

Their pile of pumpkins reminds me of a bit of Ukrainian folklore that I only learned the punchline of but never the origin. In Ukrainian language lessons at the diplomatic languages institute in Washington back in 1994, my recent-émigré teacher had

told me in passing that a pumpkin can have a particular significance in a Ukrainian village. If a man proposes marriage to a woman and she wants to refuse him, she sends him home with a pumpkin. I had forgotten all about this after I had left for Kiev, an urbane and bustling city where village customs seemed of a different country. As I was hustling home from the nearest vegetable market one day, hauling a big (at least big compared to me) pumpkin home to bake for friends, one of the market sellers called out in a voice that echoed throughout the large cavernous space, *Divchinko!* (Maiden!) *Komu harbuz?* (Who's getting the pumpkin?) The entire row of (male) sellers roared with laughter. I was happy just to get the joke, and to fit in enough to be joked with.

Amid the waning days of Indian summer in Gruzenskoye, the family is busy with all of its vegetables, but the preoccupation is with digging potatoes. The family has sown two rows of potatoes in its "garden," meaning the family vegetable plot adjacent to the chicken yard. In addition to the garden, this and every family of the village has a "plot" (*pai*). The "plot" is the share of the former collective farm's fields that this family received in decollectivization and privatization – meaning, division and distribution of capital stock – of the collective farm property. Tyotyа Dyusyа has sown the family plot with potatoes. Roughly 6 rows wide and 40 yards long, the plot stretches out in a long strip on the former collective farm fields behind their family's section of the Y. Tyotyа Dyusyа planted it completely with potatoes. The above-ground plants are gone at this point in the growing cycle. The remaining work is to dig, carefully so as not to pierce the skin and invite mid-winter rot, through loosened dirt to find the potatoes beneath the soil. Digging potatoes requires bending, concentrating, lifting; it is tiring work. Anytime that Dyadyа Lyonya looks like he is not busying himself with a chore around the yard, Tyotyа Dyusyа sends him to the potato field. He never plays hooky, never goes to visit friends or sit by the stream. She will know from the fullness of the potato bucket if he has used his time as directed. What's more, the whole family is fully cognizant that they depend on the potato crop to see them through the winter.

Potatoes were originally introduced to the Russian Empire as a matter of food security, to serve as substitute staple for times when grain harvests failed. Grown in small quantities through the middle years of the eighteenth century (perhaps brought by men returning from Prussia after the Seven Years' War), potatoes became a matter of state policy with the Senate instruction of 1765 commanding widespread potato cultivation. The Imperial Senate took action after the College of Medicine (another Imperial institution) linked more frequent incidence of disease in some regions to the periodic grain failures those regions suffered.<sup>216</sup> While its spread slowly, by 1907, an English traveler described the potato as one of four main elements of the Russian peasant diet.<sup>217</sup> Analyzing peasant subsistence and agriculture in parts of the Russian empire that included Ukrainian provinces around the turn of the twentieth century, A.V. Chayanov calculated that, while it had become indispensable, the potato was a bad bargain for laboring peasants.<sup>218</sup> It is nutritionally poorer than the grains that had made up the

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<sup>216</sup> *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossisskoi Imperii* [Full Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire], vol. XVII no. 12,406 (31 May 1765, cited in R.E.F. SMITH AND DAVID CHRISTIAN, *BREAD AND SALT: A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF FOOD AND DRINK IN RUSSIA* 199 AND 199 N. 119 (1984).

<sup>217</sup> H.P. KENNARD, *THE RUSSIAN PEASANT* 80 (1907) cited in R.E.F. SMITH AND DAVID CHRISTIAN, *BREAD AND SALT: A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF FOOD AND DRINK IN RUSSIA* 251 (1984).

<sup>218</sup> A.V. Chayanov's analysis, *synthesized from* A.V. CHAYANOV, A.V. CHAYANOV ON THE THEORY OF PEASANT ECONOMY 155 (D. Thorner, R.E.F. Smith, and B. Kerblay, eds., 1966), in R.E.F. SMITH AND

basis of the European dietary regime. It was one of the intensive crops to which peasants turned only due to land pressure. For peasants, it meant an increase in the labor expended for subsistence. From the point of view of the landlord, though, the potato was advantageous. It required less land to produce the same amount of calories as grain, so less land had to be taken out of commercial crop production in order to feed the same amount of labor power. This increase on the intensive margin was accomplished with a great expenditure of peasant labor, what Chayanov called increased “self-exploitation” by the peasant. Smith and Christian point out that the peasant who cultivated his or her own plot benefited from that same intensification: the potato yields more food-energy per hectare, is packed with carbohydrates, contains some protein, and, importantly in climes with short winter days and long months without fresh vegetables, even holds significant amounts of vitamin C.<sup>219</sup>

This subsistence strategy survives into the present and may even have become more important to rural residents after the dissolution of the Soviet state and subsequent unraveling of food production, processing, and distribution networks. According to the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, household production of potatoes accounts for more agricultural production, measured by weight, than any other single crop. In 2003, for example, Ukrainian village families produced 18,190 tons of potatoes; the next closest crop total was grains, produced by corporate farming, at 14,596.<sup>220</sup> The total number of mechanized “potato harvesters”<sup>221</sup> available to the 10-17 million-strong rural population,<sup>222</sup> by official 2003 statistics, was 188.<sup>223</sup> In other words, Ukrainian village families dig, pick up, and carry home roughly 18,000 tons of potatoes by hand every year. This is a level of horticultural exertion unknown in most countries practicing industrialized agriculture. In Gruzenskoye, we consume potatoes at every lunch and every dinner, boiled, mashed, or cut into soups, stews, or borsch. The potato is not just an optional staple. It is an indispensable ingredient. Most of the dishes that Tyotyа Dyusya makes include potatoes as a main ingredient. It seems that she would run out of “things to cook,” recipes that she knows and relies on, within a matter of very few days if she had to exclude potatoes. The potatoes, fresh from the garden, taste sweet and nutty to me. By mid-winter, even village potatoes can taste tough or old, but they are prized perhaps even more in those months of long nights and below-zero days.

The potato is called in Ukrainian idiom “*druhiy khlib*,” second bread. I wonder the history of this region, the breadbasket of Europe, in which the New-World import surpassed the Old World grain as dietary staple; and I wonder about the poverty of a

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DAVID CHRISTIAN, *BREAD AND SALT: A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF FOOD AND DRINK IN RUSSIA* 279 (1984).

<sup>219</sup> R.E.F. SMITH AND DAVID CHRISTIAN, *BREAD AND SALT: A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF FOOD AND DRINK IN RUSSIA* 279 (1984).

<sup>220</sup> Ray Morton et al., *Graphic of Production of Main Crops in Large Agricultural Enterprises and in Households, 2003, State Statistics Committee of Ukraine*, in *FARM REFERENCE HANDBOOK FOR UKRAINE* 22 (USAID Ukraine 2005).

<sup>221</sup> A “potato harvester” is a tractor-combine specifically designed to turn up subsoil potatoes for harvest.

<sup>222</sup> The rural population may be counted between 10-17 million, depending on whether or not one includes those rural outmigrants still “officially registered” at a village residence. Chapter 6 on mobility describes this phenomenon in greater detail.

<sup>223</sup> Morton et. al., *FARM REFERENCE HANDBOOK FOR UKRAINE*, 18 (USAID Ukraine 2005).

countryside that substitutes the labor-intensive, home-grown potato for bread which is subsidized and available at pennies per serving.

*Teplitsi: Greenhouses and the New Shelter in the Countryside*

The newest development in fruit and vegetable growing is urban greenhouses, Nikolai told me. Natural gas, imported from Russia, is relatively cheap in Ukraine. Certainly as an input cost, it beats the energy costs of growing and transporting fresh food to Ukraine from warmer climes in the winter. Soviet agriculture had used some greenhouses; one can still see the shards of glass houses gone to ruin in abandoned collectives all across the countryside. The new greenhouses are especially thick glass, imported from Scandinavia. Villagers in central Ukraine were erecting greenhouses as big as the family plot, up to a hectare in size. The greenhouse companies themselves had started offering financing directly to villagers. The farmers could pay off the cost of the greenhouse within two years; by the third year, they were clearing US\$ 100,000 per year in income. “Can you believe that?” Nikolai asked me. “Someone has to feed all those village kids in the city.”

*The Household, the Garden, and the Limits of Surveillance*

Back in Gruzenskoye in September 2009, the rest of the village is involved in digging potatoes from their own gardens. Because potatoes are planted in back of homes, where fences are not plank but rather split-rail, picket, or wattle, digging potatoes is a public exercise visible to each other, to “the public.” Coming back to the village from searching the forest for mushrooms, we meet Tyotyia Dusya on the road from her potato field. Walking together into the village, we stop to say hello to neighbors next to whose back yard our path travels. We smile at them through, and over, the split-rail fence. They smile curiously at me, the newcomer, although when we’re introduced they clearly already know who I am. He’s in dungarees and a sweater; she’s in village uniform of sweater and headscarf, although unlike the older women who wear skirts even in the fields, she has on a tracksuit. They are 45 and brimming over with happiness: their first grandchild was born the day before, to their daughter who now lives in the city. They have to wait the customary two weeks until the maternity hospital releases mother and child before they will travel to see the baby. In the meantime, they are industriously digging potatoes to bring the crop in before they start baby visits. This man was the village high school teacher and is now the town mayor, he admits with a shy smile when prompted by Tyotyia Dusya.

When we continue on our way, Tyotyia Dusya proudly confides to me she was the village king-maker, taking credit for picking the village teacher man to stand for election. “This new one, he’s letting me down just like the last one did, but no one else will do it.”<sup>224</sup> In fact, in this village of now 400 residents, with eighteen years of post-Soviet political restructuring and ten years since decollectivization, constraints on concentration of power and structures favoring egalitarianism were strong. The first “mayor” [*meiyor*] (as they called the chairman of the village *soviet* [council] after Soviet power passed) after the Soviet Union dissolved sports a new brick second story in a village of wooden one-story cottages, satellite dish gleaming on the roof over others’ antennas and car

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<sup>224</sup> Interview with Tyotyia Dusya, farmer and former head of dairy production for the collective farm, Gruzneske village, Sumi oblast’, Ukraine (September 20, 2009).

sitting in the drive. Now that most of the collective farm assets have been divvied up and there is little wiggle room for private gain, it is getting even harder to scare up volunteers to run for local office, Tyotyia Dusya tells me. Avoidance of political office and structured political power: is this egalitarianism?

Others in the village attest to the more recent “egalitarian” experience of political power. Serhiy, one of the few other car owners in this hard-scrabble northern village, has been drafted into driving me to the train station five miles away because he regularly receives free milk from my hosts’ cows. “So, you used to be head of the village council?” I ask Serhiy. “Yep, 2002-2006. First and last time,” he smiles, his gold molar replacements gleaming. It was a “thankless job”: “all our resources go to Kyiv and no help comes back. Somehow you have to do something with this impossible situation, you want to and everyone expects you to.”<sup>225</sup> This was a strange result of multiparty democracy and the dissolution of a unified village economic organization. Elections in their village were free, everyone agreed, but no one really wanted to hold office. In a village that had suffered serious trauma still within folkloric memory of local residents from collectivization and local abuses of power, residents were not complaining too much at this turn of affairs.

We had seen the mayor and his spouse digging potatoes as Tyotyia Dusya came back home from digging her own, and she remarked approvingly on his work ethic. The same publicity that yields public approbation also constrains harvest. Visibility counts heavily among a population on foot. During early autumn, a season which feels like a race against time, a race against frost which spoils potatoes and makes the ground too hard to dig, the family has to interrupt potato-digging frequently. When Suzanna and I want to go dig potatoes, to help this elderly couple put in their store for winter, this day is inappropriate because it’s Sunday. It’s improper to work in the fields on the Sabbath. The next day is inappropriate because it’s a holy day, some saint’s day. Which one? *I don’t know, Monika. We don’t go to church and I don’t have any idea about saints and days.* But it is still not a day when we can go dig potatoes? Why not? *We can’t go [walk] to the field when other people are going [are walking] to church. It doesn’t look right.* [In Tyotyia Dyusya’s mixed Ukrainian and Russian, *My ne mozhemo tudi khoditi koli inshi ludi khoyat’ v tservu. Eto ne krasivo*, “It’s not pretty.”]

It is difficult to find things to do on the church days, because most work this time of year is outside. Valeriy, fighting a tendency to alcoholism that has dominated most of his adult life, seems particularly ill-at-ease and lost. I had noticed that he, the former all-Soviet *sportsmyen*, had absented himself for a long run through the woods every time an occasion approached at which we as a group might imbibe alcohol: at a welcome meeting for me and Suzanna, at the beginning of dinner. Suzanna was even careful to sound out her aunt and uncle about Valeriy’s sobriety before we arranging for our visit to the village, because Valeriy is apparently a very nasty drunk and when he goes on a bender, it can last for a couple of staggering weeks. He is clean and sober when we are with the family, and seems to keep himself constantly busy either with farmwork, mushrooming, fishing, or going out for hours-long runs through the forest. The holiday seems to weigh heavily on him, though. “It doesn’t look right.” Unable to keep himself occupied with his usual outdoor work, he seems ancy. It is not hard to imagine him

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<sup>225</sup> Interview with Serhiy Khlib, farmer and former town mayor, Gruzneske village, Sumi oblast’, Ukraine (September 21, 2009).

falling off the wagon. I wonder how the winter is for him, with more confinement, less work, and more frequent holy days. Tyotyia Dyusya keeps her men in order, directing farmwork, chiding idleness, keeping a close eye on the workload and her labor force; but she does not, apparently, ostracize Valeriy when he grows drunk and abusive. Surveillance within and without the family has both its disciplinary effects and its limits.

*The individual, the household, and the imagined collective*

When I'm back in Kyiv in September 2009, I get together with Nikolai Gordichuk for coffee. He had quit CNFA in February 2007 to go into business for himself as an agricultural consultant. In the last two and half years, Nikolai, now 32, has established himself as a specialist in commercial potato farming. *95% of Ukrainian potatoes, if not more, are grown by village households*, he tells me. *The food processing industry is doing almost nothing with them. Kraft is making potato chips; they are the only ones, practically, doing anything with potatoes.* Nikolai's vision for food processing is Kollontai-esque in scope. Ukrainians consider raw potatoes indigestible for humans. Nikolai complains that, in addition to being grown by households, Ukraine's potato crop is processed for consumption nearly exclusively through the hand-labor of Ukrainian women in kitchens. The peeling, cutting, chopping, boiling, baking, frying of potatoes that Ukrainian women undertake excites him to an extent that seems palpable in Kollontai's writing too. It almost seems to get on his nerves. The difference with Kollontai is that where she looked at women's domestic labor in food processing and saw inefficient use of a potential proletariat and costs to society, Nikolai sees unused efficacies of economies of scale in industrial potato processing that translates into untapped market share. The collective with whom Kollontai and experts of her generation were preoccupied is something she called "society" and "country." The collective with whom Nikolai and experts of his generation are preoccupied is something he calls "the market."

Nikolai's "market" consists of "supply" and "demand," terms the content of which seems self-evident to him. There is obviously demand; people eat potatoes at every meal. There is obviously supply; village households feed themselves and produce enough beyond their own subsistence needs to supply urban populations with potatoes. Farmers get reasonable prices for potatoes; they can sell them all winter and need not depend on fresh supplies to take to market as they do peppers, tomatoes, or cucumbers; factors are aligned to "incentivize" potato production.

Back in the village, the "supply" side seems more complicated and less obvious. On the train to Gruzenskoye, Suzanna tells me that her aunt and uncle are well-known and respected in the village. Her aunt had been a milkmaid for the collective farm's dairy shed and had risen to head of the dairy before the Soviet period ended. Her uncle had worked at a factory in a town five-miles walk from the village for most of his working life before "retiring" [*idti na pensii*, "going on pension"], which is what they called the life of laborious horticulture he leads. The factory where he worked had employed a fair share of the men his age in the village and he still got together with three of his former colleagues, now cronies, to swap stories and split a bottle of vodka for three hours every Sunday morning. Despite long ties and mostly favorable reputation in their former *kollektiv*, life could be unpleasant sometimes these days for her auntie and uncle, Suzanna continued. Tyotyia Dusya had related several times over the past few years tales of

particular incidents or generally testy relations with old friends and neighbors. *They are jealous*, Suzanna explains. *Tyotyia Dyusya and Dyadya Lyonya are workers. They started with a cow. They now have two. They plant their whole plot with potatoes, which is no small feat for a couple in their seventies. They do well for themselves.* Suzanna continues, *The other villagers are lazy. They don't do as much. They don't do as well. They resent Tyotyia Dyusya and Dyadya Lyonya for their hard work.*

I take this as the report of a loving city niece. I wonder what I'll find in the village. I resolve to check. Sure enough, when we go out to the former collective farm's fields behind their branch of the Y, now divided into long skinny plots given out to each family, Tyotyia Dyusya and Dyadya Lyonya's plot is tilled into neat rows under which are the autumn harvest of potatoes waiting to be harvested. Every other section of the expanse of former fields is uncultivated. Where every family keeps a garden, no one else in this third of the village is keeping a plot. The rest of the field of other families' plots is grown over with weeds. These villagers came from the same milieu as Tyotyia Dyusya and Dyadya Lyonya. They neither believe more nor less in the wisdom of market reforms; have no less expertise in growing potatoes (and some must have had Soviet agricultural experience that gave them more expertise); have no less exposure to the goodies that money can buy or to the insecurities of winter food stores. "Supply," "demand," "incentives" all seem too generic to explain why Auntie Dyusya and Uncle Lyonya spend every day save holy days this autumn bent over uncovering potatoes and hauling them home. At the very least, "supply," "demand," and "incentives" do not explain what I am left wondering about the village. Why some work more and some less, some run for office and some do not, some drink and other practice moderation, is not always clear.



## Chapter 5

### Honey, Mushrooms, Berries: The Wild, the Domestic, and the Right to Roam

*Gathering on the way Home*

Gruzenskoye, September 18, 2009

We are walking from the train station in the nearest town home to the village of Gruzenskoye.<sup>226</sup> Valeriy, Suzanna's cousin, rode his bicycle the 5 miles into town and escorted us back on foot: down a paved road through the woods, then on footpaths across meadows where the village herd was grazing, to the village itself. The meadows mix with pine forest just before the edge of the former collective farm fields that ring one side of the village. The hour it takes to walk from the train station goes quickly with chatting and catching up. Engrossed though we are with talk, Valeriy doesn't miss a trick. The day we arrive is fine, warm and dry, though the village had rain two days earlier. Though absorbed in conversation, unbeknownst to me, Valeriy is also scouring the ground with his eyes as we talk. "Oh!" he interrupts himself midsentence, crouching to the ground. "What a beauty." He has spotted a gorgeous, fat, fresh mushroom, the size of fingerling potato, on the outskirts of the village, just next to the path we're treading. The mushrooms spring up in the fall, capable of reaching full size in a day's growth, and going soft and rotting within a day or two thereafter. Valeriy inspects this one briefly before deciding it could grow a little more over night. He carefully covers it with a few dry leaves to keep the keen eyes of his fellow villagers from spotting it in the meantime.

The next morning when I sleepily exit to the courtyard, Valeriy greets me with a proud look. "Monika, remember yesterday's beauty?," he asks, displaying his catch. It is the mushroom from the path yesterday, fragrant, even fatter than it was, mouthwatering. On the way home from his daily 6 a.m. trek to the stream running through the pasture to catch a string of fish, Valeriy returned to the very spot, an undistinguished inch in the hour-long walk we'd traversed, and found his camouflage had succeeded. Neither cowherd or other neighbors who had passed by the previous evening had spotted it. Tyotyа Dusya adds it to a pile she has on the table in the back courtyard, ready to be cleaned, sliced, and dried as winter provision.

Mushrooms are one of the points of intersection between human and nature, the cultivated and the found. topography and practice. Valeriy, like other mushroomers, treats his knowledge of places to find mushrooms as a kind of "trade secret," carefully kept. His finds exist on the margin of human action and intention, not planted but, when necessary, concealed. The ways that "wild foods," "products of nature," form daily practices and inform ideational formations is the subject of this chapter. Specifically, in this chapter, I look at practices of hunting and gathering in contemporary Ukraine to gain insight into how post-Soviet Ukrainians mentally map space and nature.

"Nature" assumes an interesting form in the vocabulary of legal concepts articulated by a capitalist economy. As I explore briefly in the first section of this chapter, "nature" in Anglo-American legal thought exists against a background of property claimed by separable owners, which leads to a certain vernacular landscape of fences and plots. In subsequent sections, practices of hunting and gathering—namely, procuring honey, mushrooms, and berries -- give insight into an experience of property

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<sup>226</sup> The period of observation was September 18-21, 2009.

that produces valued goods yet does not come from an ideology of scarcity, claim, and divided ownership. Finally, evidence from these domains of practice inform a discussion into topographies of nature; property and practice; the conditions of possibility for a right to roam and the personhood of traversing space; and constraints on the circulation of knowledge in public space and privacy in open air, like the trade secrets of mushrooming. This will inform some thoughts on public and private, space and sanctuary, which will be developed further in chapters of the second half of this dissertation on shelter.

*Honey: Discourses of Purity and the Local in pre-processed Food*

The urban myth going around Kyiv in the autumn of 2006 made a curious link between beekeeping and survival in politics. When Viktor Yushchenko, as opposition leader, was poisoned during his campaign for the presidency in 2004, some predicted he would not live through it. In a sinister detail seeming more of fairy tale than news, Yushchenko's wife reported that she could smell the poison on his breath when he kissed her the night he came back from dining with the Minister of Internal Affairs and the SBU (KGB successor organization).<sup>227</sup> The next morning, Yushchenko was rushed to hospital in a state of medical emergency. From Ukrainian hospital, Yushchenko was flown to an Austrian hospital where a team of doctors ascertained that he had a possibly lethal amount of the poison dioxin in his system. Yushchenko spent three weeks in treatment before returning to Ukraine to campaign. Over the subsequent three months, political drama gripped the nation's attention: elections that appeared rigged; a quarter of a million people taking to the streets to protest in that demonstration of populist energy called the "Orange Revolution"; the Ukrainian Supreme Court ordering new elections; parliament passing Constitutional reforms that would strip the presidency of power over domestic policy and prime ministerial appointment, rendering any victory by Orange forces pyrrhic; and Yushchenko winning the emasculated presidency in the new elections. Over the course of these months, Yushchenko's health appeared increasingly frail, his voice weak, his movie-star looks increasingly marred as disfiguring pocks marked his face, all consequences proximately linked to dioxin poisoning. Expert medical opinion informed the public that dioxin stays in the body, its cumulative effects growing worse over time. Yushchenko's public visage seemed to bear witness to increasingly failing health.

However, when I arrived in Ukraine for fieldwork in 2006, Yushchenko had survived and his health, seemingly stabilized. Though pock-marked and disfigured, Yushchenko had regained stamina. Pro-Yanukovych Kyivans, those who opposed Yushchenko and his party in the 2004 elections, grumbled this was proof that the "poisoning" was a hoax. Anti-Yanukovych folk grumbled that in the summer political stalemate – when Orange forces failed to reach a coalition deal to name an Orange Prime Minister after March 2006 parliamentary elections – Yushchenko was unhelpfully absent. A political observer at the U.S. embassy told me, "You know, Yushchenko is a beekeeper by hobby and he spent 'way too much time this past summer out at the hives."<sup>228</sup> This

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<sup>227</sup> Mark Ellis, *I Could Taste Poison in my Husband's Kiss*; *Leader's Wife Tells of 'Plot*, THE MIRROR (London, England), December 11, 2004. available at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/I+could+taste+poison+in+my+husband%27s+kiss%3B+LEADER%27S+WIFE+TELLS+OF...-a0126027122>, last viewed April 22, 2010. (Article reprinted in Appendix).

<sup>228</sup> Interview with analyst at U.S. Embassy Kiev, John Smith, October 22, 2009.

was not a euphemism. Yushchenko had absented himself out at his dacha, his country cottage, tending to his beehives, and in his absence, his Orange partners had feuded amongst themselves for supremacy until Yanukovich cut a deal with some of them for the votes in parliament that would make him Prime Minister. Time spent away beekeeping was one factor attributed to President Yushchenko's having to accept Yanukovich, the man aligned with the forces who poisoned Yushchenko, as Prime Minister.

More curious was the palliative effects ascribed to Yushchenko's passion for beekeeping. "You know, Monika," one Kyiv insider whispered to me over coffee, "those damn bees are the only reason he survived the dioxin." What are you talking about? "Any beekeeper, no matter how careful, gets stung. Over a lifetime, beekeepers develop some resistance; they are less affected by each sting. They say [*Govoryat*] that it is only this lifetime of getting stung and that gave Yushchenko's organism anti-toxins strong enough to resist amounts of dioxin that would kill a normal person."<sup>229</sup>

Before industrial sugar beet refining developed in Ukraine in the 1800s, honey was the primary (and practically sole) sweetener for Ukrainian cuisine. In the conceptualization of medicinal properties for which honey is prized, the locale is valorized. Honey is good for the human organism specifically because bees gather local pollen. They make the consumer of honey less susceptible to pollen and food allergies and they create immunity against local pathogens.<sup>230</sup> The Yushchenko legend iterates health effects one step better: bee-stings themselves make beekeepers less susceptible to stings and toxins.

Ukrainians identify beekeeping as "traditional Ukrainian." Unlike some other activities like cattle herding, fishing, or hunting, in regard to which they make no distinction from Russian or Polish traditions, regardless of ethnicity, residents of Ukraine identify beekeeping as "Ukrainian," traditional, primordial. The archeological record attests there is some veracity to a belief in the ancient-ness of Ukrainian beekeeping. Beehives and honey separators have been found in Ukrainian archeological sites predating the founding of an urban-based river-trading polity in Kiev, before the sixth century A.D. The design of honey separators is particularly archaic: the honey separator used by Ukrainian beekeepers today has not changed from the earliest found by archeologists. By ideology and material culture, beekeeping is a village activity that both villagers and urbanites experience as a link to the pre-historic past. Beekeeping as a hobby was interpreted by even the most cynical as a sign of Yushchenko's authentic "Ukrainianness." For some residents of Ukraine who do not identify with Ukrainian language or ethnicity, Yushchenko's public observance of ethnically Ukrainian folk customs -- like wearing traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts or jumping through a bonfire on St. John's feastnight -- marked him as a member of a group that excluded them, a group to whom they ascribed pogroms in the past or separatism from Russia in the present.

Compared with its firm place in the ambivalent discursive fields around post-Soviet "Ukrainianness," the physical space that beekeeping occupies in Ukrainian village life is no less interesting. Bees are kept in man-made hives, within the fenced courtyard

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<sup>229</sup> Interview with Hrihoriy Yel'mak (pseudonym), Kyiv political affairs think-tank analyst (February 23, 2007).

<sup>230</sup> Interview with Petro Ivananko, beekeeper in L'viv (August 3, 2007).

of the family home (or monastery, with the post-Soviet reappearance of monastic culture); they are managed, and management of bees is subject to a large amount of discussion and press in interested circles. At the same time, bees are acknowledged as wild, and their value lies in their ability to gather from the wild and convert wild products for human consumption.

*Mushrooms: Comparative Topographies of Experience*

The day after we arrived in Gruzenskoye, Valeriy and Suzanna took me out mushrooming in the pine forest surrounding the village. I contrasted that afternoon with my last experience mushrooming. In September 2007, I traveled with two friends from Kyiv to observe fall mushrooming in the Carpathian mountains on the southwestern edge of Ukraine, where mushrooms of mythic fragrance and tastiness are gathered. We had hiked up dirt tire tracks out of the village, straight up the steep side out of the valley, and into a thick pine, beech, and oak forest. We kept our eyes peeled for mushrooms, but even more, I kept my eyes peeled for mushroomers. I was there to try to observe how Ukrainians use “public property,” and what kind of “property rights” they assert over wild goods like mushrooms. Carpathian mushrooms, dried and sold by the giant glass jar-full at the side of the road, fetch a decent price for villagers, a supplement to fall income after summer tourism has dropped off. Forests are considered national, or state, property, and thereby belong to every Ukrainian citizen. I wanted to see how those citizens apportion valuable fruits of the forest that could be available to any taker. We were delighted with ourselves when we finally spotted mushrooms and wood fungi, but we were not so foolhardy as to harvest. Of the three of us novices, the most knowledgeable knew enough to repeat the proverb that the more visible the mushroom, the more deadly the poison. Newspapers had carried a story of three family members from a small city in Western Ukraine who had died of mushroom poisoning after a family meal the previous week. We spotted mushrooms that we thought were poisonous, with brilliant red caps, and mushrooms that we were pretty sure were edible, *pidpinkii* (“under-pines”), but we left them all alone. With some glee, I found stems of mushrooms that had been freshly chopped, evidence that gatherers whom I hoped to observe were taking advantage of the mild afternoon to harvest. Finally, we came upon a couple tramping through the forest on the path coming towards us with a cloth bag, slung over the shoulder, bulging. They eyed us with friendly suspicion. I, the shameless anthropologist, hailed them, asking them if they were mushrooming and if I could pose some questions. They relaxed their guard when they realized we were from far-off Kyiv, foreigners, unlikely to return on frequent future trips and not angling for mushrooms ourselves on this trip, and even more when they learned that the woman of the couple shared a first name, Orysia, with the most knowledgeable of our threesome.

“How do you find mushrooms?” I asked. This seemed to strike them as a disarmingly (ridiculously?) novice question. *You know where they like to live, near which trees or which bushes. You just walk and walk and keep your eyes peeled, especially when you’re near the kind of place they like to be. Most people around here also keep track of hribnitsva [mushroom patches], where their favorite mushrooms are apt to grow year after year.* “Then how do you decide whose mushrooms they are, up here in the public forest?” The couple exchanged a look and suppressed smiles. *Ummm,*

*you know, there are lots of mushrooms. There's no shortage of mushrooms. Anyone who wants any can take some. Even non-Ukrainians? Whyever not?! We have enough mushrooms in our mountains for anyone who wants any.* I found myself thinking, What luxury there is in being remote, without regional airports or bullet trains. These people have no inkling of how quickly a horde of urban tourists could denude their forest of mushrooms.

We stood, both of us thinking the other naïve. *Of course, you don't tell your secrets,* Pani Orysia continued. *When you find good mushrooms, you don't tell anyone in the village where. Let them find for themselves.* I felt I was hearing about the practice of a tactic familiar in U.S. property law, using “trade secrets” to protect property claims in a public domain. On this outing, seeing the cut stems from mushroomers before us, not attempting to harvest any ourselves, I was aware of an accumulation of local knowledge and secrecy embedded in the practice of gathering mushrooms. As casual as their approach seemed – no need to own a forest or get a permit to gather from the state forest, no special equipment for climbing or cutting, just tramping around with an old dull knife and a home-made cotton bag, it was not something I could just take up. Mushrooming is a storied hobby in Ukraine. My non-Ukrainian friends, those of non-local ethnicities who had moved to Kiev during Soviet times, never mentioned mushrooming; but my even some of my most urban-sophisticate native-Kiev friends talked about mushrooming as a cherished hobby. Most had a favorite summer camp or spot in the woods around Kiev or near a grandparents' village to which they made an annual mushrooming pilgrimage. I had read about mushrooming in Russian literature and watched mushrooming in Soviet films since college. I longed to go mushrooming. During my previous two-and-a-half years' stay in Kiev, I had dropped tons of hints, to no avail. When I came back as an anthropologist, I headed towards the mountains in the autumn, determined at least to observe, resigned to observation without participation.

Two years later, in Gruzenskoye, going out for an afternoon of mushrooming with Valeriy and Suzanna, I stood on the other side of that divide. Valeriy and Suzanna took me out for an afternoon of mushrooming. The soft sun of “grandmamma summer” dappled the forest floor. We wandered, armed with dull blades, at a slow, steady pace, Suzanna and Valeriy occasionally bickering over pro- and anti-Russian politics and otherwise the three of us chatting distractedly as we kept our eyes at our feet. Valeriy was the champion. “Oh!” he would exclaim, interrupting the stream of conversation, dropping to a squat to inspect a specimen. Often he would generously invite me to make the cut. I felt as proud as a small child doing her part with the adults. The practice of walking, breathing, concentrating without straining, taking in a mild afternoon in the silence of a fragrant pine forest, was almost hypnotic. In California, one would talk about achieving an “alpha state” or a “zen state.” I could see why my Ukrainian friends so loved to mushroom. We avoided paths through the forest, but Valeriy was completely at home in the trackless stretches. He would inspect each find, to make sure it was the right sort, edible and not poisonous, and the right stage of ripeness. He also carefully husbanded the forest. If a mushroom was passed optimal ripeness, older (meaning a couple of days old) and drier, he would stomp on it, releasing the spores to waft and disperse in the clear warm air. In this way, he helped to “reseed” the family *hribnitsva*, those “mushroom pockets” known and sought out by Valeriy and his parents year after

year. We stayed out for several hours, coming home with a basketful of fresh mushrooms for Dyadya Lyona to clean and Tyotyia Dusya to dry.

Valeriy's husbandry was not limited to spreading spores for future mushrooms. "This part is my forest, Monika," he said as we strode into one stretch of pines. "Your forest in what sense, Valeriy," his cousin Suzanna asked, on the lookout for immature boasting. "What?!" Valeriy exclaimed, offended. "We planted this forest, as Pioneers." Sure enough, when we looked up from the forest floor, we realized the pines here stood in fairly regular rows. The village Young Pioneers, the Soviet youth organization, had planted this part of the forest when Valeriy was in middle and high school. Despite his unstinting criticism of everything that he labeled Soviet (or Russian), Valeriy still felt a sense of pride and ownership in this stretch of public woods because of his work as a Pioneer, and he rued that no one continued work on behalf of the public forest in contemporary Ukraine.

Two mornings later, prevented from digging potatoes because it was a holiday and the neighbors would notice un-holy field labor, Suzanna and I set out mushrooming on our own. Across the former collective farm fields, towards the edge of the pine forest, we saw a couple of women a hundred yards away. They hailed us. *Devushki! De hribi?* [Girls! Where are mushrooms to be found?] Suzanna said to me, "They've walked out from the nearest town," called in reply, *My sami ne vidsyudi!* [We ourselves are not from around here.] They smiled and waved as Suzanna said to me *sotto voce*, "As if we would tell them, if we knew." We took a path that would separate us from them in the forest. The trees in the pine forest are not densely located, which is important for mushrooming. You can wander off the path and have ample room to pass between trees. We kept our eyes on the forest floor, crunching fallen leaves and pine needles underfoot. Suzanna had a fairly confident knowledge of which mushrooms were edible or not, and we knew the experts back at the homestead in the village, Tyotyia Dyusya, Dyadya Lyonya, and Valeriy, would be checking our work, but nonetheless, we only took what she was sure were not poisonous. The forest was silent. We had it to ourselves. Mushrooms, large ones, had already sprung up in some of the places we had been with Valeriy just a couple of days earlier.

There is a rhythm to mushrooming: quiet sporadic chatting interrupted when one spots a potential prospect for harvest, leaves crunching with each step, intently and carefully observing the ground in front of one's feet and to the sides. The forest is silent save for the occasional birdcall. The sunlight kept autumn at bay and the air mild. Mushrooms in the wild do not grow in great concentrations, and they do not all ripen at once. You have to wander for them, and if you intend to use them as a winter food supply, you have to do it regularly through the late summer and pre-frost fall. It is one of the most peaceful, pleasant, productive outings; I could not imagine who would not enjoy it. In three hours, we gathered a large basket full. We crossed paths with the women who had hailed us once, and they had done fine for themselves without our advice, their cloth shoulder bags bulging. They looked at our half-full basket suspiciously, saying with a smile, We thought you weren't from here. Suzanna answered them, We're lucky, but not so lucky as you. They smiled and continued in a different direction from us. We later saw them hiking up the road, away from the village, back towards the town. The forest around the village was open to all, but experienced village mushroomers certainly

would have come back from a morning's outing more heavily laden than we or the townswomen.

Gathering mushrooms involves a certain experience of topography, different than the overwhelmingly visual experience familiar to those of us from mapped places and mapping cultures. Space and nature are mentally mapped by moving through them; the slope of a part of the forest traversed, angles of light and density of shadow, relative wetness or sponginess underfoot, the sharper smell of pine or the musty smell of bog: these are the mindmarks by which one creates a sense of landscape, how one finds the mushroom hidden yesterday or the mushroom patch fruitful last year, how one finds the way home out of the forest.

This experience and the experiential mapping it yields depends on, what is called in the British legal tradition, "the right to roam." This right, or, more precisely in Ukraine, the experiences of selfhood and sociability possible in directed roaming like mushrooming, depend on one feature of the recently-Soviet Ukrainian landscape: its fencelessness. Fences and enclosures are springing up in the dubiously-privatized forests close to Kiev and other large cities, restricting nearby villagers and city residents' access to familiar mushroom groves. In the majority of the countryside, however, away from the large population centers, those spaces are still unenclosed. What success in mushrooming requires, instead, is privacy in the open air. If one can not keep trade secrets, stocks will disappear to avid neighbors and townly extralopers. Interior and exterior are marked in ways other than fences.

#### *Raspberries, Blackberries and other Vectors of Invisible Threat*

The first time I heard about Ukrainian mushrooms and berries was in obligatory diplomatic security briefings in December 1994 before I left Washington for my Kiev posting. Most of the security briefings at that time were generic to any post in the world. The briefing, which has certainly changed since the advent of the "war on terror," at that time was an exercise to heighten our cognizance that, as a diplomat, overseas one should expect to be surveilled, usually by a foreign intelligence service. The briefings normally took place over the course of three days. They included sessions on the importance of maintaining secrecy, not discussing sources of information outside of a "bubble" in the Embassy building that protected conversation from electronic eavesdropping; on detecting a "tail" and other forms of surveillance; on the necessity of avoiding behavior and relationships that could put one in a compromised position, exposed to blackmail; and other measures to thwart foreign intelligence agencies bent on discovering what we were thinking and talking about before we wished to disclose it publicly. All of us heading out to any overseas post in the world – Bangkok, Durbin, Kyiv, Ouagadougou – were all in one large room together, but the scenarios of honey-trap in the hotel bar, bug planter in one's private quarters, were always populated by two characters with Slavic names, "Boris" and "Natasha." Though this is a noted pair of villains from the children's cartoon "Rocky and Bullwinkle, wariness of the KGB was the subtext. The briefings also included sessions on personal physical security, the importance of situational awareness, avoiding becoming an easy target of someone looking to strike a symbolic blow against the United States government, like the necessity of checking under one's car every morning for a bomb before turning the key in the ignition or of varying one's daily route

to work. The perils of drinking and driving were mentioned, and the necessity for extra vigilance on a drive in an unfamiliar roadscape.

There was one partial-afternoon “breakaway” session with security information tailored to region: Latin America, Middle East, Africa, former Soviet Union. Then they called a handful of us away from the FSU session, those of us going to Kiev. “You will be living roughly 100 kilometers, 60 miles, downriver from the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant,” we were told. Chernobyl is located in the marshy headwaters of the tributaries to the Dnipro River, Ukraine’s Mississippi, the mighty waterway that bifurcates the country into East and West, on whose bank ancient Kiev was founded. When one of the reactors at Chernobyl exploded in 1986, the wind famously carried the radioactive plume north, and west, to Belarus and then Scandinavia and points west. We were safer from Chernobyl radiation in Kiev than we would be in Munich, we were told. The embassy conducted regular radiological readings, and moreover, AT&T had their American employees wearing radiation-detecting skin patches: so far, so good. There was nothing to worry about. That said, we were instructed not to drink unfiltered tap water. We were instructed not to swim in the Dnipro River, nor to let unshod feet touch the mud of the river bottom. We were instructed to buy vegetables and fruits only from the covered markets, where the government monitors every incoming shipment with a Geiger counter. If you do that, then you’ll be safe. Oh, scrub every single potato with a wire brush before cooking, wear rubber gloves, flush the water. If a rogue farmer had brought potatoes in from the regions north of Kiev, a speck of the wrong dust, ingested, could cause virulent forms of cancer. Most importantly, we were told, do not eat mushrooms or berries. Mushrooms and berries in Kiev were as likely as not to come from the forests, concentrated in northern Ukraine, nearest the Chernobyl zone. By their nature, mushrooms and berries soak up inordinant amounts of groundwater and so absorb radiation within rather than only posing danger from dust laying without. And, because they are wild products, they are sold by individual gatherers, on street corners and at metro stairwells, not by government-screened vendors in the covered markets. The U.S. government briefers were almost glib about the potential dangers of other foods, beverages, air, and background radiation, but radically cautionary about mushrooms and berries. Under no circumstances was it advisable to consume mushrooms or berries.

When I got to Kiev, I discussed these restrictions and recommendations with my boss, Maria. Maria was incredibly lax, even by my loose standards, in matters of food hygiene. She would skim mold off of last week’s coffee in the pot, pour herself a cup, and pop it in the microwave. She had been posted to Kiev for two years already and had already regaled me with stories of happy summers paddling in the Dnipro. When I asked her about the forest fruit restrictions, she practically rolled her eyes. “Bah! I defy anyone to resist berries. You’ll see. When summer comes and they’re on every corner, you won’t be able to help yourself. Ukraine is in a class of its own when it comes to wild berries.” She was half-right about me, as it turned out. I did happily eat bowls of juicy-wonderful raspberries, both fresh and preserved in sugar for winter, from my friend’s grandmother’s bush. That babushka lived in central Ukraine, roughly four hours south of Kiev, even farther from the zones of Chernobyl fallout than my daily walk to work. I did not, however, feel tempted to eat berries or mushrooms from any unknown source. Better safe than sorry, I somehow reasoned.



My Ukrainian friends seemed completely unaware of any particular danger that berries or mushrooms might pose. This was not one of the many discourses of risk about Chernobyl fallout circulating around Kiev. When I did raise it, people seemed resigned. I asked my friend Viktor, a physicist and self-professed connoisseur of mushrooms. His wife, Alla answered. “We already lived through Chernobyl explosion and fire; we live 100 kilometers from the densest concentration of Chernobyl radiation in Europe. Mushrooms and berries are the least of our worries.”

Chernobyl was part of a realm of intense human production and action, the atomic energy complex, concentrating the re-forming of nature at the atomic level. Mushrooms and berries from northern Ukraine bordering the Chernobyl zone look unchanged but may not be. The absorption of harmful fallout in mushrooms and berries represents a new intersection of human action and products of nature, one perhaps more dangerous but less heeded by contemporary Ukrainians.

By the summer of 1995, my first summer in Ukraine, my car (shipped over by the State Department) had arrived. I typically spent Saturday mornings picking up friends, who then directed me to any one of the dozens of small lakes and ponds within a 20-minute drive of the Kiev city limits. The rest of the day would be devoted to swimming, playing tipsy volleyball, singing to guitars, laying out on blankets absorbing the sun, grilling shishkebobs on open fire, and wandering into the pine forests that inevitably skirt a lake or meadow in northern Ukraine to gather berries.<sup>231</sup> Raspberries and blackberries were our normal take. The raspberries broke me. Prohibition and all, I can not deny that I enjoyed as many as I could gather by the handful or carry home by the basket-full. When I returned to Ukraine in 2006 as a scholar, the U.S. Department of Education administering my Fulbright research grant enforced strict requirements for having overseas traveller’s insurance. It threatened to force me to repay research money already spent if I left Ukraine without their prior permission and sent out dire descriptions about the perils of road travel. The Fulbright minders had U.S. government liability on the brain. No warnings against mushrooms or berries accompanied their funding, however. The perils of radiation, perhaps too long-term or diffuse to link to government-supported stays in any future health disputes or lawsuits, had vacated the discursive space.

Berries were harder to gather, in any case. The meadows and forests around Kiev had been privatized and subdivided into suburban housing developments. One would have to travel an hour or two, beyond most Kiev friends’ local knowledge, to reach an accessible swimminghole. We depended on berries gathered by elderly village women who would travel in to Kiev on public transport with their fragile cargo to be sold on sidewalks outside of the covered markets and on metro-station steps by the cup-full. The sweet tang of Ukrainian raspberries, unhybridized, barely domesticated, quick to spoil, acutely tasty, is still unrivalled in my memory of fruit tastes. We expatriates consistently told ourselves they came from south of Kiev, the part of the countryside unclouded by Chernobyl fallout.

The specter of contamination in wild foods was even farther off the radar screen of Ukrainian friends. Besides the nuclear-power professionals still monitoring the Chernobyl’ power station (including the three reactors still-online), I only heard of a couple of handfuls of Ukrainians having anything to do with Chernobyl’ voluntarily. By 2006, a Ukrainian entrepreneur had started leading tours to the closed zone around the

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<sup>231</sup> See Chapter 7 on the Informal *Kollektiv* for social analysis of these practices.

Chernobyl reactor. He was my friend Serhiy. Serhiy was emboldened by an understanding of radioactive half-life imparted from a university education in physics and by his own experience as the leader of a reconnaissance team that measured radioactive fallout around Chernobyl in the weeks after the explosion. His support team on his tourism ventures was a group of kids in their twenties from Pripyat', the evacuated town next to the Chernobyl reactor, who participate in order to keep in touch with each other, with their childhood hometown, and to earn some money in a tough economy. Starting in 2006, Serhiy led one busload of paying tourists on a trip into the Chernobyl' zone roughly every 3-4 months. Serhiy found a market of Westerners living in Kiev eager to pay for a tour to Chernobyl'. A second sort of engagement: An American friend, Myron, received a grant to organize "ethnographic trips" of archeologists and specialists in material folk culture to evacuated villages in the Chernobyl' zone, to document lifeways of a forest belt culture unreplicated elsewhere in Slavic domains. They chose their sites carefully and kept their expeditions short. Mostly, they looked at the material culture of abandoned villages in the Chernobyl' zone and practices of people in forest-belt villages on either side of the exclusion zone. The strangest thing that Myron found was that some of the abandoned villages inside the Chernobyl' exclusion have been re-inhabited by people who have snuck into the zone. Rarely are they the villagers who evacuated. They are homeless, or misfits, or rebels; middle-aged adults, mostly. Myron describes finding officially-abandoned radioactive villages peopled by small groups defying social convention: living in polyamorous compounds, some clothing-optional, many with children who could not identify their biological parents, some filled with staggering drunks by 9 a.m. Besides Serhiy, the few young adults from Pripyat' in his venture, and Myron's team and the few re-inhabitants he encountered, I never knew, heard of, or read of a single Ukrainian evidencing the least interest in going to the Chernobyl' zone. Not one. Chernobyl' was an object of horror and tragedy but not curiosity. I knew no Ukrainian besides this handful of professionals earning a living off of examining a dead zone who ever willingly exposed him or herself to the concentrated levels of radiation associated with the Chernobyl' zone. Peripatetic Ukrainians, Iron Curtain down and money in pocket, evinced interest in travel to the far corners of the earth, but no one longed for a trip to the zone.

That was what made the absence of taboo on eating mushrooms and berries among my Ukrainian friends so fascinating. Unless one gathered them herself, one could not know they were "safe," meaning, calculating by probabilistic reasoning, those wild foods from an area less likely to be contaminated by fallout. And even then, radiation travels – on dust, in water. In the twenty-some years since the explosion, no one knew which regions had become less safe; water-sucking wild foods, like berries and mushrooms, would logically concentrate radiation if radiation were to be had in the surrounding environment. Gathering wild foods could mean bringing radiation home, feeding on it, taking this foreign matter and literally incorporating it into oneself. Yes, "foreign matter." For all of Kievans' cognizance of living in shadow of Chernobyl, in their silence, the "contaminated foods" I dragged into discussion might as well have been from another country, which is what, in their silence, the Soviet Union was becoming.

*The Domestication of Gathering*

CNFA is the acronym for an English name, Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs. It was started in Washington, D.C. with donations from major U.S. agribusiness corporations who hoped to support the spread of private enterprise in agriculture in the former Soviet Union and other "emerging markets" in order to develop new markets for the agricultural inputs those agribusiness corporations have to sell. CNFA set up office in several capitals of former Soviet states, including Kiev. I met with the former director of the Kiev office, then returned to Washington to head CNFA international, John Costello, to hear his thoughts on the state of agricultural reform in Ukraine before I left the U.S. for fieldwork. John generously passed along the contact information for the Kiev office. By the time I interacted with CNFA Kyiv in 2006-2007, John's American successor as country director had moved on and been replaced by a local Ukrainian hire, nearly all of the financing for the office's activities came from USAID (U.S. government) grants, and most of the office's activities were focused on a farmer-to-farmer assistance program. CNFA offered me desk space in their office, a converted first-floor apartment in the courtyard of a beautiful old apartment building in central Kyiv. I found the office staff, who numbered five at the time, friendly, professional, and hard-working. All of them spoke English as well as Ukrainian and Russian; most had degrees in agricultural science or agricultural economics. I happily accepted the offer and made CNFA my home base for work during my stays in Kyiv over the period of my fieldwork. I was not convinced, necessarily, of the greater good the underlying agenda of CNFA's original founders, the goal of selling American agribusiness methods and inputs to Ukrainian farmers; I was very grateful to be welcomed into such a congenial and professional *kollektiv*.

On February 2, 2007, CNFA had an agriculture expert from the U.S., a mushroom specialist, going out to a new little mushroom business about an hour and a half outside of Kiev in a village called Simyonivka. The expert, Ralph, was a cantankerous, well-meaning, close-minded guy from Berkeley, California. He grew mushrooms himself, had taught some agronomy courses about mushrooms, and also worked as a consultant to mushroom growers. Olena, one of the program officers at CNFA, had contacted an association of mushroom growers in Ukraine, and obtained their contact list of private farmers. One by one, she had gotten in touch with each person on the list to offer American expertise to each new entrepreneur. As best I understood, one of USAID's measures of the success of its grants to CNFA was, how many Ukrainian farmers helped in this "farmer to farmer" program. After identifying a Ukrainian farmer who was willing to be the recipient of American expertise, CNFA would post a volunteer opportunity on its all-English website. An American farmer, or, as in Ralph's case, self-styled expert, would volunteer his time (I knew of no female volunteers); CNFA, with U.S. taxpayer dollars, would pay for ticket, hotel, driver, translator, and other costs of the American volunteer's stay in Ukraine.

When Olena told me that a volunteer was coming to advise a mushroom grower, I asked to go along. Nikolay, the CNFA-Kyiv director, and Olena, the responsible program officer, said "Sure. Why not?" At 10 a.m. on the appointed day, we piled into CNFA's car in the courtyard of their Kiev office, -- me, the driver, Olena the organizer/translator, and Ralph -- and drove through the watery February sunlight, the roadside fields laden with heavy frost and light snow, outside the city limits south of Kiev. It was cold.

The operation out at Simyonivka village surprised me. We drove through a village of single-family white-brick homes and pulled up in back of a large barn, also whitewashed. We entered through a side door and went straight up a staircase, so rickety and steep that it was more ladder than stair, to the Ukrainian “farmer’s” office. After exchanging introductions (including me in part of the CNFA entourage) and business cards, the farmer showed us his operation. There was a massive machine downstairs at the side of the barn into which laborers were throwing kindling to feed a large fire. That, in turn, produced steam, which was fed into a large metal bin into which other laborers had tossed straw. Every so often, they would open the lid on the straw bin and mix the steamed-up straw with pitchforks. As it turned out, this Rube Goldberg-contraption also contained mushroom spores mixed with the straw. They had to keep the steam running for three days straight to keep a warm, wet atmosphere for the spores to germinate.

The intake portions of the machine were inside the barn, but the rest extended through a giant cut-out section of wall to the outdoors. When we stepped outside the barn to see the outtake point from the machine, the cold went right through my down coat as if it were cotton. Inside, where the workers were pitching kindling, it was tolerable but they still wore sweaters under their overalls. Outside was heavy frost, even mid-day.

The farmer then took us inside to a large, walled-off section of the barn. It looked, at first glance, like a boxer’s training paradise: a forest of punching bags hung from ceiling beams in close rows, each row perhaps two feet from the next and each punching bag about a foot from the next in its row. Upon closer inspection, I realized these “punching bags” were black plastic Glad garbage bags sliced all over with 2-3 inch slits. The more mature rows of punching bags had round, fluted edges of mushrooms protruding from the slits. This type of fungus in nature grows along the vertical stretch of a tree trunk. The rotting, moist straw in each bag provided the milieu and the black garbage bag provided a vertical structure.

When the mushrooms reach the full time-span of their maturation (after which, undisturbed, they are supposed to spore and rot), the farmer harvested them by removing strings of fungi from the garbage bag slits. The farmer and his employees loaded the mushrooms into the trunk of a small Soviet-model Lada (a small, scrappy four-door) for delivery to mushroom-selling vendors at the three main covered markets in Kiev. The air in this last room was close, almost uncomfortably warm to our bundled-up selves. They kept it at a constant temperature, perhaps 60 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the external air temperature, 10 degrees warmer than the farmer’s office upstairs, and probably 20 degrees warmer than their unheated home across the road, that the mushrooms favor.

After touring the operation, we followed the farmer back up the rickety staircase to his office to meet his business partner, a young man in his mid-twenties, drink tea, and hear Ralph’s evaluation of the operation. Ralph revved up and let them have it. His main case was against the inefficiency of operating a wood-fired straw-steamer. All that wasted labor! All that wasted energy! Everyone knows that natural gas produces heat so much more efficiently. If you’re going to have a steam-fed operation, as you must in a Ukrainian winter, you have to switch to natural gas. “I don’t know how you’ve kept from going out of business already. Geeze!” Ralph railed. “It’s like you don’t have a clue about running an efficient operation.” Ralph pulled out his laptop and showed them a photograph of a natural-gas steamer he had shot at a mushroom operation in Russia. The farmer there had re-purposed an old Soviet combine, cleverly welding new strips of metal

to create an enclosed space and welding natural-gas intake valves to the contraption. “This is the way to go. You can do this, or you could if you had any ingenuity. They’re doing this right across the border, right in Russia, with old machinery that I’m sure you have lying around in Ukraine as well.”

Olena, the CNFA employee who had contacted the farmers and persuaded them to accept American advice in the first place, looked uncomfortable translating Ralph’s words. And no matter which words she chose, there was no disguising his tone. When he had finished, the Ukrainian growers offered him more tea and thanked him for the advice. I asked them in Russian what they thought of Ralph’s feedback. “Those combines, they sell used combine bodies around here for upwards of \$500, which is what we live on for 6 months,” the young man told me. “We don’t have natural gas in our village,” the older grower, our tour host, told me. “We were scheduled to get pipes laid to connect us to the main trunk line in 1994, but then the Soviet Union fell apart [three years before that]. No village in Ukraine has gotten hooked up to gas since then.”

I was surprised to hear that they had been in business only a couple of years and that neither had grown mushrooms previously. The older farmer, a native of the village, had gone to Kiev to work as a day-laborer on construction sites when his collective farm’s collective organization of their work had fallen apart after 1991. Even back in his farming days, mushrooms were not his occupation. “A mushroom-grower? No! I never even heard of someone growing mushrooms! Mushrooms were what you went into the forest for.” The younger guy was a Kiev native, not a farmer at all but an engineer by training who had finished a degree at one of the country’s most highly-regarded schools, Kiev Polytechnic Institute. “I finished KPI and didn’t have a job. I did know how to use the internet, though.” The two met incidentally in Kiev, through a chance encounter on a street corner, and got to talking. The farmer had noticed imported mushrooms in the Kiev markets, supplying winter mushrooms to new urbanites who hadn’t the time or access to gather and dry mushrooms in the fall for winter soups and varenniki (dumplings). “I couldn’t believe how much they charged, just for mushrooms,” he said, remembering. Then Pavel, the KPI graduate, looked up do-it-yourself mushrooming on-line. The two of them put their heads together and did the math. They decided to try a pilot project, growing mushrooms in the older man’s garage back in the village, selecting a mushroom varietal based on the least amount of days required until maturation. “Six weeks: we can go from spore to market in six weeks.”

Their first crop grew, somewhat to their surprise, just like the step-by-step instructions they found depicted on-line. They contacted sellers by talking up folks that stand behind the tables selling mushrooms in the covered markets in Kiev. “We offered them a price that beat all the imports. They didn’t really believe we’d deliver.” They sold their first crop for a huge profit in Kiev. Several six-week growing cycles later, the villager proposed to his former collective farm director that he buy the abandoned cattle shed from the farm. That was how they expanded the operation from its original small footprint in his shed-sized garage to the size I had seen, employing six local day-laborers to feed kindling and stir straw. They staggered the start-times of their growing cycles so they produced a new crop every two weeks. When it was time to harvest, they cut down the garbage bags, unloaded the mushrooms, and loaded the harvest into the trunk of Pavel’s used Lada.

City folk in Ukraine eat mushrooms all winter, in soups, stuffed and baked, marinated as cold salad, in *varenniki* (ravioli-like dumplings), in a warm, creamy *julienne* gravy. Mushrooms are an indispensable part of holy day meals that are supposed to be vegetarian, a connection to forest the way that the *didus*<sup>232</sup> is a connection to field. When I queried interlocutors in Kiev, no one knew mushrooms could be grown or that Ukrainian-grown mushrooms could be for sale in Ukraine. After all, mushrooms are wild, not domesticated.

*Public and private, space and sanctuary*

This switch in mushrooming tells us about changes in the lived experience of space. Normal mushroom-gathering involves physical involvement with the local landscape, a lived experience of topography – walk up hills, heart beats harder; tramp through *boloti* (swamps), feet get wet. Normal mushrooming also involves a form of local knowledge, embodied not just in a “right to roam” but knowledge of where to roam to, and when, and why. The new practice of growing mushrooms actually involves a whole complex of new practices and initiates a different experience of landscape and topography: searching the internet, purchasing use-rights to the village barn, turning neighbors into employees, driving.

In earlier sections of this chapter, we considered gathered wild products and the relationships they instigate with “nature,” ranging from those spatially most domestically located (bees) to least (mushrooms and berries). Topographies of nature, conceptualized by tramping through instead of looking down at a flat representation, inflect how space and nature are mentally mapped. Honeybees are kept in the domesticated space of the family courtyard and carefully tended to treat disease, keep from predators, and prevent swarming or other acts of mutiny. They are prized for their partial domesticability but also for their partial indomitably wild nature, capable of hunting and gathering pollen and nectar, and processing it in ways humans can not. Both wild and domestic, honey is prized in part for the healthful properties attributed to it substantiation of the local. “Local” becomes far-fetched, displaced, as evidenced by the L’viv beekeeper’s experience: after *raspaiuvannie*, disaggregation and distribution of collective farm lands into household plots, in Western Ukraine, he realized that land use was too fragmented to practice beekeeping in most areas. Beekeepers in Western Ukraine compete for hive placement with farmers in areas that happen to be growing the same crops, with the same flowering seasons. In his own case, he has given up on finding a space that decollectivization has not rendered too fragmented; he carts his hives several hundred miles by truck, to the large monocropping enterprises of south central Ukraine, during the honeying seasons.

Berries are, likewise, of two domains. Sometimes grown in the yard of a village house, the largely extant tradition from Soviet times is to acknowledge the fruit of fully grown bushes as gift from patrilineal ancestors who had occupied the property in prior generations (assuming that home inheritance in the village followed patterns of settlement, which, given patrilocality, meant inheritance along patrilineal descent); now, as homes may be sold, tenants acknowledge berries as the blessing of prior tenants. However, berries are also and most abundantly not grown but rather found, in forests. Retrieving them involves foraging in a wider circle. Mushrooms are the most recently of

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<sup>232</sup> The *didus*’ is a harvest sheath endowed with ancestral personality, described in Chapter 2, *Khlib*.

two natures, and the secret of mushroom domestication is still widely kept. Mushrooms are overwhelmingly interpreted as originating from uncultivated, locally accessible domains.

These graduated senses, of the intimate, the public, the natural are mapped experientially in other domains of experience besides food-gathering. The Slavic languages spoken in Ukraine (Russian, Ukrainian, and the shades of creole admixtures) have words that reflect these physical and mental divisions of space. *Doma* (Ukrainian удома, Russian дома) combines a locative sense with the word for “home” in one concise word meaning “at home.” The next step into space, in a transition from intimate to public, is different in the two languages. To be “outside” or “outdoors” [in the locational sense, as in the English expression, “go outside and play”] is *na vylitsii* (on the street) in Ukrainian and *na dvore* (in the courtyard) in Russian. In Ukrainian linguistic experience, in central and Eastern Ukraine, Russian was the language of the city and Ukrainian, of the village. The experience of not being “inside” in a village is expressed in Ukrainian as going straight onto the street versus the (largely Russophone) urban experience of the semi-intimate space of an apartment-building courtyard.

The normal architecture of the first apartment buildings in Ukrainian cities, the nineteenth-century low-rises that still structure residential life, does not include a “front door.” The first floor of apartment buildings in the city center is devoted to retail storefronts, so stores have front doors. To enter the apartment building proper, though, usually a driveway cut through a small section of the street level, like a tunnel, leads to an interior courtyard. The doorway to the stairwell that leads to any given apartment is located here, at the back. An individual apartment has a front door opening onto a stairwell; but the “entrance” to an apartment, meaning the entrance [*pod”ezd*] to a stairwell, was typically located at the back in the courtyard. Post-war residences built outside of the city center, on quiet streets located in areas laid out along the extensive post-war metro and bus systems, may have a “front door” to the common stairwell (and no back door), but even they preserve a sense of “courtyard” in the common spaces between residential buildings. Even new post-Soviet high-rise apartment buildings are built with a courtyard proper, or a yard “belonging” to the building where children play and old folks sit in the sun. Saying one is literally in “the courtyard” means nothing more specific than “I’m outside.” Why are you sunkissed? Because I spent a lot of time on Saturday “in the courtyard,” could mean anything from you spent the day at the beach, to strolling and window-shopping down main street.

Viktor’s mom lived just half a block from me. We discovered this after Viktor and I had been friends for a couple of months already. A striking, strong woman, I visited her at home once every month or two, sipping tea and hearing stories of her growing up in Moscow. Viktor’s father had been a noted Ukrainian poet, a Ukrainian orphan who volunteered in the Red Army to fight against “partisans” [meaning either Ukrainian nationalists or Ukrainian Nazi sympathizers] in Western Ukraine. The state rewarded the Ukrainian hero-orphan after the war with an education in engineering, official enthusiasm for his poetry, and, when he was transferred back to Ukraine to work, a large apartment in a building reserved for other noted artists, musicians, and writers in the center of Kiev. Viktor’s father brought his Muscovite Jewish spouse with him back to Kiev. Late in life, long after his father had passed, Viktor’s mom slowly ebbed in vigor but she lived out her days *doma*, at home. When she died, quietly of heart

stoppage, Viktor and his wife followed the normal practice of sitting with her around the clock in her apartment for three days. Viktor called me to let me know she had passed and to invite me to attend the funeral. After the third day, the casket was carried down from her apartment and laid out *na dvore*, in the courtyard of her apartment building. Neighbors, former colleagues from her work days, friends of her late husband's, friends there to support Viktor or his wife Alla -- quite a large crowd -- stood out in the cold a respectful distance from the "entrance," the back stairwell door to the building. The casket exited the building and the bearers set it down in the courtyard. The crowd surged forward. The casket, per tradition, was left open, closed only from her waist down. Friends pressed forward to regard her one last time and to insert fresh flowers -- mostly bright, variously-colored Gerber daisies, down into the casket, until layers and layers of fresh flowers covered her chest and framed her face. Her skin was pale, her hair as jet-black as ever. Petals were everywhere over her. She was beautiful.

When the last of the crowd had pressed forward, paid their respects, and stepped back into the ring encircling her, several men loaded the casket into the back door of a waiting bus. Viktor, his wife, and his mom's close friends filled the seats of the bus. Two other buses carried other mourners, me among them, to the cemetery.

Viktor's family were not "believers," or as one would say in American idiom, not "religious." They were Soviets, and scientists, rationalists. Moreover, she was to be interred next to her husband at his gravesite in a section of Baikovski cemetery reserved for Ukrainians of artistic, literary, or patriotic repute, an elite section of the cemetery where space is in short supply. When our buses arrived at the cemetery, I followed others streaming into a structure that looked like a concrete band-shell, like that in which an American orchestra plays to enhance acoustics of summer outdoor concerts. The casket was laid on a concrete slab at the front of rows of cold concrete bleachers. A few people stepped to the front and made short, prepared memorial remarks; a couple recited poems. Viktor then stepped up and uttered a few short, quiet sentences. The casket closed. Someone, perhaps Viktor himself, pushed a button. Then, to my extreme astonishment, the floor on each side of the slab on which the casket lay parted, and the casket's slab descended into the opened floor like a concrete elevator. Peering from my place back on the bleachers, I could see something glowing, either flames or coal, in that subterranean space to which the casket descended. As the floor re-closed itself over the descended slab, I realized that we were made to see the crematorium to which her body was surrendered before her ashes were to be interred with her husband's. Concrete and coal: finality. Those Soviets didn't play around with reminding their followers that this is it, and there is no more.

Even the body traverses from the intimate space of home, to the space of semi-intimate action, the courtyard, to public space as the funeral procession winds through town to cemetery, and then to the unmapped semi-wild of the cemetery underground.

### *The Mobile and the Visual: Experience and the Conceptualization of Space*

Back at the inception of Ukraine's political independence in 1991, a map could be considered a highly political document. Not all were resigned to the disappearance of the Soviet state or the emergence of borders between former Soviet republics, particularly between Ukraine and Russia. Before I moved to Ukraine in 1995, I was advised to buy a



map in Washington, D.C. before I came. It is not that one could not find maps in Kiev: a few surviving bookstores had maps of the new state, and trolleybus ticket kiosks had the best public transport route maps I had ever seen anywhere. What was difficult to find were roadmaps of Ukraine. Almost no one owned a car; individual navigation calling for maps was nearly non-existent. Intercity travel was accomplished almost exclusively by bus or train. I bought an excellent Michelin roadmap of Ukraine and Belarus (in French, but otherwise remarkably suitable) from the premier specialty map store in downtown Washington, D.C. As it turned out, my boss had found a rare Ukrainian roadmap which she bequeathed me upon her departure a few months later, and which I used until it literally hung in tatters along each fold. Local roadmaps for routes between cities and roads within cities were hard to come by.

Now, roadmaps in Ukraine are a dime a dozen. Car ownership has surged, growing in the late 1990s at rates of more than 100% year-on-year. People are traveling on their own, by road. Some of the conceptualizations of territory, derived from viewing a two-dimensional visual representation rendered in bird's-eye perspective, are honestly not new to post-Soviet Ukrainians. Soviet Ukrainians had excellent primary education, including extensive schooling that successfully conveyed concepts of territory through disciplinary studies like geography and history. Map-reading is not a new post-Soviet skill.

The shifts, if any, are more subtle. They come from the eclipsed of fixed-route transport. That brings a new experience of space, envisioning space through which one will travel, and the concomitant advance planning, fretting, anticipation, via maps versus train or bus schedules, or via the experience of local topography. Lifting the Soviet registration requirements<sup>233</sup> erased the imaginary radius, the old 30-*versts* from one's residence point within which one could move without special permission. The state absented itself as a mediator of special limitation with regard to movement. The local became less circumscribed by legal formalities. At the same time, networks that had facilitated travel – even provided the sense within which travel occurred – of Soviet production, education, politics, even kinship in some cases, had vanished, and with them, funds for travel. That meant that for most Ukrainians in villages as well as cities small and large, the first half-decade or more of political independence entailed an intensification of household autarky and experience of the local.

By 2006, when I arrived in Ukraine for fieldwork, that had shifted further. When we were in the Carpathians, 750 miles from Kiev, to observe autumn mushrooming practices, we ran into two friends from Kiev. These girlfriends had left husbands for a long weekend break, hopped in one's car, and taken off for the mountains. That would have been an unimaginable occurrence when I lived in Kiev ten years earlier. Likewise, two other friends were trying to make a go of running a retail clothes kiosk in a metro underpass. They made an overnight drive every two weeks to the newly established "Chinese market" in Odessa, a major southern port where Chinese vessels would unload every Thursday and sell imports practically off the dock to small retailers. My friends would arrive when the market opened at 3 a.m., chose the latest fashions they hoped would sell in the kiosk, and – like the new mushroomers – load up the trunk for the drive back to Kiev to their retail outlet.

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<sup>233</sup> I analyze registration documents in greater detail in Chapter 6, Mobility.

Car owners, now a significant minority of Ukrainians, are coming to know what road to take to get across the county. Vitaly and Tanya traveling to Odessa to the Chinese market are the new foragers. Roadmaps merely facilitate, and document, a new lived experience of long-distance topography. The corollary to this emerging pattern is that, while I observed people in border cities making short trips across a border – with Moldova, with Poland, with Belarus – by car to see relatives or visit a neighboring town, I did not know anyone who traveled long-distance to cross a border by private vehicle. This amounted almost to a self-imposed, new 30-verst limit: car-travellers are comfortable driving throughout Ukraine, hundreds of kilometers; and they are comfortable driving across a border if it is within the range of normal experience, within 30 kilometers or so of their home base. But otherwise, Ukrainians use planes or trains to get across international borders. Roadmaps of neighboring countries' roads are a not common. Experiencing one's mobility within Ukraine has become normalized, while travel to other former Soviet republics has become relatively rare.

The recasting of the local, the new ways of defining and experiencing local and proximate, in some ways resemble the old. Moving across a landscape, whether on foot for mushrooms or by car for jeans, entails perceiving changes in altitude and plain, anticipating where and when others group to join or avoid, accruing experiences of hardship and comfort, wet and dry, anxiety or ease. These circumlocutions mean those who move through the "new local" accumulate experience of "Ukraine" as a separate entity. Seeing Ukraine as an independent country, not as part of a larger unit, becomes the norm in part by the lived experience of locality.

## MOBILITY

## Chapter 6 Mobility

*Monika, ya zdes'.*

*Ty gdye?*

*Ya zdes', v Nyu Yorkye. V aeroporte.*

*Kak zdes'? Na kak dolgo?*

*Eto ne telefonniy razgovor.*

*Monica, I'm here.*

*You're where?*

*I'm here in New York. At the airport.*

*What do you mean "here"? For how long?*

*That's not a conversation for the phone.*

The next day, when my friend Sasha got off the train in New Haven, I learned that he was in the U.S. to stay. He had not told me he was coming. Neither had he told his brother, a surgeon from Leningrad who had lived in New York for 17 years, in whose two-room apartment he planned to live; or his parents, whom he left in Kherson; or his teenage daughter; or his faction leader or colleagues in Parliament. The only person, in fact, who knew that he was going to the airport and boarding a plane after he officially presented his report on election fraud to Parliament that morning was his wife, left in Kyiv until he could arrange her and his daughter's passage.

Mobility is an element arising out of decomposition. In making his move, Sasha joined legions of Ukrainians who have displaced themselves since independence.<sup>234</sup> Although statistics are suspect, even by rough estimates, the figures will stop you in your tracks. Five million, 10% of the population,<sup>235</sup> have left Ukraine since independence in 1991.<sup>236</sup> And, as a measure of cross-border dislocations, this figure may be low. Other research indicates that, not including emigration, by 2006 10.6% of Ukrainians had had the experience of working abroad: 4.7% went away in search of a job once; 2.2%, twice; and 3.3%, three or more times.<sup>237</sup> As of April 2006, in 15.7% of households, at least one person had temporary work outside Ukraine (compared with 11.8% in 2004 and 12.1% in 2005), according to the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.<sup>238</sup> Emigration is dwarfed by internal migration. In the period during which they received plots during the privatization of state farmland, roughly 10 million farmers (close to 60% of the rural population, 20% of the national population) evacuated their rural homes and moved to a city within Ukraine.<sup>239</sup> These figures, this amount of mass

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<sup>234</sup> While Sasha's decision is common, his impetus is nearly unique. He is one of only three post-Soviet Ukrainians granted political asylum in the U.S. (the other two, Myroslava Gongadze and Major Melnichenko, were like Sasha under threat from the Kuchma administration for their role in revealing Kuchma's hand in the death of journalist Hrihorii Honhadze).

<sup>235</sup> LABOUR MIGRATION ASSESSMENT FOR THE WNIS REGION, International Organization for Migration Mission in Kyiv, October 2007.

<sup>236</sup> Roughly two million have emigrated. The other 3 million left as labor migrants, intending to return to Ukraine. , *The State and Problems of Legal and Social Status of Contemporary Ukrainian Labor Migration*, Hearing of Parliament of Ukraine, (Nov. 17, 2004), <http://portal.rada.gov.ua>, in IOM LABOUR MIGRATION ASSESSMENT, *supra* note 2.

<sup>237</sup> LABOUR MIGRATION ASSESSMENT FOR THE WNIS REGION, International Organization for Migration Mission in Kyiv, October 2007.

<sup>238</sup> UKRAINIAN SOCIETY 1992-2006. (V. Vorona & M. Shulga, eds., Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2006) *cited in* IOM LABOUR MIGRATION ASSESSMENT, *supra*.

<sup>239</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION KYIV MISSION, LABOUR MIGRATION ASSESSMENT FOR THE WNIS REGION (October 2007).

movement in a fifteen-year period, would be astonishing in most contexts. Though prompted by the millions of Ukrainians who have left home in search of refuge from unexpected exigencies of post-Soviet life or drawn by unanticipated new spaces of possibility, this chapter does not examine their motivations. Rather, it looks at what makes this motion possible.

The first part of each section of this chapter examines the late Soviet apparatus of relationships – legal, labor, and informal – in which a general absence of mobility was normalized. People generally stayed put; this part examines why. The second part of each section of this chapter looks at technologies of mobility, or rather, to be more precise, technologies that create the conditions of possibility for mobility. I isolate several categories as decisive: post-Soviet changes in documentation practices; surviving late Soviet expertise in social networks, magnified by electronic means of effectuating them; and literacy. Mobility is a compelling starting point for a line of inquiry in part because it is such a pervasive feature of the post-Soviet Ukrainian experience. Studying an element of decomposition also allows one better to understand the composition of the prior matter, leads to insight into the process of decomposition itself, and may lead to an understanding of the elements – practices, ideas, technologies -- that are recirculating in the emergent recomposition. What is at stake is a set of new relationships between sovereignty and territory.

#### DOCUMENTS AND THE *KOLLEKTIV*

The relationship between a person and a place was well-documented in the late Soviet period. In fact, documentation itself reinforced other practices of regulation focused on physical location of the citizen. Several genres of document figured particularly prominently in the relation between person and place.

##### *Labor Book*

Internal migration within the Soviet Union posed a significant challenge to the fledgling Soviet government as it tried to organize a state industrial sector. An estimated 25 million people moved from rural to urban areas during the period 1926-1939.<sup>240</sup> As the labor landscape reshaped itself, leaders designed legislation to stabilize conditions in the economy and enforce government control over the labor market. Government planners, struggling against rapid turnover, labor migration, and absenteeism, replaced economic incentives with discipline as the basic approach to managing labor. A 1933 decree introduced the “labor book,” *trudovaya kniga*, which each worker carried with him or her from job to job, to be inscribed by each employer as verification of periods of employment. A 1940 decree prohibited a worker from leaving his employment without permission of management, under penalty of two to four months imprisonment and a system of penalties was established for lesser unexcused absences from work.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> KAZIMIERZ GRZYBOWSKI, *SOVIET LEGAL INSTITUTIONS: DOCTRINES AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS* 173 n. 1 (1962) (citing Eason, *Population and Labor Force*, in *SOVIET ECONOMIC GROWTH* 114 (Bergson, ed., 1953)).

<sup>241</sup> GRZYBOWSKI, *SOVIET LEGAL INSTITUTIONS* 174 (citing SCHWARZ, *LABOR IN THE SOVIET UNION* 95 (1952); GUINS, *SOVIET LAW AND SOVIET SOCIETY* 150–81 (1954); KULSKI, *THE SOVIET REGIME* 404 (1954); Gliksman, *Recent Trends in Soviet Labor Policy*, 79 *MONTHLY LAB. REV.* 772, 767–75 (1956).

Modes of discipline were modified yet again in the post-Stalin years. A change was marked by a decree of the highest legislative body, the Supreme Soviet, of April 25, 1956, stating that labor discipline at enterprises and institutions had been strengthened as a result of the growth of working people's consciousness and rise in standards of living and cultural level.<sup>242</sup> After this point, more subtle methods of regulation than the earlier prohibitions punishable by criminal law were introduced. Pegging social insurance and pension benefits to a worker's employment record favored those who stayed with their jobs,<sup>243</sup> encouraging longevity instead of enforcing it. A system of legal penalties enforced by courts was replaced by public censure organized and administered by workers.<sup>244</sup> Workers could switch jobs without losing important benefits as long as they kept each job registered in their labor book. This presupposed that a worker managed to get physical possession of his or her labor book. Under the new benefits, the labor book, and the longevity it documented, assumed even greater importance. The labor book documented a worker's tie to his or her labor *kollektiv*. Other documents intensified the link between citizen and locale.

### *Propiska*

The most important, direct bureaucratic link between citizen and locality was the *propiska* system. Its lineage can be traced back significantly farther than the "labor book" to the pre-Soviet Ukrainian experience of Russian rule. Two major features of the *propiska* system, registration and the internal passport, were, in local experience, specifically linked to shifts in the balance between local sovereignty and imperial rule: Registration, the internal passport, and other technologies regulating mobility -- already features of Great Russian state practice in the Russian homelands -- were introduced to Ukraine under the reign of Catherine the Great as instruments of the colonization of Ukraine in the second half of the 1700s.<sup>245</sup>

Catherine the Great took a series of steps that significantly decreased mobility of those residing in Ukraine (then designated Russia Minor, or, as otherwise translated, "Little Russia"). These measures exerted unfamiliar, strict controls over Ukrainian peasants. (Note: Here we are distinctly discussing free peasants, not serfs.) In a 1760 Decree, for example, although a peasant could still change resident at will, Catherine prohibited a landowner from settling the peasant on his land without the prior written

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<sup>242</sup> VEDOMOSTI VERKHOVNOGO SOVETA SSSR (JOURNAL OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR) no. 10 (1956), in GRZYBOWSKI, SOVIET LEGAL INSTITUTIONS 174.

<sup>243</sup> Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (January 25, 1960), subsequently approved by the Supreme Soviet on May 7, 1960, guaranteeing continued sick pay benefits due to the interruption of employment:

"[W]orkers and employees who have left their previous jobs of their own free will are to be paid temporary benefits in all cases on a common basis, regardless of the amount of time they have worked on new jobs. [W]orkers and employees dismissed on their own will retain uninterrupted seniority, if they begin work within one month after the day of their dismissal."

VEDOMOSTI VERKHOVNOGO SOVETA SSSR (JOURNAL OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR) no. 4. (1960), in GRZYBOWSKI, SOVIET LEGAL INSTITUTIONS 175.

<sup>244</sup> GRZYBOWSKI, SOVIET LEGAL INSTITUTIONS 175 (citing Gliksman, *Recent Trends in Soviet Labor Policy*, 79 MONTHLY LAB. REV. 772, 775 (1956).

<sup>245</sup> See generally Z. Kohut, *The Abolition of Ukrainian Autonomy, 1763-1786. A Case Study in the Integration of a non-Russian Area into the Empire*, (1975) (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania).

permission of the landowner where the peasant had previously dwelt.<sup>246</sup> Her 10 December 1763 *ukaz* [order] attacked the peasants' right to mobility itself. It specified that the right of a peasant in Little Russia to move at all was subject to permission of the landowner of the peasant's previous place of residence.<sup>247</sup> A 1770 law ordered the return of all *begliye*, "runaway peasants," to their place of origin so they could be made to pay their taxes.<sup>248</sup> Finally, a 1783 *ukaz* deprived a peasant of the right, theretofore enjoyed in Ukraine, to negotiate his departure from one landlord to move to another.<sup>249</sup>

Catherine decided in May 1779 to extend to Little Russia her *Statute of Local Administration* of 1775. This decision made the previously autonomous lands of the Zaporizhzhya Cossacks (the host guarding Russia's southern flank from Ottoman forces during a time when most of the southern Ukrainian Black Sea coast was a province of Turkey, and perennially an attractive destination for escaped serfs fleeing Russia) into the governorships (*gubernii*) of Kiev, Chernigov, and Novgorod-Seversk. This extension of a Russian administrative form introduced stricter controls over mobility in an area whose military advantage and popular attraction had been predicated on mobility. In a letter of 26 October 1781 interpreting the *Statute*, Catherine changed the status of town and Cossack authority over their lands, which in Little Russia had previously been self-governing enclaves with the right corporately to own land. In the letter, Catherine stated that town and Cossack lands were to be stripped of local ownership and taken over by new treasury boards in each *guberniya* [governorship].<sup>250</sup>

Each of these measures interposed the figure of the "landowner" (or treasury board member) as agent for enforcing the imperial government's restrictions. During this same period, Catherine, a German princess-émigré, was awarding enormous tracts of land in Ukraine to select Russian nobles in order to build the cohort backing her tenuous claims to the crown. For 18<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian peasants, inhabiting sparsely populated frontier lands between Russian and Ottoman empires, a central government and its regulations had previously been a remote affair. For that resident, "nobility" was a foreign concept and the new Francophone/Russophone landowner was a linguistic stranger. For that landowner, either Russian noble or Ukrainian Cossack who had thrown support behind Catherine's faction, the aggrandized role in regulating peasant mobility strengthened the reality of "empire" by making obligation for local enforcement of imperial regulation a part of normalized performance of the self.

"Registration," then, was yet another part of the great extension of Russian law and bureaucratic practice over Ukrainian lands and a radical reconfiguration of personhood in terms of sovereignty, status, and relationships to territory. "Registration" eroded individual sovereignty in terms of rights to decide one's own physical location and local collective sovereignty in rights to own land. The elimination of mobility and

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<sup>246</sup> Zohut, *Abolition of Ukrainian Autonomy*, in ISABEL DE MADARIAGA, *RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT* 68 (1981).

<sup>247</sup> E.I. DRUZHININA, *SEVERNOYE PRICHERNOMOR'YE V 1775-1780 GG.* [THE NORTHERN BLACK-SEA BORDERLANDS IN THE YEARS 1775-1780] 195–96 (1959), in ISABEL DE MADARIAGA, *RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT* 314 n. 25.

<sup>248</sup> Kohut, *Abolition of Ukrainian Autonomy*, in ISABEL DE MADARIAGA, *RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT* 308 (1981).

<sup>249</sup> *POLNOE SOBRANIE ZAKNOV ROSSISSKOI IMPERII* [FULL COLLECTION OF LAWS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE] XXI, NO. 15,724, in DE MADARIAGA, *RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT* 313-314.

<sup>250</sup> DE MADARIAGA, *RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT* 310.

introduction of fixation soon extended from geographic location to social location. The census (*reviziya*) of 1782 was conducted to get a fix on where a person lived; the poll tax 1783 fixed people to that place of residence. To facilitate collection, the *ukaz* imposing the poll tax added in Article 8 that inhabitants of the new *gubernii* [governships, a unit of Russian empire territorial administration] of Kiev, Chernhiv, and Novgorod-Seversk were to remain in the place and in the status in which they had been registered in the last census. (A person's "status," or estate, could be Cossack, "Little Russian" landowner, Great Russian landowner, clergy, peasant, or townsperson.) Article 11 of the *ukaz* extended these provisions to Slobodska Ukraine and the gubernii of Kursk, Kharkov, and Voronezh.<sup>251</sup> basically, all of Ukraine that was not controlled by Austrian or Ottoman empires.

In 1783, the "internal passport," also a pre-existing feature of Russian regulation of Russian lands, was extended to Ukraine. The internal passport was "the instrument by which the population was kept in its place."<sup>252</sup> For journeys of less than 30 versts [19.88 miles], a townsperson used a passport which he received from the town council or magistrate; a peasant, from his commune; and a serf, from his owner. For distances greater than 30 versts, passports had to be obtained from local authorities of the imperial government.<sup>253</sup> In other words, to move, one had to have an internal passport; and while familiar local authorities could provide a passport for short journeys, a journey of any length was contingent upon obtaining a document from local representatives of the imperial government. Whereas Little Russians had been subject to a household tax since 1765,<sup>254</sup> the per-head tax – the poll tax – of 1783 caused peasant adscription to the soil and brought the end of traditional Ukrainian mobility.<sup>255</sup>

The internal passport and the registration system of imperial Russia, known in Soviet parlance as the *propiska* system, survived through the Soviet period. The only brief interruption in the requirement of internal passports came with the 1917 Revolution, lasting until mobility restrictions were re-adopted during the Famine and industrialization in 1933. During the late Soviet period, other organizational features introduced additional incentives and structures that established bonds of loyalty and affiliation between a citizen and her locale. One significant such feature came in the 1977 Soviet Constitution, which for the first time offered a constitutional guarantee of housing for every citizen.<sup>256</sup> Free housing, in one's place of registration, that is: free housing, as long as a person stayed where the state expected her or him to be.

Measures of the Soviet system for establishing a relationship between citizen and locale, then, had a healthy provenance, if not an uncomplicated history. The early history of measures to regulate mobility on Ukrainian territory has a distinctly colonial cast, but came to be a given of state administration. The Soviet government certainly did not delegate to local authorities discretion to regulate mobility within a 30-*verst* radius. By 1933, every Soviet citizen was required to have an internal passport issued by national

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<sup>251</sup> POLNOYE SOBRANIYE ZAKONOV IMPERII ROSSII XXI, No 15,724, 3 May 1783, in DE MADARIAGA, RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT 313, effect of poll tax on mobility at 315.

<sup>252</sup> DE MADARIAGA, RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT 49.

<sup>253</sup> DE MADARIAGA, RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT 49.

<sup>254</sup> DE MADARIAGA, RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT 308.

<sup>255</sup> DE MADARIAGA, RUSSIA IN THE TIME OF CATHERINE THE GREAT 315.

<sup>256</sup> 1977 Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Art. 41



authorities and was expected to carry it at all times on their person. It took special permission – a state-approved purpose for travel – to obtain an international passport.

#### DOCUMENTS AFTER THE KOLLEKTIV: TIED AND CUT LOOSE

The *propiska* system was abolished by deliberate omission from the 1996 constitution of independent Ukraine. The state, for the first time since 1783, does not seek to control mobility of its citizens. The *propiska* was replaced by a registration [*revestratsiya*] system that establishes the physical locale at which certain benefits are allocated and obligations are collected, but the law deliberately institutes “freedom of movement.”<sup>257</sup> The law has work-arounds built-in to accommodate displaced people, allowing them to meet their obligations to the state through routine procedures.<sup>258</sup> For example, a taxpayer is supposed to pay personal income tax in the town where she is registered, at her local tax administration office. However, if she is traveling or residing elsewhere, she may pay her annual income tax at a special office for the displaced in the nearest provincial center. A voter is supposed to cast his ballot in the *raion* (local government area) where he is registered, but he may vote absentee. The post-Soviet registration system is less accommodating in regard to distributing benefits. To receive state-subsidized medical care, for example, one must visit a clinic in the place one is registered. Absent that, a person must rely on expensive private clinics, less expensive informal healers, or self-treatment. (Exceptions are made for certain categories of people who move internally, like college students, but even then receiving benefits is harder away from home. For example, any university student in Kyiv whose family is not registered there may receive subsidized medical care at one clinic, which entails an hour or two trek across from most institutions, no mean feat for a person feeling ill.)

The registration system, then, is a means for administering obligations and benefits, not for controlling mobility. The system for controlling mobility did not die out as fast as the law had changed. Although the Constitution did away with the *propiska* system in 1996, as of 1997 Ministry of Interior barriers still blocked all roads into Kyiv. Driver, and usually passengers, were required to show their internal passport before entering the city. Even in small towns in the countryside, Ministry of Interior personnel manned speed bumps which required drivers to slow and produce documents. Control was not enforced on trains or buses. By 2006, however, roadblocks for internal passport checks were a nearly forgotten feature of the past.

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<sup>257</sup> According to Art.3 of Law of Ukraine “Про свободу пересування та вільний вибір місця проживання в Україні.” [Pro Svobodu peresyvannya ta viln’nyy vybir mistysya prozhivannya v Ukrayini (“About freedom of movement and free changing of residence in Ukraine”)], “registration” is the recording of information about person’s location or residence in his/her passport and recording of this information in the [state] registration database of the “central organ of executive power for questions of registration.” (реєстраційний облік відповідного органу спеціально уповноваженого центрального органу виконавчої влади з питань реєстрації). [revestratsiyyny oblik vidpovidnoho orhanu spetsial’no upovnovazhenoho tsentral’noho orhanu vykonavchoyi vladi z pitan’ revestratsiyi].

<sup>258</sup> Article 3 of Law of Ukraine, *Pro Svobodu peresyvannya ta viln’nyy vybir mistysya prozhivannya v Ukrayini* (“About freedom of movement and free changing of residence in Ukraine”).

Likewise, when I first arrived in Ukraine in 1995, the process for obtaining a passport to travel internationally had been liberalized but most citizens of the new state were unaware of the change. They assumed without express permission, one might not cross the border. It took some time for Ukrainian passports to become anything other than an astonishing rarity. In nine months examining passports in the consular section of the U.S. Embassy (where I saw no less than seven thousand passports), perhaps twenty of the new blue Ukrainian passports crossed my hands. The other thousands still traveled on the Soviet red. Those days are passed now. Under the 1996 Constitution, an international passport is available to any Ukrainian citizen who applies for one.<sup>259</sup> Citizens know it and widely take advantage of it.

The labor book, by contrast, is alive and well in post-Soviet Ukraine. It is still an object of contention between labor and management. Vitaly is a wry forties-something middle manager, abruptly laid off in 2006 by his employer, a foreign embassy, after eleven years on the job. “So what are you doing, Andrush?” “It’s difficult. You remember how they always refused to do anything about our labor books.” Although employees had implored embassy higher-ups, the embassy had always refused to have anything to do with labor books, in particular to make entries or hold them for the employees as a normal Ukrainian employer would. It seemed alternately either silly – why would it matter who made a hand-written entry in a small blue staple-bound book – or complicated – if it did matter, then someone would have to investigate how it was done, who had the authority, and what it meant. No one checked. The Ukrainian government certainly was not asking any questions about the labor book. It only mattered to the employee, not the employer. Vitaly continues. “I should be eligible for unemployment benefits, for state retraining courses, for access to assistance in finding another job. But my labor book has nothing in it for the last eleven years.” State unemployment assistance was only available to the recently unemployed. Vitaly had never collected his labor book from his last Soviet employer, hoping that by laying in their office drawer without a terminal date entered, at least he would eventually be able to present it to collect retirement benefits when he reached pension age. It turns out he needed benefits much earlier than that but without a labor book in hand, could not collect. It was difficult for a person his age to get a white-collar job through the want ads; they all were looking for someone much younger. Places that would have considered him tended to use the state unemployment offices to find new staff. Vitaly left his labor book where it lay and used his small savings to try to start his own business, a kiosk to sell imported jeans in a metro underpass. His business failed a few months later after he was in a car accident and could not attend to it for several weeks. At least his last Soviet employer, the Academy of Sciences, was not a stickler about forcing him to take his labor book.

Irina, on the other hand, had a hard time prying her labor book out of her boss’s fingers. “I was teaching at a university in Ivano-Frankivsk [a small city in Western Ukraine] in the foreign languages faculty. I was unusual in that, after I got my doctorate in literature, I decided to get another decree in law. At that time [1988] – even now – it is very unusual for someone to go back to school after their early twenties. Strange, even. But I had realized that the only way to protect my rights in life was to know the law, and the only one who was going to protect my rights was me. In 1994, I saw Holovatiy [reform parliamentarian who helped lead the group introducing Western-style civil

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<sup>259</sup> CONSTITUTION OF UKRAINE, 1996.

liberties into the post-Soviet Ukrainian constitution] on t.v.<sup>260</sup> and I thought, ‘He is really helping the country. I should be doing that. I should go to Kyiv and work for him.’” Although Irina had little trouble contacting Holovatyey’s n.g.o., the Ukrainian Legal Foundation, and was soon hired, her plans hit a roadblock. Her previous employer did not want to let her go. “I went to see my department chair to collect my labor book. He refused to give it to me. I told him it was my right under Ukrainian law to collect my labor book whenever I wanted it. I was the junior faculty member; they had piled so much on me. Even when I had just had given birth to my daughter and asked for later classes, none of the others wanted the early slots. He scheduled me for class at eight in the morning and at four in the afternoon, every day. It was too far to go back and forth to home, and he knew it. He created so much hardship for me! They knew they could do anything to me, and he had taken advantage of that.” Irina saw the control over her labor book as just the latest move in an exploitative relationship. This whole story came out when I had asked her if she had ever been blackmailed. She continued, “When I told him it was my right to have my labor book, he said nothing, but he turned around to the shelf over his desk. For the first time, I saw there a row of *papki* [folders]. He reached for one. I was furious. I told him, ‘Don’t you know it’s against Ukrainian law to collect information on fellow private citizens?’” His hand stayed for a moment, arrested in mid-air. Then he turned back and with a malevolent look, reached down, withdrew her labor book from his drawer, and handed it over. She was free to go to Kyiv.

As these examples show, the labor book is not a direct legal bond tying a person to a locale. With the eclipse of state ownership of most of the productive sector, the labor book falls into the hands of the private employer. Whether there, in a state institution, or in a foreign organization, it is still a powerful tool of malignant neglect or manipulation.

*Friendship: the “Informal Kollektiv” goes Mobile*

“Vitaly, I’m coming to Kiev.” Great, when? Luckily for me, it’s 2002, meaning my friend Vitaly has a cell phone and I can reach him. Though he has not heard from me for over two years and though I misjudged the time difference and woke him in the middle of the night, Vitaly does not miss a beat. “In a week. I’ll need to stay with you for a couple of months.” He does not even have to answer “no problem.” He just asks when my flight arrives.

The Soviet friendship circle was, in Kharkhordin’s analysis, a form of “spontaneous kollektiv.”<sup>261</sup> It was an alternative to family life, which otherwise had a near-monopoly on intimate life. Outsiders’ suspicion towards those who beat the system together led to an intensification of relations in each compartmentalized zone of the non-public sphere. Soviet friendships were marked by intensity, loyalty, and compartmentalization compared to U.S. friendships. A 1981 survey of U.S. bachelors found that they got together with friends on average 4 times per month. By contrast, a 1981 study of Soviet friendships found that 16% met with their closest friend every day; 32% met several times per week; and 32% met several times per month.<sup>262</sup>

Friendship created a large reservoir of social capital which did not dissipate with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. On the contrary, in the first few post-Soviet years

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<sup>260</sup> For more on Holovatyey, see Chapter 9, 2-D Setting.

<sup>261</sup> Chapter 7 analyzes the fate of Soviet friendship over the two post-Soviet decades.

<sup>262</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

of unemployment and hyper-inflation, friendships if anything grew more intense and more central to people's daily experience. How did this play into mobility? There was a paradox. A friend who had already moved to an urban area could be a source of support, a repository of knowledge about employment, resources, and even a place to live, during a newcomer's transition. However, the newcomer needed to operationalize friendship. The mails within Ukraine, on the whole, did not fail and people did maintain contacts through letter-writing; but that did not offer the kind of fleet communication needed. The problem, then, was to keep in touch with friends who had moved. Telephones were of little help. As of 1996, only 18% of residences had landlines, and those were largely limited to people already established in cities.<sup>263</sup>

The answer was mobile phones. As of 1996, mobile phone use in Ukraine stood at .1%. By 2008, "mobile subscriber penetration" in Ukraine was 92.45%.<sup>264</sup> According to one source, mobile penetration in 2006 exceeded 100%, meaning Ukrainians averaged more than one cell phone per capita.<sup>265</sup> This boom was both facilitated by, and itself facilitated, the upheaval and surge in mobility.

Orality and its media was but one of the tools used by a population on the move. The mobilization of informal networks fails to explain those practices of mobility that depend on impersonal exchange relationships. To understand this part of the picture, we turn to literacy.

#### *Literacy and other Technologies, Retooled*

Literacy is a venerable survivor of the Soviet era. Spreading basic literacy is one of the Soviet power's mass achievements and formidable legacies.<sup>266</sup> The record of Soviet success in its literacy campaigns left Ukraine at independence with a literacy rate estimated near an astonishing 99%. I suggest that literacy plays a large role in allowing post-Soviet mobility and shapes some of the forms that mobility is taking, in pre-figuring how newcomers and the uprooted find shelter in an alien space.

When I was evicted in the middle of fieldwork period by a greedy landlord (who broke our lease contract hoping to get more money by converting our apartment into an office to rent) and I turned to Ukrainian friends for advice on finding a place, they all gave one answer: *Afisha*. Another Soviet legacy aiding those moving from countryside to city, this Soviet-era newsprint circular lists housing for rent, by 1-room (meaning a studio apartment), 1-bedroom (meaning two rooms total), 2-bedrooms, and so on. Every major city has an *Afisha* publication. It comes out weekly. It is the bible of the dislocated.

Surprisingly, even during Soviet years of registration and inhibited mobility, *Afisha* served as a medium for connecting those who, for whatever anomalous reason, had living space to offer and those who needed to find it. In post-Soviet Ukraine, *Afisha*

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<sup>263</sup> Statistics on telephone service available at [www.gjk.come.ua](http://www.gjk.come.ua).

<sup>264</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit. *Doing EBusiness in Ukraine*, available at [http://globaltechforum.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=newdebi&country\\_id=UA&country=Ukraine&channelid=6&title=Doing+e-business+in+Ukraine](http://globaltechforum.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=newdebi&country_id=UA&country=Ukraine&channelid=6&title=Doing+e-business+in+Ukraine)

<sup>265</sup> PMR Publications, *Mobile Penetration Rates in Russia and Ukraine Exceeded 100%*, IT and Telecommunications Sector in Russia report, available at [http://www.ictrossia.com/45821/Mobile\\_penetration\\_rates\\_in\\_Russia\\_and\\_Ukraine\\_exceeded\\_100\\_.shtml](http://www.ictrossia.com/45821/Mobile_penetration_rates_in_Russia_and_Ukraine_exceeded_100_.shtml) (January 1, 2007).

<sup>266</sup> For an exploration of Soviet literacy campaigns, see Chapter 1, Collectivization.

has grown from a thin pamphlet to, by 2007, the thickness of a small catalogue but the size of a broadsheet newspaper. It is both index of and solution for those whose guarantee of housing has failed.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter, I examined conditions of possibility for the mobility that so characterizes post-Soviet Ukraine. In this analysis, I isolated three as indispensable. First, post-Soviet changes in documentation changed the relationship between citizen and locale. Some forms of documentation that had served to fix persons in place, like the *propiska* system, were abolished; others like the international passport, lost some of the binding properties they had had because of changes in the conditions under which the state would issue them. A few, like the labor book, remained unchanged in form but radically changed in their significance for inhibiting movement. Second, a new technology, the mobile telephone, gave the informal *kollektiv* flexibility as its connections were stretched over longer distances and subjected to more geographic uncertainty, and intensified the care of the informal *kollektiv*, making and sustaining networks of connections. Finally, literacy, the legacy technology, enabled an extension of practices and movements. Reading and writing enabled newcomers to connect with impersonal providers of shelter and sustenance. All three allowed the mass movements that became a new form of life specific to post-Soviet Ukraine. Their import to the recreation of the national imagined community, to the intensification of informal *kollektiv*, and to expanding exposure to the impersonal extralocal recast the relationship between individual and group. They raise several fundamental questions: does “care of the self” presume a dividualized subjectivity? Is the first person of subjectivity always singular? And if singular, can it never be a singular collective noun? Can “the self” be a *kollektiv*?

The new rural property owners met their new land-holdings with a spectacularly widespread, through individual, response: flight. The conditions of possibility that allow for this remarkable post-Soviet mobilization also inscribe forms of subjectivity. The subsequent chapters examine forms of the self that may be emerging in this new milieu.

SHELTER

## Introduction: Shelter

The creation and re-creation of space and its relation to the social deserves special consideration in our study. As we have noted already, some of the primary legislative changes that dismantled the legal framework and institutions of the Soviet Union in Ukraine took spatial terms as their object. Territory, farm, garden plot, capital city, apartments: these became primary objects of reform. National borders reframed relationships between the newly independent state, the territory over which it claimed jurisdiction, and the “outside” world, just as parcels carved out of collective farms reframed relationships of rural residents to the evaporating state, as well as to each other, to their farmlands, and to the cityscapes to which they fled.

Accordingly, this second section will focus on the reframing of physical locale, performances of the self, and intersubjectivity that occurred over the two decades since the end of the Soviet Union. I frame it as an inquiry into forms of “shelter.” Russian has one word, *ubeziheshche*, meaning at once both shelter and refuge, that captures better what I have in mind, thinking of spaces of possibility for performances of the self, practices of sociability, and reformulations of temporality.

In thinking about shelter, the concept of “front” proves particularly useful to examine some specific functions that physical locale serves in the performance of the self.<sup>267</sup> In his study of the self, Erving Goffman coins the term “front” to name those devices that mediate and signal between the individual and those with whom he or she interacts. “Front,” specifically, is “that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance.”<sup>268</sup> Goffman proposes two standard parts of front. “Personal front” refers to “items of expressive equipment” that “we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes, which may include: “insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like.” Goffman’s other standard part of front, “setting,” is the one on which we will concentrate in our inquiry into shelter. By “setting,” Goffman means “the scenic aspects of front.”<sup>269</sup> Scenic front involves physical layout and other background items “which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it.”<sup>270</sup>

We part company where Goffman’s conceptualization seems not to fit empirical observation of the post-Soviet Ukrainian experience. I find two of Goffman’s assumptions with regards to setting that are misplaced in the post-Soviet Ukrainian context particularly instructive in their inappropriateness. First, permanence. Goffman writes, “A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use

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<sup>267</sup> Goffman uses “performance” to refer to “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers.” ERVING GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in *THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 22 (1973).

<sup>268</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in *THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 22.

<sup>269</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in *THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 24.

<sup>270</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in *THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 22.

a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it.”<sup>271</sup> One form that discursive rupture takes in the former Soviet space, however, is that “geographically speaking,” the interpretive frame that endows a space with the meanings that make it a “setting” disappeared. For post-Soviet Ukrainians, the setting did not stay put. And, for both Soviets and post-Soviets, the setting was in any case not static. Yurchak’s work on late Socialism demonstrates that these milieux, from those of the state to those that were informal or spontaneous, were not static social spaces; they were rather continuously reproduced through repeated performative genres.<sup>272</sup> Second, personhood. Goffman takes the individual as the starting point for his analysis of “performance of self,” an enactment of personhood that depends on an individual and observers. Another unit of analysis that the late Soviet milieu offers, as should be clear from our prior focus on collectives, is the *kollektiv*, a form of the self that is less individualized and a performance that depends less on observers and observed and more on contemporaneous intersubjectivity. In the first chapter of this section on the Informal *Kollektiv*, I take up practices identified by Kharkhordin, including *oblichie* (self-revelation), and Yurchak, most notably *obshchenie* (imminent companionship), to explore the collective self and its fate upon the demise of the Soviet state.

With these two caveats, then, in this section, I use scenic front, i.e., setting, to look at three types of Soviet formations and their disposition in the post-Soviet context, given the profound displacement effected by legal changes. The first formation I consider is the “informal *kollektiv*,” the spontaneous friendship circle that had occupied a central place in so many Soviet citizens’ lives. In looking at the prosaic question of where this kind of performance of the self occurred, I map changes in conditions of possibility, perceptions of time, and forms of sociability inhering to the informal *kollektiv*.

The second formation I consider is the past. Goffman notes, “Since fronts tend to be selected, not created, we may expect trouble to arise when those who perform a given task are forced to select a suitable front for themselves from among several quite dissimilar ones.”<sup>273</sup> We may expect even more trouble when a front has to be created, or refashioned and the “past” as a referent offers a menu of dissonant possibilities. The second problematic I take up in this section, then, is the past and the place of the past in the present. I choose as the site of this exploration the oldest monuments of Kyiv, churches of the early first millennial church-state, turned by the Soviet Union into museums and now disputed as possible sites of public performance of the self, as dissimilar as scholarly erudition, to nationalist tourism, to religious worship.

The post-Soviet context of rupture challenges expectations of pattern, of “routine,”<sup>274</sup> of standardization. Rupture disrupts deployment of “expressive equipment

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<sup>271</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE 22.

<sup>272</sup> ALEXEI YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, UNTIL IT WAS NO MORE: THE LAST SOVIET GENERATION 148 (2006).

<sup>273</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE 28.

<sup>274</sup> A “routine” or “part” for Goffman is the “pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented or played through on other occasions.” GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE 16.



of a *standard* kind”<sup>275</sup> [emphasis added] and puts performance on a new footing. What bears further examination is how the collectively-generated self, what Yurchak calls “dispersed personhood,”<sup>276</sup> performs. Goffman describes a dialogic process for the performance of the self. “[A] performance of a routine presents through its front some rather abstract claims upon the audience, claims that are likely to be presented to them during the performance of other routines. This constitutes one way in which a performance is ‘socialized,’ molded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented.”<sup>277</sup> Claims upon the audience might be embraced or rejected. That moment in which the claims upon the audience are poised in the balance, embraced or rejected – which an “audience” is itself in formation and a public may cohere or not -- that moment of emergence (what Goffman calls “celebration”), is one of the characteristic experiences of post-Soviet Ukraine.<sup>278</sup> “[I]n so far as the expressive bias of performance comes to be accepted as reality, then that which is accepted at the moment as reality will have some of the characteristics of a celebration. To stay in one’s room away from the place where a party is given, or away from where the practitioner attends his client, is to stay away from where reality is being performed. The world, in truth, is a wedding.”<sup>279</sup> The third chapter in this section considers a certain type of gathering, a certain kind of celebration where reality is performed; I use Deleuzian concept of “event” to round out aspects of Goffman’s concept of celebration. In post-Soviet Ukraine, the *miting* (the political rally) has become Goffman’s wedding. Analyzing one such celebration, we may understand the performance of “Ukraine” as a new place in the world. We will also better understand attempts to create the reality of a state and nation, and a “Ukraine” in Europe.

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<sup>275</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE 22.

<sup>276</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER 151 (2006).

<sup>277</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE 34–35.

<sup>278</sup> Here I would contrast Goffman’s “celebration” with Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of “carnival.” Carnival, while spontaneous, is marked by play with forms and patterns: role reversals, parody, and irony. It is less characterized by confusion borne of an absence of forms. On carnival, see MIKHAIL BAKHTIN, RABELAIS AND HIS WORLD (trans. Helene Iswolsky, 1984).

<sup>279</sup> GOFFMAN, *Performances*, in THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE 35–36.

## Chapter 7

### The Informal *Kollektiv*: Unravelling of a Setting for the Self

Prior chapters have discussed the establishment of formal collective organizations in Soviet life, taking the collective farm as an example, and a variety of fates that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet polity and subsidiary formal collectives. In this chapter, I pick up a different version of collective life, the “informal *kollektiv*,” and follow its trajectory. To get oriented, it is worth reviewing the two terms.<sup>280</sup> In his work on individual and collective in Russia, Kharkhordin tells us that as far back as the 1930s, a *kollektiv* signified “a goal-oriented complex of persons” that is “organized” (in contrast, to a goal-oriented but not organized group, like a spontaneous street mob oriented around the goal of breaking a window).<sup>281</sup> By the late 1970s and a generation-and-a-half of lived experience with the *kollektiv*, Soviet social scientist Galina Andreeva identified an additional characteristic of the *kollektiv*: a “specific type of interaction that fosters the development of an individual personality.”<sup>282</sup> In the language of Western social science, then, the *kollektiv* was both a unit of social structure and a genre of communicative practice that engendered a certain kind of individual.

The second term, “informal,” conveys additional information. The “informal *kollektiv*” is a group not organized by state authorities. Rather, contemporary social scientists describe it as existing in the interstices of formal *kollektiv* organized under the auspices of the state (i.e., those primarily aimed at production, education, or housing) and the family (in its own right a social sphere well-inscribed in state documentary practices). An informal *kollektiv* emerges through patterns of interaction that identify like-minded people and cultivate intimacy between them. Kharkhordin designates this alternative form of *kollektiv* the “informal *kollektiv*” because it existed “not within formal ones, but as if on the obverse side of the social life.”<sup>283</sup> Such a *kollektiv* could be as ephemeral as a group of strangers that open a conversation and a bottle in a shared train coupé and spend an evening relaxing together in chat, or as enduring as a loyal group of middle-agers whose ties were forged as middle-school classmates.<sup>284</sup> Identifying and cultivating potential friends is a serious undertaking in Ukraine; people do not think of themselves or others as friends without some mutual investment of time and care. When that happens in a group, over time, a recognized constellation emerges.

Self-recognition of a group as a group is cultivated through means of denoting interior and exterior – invitations, discrimination, and exclusion, time spent together – a

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<sup>280</sup> By way of reminder, a small fraction of the introduction to this sentence revisits our discussion of the *kollektiv*, first taken up in the Introduction. I will follow Kharkhordin’s persuasively argued practice of using the transliteration from the Russian *kollektiv* to distinguish the standard usage of “collective” in English from the particular social form collective life took in Soviet practice. OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 77 (1999).

<sup>281</sup> ANTON MAKARENKO, *SOCHINENIE (WORKS)*, VOL. 5, 207 (1950–1952), cited in OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 91 (1999).

<sup>282</sup> GALINA M. ANDREEVA, *SOTSIOL’NAIA PSYCHOLOGIIA [SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY]* 291 (1980), cited in OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA* 97 (University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>283</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, *THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA: A STUDY OF PRACTICES* 313 (1999).

<sup>284</sup> This type of informal *kollektiv* was described to me by Viktor Synenko, native Kyivan now 50 and still bonded to his middle school class, in interview September 26, 2009.

set of activities that Yurchak describes as the cultivation of *svoi*, “our own.”<sup>285</sup> As noted, some informal *kollektiv* were ephemeral, others more enduring, but all were created through communicative practices and other performances of the self that happen only in group setting. In this chapter, I focus on the latter type of informal *kollektiv*, the more enduring. Supplemented by others’ descriptions of more stable, enduring informal *kollektiv*, I draw on one circle of friends that formed in Kiev in the late 1980s as my primary example.

The introduction of private property accompanied a host of other changes that reframed basic configurations of the Ukrainian experience. Many others have described market reforms in policy terms. In this chapter, I focus instead on this cherished feature of the social landscape of late Socialism. Drawing on social scientists’ descriptions of the “informal *kollektiv*,” I review its practices and patterns, particularly an experience of time common to it, and analyze its durabilities and vulnerabilities in the social spaces created by post-Soviet reforms. I start with an account of a typical evening of the informal *kollektiv* over several slices of time. I then identify some features of the informal *kollektiv*, analyze how it has fared under post-Socialism, and discuss some of the factors determining its fate.

### *Homecomings*

March 8, 1995

A circle of Ukrainian friends has gathered to celebrate International Women’s Day together. At 29, I am the youngest in the room by three or four years and the only outsider. Most are mid-thirties. All are college graduates, and most of them started graduate studies together in the late 1980s, before the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991. Besides our hosts, Suzanna and Vitaly, the company includes: Vitaly’s best friend, Minenko, quick-witted, flirtatious, blessed with a prodigious memory for jokes; Minenko’s girlfriend Zhenya, slender and blonde, with the cool composure of a ballerina, and her two closest friends, drama queen Kisya of exaggerated gestures and big eyes, and quiet, dark-haired Oksana, Kiev sophisticates all; Suzanna and Vitaly’s dormitory neighbor Zontik, an affable family man, and his wife; from down the hallway, Mitya, a dark-haired, serious baritone; also from the dormitory, pixie-ish, nervous economics Ph.D. candidate Ksenya, a single mom whose elementary-aged son has stayed behind in their room downstairs. Some come later, hindered by more cumbersome commutes, by tram, bus, and metro: two graduate school classmates, the Ponymarchuks: Sergei tall, blonde, with a pencil mustache and expansive friendliness, and Oksana, curly-haired blonde, petite, more retiring but ready with a shy smile. Next, Alla, a dark-haired beauty who is the only person that evening identified to me by her occupation. She manages her own business of some kind, a clothing shop or design business, I think, and the other women respect her. Diminyan, a high school friend of Vitaly’s who, like Vitaly, came to Kiev for graduate school from Yerevan when Armenia and Ukraine were different parts of one country, the only member of the company one would characterize as boisterous. Yura, a work friend of Vitaly and Sergei Ponymarchuk’s, perhaps because he is a friend from work and of newer acquaintance, less integrated into the core and a bit quiet. This tight group is composed of dyads and triads even more intimate with each other, who see each other even more frequently – some, daily -- than they meet with the rest of the

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<sup>285</sup> See the opening chapter, Introduction, for introductory discussion of *svoi*.

group. Most have access to a shared telephone at work; a couple come from families established in Kiev long enough that parents have a home phone; none at this time have his or her own phone and this is before anyone has email. Communication happens almost exclusively face-to-face.

This group, ersatz family to each other, came to be my homebase in Kiev. We celebrate every person's birthday and every present or near-past public holiday-- New Year's, Revolution Days, Soviet Army Day, Ukrainian Independence Day -- as well as Chinese New Year, our cats' birthdays, and other imaginary holidays, together. The newly post-Soviet commons is our clubhouse, our living room. We braid virginal wildflower wreaths for the guys' heads in mid-summer meadows. We break through ice in the river to baptize each other, three dunks each into the ice water, on Orthodox Easter (though none of us is Orthodox). We stay up all night on New Year's, singing, as Zhenya puts it, like drunken angels. In short, we meet for some reason or another at least a couple of weekends per month and go on vacation together for two weeks in the summer, an exercise that entails smuggling me, a foreigner, into a special guest house reserved for the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers to which Minenko had arranged access.

The details of every excursion are not important. Why the group assembled that night became central to my life in Kyiv, and to each others', is. I describe our dinner that first night to convey a set of practices and an ambience that is necessary to understanding this essential formation of late Socialism.

Even at this, my introduction to the group, I am keenly aware of how the physical premises frames the experience. The hosts, a couple, live in a graduate student dormitory though neither of them are graduate students in my understanding of the term. A few of their circle of friends present that night also live in the dormitory, although only one of the other guests is actually a graduate student. The others have come from various corners of Kiev to the party. Fifteen of us are crowded into our hosts' one-room place, roughly 10 feet by 12 feet. The couple, Suzanna and Vitaly, in turn share their bathroom with a family of three next door; a kitchen with twelve other families on their corridor; and one front door, one telephone, and a mail reception table (on which letters are laid out for recipients to pick up and all to scrutinize), watched over by a minder, with roughly 400 co-residents. For the evening, Suzanna and Vitaly have turned their single bed into bench seating, their desk into a table, added on a small folding table at the end, covered the whole with a festive table cloth and lined the opposite side with borrowed chairs. We are thrown together. We are careful not to impinge, with sounds or smells or curious glances, on dormitory neighbors along the corridor.

When I walk into Suzanna and Vitaly's living room/bedroom/study that evening, I see a laden table that reflects an enormous amount of effort. Bread, of course, and butter. Shredded beet salad. Carrot salad with raisins. *Vareniki*, boiled ravioli filled with mashed potatoes. *Kholodets*, a kind of clear jelly made from meat parts that makes me happy to be vegetarian. *Salo*, the Ukrainian national dish, pork lard, served in a rectangle on a small plate looking like a stick of clearish butter to be smeared on bread or eaten just so. *Borshch*. Cabbage leaves, stuffed with rice and minced meat. Sliced cold meats. Boiled potatoes. Only *salo*, cold meats, and bread are purchased prepared. The rest of the food represents a substantial effort by Suzanna, our hostess, both in rounding up food supplies and in preparation on the two gas-rings that serve as stove for twelve families on her corridor that share one kitchen. This performance of hospitality and mastery of the

folkloric genre of recipes comes from an expert who clearly has worked long and conscientiously to develop her craft. Guests contribute beverages: beer, sugared Moldovan wine, champagne whose bottles still call it Soviet, vodka, hot tea, *kompot* (a kind of drink made by stewing dried fruit), “water with gas” (bottled carbonated mineral water). Suzanna has made practically all the dishes. One of the other girls has brought a store-bought cake, the “Kiev tort,” sold only on the main street downtown and at the train station (so popular it is with out-of-town visitors), produced by the main Kiev bakery.<sup>286</sup> Some of the guys have brought the champagne, vodka, and wine. An American couple have contributed beer.

The men walk a careful line with me, the new single woman in this group of friends, careful not to neglect but also not to over-toast or otherwise make the target of jealousy. I am included in the third toast, which by Ukrainian tradition is always the toast to the women. Toasts hold special place as a speech genre in these get-togethers as a metadiscursive device, a means to praise virtues, poke fun at shortcomings, or call to mind particularly prized events or qualities.<sup>287</sup> Because today is Women’s Day, more of them than usual are dedicated to women in general and to particular women at the table. Drinking alcohol is a central activity, but it is done only to toast; people sip non-alcoholic drinks and nibble on snacks in between toasts, but no one drinks alcohol without the general company. In between toasts, there is lively chatter amongst each clump of friends around the table until the guys start swapping *anekdoty*, jokes.<sup>288</sup> One by one, the others drop out and it becomes a contest of memory between Vitaly and Minenko. Their store of *anekdoty* rivals the Hermitage for Faberge eggs. Many of one’s jokes are known to the other, and one might prompt the other by reciting the opening line or the object: “A policeman walks up to a passer-by stopped in front of a pet store window ...” “Tell *galstuk* [the one about the tie]!” I find over time that this is a special talent of Vitaly and Minenko’s, much to the pleasure of their friends. They can swap jokes, keep a string of *anekdoty* going, for an hour or more. The others provide an audience for them and chat amongst themselves.

Topics of conversation seem less important than the significance imbued by the quality of the exchange: rapt attention, deep eye contact, exclamations of support, horror, or glee in response. Voices are low (except when narrating a story or *anekdot* to the group). A listener might nod along, inhale audibly to show surprise, widen eyes in shared outrage, suppress a smile as reward for a witticism. It is only in retrospect that I try to piece together and analyze literal content. A few themes repeat. Sharing private amusement: reliving a funny scene witnessed on the street, or describing the behaviour of one’s pets. Rehearsing complaint, *skarha*<sup>289</sup>: narrating the latest run-in with a difficult character who one thinks may cause trouble in the future, the mal-intended colleague, the ill-tempered neighbor. (The *kollektiv* is a particularly sympathetic venue in which to hone complaints one may need to raise in more official or contentious places at some point.) Relating material discomforts and information on how to alleviate them: telling where to find a particular foodstuff, article of clothing, or medical specialist. The topics

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<sup>286</sup> Consolidation of bakeries described in Chapter 3, *Khlib*.

<sup>287</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA: A STUDY OF PRACTICES 335-336 (1999).

<sup>288</sup> Cite to Yurchak on “reeling out *anekdoty*”

<sup>289</sup> Described by ADRIANA PETRYNA, *in* LIFE EXPOSED (2002).

that we do not talk about come to my consciousness over time. Politics, particularly striking to me because in my worklife I am the official U.S. Embassy liaison with the Parliament and spend most days there, following debates and interviewing members of parliament. Among “my own,” I do not think anyone could have named a single sitting MP. Work, professional ambitions, office politics, financial plans. “Home,” meaning the context to which we return when the group disperses at night. Because politics, work, and home are such prevalent topics for American conversations, it can be hard for me to identify what we *did* talk about. Topics might have been trivial, but there was no “small talk.” The important thing, it seems, was not what but how: with attention, wit, drama, tomfoolery, general care for performance of verbal genres; with a quality of listening and speaking that cultivated simpatico. What sticks in memory was not usually the literal content but the sensation of intimacy that came from conversing.

Chats are interspersed with solicitous offerings and pourings from others, usually the men at table. Once in a while, a group of two or three slips away from the table off to the dormitory stairwell to smoke by an open window: although most are smokers, it is considered unacceptable to smoke in someone’s apartment. When the party reaches full tempo, we spill out into the shared corridor to dance to songs played off of a portable cassette player: Beatles, Soviet groups like *Machina Vremeni* [Time Machine] or *Bravo*, music discouraged by the Soviet government until *perestroika*, that until relatively recently could only be had through informal networks of production and exchange.<sup>290</sup> even now, friends share bootleg tapes, unable to afford prices of cassettes in the markets and metro-station kiosks. The neighbors wouldn’t complain, Suzanna explains, because it is a holiday and they are enjoying themselves too. We don’t dance for more than a few songs, just in case. After the *anekdoty* peter out and we quiet our dancing, at Vitaly’s urging, Mitya picks up his guitar. Most know the words to the songs he plays, Soviet pop ballads and Ukrainian folk songs, and sing along. “*Khreshchatik, Khreshchatik!*” Songs naming streets and parks in Kiev are special favorites. We’re together for about six hours and the passage of time seems suspended, as it does every time we are together. Although it is a work night, the group stays together until midnight, only breaking up in order not to disturb the *dezhornaya*, the woman who watches the dormitory entrance and enforces good behavior of its denizens, not to violate the dormitory curfew, not to miss the last metro.

Reflecting on my first introduction to the informal *kollektiv*, on Women’s Day 1995, I realize this night was to prove typical. The groups’ indoor activities are loosely patterned: sharing a meal of modest fare but extravagant variety; chatting; sipping alcohol, particularly around a discursive tradition of toasting; swapping jokes, *anekdoty*, in almost-competitive performance; dancing; playing guitar and singing along. The practices of this informal *kollektiv* conform with Krotov’s description of the “ubiquitous and open-ended” practices of socializing through communicating of late Socialism that Yurchak cites. “Endless *zastol’ia* [around the table drinking-eating-talking], *posidelki* [casual sitting and talking where the topic is open-ended and is less important than the process], *trepny* [chatting], *vypivony* [drinking and talking with friends and strangers] ...

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<sup>290</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER.

constant anniversaries and birthdays celebrated both at work and at home.”<sup>291</sup> My experience of this circle of friends accords with Yurchak’s description: “For many people, belonging to a tight milieu of *svoi*, which involved constant *obshchenie*, was more meaningful and valuable than other forms of interaction, sociality, goals, and achievements, including those of a professional career.”<sup>292</sup>

April 18, 1998

I stayed in Ukraine for two and quarter years after that Women’s Day 1995. I secured one extension to my diplomatic rotation, but, finally, my time was up and I had to leave in June 1997. The following spring, the first leave from work in D.C. that I had, I went back to Kiev to see my people.

I stay in the one-room dormitory set-up of my friends Suzanna and Vitaly. They have commandeered a taxi to pick me up at the airport. We stopped at a small, modest neighborhood supermarket on the way home, an innovation that has arrived to Kiev since my last stay.<sup>293</sup> Back at the dorm, Vitaly’s wife Suzanna has “laid a table” to welcome us: borshch, varenniki, salads, plus bread and sliced meats from the little supermarket. It is a worknight; four of us – Suzanna, Vitaly, my traveling companion, and I -- enjoy getting caught up. That weekend, the whole gang joins us for a reunion dinner back at the dormitory room. The girls ask after me, expressing their solicitousness in sympathy at troubles I recount and in wonder at my travels; they preen, exchange looks through their lashes at the guys; they compliment Suzanna’s cooking and Yura’s singing, Minenko’s humor. The guys compete in telling new jokes and refreshing us with old ones; flirt with the girls, keep plates supplied, glasses filled, toasts rolling. Suzanna has a talent for reminiscing about holidays and exploits we shared in the past. Vitaly makes sure the ice stays broken, that no one has time to feel stilted around the long-absent me. He is a master of producing *svoi*, “our own.” Suzanna calls me *nasha*, “our,” Monika. Toasts, *anekdoty*, singing, timelessness. We dance in the hallway. We sing to Mitya’s guitar. It feels like nothing has changed, except that I had left.

June 2, 2002

I return for my first research trip to Ukraine as a graduate student myself. Telephoning is prohibitively expensive and, as letters are delivered to the dormitory *dezhornaya* and laid out on a common table at the entrance, a foreign stamp and postmark exposes my friends to unwanted scrutiny. We have spoken only a couple of times per year, when I call with New Years’ or birthday greetings, until I had phoned Vitaly two weeks earlier. His voice on the other end of the line is a rock to which my self clings after what had been the most socially isolated year of my life, the year I was the only person within five years of my age, that lonely year of leaving work and of the United States attacked, my first year of law school. “Vitaly, I’m coming. I’ll be living at you.” His only question is, “When does your flight land?” The fact that I’m coming for an

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<sup>291</sup> Iakov Krotov, “*Sovietskii zhitel’ kak religiozniy tip* [Soviet Inhabitant as a Religious Type],” *NOVYI MIR* 245, 248(May 1992), cited in ALEXEI YURCHAK, *EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, UNTIL IT WAS NO MORE: THE LAST SOVIET GENERATION* 149 (2006).

<sup>292</sup> ALEXEI YURCHAK, *EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, UNTIL IT WAS NO MORE: THE LAST SOVIET GENERATION* 148 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>293</sup> The experience of markets is described in Chapter 3, *Svitofor* and *Second Bread*.

unspecified length of time for an unspecified purpose (it would be for six weeks, for research, but he doesn't know this until after I arrive) does not seem to phase him; we are friends, after all.

Vitaly picks me up from the airport. He now has a car, an Audi, by virtue of whose logo (four interlocked circles) his friends at work have dubbed him *Khozyayin Kolyos*, "The Lord of the Rings." He has managed, "by wiggle or squiggle," to get a car with the help of friends of friends who had a connection at a used car market in Poland (famous among Ukrainians for the wealth of well-maintained used German cars). Save for the Audi, he is alone at the airport. We run an errand, stopping at a gigantic grocery store, on the way in from the airport to his apartment.

It is a Saturday night, the normal night for gathering. We return to Vitaly's quiet apartment; he has moved out of the dormitory into a much nicer place, a rented apartment – two rooms, balcony, kitchen, in a residential district of chestnut trees and post-War yellowish brick low-rises. No laid table awaits us. I'm astonished again. Instead, the two of us unpack cold cuts and toast our friendship with a shared bottle of beer.

### *The Emergence of Isolation*

This picture of disintegration was widespread among friendship circles in Kiev. A striking feature of Soviet Kiev, when I had first moved there in 1995, was the durability of such circles. The group of friends one had at age 30 was typically intact at age 55 with little change. For me, this is the mystery of the informal *kollektiv* and its entry onto the endangered species list: if its magic, the vehicle of its intimacy, was talk, one would think that a social circle based on the ability to talk would be more durable than if the social group had been based on a particular physical space (like, say, a country club or a church) that could be destroyed or a social space (like work group or family) that could be disrupted. This section explores the mystery, attempting first to pin down more precisely an analytical description of the informal *kollektiv*. I then briefly outline the trajectories of the members of our *kollektiv* -- to look into where were they, if not together – in order to propose what salient features had been undermined.

### Creation of a Discursive Space: Practices of the Informal Kollektiv

In defining an informal *kollektiv*, we might first specify what it is not. We should note that in Soviet times the informal *kollektiv* is not the realm of dissent, running contrary to authoritative discourse. Kharkhordin describes such social circles instead as "subcultures," focused on production and dissemination of political dissent, rock music, unofficial literature, and other forms of discourse running outside of officially-sanctioned spheres of discursive production and dissemination.<sup>294</sup> Instead, this domain existed outside of official *kollektiv*, outside of the officially-sanctioned (and sometimes, as we saw in Kollontai's work on child-care provision, officially-promoted) family, and also outside of those "subcultures" so intentionally anti-official that their contours were drawn by official prohibitions and proscriptions.

I would diverge from Kharkhordin when he calls the informal *kollektiv* a "friendship network."<sup>295</sup> Herein, I defer to Kharkhordin's own description of a late-

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<sup>294</sup> OLEG KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RUSSIA: A STUDY OF PRACTICES 313–17 (1999).

<sup>295</sup> KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL 315.



Socialist “network” as a social form in which “each individual knew an adjacent friend but rarely knew a friend of a friend. No one knew all the members of the network.”<sup>296</sup> I would refer to the informal *kollektiv* instead as a circle of friends, a circle who did know each other. Yurchak refers to this kind of group as *svoi*.<sup>297</sup>

Kharkhordin describes this as a “tight *kollektiv*” of late Socialism that “spontaneously emerged.”<sup>298</sup> Kharkhordin’s adjective, “spontaneous,” points us to what I would argue is a more apt descriptor, “emergent.” Let me explain. Where familial relationships in the socialist state were written up in marriage certificates, birth certificates, and registration papers documenting related persons’ right to co-reside in state-provided housing, the informal *kollektiv* existed outside of written records and was primarily the product of oral speech genres. Orality gives more full range to those qualities that Bakhtin ascribes to the novel. The novel for Bakhtin is an emergent form, free and flexible. It “reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making,” its language renewed by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia, dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody, and indeterminacy, “a certain semantic openendedness.”<sup>299</sup> (For Bakhtin, the epic, by contrast, is fixed. Its defining feature is that the “authorial position” (the position of the one who utters the epic word) is “the environment of a man.”)<sup>300</sup>

Two examples of speech genres show the interrelationship of certain forms of performance and the production of informal *kollektiv*. The first supports Yurchak’s even stronger claim about the emergent quality of social forms of late Socialism. “All these milieus, from those that were institutionalized by the state to those that were spontaneous, were not static social spaces; they were continuously reproduced through repeated performative genres known as the practice of *obshchenie*.”<sup>301</sup> Yurchak explains that *obshchenie*, while it has no direct translation in English, refers to

communication’ and ‘conversation’ but in addition involves nonverbal interaction and spending time together or being together. ... The noun *obshchenie* has the same root as *obshchii* (common) and *obshchina* (commune), stressing in the process of interaction not the exchange between individuals but the communal space where everyone’s personhood was dialogized to produce a common intersubjective sociality. *Obshchenie*, therefore, is both a process and a sociality that emerges in that process, and both an exchange of ideas and information as well as a space of affect and togetherness.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL 315.

<sup>297</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER 102-108.

<sup>298</sup> KHARKHORDIN, THE COLLECTIVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL 317.

<sup>299</sup> MIKHAIL M. BAKHTIN, *Epic and Novel*, in THE DIALOGIC IMAGINATION (Michael Holquist & Caryl Emerson, eds., Michael Holquist, trans.) 7 (2002 (1975)).

<sup>300</sup> MIKHAIL BAKHTIN, *Epic and Novel* 7.

<sup>301</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, 148.

<sup>302</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER 148.

Yurchak cites analysts of late Socialism observing that *obshchenie*, while an old cultural practice in Russia, “in the 1960s and 1970s emerged as a ‘new cult’”<sup>303</sup> (another called it a “‘new fetish’”<sup>304</sup>) in the Soviet Union.

A few days after that quiet 2002 homecoming over which Vitaly and I had split a beer, I asked Vitaly what was up with his best friend Minenko. He answered, “*Ne znayu. Bol’she ne obshchaemysya*”: “I don’t know. We don’t *obshchat’sya* anymore.” Much to my amazement after I learned the meaning of the word, that was my first introduction to the verb *obshcat’sya*. It was like breathing: we did it so habitually that no one remarked on it metadiscursively until we stopped doing it. The best translation that I could come up with, after Vitaly explained what he meant by it, was “hanging out together.” Yurchak’s explanation made that understanding more precise for me: to *obshchat’sya* is to hang out by talking or otherwise produce companionship through speech acts, like singing or reeling out *anekdoty*, or silence.<sup>305</sup> *Obshchat’sya* is to puff into being, to project, a spontaneous dialogic space for the performances that create intimacy. The self that emerges is not an individualized self. It is an intersubjective self. It is the hydrogen that exists in water rather than as hydrogen gas; in an H<sub>2</sub>O molecule, it has different characteristics that are only possible in its bonded form and that take their specific properties from the other atoms with which it is bonded.

A second practice that took place within, and helped to constitute, the informal *kollektiv* is a speech genre Kharkhordin refers to as *oblichenie*, from the verb *oblichit’* meaning both “to reveal” and “to accuse, to condemn.” From antecedent religious<sup>306</sup> and early Soviet practices,<sup>307</sup> *oblichenie*, meaning both self-revelation and self-criticism, was a form of publicizing the self; in medieval Russian history, *oblichenie* took on the meaning of publicizing the sins of the powerful in order to hold them to account.<sup>308</sup> Kharkhordin points out that the word *oblichenie* may be said “almost literally to mean ‘en-personation (*ob-lichenie*), the endowment of someone with *litso* (face or juridical person) or *lichnost’* (personality).”<sup>309</sup> He cites Vladimir Dal’s explanation in his *Dictionary of the Living Russian Language*, “Deeds, and not words, reveal [or en-person, *oblichit’*] the man, indicate his real face and his real person.” [*Dela, a ne slova, oblichaiut cheloveka, pokazivayut podlinnoe litso i lichnost’ ego.*]<sup>310</sup> In Soviet practice, the self to be revealed could be a heroic self as well as a defective self. The performance of the self in *oblichenie* took on more freighted consequences during the Party purges in the 1930s.<sup>311</sup> By the late Soviet period, after Khrushchev had assured that no longer would any Soviet person suffer for acts of loyalty to the Party (even acts later judged to

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<sup>303</sup> Petr Vail’ and Alexandr Genis, *Strana Slova* [Country of Words] NOVYI MIR 4:239-51, 242 (1991), cited in YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, 148.

<sup>304</sup> Iakov Krotov, “*Sovietskii zhitel’ kak religioznyi tip* [Soviet Inhabitant as a Religious Type],” NOVYI MIR 245, 247 (May 1992), cited in YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER.

<sup>305</sup> *But n.b.* Yurchak’s caveat: “It [*obshchenie*] is different from just ‘hanging out’ with friends, as used in the United States, because it always involves an intense and intimate commonality and intersubjectivity, not just spending time in the company of others.” YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER 148.

<sup>306</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 215–219.

<sup>307</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 212–214.

<sup>308</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 220–228.

<sup>309</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 214.

<sup>310</sup> Vladimir Dal’, *Tolkovy slovar’ zhivago velikorusskogo iazyka* [Dictionary of the Living Great-Russian Language (1859)], 3:596 (1980), in KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE 214, n. 148.

<sup>311</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 214–215.

be misguided or wrong), *oblichenie* became institutionalized in routines of self-revelation, self-criticism, and group solidarity like the annual review of students, the Lenin Pass.<sup>312</sup> It also became routinized in the informal *kollektiv* through the exposure, review, and critique of the self in rounds of toasts and ribbing by one's closest friends in the annual rite of the birthday party.<sup>313</sup>

What Kharkhordin calls “informal authentic *kollektiv*,” function to define the group and the person-within-the-group.

They cohere as stable networks of free individuals drawn together by mutual interest and respect, who therefore cherish one another's opinions. Defending the constituent members is their first obvious feature; but the second feature is even more important. Diffuse groups have such freedom to penetrate their constituent individuals' lives because they allow all to be who they are – but not the right to be [just] anyone. Diffuse groups allow members to be who they are in the sense that they reveal to each of them who they are; they endow each individual with a person. ... [Th]ey function as the primary arenas of informal *oblichenie*, revealing the person of all members of a diffuse group with all their particular “weaknesses” and “drawbacks.”<sup>314</sup>

I reject this bifurcation between and “authentic” and an inauthentic self, the latter associated with formal *kollektiv*, officially-sanctioned activities, or state-endorsed values and the former with the personal, the private, the spontaneous. I would question the proposition that the informal *kollektiv* is vehicle only for the authentic self. What rings true in Kharkhordin's description of an informal *kollektiv* is the insight that the *kollektiv* engages in practices that, *inter alia*, reveal the self. I would stress, though, that it is an emergent version of a self. Those practices are less the drawaing away of a curtain to reveal the already-painted portrait of an authentic self, and more the adding, subtracting, and molding in sculpture.

#### *Unexpected Futures: A Catalogue of Displacement*

I learned over time that Suzanna, Vitaly's wife, and Minenko, Vitaly's closest friend, had an uneasy relationship. She enjoyed *anekdoty*, but she was not in the front row admiring his performances. He took second helpings of her cooking, but was not the most effusive in complimenting it. I became aware of the occasional sarcastic smile exchanged between them. This testiness, I believe, made me the beneficiary of an invitation to join a trip to Crimea, a peninsula of summer beach hotspots on the Black Sea an overnight train ride from Kiev, the preferred August retreat. Apparently, Minenko had pitched the idea of a getaway to Vitaly. Vitaly thought better of leaving Suzanna behind and had the idea of inviting me as companion for her, to which Minenko, with whom I enjoyed cordial relations, heartily agreed. The vacation turned out to be more of a group affair than I had anticipated. Minenko smuggled me into the Cabinet of Ministers

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<sup>312</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 334.

<sup>313</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 335.

<sup>314</sup> KHARKHORDIN, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, 339.

guesthouse in which he had secured rooms for himself and for Suzanna and Vitaly; I slept on a cot on their balcony. The setting was idyllic: the guesthouse was located on a small restricted-access bay, with only a couple of elite government guesthouses and the famous Soviet-era children's camp, Artek, dotting the palm-tree tropical gardens occupying the circular hillside wrapped around a dolphin-populated crystal-blue bay. Except during the kids' camp swim period in the morning, we had the bay to ourselves. The food at the guesthouse was, to my taste, miserable, and the Soviet gruel they served for breakfast every morning got old by the second day. We skipped the other meals, walking in to get a watermelon from the local market or dropping in to the beachside grill, both in the next town, Gurzuf, about twenty minutes' walk away. That was when I realized that Minenko had arranged this week to coincide with the second week of a vacation being taken by his girlfriend Zhenya, and her two best friends, Oksana and Kisya, in Gurzuf. I wondered if part of the difficult politics arose from the fact that the triad of other girls in our *kollektiv* had not included Suzanna in their vacation plan. On the other hand, she was the only married woman, and it seemed reasonable to let her take her vacation with her husband. In any case, Minenko had figured out the logistics and Vitaly had navigated the group politics, and I was happy to be along. Our *kollektiv* lived it up, swimming in warm waters and sunning all day, dancing at a small concrete Soviet dive-bar in Gurzuf each night.

Minenko was charming, resourceful, chivalrous, quick with a joke; a man's man to Vitaly and a flirt's flirt with the single ladies in our circle, somehow able to flatter those unattached lonely hearts without crossing a line that would offend Zhenya, his girlfriend. I had originally found Minenko glib, and I never countenanced his smirks at Suzanna's expense, but aside from the latter, I came to appreciate his role in the group and looked forward to times spent in his company. I could see Suzanna's point, though: Vitaly and Minenko were so close, finished each other jokes, shared each others' schemes and plans, that when the group was small and I saw just the three of them together, Suzanna seemed like a third wheel.

The summer after I left, Minenko invited Vitaly again to Crimea. "That kind of pleasure, I could not permit," Suzanna said. "Crimea" in the summer implies relaxation, a concentration of beach-goers from throughout the Slavic areas of the former U.S.S.R., quick acquaintances, drinking, sexual license. Abstention did not last through the second summer after I left. This time, either no mutually acceptable solution for including Suzanna presented itself or Vitaly just wanted a break, to cut loose with his guy friend. Suzanna told me that trip that Vitaly took alone with Minenko was the last straw. "My grandmother even died two weeks earlier, and he didn't cancel his trip." The grandmother lived a several hours' travel away and was not someone Suzanna had felt particularly comfortable with or well-treated by in life. I wondered if death to Suzanna, a Ukrainian, meant something different than to Vitaly, a Soviet of Russian family and Armenian hometown, or if Suzanna was grasping at straws herself. "When Vitaly returned from Crimea, I told him it was time to *rasvodit'sya* [literally, "to go separate ways," to divorce]." This posed a problem in living conditions, though.

Suzanna and Vitaly had met as students in graduate school, she in biochemistry and he in electrical engineering. Suzanna had matriculated after working for a few years as a biologist in a small laboratory in a water treatment center in her hometown in central Ukraine, making her several years older than most of her entry-year classmates. Vitaly

had been invited to Ukraine from Armenia under the privileged category of *molodoi spetsialist*, “young specialist,” a Soviet category reserved for a talented and promising pool of young intellectuals. He received residence permission in Kiev as a *molodoi spetsialist*, and he was granted residence rights to a room in the graduate student dormitory based on that designation while he waited for his turn to come up on the list of apartments provided to *molodiye spetsialisti*. After several years’ acquaintance, they married, officializing a relationship already signified when Suzanna had moved in with Vitaly in the dormitory a couple of years earlier. Vitaly’s friends the Ponymarchuks had already received their apartment, a pleasant one-room (with its own kitchen) in an apartment block of other young specialists. New blocks would be built over time to accommodate the up-and-coming young specialists. Then the Soviet Union broke up.

Eight years later, when Suzanna told Vitaly she wanted a divorce, she was already sick of the dormitory. The shared kitchen, the minder at the door, the tiny quarters, the shared bathroom. In her late thirties, she had long been ready for a place of their own. It had been nearly eight years since either of them received their monthly graduate student stipend. Suzanna had taken work as a nanny for a foreign couple living in Kiev, who had had their first baby in 1994. Although far from her biochemistry, she managed to enjoy the job. She loved the child and the family. She had actually found the nanny job through Sergei Ponymarchuk, who in absence of his graduate stipend had scrambled, asked around, and heard through the grapevine that the new U.S. Embassy was hiring day laborers to move furniture. (Foreign governments had only had embassies in Moscow, the capital city, during the Soviet period. It was only after the Soviet Union broke up that foreign governments slated Kiev and the capital cities of the other former-Soviet republics for government-to-government representation in an embassy.) When Sergey’s supervisor in the embassy shared that his wife had become pregnant, Sergey thought of Suzanna and suggested the nanny job to both parties. Vitaly was initially opposed, thinking it a waste of her education, but Suzanna pragmatically took the job. Vitaly subsequently relented and took a job in Sergey’s unit, working as a day laborer at the U.S. Embassy himself. At the time she suggested divorce, neither Suzanna nor Vitaly had been actively working on graduate studies or laboratory apprenticeships for more than six years. Vitaly had a right to *postoyannoye mesto zhichel’stva* (“permanent place of abode”) in the dormitory or, after his turn came up, in a state-provided apartment, by virtue of his designation as a young specialist of the Soviet Union long after the U.S.S.R. ceased to exist; Suzanna enjoyed the same right derivatively by virtue of being married to Vitaly.

In Soviet times, a couple might resolve a situation like Suzanna and Vitaly’s by maintaining what became known as *fiktivniy brak*, “fictitious marriage.” That was the term used to designate a situation in which a couple maintained an outward semblance of marriage, never officially divorcing, although both agreed the relationship was defunct, so that both could continue to live in the residence to which they were *pripisanniy*, “ascribed to [*lit.*, written to],” registered. [N.B.: The person is ascribed to the place; the place is not ascribed to the person.] Formally, both parties had a right to state-provided housing, but in reality, housing was often scarce and one had no place to move out to if a marriage became unworkable.

The *fiktivniy brak*, fictitious marriage, was not the only alternative for Suzanna and Vitaly. They found themselves in the relatively new situation in which the state

provided no guarantees. Instead, a market for housing existed in which, if one could locate a willing landlord with an available and affordable apartment, one could rent. Minenko helped. One of his cousins had a place that he was willing to lease, only to someone “known,” to a friend of a friend. In addition to being known to Minenko, Vitaly had the additional social capital of having kept a steady income through most of the chaotic post-Soviet period, when most people were out of work or unpaid or both, although keeping this position imposed its own social costs. (Vitaly, having stayed with the embassy, had now risen to warehouse manager, a decently remunerated managerial position, well-regarded within his workplace but treated with some condescension by old friends like Minenko.) Thus, Vitaly found an apartment that he could afford on his embassy salary from Minenko’s cousin.

As his official wife, Suzanna had the right to stay in the dormitory room to which Vitaly had been assigned as a “young specialist.” The foreign family for whom she had been a nanny had moved to another country more than three years earlier. Suzanna started applying for jobs at offices in the city. In 2002, the next time I saw her, Suzanna was still living in the dormitory room with her new relatively new partner, Mark. I realized how alone she had become from her description of meeting Mark. “It was like *Ironia Sud’bi* [“Irony of Fate,” a Soviet movie about a couple that meets when their paths mistakenly cross on New Year’s Eve. Soviets typically celebrated New Year’s Eve by decorating a fir tree, hosting a midnight dinner with family and friends, and exchanging gifts. Suzanna’s comparing her meeting Mark to the well-loved Soviet film was an attempt to romanticize her aloneness that year.] I went to the bus station to receive a *posil’ka* (Soviet idiom for a package sent in person through a common acquaintance traveling from sender’s home city to recipient’s home city rather than through the mails). My family was sending me New Year’s presents. I was waiting for the bus from Ladyzhin (Suzanna’s family’s home town). The bus was several hours late, and as other buses arrived and folks meeting disembarking passengers cleared out, I noticed only one other guy was still standing around. We started to chat, and it turned out that Mark was also from Ladyzhin and was also waiting for the bus to receive a New Year’s *posilka* from his family. After the two of us waited, chatting, for several hours, I asked him if he had plans for New Year’s Eve. He didn’t, and once the bus finally arrived late at night with our packages, we decided to see in the New Year together.”

The following are my notes, taken after the first time I visited Mark and Suzanna in the dormitory room that they now shared, Suzanna semi-officially and Mark “under the radar,” as an unofficial guest of Suzanna’s. Mark had separated from his wife, with whom he had two children, and the relationship with Suzanna afforded him a long-awaited housing alternative. This was, at best, dubiously stretching the rules for allocating access to living quarters in the dormitory. Suzanna knew that the dormitory manager had turned a blind eye thus far, but that Mark’s presence made her vulnerable to denunciation by any dormitory residents who bore her ill-will. She kept her head down.

In July of 2005, I returned to Kiev for a week in preparation for the year I was to go for fieldwork (2006-07). I dug up the last number I had for Suzanna, dating from summer 2002, and dialed. She shouted into the phone, “You rascal! You’re in Kiev, aren’t you?” We met to have a walk in the center of Kiev that night after she left work. It was midsummer; twilight lasts until nearly 10 p.m. We had had a leisurely walk and talk for a few hours before she broke in, “Wait, you don’t know that I finally got out of

that damned dormitory, do you?" "What?!" I asked. She explained to me that she and her partner, Mark, rented an apartment at the outskirts of town. I realized that she was not getting back to her place by easy metro ride to a stop five minutes' walk from the dormitory. We had kept her out 'way too late, given her commute home.

We flagged down a taxi to accompany Suzanna home. She protested against the taxi and our accompanying her, but finally relented. When the ride to her place took us beyond the last metro station on the line, I realized that it was good that we had given her a ride. We went passed the last high-rises built next to the farthest metro station and sped on through traffic surprisingly thick for that time of night to a part of Kiev that had not existed on any of my previous visits, then passed the ring road, then new suburbs of recently constructed free-standing homes, a type of architecture which I had previously seen almost exclusively in villages in Ukraine. Finally the depressing newbuild dribbled out and the road we were on ran as straight as a country two-lane in the U.S. Midwest, surrounded by fields on both sides, lined by poplars. The traffic around us thinned out to country-road traffic. It was a full 45 minutes, driven by a driver not shy of speed, from the center of Kiev, before we turned left off the country highway and into the center of a small village.

The mayor of the village, Suzanna told us admiringly, had apparently paid off some of the local farmers for rights to their newly-acquired land plots closest to the village and promptly built high-rise apartment buildings, eight or nine stories high, one twelve stories high, right on the edge of sunflower and corn fields. (All of this took place in blatant violation of the new Land Code's restrictions on appropriating agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.) This was a new "bedroom community," populated by Kievans priced out of the city center or new arrivals without Soviet-era registration rights or other means to access housing in the center. Suzanna's commute normally entailed a 45-50 minute ride by public minibus from the village to the last metro stop; and then about an hour by metro into the center of Kiev. Once in town, her workplace was just ten minutes' walk from the metro. The mayor had financed the construction by "pre-sales," selling apartments in the unbuilt buildings for hard cash and using that cash to pay construction costs. This kind of financing was not unusual at this point in Ukraine, four years after the new Land Code had passed, and people were already aware that a building might never materialize but their cash would be long gone. Apartments, then, could be had relatively cheaply, for \$40,000, bought on speculation. As soon as a building was built, the owner of the now-actual apartment could resell for a minimum of \$65,000. Suzanna earned \$300/month. She and Mark rented.

When we pulled into the parking space in front of the entry door to the stairwell to Suzanna and her neighbors' apartments, Suzanna disappeared for a moment and then returned to us in the taxi in triumph. "Ha ha! Mark and I will now drive you home!" "What?! We just rode 45 minutes to see you home. It doesn't make any sense for you to come back with us to the center just to have to turn around and drive back out again to your apartment." Nevertheless, we were guests to Ukraine, this was Ukrainian hospitality, under no circumstances would she be moved to let us be the ones to see her off, she never would have acquiesced in letting us take her home by taxi if this scheme hadn't occurred to her; in short, I realized Ukrainian *hostopriemnost'* (literally, "guest-reception," translated as "hospitality") in this case was a form of madness and I should comply rather than try to reason by reference to economizing time or fuel.

Before we left, she showed us around her apartment with enormous pride: a kitchen, bedroom, living room, corridor connecting them all, small balcony off the kitchen. Because they were on the first floor, the balcony was more like a very small patio, and in the common yard in front of their building, Suzanna had planted a homey row of blooming flowers and tomato plants. Even though she had not had any advance warning of company, the apartment was as neat as a pin. She pointed out the “summer curtains,” of a cheery, light fabric, that she had made for the kitchen windows. She had a set of “winter curtains,” heavier, more insulating, that she had made for winter. A two-room apartment! This was extravagance. We congratulated her before we piled into Mark’s car for the return journey to the center.

On that prior research visit in the summer of 2002, Vitaly used my presence in Kiev as an excuse to arrange a meeting with Minenko. At that point, having lived with Vitaly in his apartment for a couple of weeks, I realized that he and Minenko no longer sustained the daily contact that had formed the essential reiterated performance of their friendship. I had an interesting off-line relationship with Minenko, which I did not have with any of the other members of our group. One day back in 1997, on a rare occasion my diplomatic duties took me to the Presidential administration for meetings. (We were meeting with Ukrainian counterparts to finalize arrangements for a face-to-face meeting of our bosses’ bosses’ bosses when a high-level U.S. delegation was scheduled to come to town). I was striding purposefully behind an escort. The corridor was very long – it ran nearly the length of a city block – with light wood parquet floors under a red carpet that felt like it stretched away to infinity, lined with light-wood doors, most closed. By chance, we passed one door that was open and of course, I glanced in as we hustled by. And by even greater chance, to my extreme astonishment, there I saw Minenko sitting behind a desk. Besides Vitaly, who worked at the same place as I, I did not know what any of my friends did for a living, although at that point we had spent at least a couple of weekends per month together for the previous two years. Work was not something we talked about in the informal *kollektiv*. In fact, one of the hallmarks of the informal *kollektiv* was how compartmentalized it was. I knew nothing about most of their work or home situations. I assumed most did whatever they could to make ends meet, in the midst of career trajectories and labor markets fractured by the Soviet disintegration. And here was Minenko, sitting behind a desk on the fourth floor of the heavily-guarded, ultra-prestigious Presidential administration! I physically did a double-take; he looked up and our eyes met through the door. My mind reeled. Had he worked here all along? Did the others know? Could he not use his position to help his friends get work? Was he spying on all of us? Would I get him in trouble, if any of his colleagues came to understand that he had been having contact with a foreigner, much less a diplomat at the American embassy? I recovered, controlled my face and guarded my eyes for his sake, and kept walking.

On my way out of the building after the meeting, I slowed down as we neared that stretch of the corridor. I glanced in and Minenko’s office-mate was gone. I hesitated at the door and glanced in. Minenko met my glance and said, “Hello, Monika,” in a low but friendly voice. I understood that he was not advertising our acquaintance but neither was he keeping it completely unacknowledged. I opted for openness, at least to him. “You must know we’re here to make arrangements for that delegation that’s coming soon. Tons of work.” He nodded, reached his hand over his desk; I stepped in, shook it, and we



exchanged a smile as I stepped out to catch up with my escort, who seemed not to notice my short detour.

Minenko and I never spoke of that moment, nor did I ever tell any of the others that I had seen him there. He surely asked around enough to know I never talked about him. My keeping confidence, even if all of the others already knew of his work situation, as well as my status as a diplomat, which Minenko treated as a quality that reflected prestige onto him (a prestige he appeared to think his due), seemed to engender a friendly bond between us.

Vitaly invited me to meet him and Minenko at a tourist site, a “women’s monastery” (as convents are called in Russian orthodox tradition) from the Middle Ages, just off of one of the main arteries heading towards downtown Kiev. I had never been, never even heard of it; and now, it held even greater interest in its relatively recent conversion back to being a working monastery. We met after the two of them got off from work one weeknight, which in midsummer felt more like an afternoon. As Vitaly and I greeted Minenko and we set off on foot toward the entrance to the monastery, I had the strange simultaneous feeling that this could be any day five years previous, that nothing had changed, and yet at the same time that here stood a completely different person. Here was the same man, handsome face with typical Ukrainian features, urbane suit, post-Soviet shoes, broad smile, whom I knew. And here was a man who emanated indifference toward Vitaly that I had never seen. Minenko greeted me with warmth and Vitaly with barely a glance. Vitaly asked Minenko if he knew, “What did Christopher Robbin say to Winnie-the-Pooh after Piglet got his head stuck in the honey-pot?,” the lead-in to the latest *anekdot* Vitaly had heard. Vitaly had not told me this one yet; I had the feeling he had been saving it up with pride to tell Minenko. When Vitaly followed up, rapid-fire, with a punchline casting sexual aspersions on the A.A. Milne character, Rabbit, Minenko involuntarily guffawed before re-mastering his features into a somber mask, without a twinkle of a reward for Vitaly’s efforts. He kept that duality, warmth towards me and distance towards Vitaly, for the rest of our outing. It was painful to be around. Vitaly, it seemed to me, related exactly the same way that he always had towards Minenko, treating us to *anekdoty*, being kind to me and patient with language barriers, mentioning mutual friends and inquiring after the health of Minenko’s parents. Minenko kept his unrelenting cool demeanor towards Andre intact. After we had had a nice stroll around the monastery, Minenko proposed to Vitaly that he walk me to the metro station. Vitaly assented and let us go off on our own. This was the first time I had ever been alone with Minenko, aside from that moment in his office.

It was in anticipation of this meeting that I had asked Vitaly what changed between him and Minenko. *Chto sluchilos’?* What happened, I inquired. That was when I learned the word *obshchat’sya*, to communicate, to spend time cultivating intimacy. *Ne znayu. Bol’she ne obshchaemsya.* “I don’t know. We don’t *obshchat’sya* any more.” Is he still working at the same place? What does he do, actually? *Ne znayu.* “I don’t know, I’ve never known.” *Ne mozhesh’ dobit’sya ot nego, chem. tam zanimaetsya.* “You can’t beat it out of him, what he’s up to there.”

That night, Minenko and I took a long walk in the summer twilight. As soon as Vitaly had left us, Minenko asked me, Monika, what are you doing back in Kiev? I told him I had quit the State Department and gone back to law school, and that I had received a grant to research the effects of the newly passed Land Code (passed just the previous

October). I'm here to research property in Ukraine, I told him. "Oh-ho, I can tell you something then," Minenko answered. Are you still working for the Presidential Administration? I asked. After all, the President had been re-elected two years earlier and most of his team, at least at higher levels in the bureaucracy, had stayed in place. "Nooooo, that's a long story, and to answer that, you'll learn something about property in Ukraine."

First, though, I asked him what happened in his relationship with Vitaly. I met a woman, Minenko told me. She was special, very serious. Minenko had stopped drinking alcohol, had become a vegetarian and taken up yoga, three practices that I had never heard of anyone doing in Ukraine. "She made me see that everything I had with Vitaly was not serious," Minenko said. "Fooling around. Drinking. Chasing skirts. I came to understand how useless and counterproductive all that is." This was a Minenko, grim and unsmiling, that I had never seen before.

We wound through the old city on the hill, and down one of the hillside lanes that traverse down the steep embankment to the ancient working class quarter along the river. Summer twilight lasts for hours, but Minenko's tale outlasted twilight and we wound up at a bar in Podil, both of us sipping carbonated water, with him sketching out the more complicated parts on a napkin. In a nutshell, Minenko started, a couple years earlier, the last time he had gone on summer vacation to Crimea with Vitaly, actually, they had been exploring old Soviet-era tourist attractions. In climbing around one old property, a "castle" built as the vacation playground of a nineteenth-century Muscovite prince later nationalized by the Soviet government, he found that this castle had been taken over, privatized or acquired, by a group of post-Soviet "businessmen" from Moscow. That gave him an idea. When he returned back to Kiev to start the autumn work season, he approached his boss in the Presidential administration bureaucracy, outlined the project, and asked for permission. His boss thought it over and gave him the green light.

For the next two years, Minenko did research. "Research" involved finding things out, either through a paper trail of documents in public archives or by talking to people, local municipal authorities, workers at the castle, officials at the State Property Fund in Kiev. He found out how the Muscovites had gotten a hold of the castle, what means they had used to privatize it. It took the whole of our long walk for Minenko to explain the various leads he had followed, the improprieties he uncovered: the bribes they paid, the forms they forged, the unclear paths to convert public to private property that could be interpreted for them or against them, the permits – from fire codes to historical-preservationist restrictions – that they had violated. Minenko amassed piece after piece of documentary evidence; he built up a thorough case against each claim to ownership the Muscovite occupiers might advance and he developed every lead to argue that they had violated the correct process. His position at the Presidential Administration opened some doors – it gave him a place from which to place phone calls to various municipal and Crimean authorities and an official address from which requests for documents emanated – but the project required substantial creativity, ingenuity, and thoroughness on his part. He knew that these Muscovites were at least rich and could afford clever legal representation to defend their claims, and that they were probably also mafia-connected. He needed to make himself invulnerable through paper. He worked steadily for nearly two years, in isolation, not daring to tell anyone – no colleagues, no friends – what he was doing. After he had compiled a full dossier, a *papka* (the same

kind of folder of compiled information that my colleague Irina had objected to when her dean tried to blackmail her into giving up her labor book)<sup>315</sup> and double-checked it, making sure every objection to their original claim, every cited flaw in the process of privatization, every uncovered code violation was airtight, Minenko was ready. He took a deep breath and took it all to his boss in the Presidential Administration bureaucracy.

“I walked into my boss’ office and handed him the *papka* (folder). We sat alone in his office for a long time, more than an hour, maybe two. He looked through each paper carefully: the legal description of the property location, the deed, the official documents about the privatization, the permits. He looked over each memo I had, describing each incomplete form, forged signature, or improperly stamped document. After he had scrutinized each paper very careful, in deep, thoughtful, silence, my boss closed the folder, looked up at me, and smiled. ‘Excellent job. Well-done. This is an airtight case. Really professional work.’ Then, putting the folder into his top desk drawer, he said, ‘Thank you. We won’t be needing you here anymore.’” Minenko looked at me with a self-sarcastic smile. He had been had. His supposition was that his boss had immediately put his *papka* to use, to secure that property that Minenko had had his eye on, for himself. “That would have set me up for life, Monika.” Minenko looked away for a moment, then back at me. “That was the last moment of my employment with the Presidential Administration.”

Minenko was a complicated guy. Back about a year after I had first met the group, the American woman for whom Suzanna worked as nanny made a scathing remark about Zhenya, Minenko’s girlfriend and a core element in our group. What’s wrong with Zhenya? I asked. “Don’t you know?! She’s his mistress,” Tamar spat, defensive of her own marriage against any interloper. “He has a wife and kid, a five-year-old son, that he leaves at home.” I took this in. I had never heard anyone, including Minenko, mention a wife, but this could be interpreted in a number of ways. The fact that it could be true or not, that it struck me as plausible as a truth as it did as a misconception, is a sign of how compartmentalized we kept our lives. My informal *kollektiv* was my family in Kiev, and no one, except eventually Vitaly and, separately, Suzanna, knew anything about my family or love lives, and precious little about my professional life.

Minenko’s tale about the genesis of his disenchantment with his friendship with Vitaly piqued my curiosity. After that long walk with Minenko, I asked Vitaly, “Wait, where’s Zhenya these days?” “She lives outside of Paris.” What?! When I had to leave our *kollektiv*, no one had an email address and almost no one had access to a computer or the internet. A one-way Iron Curtain was still in place for many practical effects. When I had known Zhenya, she didn’t even have a passport. She had never traveled outside of Ukraine, not even to Moscow. “Paris? Like, Paris, France?” “Yep. I went to see her last year. When the Embassy sent me to the regional office in Frankfurt for training for our new warehouse organization system, I took some days of personal leave to go see Zhenya.” “She’s been there since last year?” “Actually, a little more,” Vitaly said. “She married some French guy, a guy she met off the internet.” This development caught me completely by surprise.

Suzanna later told me more, perhaps a different version than Vitaly knew or had internalized. “She gave up on Minenko. He was never going to be able to provide an

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<sup>315</sup> For discussion of *papka*, see Chapter 6 on Mobility.

apartment for her. You know how he always lived with his parents.” I recalled Minenko’s parents’ apartment, where we had all spent New Year’s Eve one year. They had a large apartment, three rooms plus a kitchen. Minenko, like Zhenya, came from a family that was “registered” in Kiev, a source of substantial social capital and, I suspected, one of the sources of a self-confident ease that had set them apart from others in our circle whose ability to stay in Kiev depended on their own resourcefulness and cunning. Being registered in Kiev struck me, structurally, as something akin to “white privilege” in the United States, a taken-for-granted feature of life for those who enjoy it and painfully compensated for by those who do not, a platform from which, all else being equal, a slightly more care-free performance of life is possible.

I also recalled the last time I had seen Zhenya before I moved away from Kiev in 1997. She had, to the admiration and rejoicing of her friends, just bought a one-room apartment for herself. She was the first person that any of us had known to secure their own apartment in the private market. I learned shortly before that, after having known her for two years, that she was employed at a bank, one of the new private savings banks, in downtown Kiev. I had never known where she spent the hours in between our *kollektiv* gatherings; I still do not know what she did at the bank. I do know that the other “girls” considered it good employment. Zhenya’s parents were registered in Kiev as well, meaning they had received private ownership rights in the state-provided apartment they occupied at the end of the Soviet period; so she had a family home from which to make her way in the world. She could work at a white-collar job, afford to take herself to Crimea with the girls, wear fashionable (if, to my eyes, mass-produced and cheaply made) clothing, afford manicures and makeup – in other words, to make herself presentable to the standards of self-presentation that Kiev held for its post-Soviet women -- and put some money away. I do not know if her workplace also afforded her access to credit or financing, at that time still unavailable to the wider population.

The price of apartments in Kiev had just started to rise by 1997. Before then, in the rush of connected Kievans to stampede the exists of the post-Soviet economic catastrophe and the turnover of state apartments to their legally registered occupants in private ownership, housing prices had seemed absurdly low to me. One friend in 1997 remembered having done some plumbing work for a friend of a friend two years earlier. “He offered to pay me in barter. I could choose: either a brand-new VCR (video cassette player) or an apartment in downtown Kiev, because both he and his wife had gotten apartments from partetns who recently passed away. I said to myself, ‘Everybody’s got an apartment. NOBODY’S got a VCR.’ I took the VCR.” My friend told me this ruefully, at a time when apartments in beautiful if shabby buildings in the center of Kiev had just risen in price from several hundred to a couple of thousand dollars. Neither he, nor I, nor anyone else knew if property rights would be respected in a few months or years, if apartments paid for would somehow not revert to the last Soviet-registered owners or to some new claimant, based on post-Soviet norms or networks. It felt risky, but there was enough trust in the nascent secondary housing market that prices had just started to rise. Zhenya had bought herself a place at just the right time.

Apparently, her own resourcefulness in securing her own apartment did not satisfy her material wants or her anxieties about future security. “Zhenya and Minenko have known each other since they were in middle school,” Suzanna told me several years later. “They met in at the *Dom Kulturi* [House of Culture], in the after-school dance

lessons for children.” One feature of the Soviet state, an outgrowth of Kollontai’s initiative for the state to provide ways to free women from childcare responsibilities during working hours, was an extensive system of free after-school activities for children. Music lessons, chess clubs, sports teams, reading rooms, were all provided in neighborhood facilities in a city as large as Kiev. Among the amenities were ballet and ballroom dance lessons, which is where Minenko and Zhenya had first gotten acquainted. “They were an item from the beginning.” The idea of a someday-future got postponed during the post-Soviet economic collapse that postponed their young adulthood. As I wrote this, I found myself wondering if Minenko’s scheme to take over the Crimean property was his last realistic chance to get the resources to buy an apartment of his own for a future with Zhenya.

The mail-order bride business had already been booming when I lived in Kiev between 1995-1997. Brokers who introduced Western (usually American) men to Ukrainian women seeking marriage and life elsewhere made thousands on each match. Through work in the consular section of the U.S. Embassy, we were presented several times a week with such couples, the man seeking an immediate visa for a woman with whom he had corresponded by mail but only just met in person. It was not unusual for the woman to meet the man’s flight at the airport, and the two to come together straight from the airport to the U.S. Embassy to try to get her a visa. (As we only processed non-immigrant, instead of immigrant, visas, most of these meetings were destined for disappointment as we referred the American citizen to the appropriate INS immigration forms.) The men seemed disproportionately to be engineers working in remote areas of Alaska, or sometimes, the upper Midwest, like North Dakota, usually for oil companies. A few times a year, we also had to deal with the effects of such relationships gone wrong: anonymous information about American citizen men who came to Ukraine on visits arranged by a marriage broker but actually with the intent of sex tourism; pleas from Ukrainian mothers about their daughters trapped in the U.S. in potentially dangerous or physically abusive relationships; even, on rare occasion, the family of a deceased U.S. citizen lured to Ukraine by a potential mail-order bride only to be financially defrauded by her or, on more than one occasion, taken for money and murdered, apparently by the woman’s pre-existing husband or lover. The mail-order bride business had an unsavory cast for me.

That was all in the days of postal mail. The internet began to infiltrate Ukraine, and it seeped in through wires into living rooms and bedrooms throughout Ukraine. “Mail-order” match-making proliferated and took on an even more personal dimension. The broker, a person who advertised to American men and solicited Ukrainian woman, who arranged tours to Ukraine for men and parties or dates (often with a third-party translator), became a thing of the past. The world came to the screen of Ukrainian women. Zhenya, entrepreneurial and attractive, apparently gave up on Minenko, met a divorced French mathematics teacher fifteen years her senior, worked on her French language skills, and ended up moving to a suburb of Paris as his spouse.

By 2002, Suzanna told me, “Zhenya wants to have a baby with Joffroi.”<sup>316</sup> I tried to imagine Zhenya, always immaculately dressed in freshly pressed clothes, with fresh manicure and unsullied makeup, hair always *comme il faut*, cool and somewhat aloof,

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<sup>316</sup> This ridiculous spelling is the best I can approximate, in Roman script, of his name in French as pronounced by Ukrainian Russian speakers. I can not guess what it might be in French.

dealing with diapers and jammy hands. Most Ukrainians have children by 25, grandchildren by 45. Zhenya was nearly 40. Why? I asked. Joffroi, as it turns out, had two children with his first wife. “Our’ first wife,” as Suzanna reported Zhenya’s wry appellation, “needs our attention almost every day.” He had to interact with his first wife nearly daily; he and Zhenya even dined with his first wife and children once or twice per week. The children were a pull on Joffroi. Zhenya thought that she would never be the center of his attention, top priority, until she had a baby with him. “She doesn’t really want a baby,” Suzanna told me, “but she doesn’t see any other way.”

Zhenya was not the only one who had left the group. Another of our girls, Zhenya’s close friend Oksana, had married an Italian, also met over the internet. “Actually, they’re not married. He’s married, that is, to his first wife, an Italian. He went on the internet looking for a mistress. But Oksana did research and found out under Italian law, if you have a baby with a man, you have rights to half of his property, so she agreed.” Oksana moved to Italy and by 2002 was happily pregnant. Ksenya, the economics Ph.D. student who lived in the dormitory with her son? “Oy, Monika. You won’t believe this. Ksenya got religion. She became an orthodox nun; she, and her son!, live in a convent out near Zhitomir [a small city about an hour and a half’s drive from Kiev].” Wow. I did not see that coming. “Neither did we. She wanted peace, after all this unpredictable noise we had in life the last decade.”

Then there was Mitya, the guitarist, who also lived in the dormitory. I asked Vitaly, who worked with him, how Mitya was doing. “God, that back-stabbing brown-nose? I have no idea.” Vitaly had the impression that Mitya tried to cast aspersions on his Ukrainian workmates to their managers to win brownie points at his friends’ expense. Vitaly’s take on his old dormitory neighbor and embassy colleague, Zontik, was even worse. Zontik would openly frame others at work in petty misdeeds, in order to be able to report on them to American supervisors and thereby curry favor with his higher-ups. Vitaly and his colleagues judged both Mitya and Zontik’s behavior as particularly egregious because most of their work colleagues were friends who had gotten jobs, like Vitaly had, through the same chain of acquaintance (that for Andrie had started with Sergei Ponymarchuk). Like both Mitya and Vitaly, at that point, many of the U.S. Embassy warehouse crew were members of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, physicists or electrical engineers, who had not been paid in years. Most respected each other’s scientific temperament or intellect; quite a few had known each other in graduate school or laboratory work before they became day laborers or salaried employees. They were from the same formal work *kollektiv*, quite a few were from the same housing *kollektiv*, and a few were from one or another common informal *kollektiv*. To betray one of them to get ahead at work at the Embassy was even worse than betraying a colleague who was merely a work acquaintance. By 2002, Vitaly never ever spoke to me of Zontik. Of Mitya, Vitaly, mellow and loyal, said little more but the depth of his insult came through in one quiet statement, “I can’t stand that guy.”

That summer of 2002 that I stayed with Vitaly, I met him on the street not far from the Embassy when he was getting off from work one day and happened to see Mitya as well. As I was staying in the apartment Vitaly rented from Minenko’s cousin, I had not spent much time at the dormitory save for the occasional evening to visit Suzanna and so had not run into Mitya. Mitya smiled his quick smile under that thatch of thick dark hair, shook hands, and asked how I was doing. Vitaly diplomatically asked if we might

like some time alone to catch up and jumped onto a passing street car to escape Mitya's company. Mitya and I walked together to the city center metro, a good forty minutes' stroll, and had a cup of tea before we parted. This was the first time I had seen Mitya since singing to him playing guitar during my brief visit to Ukraine in 1998. After we had talked for some time, I asked after Mitya's family. I had only met them once, when they had come to Kiev to spend a New Year's holiday with him in the dormitory. They normally lived in Zaporizhzhya, the central Ukrainian city where Mitya still held a professorship in electrical engineering.

His wife and child were well, he said, but a pained look crossed Mitya's face. "I'm doing well at the Embassy, Monika. I'm not a day laborer any longer – you know that, right? I've moved up to a junior manager position. Not as high as Vitaly," he said, with a strained chuckle, "but I've advanced. I'm salaried now. I'm in charge of others." His pride in advancing up this ladder seemed tinged with a level of sadness. "It's just that, I'm not for this. You know? None of us are." This was a theme I'd talked over long ago with Vitaly: the frustration of being paid to lift boxes, move sofas, fix toilets for American diplomats, most of whom were not as smart or as sophisticated as Vitaly had expected. "It took me a little time to acquire enough spoken language fluency to figure it out, Monika," Vitaly had told me, "I started out giving everyone the benefit of the doubt – American diplomats, after all -- but I soon realized that I'm doing the physical labor, the grunt work, for people who are not as smart as me." Most of them were not educated past college, Vitaly said. I did not add, from my vantage point of having chatted socially with my American colleagues, most of the American diplomats had no idea how overqualified our Ukrainian warehouse staff was. They saw a guy moving a refrigerator, they assumed high-school drop-out, not Ukrainian Academy of Sciences; and many of my colleagues did not have the language facility in Russian or Ukrainian to understand who these laborers were, had they taken the time.

"There was this moment," Mitya told me quietly, as we walked through the early evening hush. Mitya had talked his department chair at his home university, Zaporizhzhya State University, into scheduling all of his classes on every-other Saturday. So, every-other Friday night after he got off work at the warehouse, Mitya took the overnight train to Zaporizhzhya, put on a suit and tie, taught electrical engineering and physics for eight hours, and spent the rest of the weekend happily with his wife and child. Then, Sunday night, back into jeans and t-shirt, back to Kiev. His department chair knew that all of the professors were in desperate straights, that the university had failed to pay its staff with any regularity for several years since the Soviet Union disintegrated, that most people were feeding themselves by working gardens of extended family in the countryside. He knew that Mitya had found some paying job in Kiev, and so he tried to arrange Mitya's course schedule to accommodate him; he knew Mitya had found some work, he just had not known what.

"It was *Chetevertogo Iulya*, the Fourth of July." For any American Embassy, the Fourth of July is the biggest event of the year. An Embassy or Consulate typically cooperates with a local American school or Chamber of Commerce to hold a large, open Independence Day celebration for expatriate American citizens. In Kiev, when I was at the Embassy, this meant working with municipal authorities to get permission to use a public park; making advance logistical arrangements, from bringing in folding tables and chairs to hiring biologists to test water in the park's pond for bacteria and radiation; and

organizing a for-pay picnic and a free orchestra playing American big-band standards interspersed with patriotic hymns, plus a sound system for dancing later. An extravaganza. But that was really the smaller part of our effort for the day. The real work was the Fourth of July reception at the Ambassador's residence. Normally, this was the biggest networking event that the Embassy held every year; the years that I was at the Embassy in Kiev, the Ambassador's Fourth of July reception had about 1000 invitees and more than 800 attendees. Putting this on was an all-hands effort by the whole Embassy staff. Each section of the Embassy created a list of dignitaries, good contacts, influential people, relationships we wanted to cultivate, to invite. The Ambassador, with his Ukrainian protocol officer and his American colleagues, double-checked the list, admitted as many as possible, trimmed only when necessitated by Embassy budget constraints. We American staff managed Ukrainian staff who took care of all the details: double-checking addresses; getting invitations embossed with a gold State Department seal, printed. Drivers in the Embassy motor pool delivered invitations. The General Services section, where Mitya and Vitaly worked, bore the brunt of the preparations work: hiring caterers, setting up tents to shield guests from the sun, bringing in hundreds of folding chairs from the warehouse and setting them up in the garden of the Ambassador's residence, locating a portable sound system.

"I was unloading crates of drinks off the back of a truck at the Residence. It was noon, just as the reception was starting, on the Fourth of July itself. We were all hustling. It was a really hot day. I was covered in sweat [*ves' mokriy*, "completely wet"]." Mitya paused. "I turned around, arms loaded with flats of drinks, and I was looking straight into the eyes of my university president." Mitya exhaled. "It was the worst moment of my life."

He recognized me, Mitya continued, looked straight into my eyes, shocked, and turned without a word. The Ambassador had apparently traveled to Zaporizhzhya, Mitya's hometown, the previous autumn and made a speech, and struck up acquaintance with university higher-ups. The university administration knew that one of its star young intellectuals had found some kind of work in Kiev, but they had assumed it was in research. They had not expected to find Mitya lifting boxes off the back of a truck.

The only person with whom Vitaly still had regular contact was his old high school friend, Diminyan, who had moved from Armenia for graduate school the same time as Vitaly. Diminyan had married a Ukrainian woman, a Kiev native and so from a family who had Soviet-era registration and, therefore, a post-Soviet apartment. "Oh, Diminyan pays," Vitaly said. He got us together for drinks once, and, under a fluorescent-light tube in the dark interior of a bar near the tramvai tracks, Diminyan confirmed this. He was still boisterous, still light-hearted, but he did not dispute that his in-laws were on his case every living day. "With their help, I have come to accept that, no matter what I do, I will never ever be good enough for their daughter," he said with a grin. "Accepting that my very existence on the earth is itself a tragedy helped me to put everything else in perspective; compared to that, my chronic unemployment and general miserable uselessness is not as big a deal," he added, causing us to shout with laughter, even as I noticed a hint of sadness in his twinkling defiance.

As of 2002, then, when Vitaly and I were sharing that beer at my homecoming-party-of-two, here is where the rest of our *kollektiv* stood: Suzanna, still in the dormitory in a room registered to Vitaly, with large Mark, the ungentle giant from her hometown,



ready to fly two years later when the village high-rise appeared as an affordable alternative; Zhenya, outside of Paris and trying to get pregnant, and Oksana, outside of Rome and pregnant, both with foreign internet mates; Kisya, the high-drama third of the girls' trio, producing segments on kitchen re-dos and personal-appearance makeovers for a "lifestyle program" (a new genre unknown in Soviet times) for a t.v. station in Kiev; Ksenya, out of the dormitory and into a convent in Zhitomir; Minenko, kicked out of the Presidential Administration after his property scheme was stolen by his boss, living with his parents, disaffected with Vitaly and made serious by a post-Zhenya relationship with a clean-living woman, working long hours to make himself indispensable in a job in the new Ministry of Small Business that he had managed to get, quietly, through P.A. contacts who pled with him not to expose them to his former boss; Vitaly, living in an apartment rented from Minenko's cousin, alone save for his cat, Barbra, and his computer games; Diminyan, still getting together occasionally with Vitaly, hanging on despite antagonistic in-laws; Zontik, out of the dormitory, whereabouts unknown; Mitya, estranged from all, alone in the dormitory, hoping to hang on to his professorship in Zaporizhzhya despite the degrading work in Kiev and the arrested state of his research agenda. Sergey Ponymarchuk had moved into a demi-managerial Embassy job that he then parlayed into some white-collar job in a Ukrainian government ministry. Although paying little, it was enough to support wife and child since they were allowed to hang onto their "young specialists"-era apartment. Both he and Alla, the businesswoman, were both busy enough with work that they would not have had time to get together often with the group, if the group had still existed.

#### *Conditions of Possibility for Production and Reproduction of the Informal Kollektiv*

I chose this particular informal *kollektiv* as an exemplary case because it did not arise out of a Soviet workplace or some other Soviet, Socialist, or Communist Party institution formally dissolved with the disintegration of Soviet life. It is, however, in its rough outlines, completely typical of any of dozens of informal *kollektivy* into which I had insight, either as a satellite member, as a persistent outside observer, or as friend-of-friend, in Kiev. Most were not only intact as of 1995, four years after the Soviet Union dissolved; many had even become stronger, the interrelationships more intense, as post-Soviet Ukrainians put a premium on emotional support, stability, and relaxation as well as a forum for sharing practical information in the chaos of those early post-Soviet years. And, to the surprise of their members as well as of observers like me, by 2002 many informal *kollektivy* had disbanded or become such a weak shadow of their former selves that they constituted a categorically different form of social life. That leads me to re-raise the mystery of the informal *kollektiv*: how do entrenched patterns of affect disappear? In the case of the informal *kollektiv*, if its bonds could be described as a spontaneous, emergent intimacy evoked by reiterated performance of certain verbal genres – if it was a product of discursive practices which carved out a space for emotional intimacy rather than a product of formal institutions or physical spaces that had been destroyed – why did it not survive?

The amount of change in the environment surrounding the *kollektiv* makes it impossible to identify exclusive causal features the disappearance of which led to demise of the informal *kollektiv* of that first generation of post-Soviet adults. I do, however, identify two features of Soviet life that, I propose, served as conditions of possibility for

the performances of self and sociability that constituted the informal *kollektiv* and whose disappearance removed some of the necessary basis for its existence.

Self and Space: First is a luxury, a surfeit of self, which came from the assurance of social support for one's basic material needs. Soviet life assured each person, through a formal *kollektiv*, physical shelter, a living space. At the time that I first became acquainted with this informal *kollektiv*, for example, each of its members had some foothold in Kiev, a place to prepare food, rest at night, shut others out, keep quiet within. While no one except the Ponymarchuks expressed satisfaction with the living quarters they had in 1995, all members had a place, regardless of unemployment (or on-paper employment without pay in real life), former labor *kollektiv* having disappeared with the Soviet Union. Spatial arrangements eroded with time. Legal claims on space became more tenuous in some cases, as attachments to the work units that had afforded residence registration disintegrated. In other cases, the social relationships upon which spatial arrangements were predicated had changed and a member of the *kollektiv* had sought space for rent, through market mechanisms, or through new bases for exchange, like internet-forged marriages or pregnancies, or religious orders. Access to housing, by rent or otherwise, depended more on relationship than it had during late Socialism; as members of the *kollektiv* drew on or cultivated relationships to cope with change and worked longer hours, the *kollektiv* was simultaneously strained and neglected. The burden of support for a person's basic material needs that used to fall on society and its formal *kollektiv* increasingly fell on informal *kollektiv* and the individual.

Sociability and Time: Another marked feature of the informal *kollektiv* had been the feeling of timelessness when one was in this company. No one kept track of time; the only constraints were external, like the last metro train running or the time when the dormitory minder locked the front door, and if those were exceeded, then one could sleep on the floor or in the extra chair of the host *du jour*. This feature had, at first, been difficult for me to get used to. I felt some discomfort with the open-endedness of a plan to socialize. There was usually a start time specified: Let's meet at our place at 6 p.m., or, Can you pick us up to go to the lake at 10 a.m.? But there was never an endpoint specified, at least not in ways that I could perceive. We just kept going, from whatever time we met until a person got so sleepy that she toddled home or fell asleep in place. The shortest dinner party of the *kollektiv* that I attended may have been 6 hours. The same held for dropping by someone's or for meeting for a walk. I had to adjust my expectations of social time. If I dropped by someone's apartment on a Saturday afternoon to drop off, say, a video tape or cassette that they had been interested in, two hours would have been considered an abrupt leaving to a foreshortened meeting. Six hours would be normal enough. Ten would be in no wise excessive. Watching the clock was not a practice of this social milieu. It was not so much that we "lost track of time" together – it was not as though time were a pre-occupation which one shook from the consciousness with difficulty. Instead, it was as though, in each other's company, we stepped out of time. The clock did not get attention; each other got attention.

My friends generally seemed to be untouched by market mechanisms in their work. It was not the case that the harder or longer they worked, the more they got paid or the faster they advanced. Neither did most of them seem touched by professional ambition, or at least not in that part of the self that was in play in our *kollektiv*. At least in my friends' experience through life until 1995, time did not equal money. Time was not

valued for the efficiency with which it was spent. In fact, “spending time” was not an idiom or a thought. Even in our work life or in the parts of life that demanded effort, like locating affordable groceries, we did not “spend time” (*platit’ vremya*); what we did was “carry time through” (*provesti vremya*).

A few years before I had gone to Ukraine, I had taught at a university in the People’s Republic of China (from 1988-1990). For my students in China, the English children’s round “Row, row, row your boat” had particular resonance. It was only in their throats, on their lips, that the literal meaning of the words came to my conscious attention and came to have meaning for me. We row gently down the stream instead of straining ambitiously against the current: one has the impression of an oar dipping lightly and superfluously, more for entertainment than necessity, from a dreamy boatsman in a languidly drifting boat. “Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.” This song occasionally bubbled in to my subconscious when I was passing time with my *kollektiv*. Our informal *kollektiv* was a boat in which we rowed, occasionally and without necessity or urgency, as we went with the flow.<sup>317</sup> Time flowed. We floated. The purpose of the practices of identifying, selecting, culling, cultivating potential members of a *kollektiv* was, it seemed, to find people who could go with the flow together.

Within ten years after the Soviet Union broke apart, however, an equation between time and money had infiltrated some of my friends’ consciousness. Arranging for the material provision of life had become stressful. Time spent with friends had become an escape; life outside of that time had become a strain. My friends still took that feeling of “timelessness” for granted. What I noticed, with some alarm as Soviet time receded, was the extent to which that experience of timelessness became increasingly relegated to smaller and smaller portions of life.

In addition to the introduction of a time-money relationship, a couple of other background features seem relevant to a consideration of the experience of timelessness that was, to my mind, being increasingly eroded. One feature of our time together was childlessness. Several members of our *kollektiv* had children, but kids were almost never included in our plans and excursions. This, in turn, was one consequence of a practical feature of Soviet life that had survived through the mid-1990s. The Soviet retirement age was 55 for women, 60 for men; most Ukrainians married by age 21 or 22 and had children by age 25 or 26. Factor in the absence of mobility that featured so prominently in Soviet life, and the housing density that meant intergenerational co-housing in many cases. That meant that many friends in their 20s or 30s already had children, and that the children had grandparents who were both proximate and no longer working. Grandparents typically took the children home from daycare, if the child was not involved in after-school activities, and grandparents often stayed with the children if the parents went out at night or on the weekend to socialize. Children change so much more rapidly than adults over weeks or months; and small children often hit time limits on physical tolerance, experiencing a need for food or sleep at set intervals. Other friends in the *kollektiv* did not have children, part of a generation that had come of child-bearing age during late *perestroika* or early in the post-Soviet period. The economic upheaval, difficulty of finding basic foodstuffs, uncertainty in career and livelihood, had dissuaded most of my friends my age in Kiev from having children. The general effect was that,

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<sup>317</sup> This sense is conveyed beautifully in a scene literally in a rowboat in Mikhailkov’s film *BURNT BY THE SUN* (Caméra One 1994).

either because a person had not had children or because they were left in the care of grandparents, usually, children were not part of our gatherings. The absence of children in our social gatherings, I suggest, contributed to a feeling of timelessness or an absence of awareness of time passing.

Another characteristic of the way in we passed time, which could contribute to an experience of timelessness, was the prevalence of alcohol. The point of drinking was not to get drunk. The point of drinking was, just as with conversation, *anekdoty*, or song, to spend time in a joint activity that promoted or produced a feeling of companionship. The fact remains that consumption of at least several drinks of alcohol each, either vodka, champagne, wine, or - if we “were not drinking” – beer, was a feature of every get-together. Soviet custom was that it was bad luck for a bottle, once opened, to remain unfinished at the end of a given evening or occasion; and we adhered. By the time I arrived in Ukraine for fieldwork in 2006, none of my hard-drinking friends still drank. One could be induced to a beer or a glass of wine of an evening, but the expectation of one bottle of vodka for three people had passed. On the other hand, Kiev, a city of tea and vodka; a city in whose cafes, restaurants, and snack bars, in the mid-1990s, I found only instant coffee, and that, with difficulty, had become a city of coffee-shops. All of my acquaintance had switched from alcohol to coffee as the social drink.

A feature of the background in which we passed time, while not causal of a feeling of timelessness, could also be a condition of possibility for an experience of timelessness. That was limited, and thus repeated, vocabulary of materiality in late-Socialist and early post-Socialist culture. Yurchak describes this well, setting up his argument with a description of the late Soviet comedy film *Ironiya Sud'bi* (Irony of Fate), whose comic premise depends on the near-identity of street names, post-war neighborhood layout, apartment-block architecture and apartment interior, furniture, appliances, even keys. Because of the widescale standardization of production, a hero, tipsy from New Year's Eve festivities accidentally winding up on a plane, can mistake an apartment in Leningrad his home apartment in Moscow. The plausibility of this mistake to viewers is the key condition for the comedy of errors that then ensues. Yurchak goes on to note, “This comedy makes apparent the standardization and predictability of Soviet life in the 1970s, when street names, architectural styles, door keys, and household possessions seemed completely interchangeable. These standardizations of everyday tools, references, and scenes were part of a larger standardization of discourse during the Soviet period, epitomized in the ubiquitous ideological slogans and posters that covered urban space.”<sup>318</sup> Yurchak focuses his analysis on language, finding a normalization of standard forms across linguistic levels -- metaphor, morphology, style, temporality, syntax, narrative structure -- in authoritative discourse. This standardization of forms, as the comedy showed, played out across the visual, tactile, and spatial vocabulary as well. “[T]he same normalization occurred in non-linguistic registers of authoritative discourse,”<sup>319</sup> and, in a command economy, material objects were also the products of centralized authoritative discourse. Material culture came to involve circulation of a standardized forms; a standardized visual, tactile, and spatial vocabulary was reiterated no less than repertoire of forms of the language of authoritative discourse.

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<sup>318</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, 37.

<sup>319</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, 37.

While Yurchak includes in his analysis state and Party rituals, some of this standardization also accrued to rituals of the informal *kollektiv*. Not only was it convention to raise a toast at a friend’s birthday party – not unlike the convention of baking a cake and singing happy birthday in American culture – what is more, beyond practice, in Soviet and early post-Soviet culture, the glasses in which one poured the alcohol came from a limited number of factories, using a limited number of glass designs. Across a country spanning eleven time zones, the same limited number of possible glass designs might occur. The kinds and makers of alcohol itself were also of limited number and standardized content. This is not to say that life was monotonous. The fixity of form, the standardization of scenic front, might even have allowed for broader or more inventive play within the venue. “[T]his precise reproduction of authoritative form enabled the creation of new, unanticipated meanings in everyday Soviet life ...”<sup>320</sup>

Yurchak proposes in passing a relationship between the standardization and the predictability of Soviet life in the 1970s,<sup>321</sup> the decade in which the first post-Soviet generation of adults spent their childhood. Predictability, I propose, inculcated a certain experience of time. Reiteration of forms – from material culture to holiday rituals – and the predictability of visual, tactile, taste, and spatial-organization stimuli, experienced at subconscious as well as conscious levels, had, I propose, several effects. One was the expectation that nothing would ever change, including friendships. Another was the creation of a venue that enabled the experience of timelessness rather than consciousness of the passage of time.

Soviet guarantees of housing and minimum material requirements for physical survival, already discussed above, enhanced features of this venue that allowed for an experience of timelessness. Social guarantees rule out a certain level of worry. I already mentioned, earlier in this chapter, that the ease of friends from Kiev-registered families struck me as similar to the lived experience of white privilege in the United States. Another unlikely comparison came to mind. In the early post-Soviet years, my contacts across Ukraine, even while preoccupied with daily demands of locating or growing food, exhibited at a certain level what seemed to me an identifiable sense of being care-free in relation to future access to food and shelter. In the United States, I had only been exposed to something like that care-free sense in those who had grown up in families of hereditary wealth. The American middle class has been described as, typically, two paychecks from homelessness. The absence of an unconscious preoccupation with the precariousness of present provisions; the absence of certain forms of worry about minimum provisions in the future. Being free from these forms of care allow for, I argue, an experience of time in the present (what seemed to me “timelessness”), an experience of others’ presence, and the generation of spontaneous community through those emergent performances of self and inter-subjectivity. The level of attention to the present, intersubjective self is what I mean by “intimacy.” And that was the quality that time passed in the informal *kollektiv* had given rise to.

#### *What Happened? Synopsis of an Autopsy*

When Suzanna told me about Zhenya’s marriage to the French mathematician, she uttered a phrase that I had never heard before: “*ona obespechila sebya na vsyu*

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<sup>320</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, 37.

<sup>321</sup> YURCHAK, EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER, 37.

*zhizn'*," "she has safeguarded herself for life," she has set herself up for life. *Obespechit' sebya* – the "*sebya*," the object of the verb *obespechit'*, to guarantee, is "oneself." That became an idiom that I heard repeated over and over as other friends in other *kollektiv*y told me about women disappeared abroad in relationships with foreign men. *Ona obespechila sebya na vsyu zhizn'*. Life had become a span of time the duration of which one needed to provide for oneself. The imperative object of care and attention had become oneself.

As the Soviet state receded farther into the past, certain features of life that had seemed set on certain trajectories disintegrated, lost their force, or disappeared completely. One set of trajectories were the life paths – past, present, and future – that would have formerly determined access to different forms of state-provided housing. Those life paths were disrupted. The state had disintegrated. People were left to their own defenses, to their own safeguards. Time passed with friends became a way to escape a form of stress that had become a feature of the new background, instead of what it had been: a different platform among many, relatively undistinguished from each other in terms of experience of stress over material conditions of life, for performances of a different self.

Another feature of life disappearing into the Soviet past was a reiteration of forms of material culture as well as forms of language in authoritative discourse and public ritual. Reiteration, repetition, predictability became replaced by a culture of the new and a norm of radical unpredictability.

Finally, a feature of life increasing rare was an experience of time: time spent in the present, a sensation of timelessness or suspension of time while in a milieu of companionship, versus a present in which the future has become a problem. A substantial literature describes ways that practice and affect transform space into place. Here, I am making an obverse claim. What I am proposing is that two background features of late Soviet life, the physical and legal arrangement of space and an experience of changelessness and timelessness, had created a venue for certain genres of performance. Those performance genres, in turn, had been the means by which people in a group produced a certain form of group intimacy, the informal *kollektiv*, that allowed for a certain form of the self, a dispersed personhood. The disappearance of those features had not caused the disappearance of the *kollektiv*, but they had eroded the conditions of possibility for its existence.

## Chapter 8

### The Place of the Past in the Present: Technologies of Remediation

What place does the past have in the present? This question has become an intense focus of discussion and action in independent Ukraine. Public spaces of central Kyiv have become sites for testing interpretations of history, claims on the present, and settings for the future. Perhaps no setting is more iconic than the grand monuments of the St. Sophia complex. The St. Sophia National Preserve, as one administrative unit, includes the oldest surviving building sites scattered across Kiev. Over the course of their nearly thousand-year history, the monuments of the St. Sophia complex have been sites of public worship, diplomacy, defense, festivity, mourning, and for more than seventy years of the last century, scholarship, teaching, and memory. Now their status has become more problematic. We will concentrate on two of the sites of the complex.

At the core of the National Preserve stands St. Sophia herself, the thousand-year-old cathedral anchoring the oldest section of old Kyiv. After the Nordic caste that ruled Kyiv converted to Christianity in 988 A.D., Prince Yaroslavl brought Byzantine masters north to plan the cathedral, its mosaics, and its icons, which explains how the iconic cathedral of Ukrainian orthodoxy came to be built on the floorplan of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (now, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul). The Hagia Sophia and her Kyiv namesake are dedicated to Holy [Hagia] Wisdom [Sophia], not to the person of a particular saint; this conceptualization and veneration of wisdom over knowledge enjoys a genealogy that extends back to Plato and beyond. In the mystical theology of Eastern Orthodoxy, Holy Wisdom is understood as the Divine Logos who became incarnate as Jesus Christ.<sup>322</sup> The Russian and Ukrainian word that translates as “cathedral,” *sobor*, is from the same root as the verb “to gather” and the noun “a gathering.” The Russian and Ukrainian name for this place, *Sofiskyi Sobor*, “Wise Gathering,” could connote in the Old Russian of medieval Kyiv either “gathering of the wise” or “gathering of wisdom.” The Cathedral is surrounded by buildings of dormitories, rectories, administrative buildings, and bell tower that served medieval St. Sophia.

Kyriivska Tserkva [“St. Cyril’s Church”], though physically removed from St. Sophia by four and a half miles, is administered under the same aegis. Its 900-year-old interior is covered with the most extensive intact collection of original icon-frescos in Russian orthodoxy, as well as the sometimes-iconoclast murals of 19<sup>th</sup> century St. Petersburg painter and “restorationist” Mikhail Vrubel’.

Given their antiquity, these spaces have assumed a surprisingly emergent character in recent years; what their place is in the present is remarkably fluid. The first point of the exploration that follows is to examine what makes something problematic and what the work of remediation entails in that context. Next, I take the field of historic preservation as an example of a set of possible responses to a problematic site. Historic preservation is a field ripe for understanding the place of the past in the present, not in mystical or abstract ways but in easily observable, everyday practices. It also serves as an example for understanding specifically how inherited physical structures frame the present. Our inquiry leads us to consider the sites as both objects and agents of

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<sup>322</sup> For more on the place of Holy Wisdom in the mysticism of Eastern orthodoxy, *see, e.g.*, PROTOPRESBYTER MICHAEL POMAZANSKY, *ORTHODOX DOGMATIC THEOLOGY: A CONCISE EXPOSITION* 357ff (trans. Hieromonk Seraphim Rose, 1994 (1963)).

remediation. This consideration may illuminate some of the human work that changes space into place and individual into subject. And, taking up the question of the place of the past in the present tells us something specific about contemporary Ukrainians. To start, we note that the question itself distinguishes contemporary Ukrainians from Luhman, Rabinow, and other Western observers concerned with the “place of the future in modernity (and its various presents),”<sup>323</sup>

### *The Angel Unrolling the Sky*

December 27, 2006. I have gone to Kyriliska Tserkva on a cold winter morning to take digital photos for an email Christmas card I intend to send out from Kiev. The card never gets sent because problems arise. Kyrilivska is small, its interior perhaps 15 yards by 15 yards, dark, old, and hard to reach. Originally built at the edge of ancient Kiev, on the border of the beginning of the lands of the princes of Chernihiv (a medieval city approximately 90 miles north of Kiev). Its vast monastery grounds were repurposed in the nineteenth century as a hospital and then as an insane asylum. The asylum still fills almost all of the grounds. Now, the church building stands on a small corner of land carved out of the edge of the grounds of one of the main in-patient psychiatric hospitals in Ukraine. The lands beyond the hospital are now a city park which includes the infamous ravine, Baba Yar. Although the city neighborhoods have long since grown up far past the park and hospital and church, Kyrilivska feels isolated, far from metro or tram stops, the rare remote spot in a city otherwise well-served by public transport.

I made the effort to get to Kyrilivska because I was haunted by a fresco I had seen ten years earlier. I wanted to photograph a nearly thousand-year-old image of an angel unrolling the night sky like a scroll. After rousing someone at the outdoor ticket kiosk with some difficulty, we paid a token fee and stepped in through the giant doors. Just inside the doorway, in the nave, over an arch, stood the angel, still unrolling its perpetual scroll. This image, an unrolling scroll, a unity of word and action, captured what I had been thinking about creation. Performative speech act united with perpetual performance.

As I got out the camera, an older middle-aged woman stepped out of the shadows and stayed my hand. “Photographs are forbidden here,” she said. “I love this image. I want to email it as my New Year’s greeting,” I said, hoping to sway her sympathies. “Is there a fee to photograph?” I added, hoping to suggest a way forward. “No, photographs are absolutely forbidden. These ancient frescoes are really fragile and have to be protected.” She sighed. “In fact, if you like this one, take a good look. It might not be here when you come back.” “Oh, I live in Kiev now,” I told her, thinking that she was warning me, as a foreign tourist, that the image might deteriorate over decades. “No, no, no, I mean, these frescoes are going to be painted over in the next two weeks.” “What?!” I exclaimed, hardly believing my ears. That was my introduction to the particularly acute fight being waged over this corner of the past.

### *Problematic Sites and Technologies of Remediation*

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<sup>323</sup> See NIKLAS LUHMANN, *Prescribing the Future*, in *OBSERVATIONS ON MODERNITY* (Stanford University Press 1998 (1992)); Paul Rabinow, *Anthropological Observation and Self-Formation*, in *SUBJECTIVITY* 98, 99 (Joao Biehl, Byron Good, & Arthur Kleinman, eds., 2007).



When we call the sites of the St. Sophia historical preserve “problematic,” we are using a specific technical term. This term references the concept of a “problematization.”<sup>324</sup> A situation has become problematic if what was once taken as “a given” has become a question. So as not to get lost in abstractions, take for example Kyrilivska Tserkva (St. Cyril’s Church), one of the monuments under administration of St. Sophia authorities. Turned into a museum in the late 1920s and kept as a museum throughout the Soviet period, some after 1991 wanted to turn it to religious use. Should it house a state museum; public religious worship; or, like other ancient monuments of the preserve, private living quarters for newly-installed novitiate monks; or -- as was the case with the refectory building at another medieval Kyiv church -- a commercial restaurant? The questions are only half of the complex, however. A “problematization” refers both to a certain historical situation marked by an explosion of givens into questions -- and also the nexus of responses to that situation.<sup>325</sup>

This complex of questions and responses arises in a certain kind of context. A situation becomes problematic after something prior has happened to introduce some uncertainty, a loss of familiarity.<sup>326</sup> Ukraine as a stand-alone polity emerged out of what anthropologist Alexei Yurchak describes as “discursive rupture” at the end of the Soviet period.<sup>327</sup> That same discursive rupture introduced uncertainty and resulted in a loss of familiarity over interpreting the past, imagining the future, and acting in the present. The post-Soviet period has been marked by a problematization of the present. The complex of questions and answers hanging over objects like property and publics, including the monumental historical sites in Kyiv, are a subgenre of that problematization.

The problematization of the present has entailed a reworking of the past, a rethinking of history and a plethora of questions about what to do with inherited objects. As Eduardo Penalver reminds us, a cityscape is perhaps a paradigmatic inherited object; land, Penalver tells us, has memory.<sup>328</sup> Into this present, remediation enters. Remediation, technically, is an intervention on existing objects. “‘Remediation’ refers to contemporary practices that remake an already existing object in the context of simultaneous possible solutions to conceptualized difficulties--that is, in the context of a problematization.”<sup>329</sup>

### *The Angel Unrolling the Sky: A Call to Action*

When I was told the 900-year-old frescoes were supposed to be painted over imminently, my disbelief and outrage were evident in my inarticulate sputter. The docent asked if I wanted to talk to the on-site director. “You bet!” I answered.

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<sup>324</sup> A “problematization does not mean the representation of a preexistent object nor the creation through discourse of an object that did not exist. It is the ensemble of discursive and nondiscursive practices that ... constitute it as an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)” MICHEL FOUCAULT, *LES MOTS ET LES CHOSSES*, 670 (1966).

<sup>325</sup> PAUL RABINOW, *ANTHROPOS TODAY: REFLECTIONS ON MODERN EQUIPMENT* 19 (2003)

<sup>326</sup> RABINOW, *ANTHROPOS TODAY* 18.

<sup>327</sup> YURCHAK, *EVERYTHING WAS FOREVER*.

<sup>328</sup> Eduardo Penalver, *Land Virtues*, 17 *CORNELL L. REV.* 822 (2004).

<sup>329</sup> This rendering of the concept of remediation emerged from discussion within the Labinar of the Anthropology of the Contemporary Research Collaboratory. Sentence quoted from ARC Wiki, <http://www.anthropos-lab.net/arcwiki/index.php/Remediation>.

Natalia Rakitskaya, the director, filled me in. The museum authorities who are responsible for the church had grown increasingly alarmed by the behavior of their clerical counterparts. After 1991, properties that had belonged to the Soviet state which were acknowledged to have been churches before the Soviet period could be restituted to one of the religious denominations. An exception to this rule was those properties that were officially recognized as “dual-use” museum and church. Those buildings could be put on a list of objects that were protected from being transferred wholly to a religious denomination and designated solely for church use. Kirilivska Tserkva was on that official “dual-use” list, or it had been until the Moscow Patriarchate quietly had Kirilivska Tserkva removed from the list of properties protected from the possibility of transfer two years earlier. The timing was no coincidence. The Orange Revolution had run its course two years earlier, resulting in the electoral defeat of the Moscow-favored Russophone candidate, Viktor Yanukovych. The Moscow Patriarchate had come out in favor of Yanukovych during the campaign and feared that the new government, less inclined to Russia, might discriminate against the Moscow Patriarchate. Just before the transfer of political power to the Orange forces (President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Timoshenko), the Moscow Patriarchate had arranged to have Kirilivska Tserkva taken off the list of dual-use monuments.

The Moscow Patriarchate had started holding religious services in the church in the mid-1990s, and museum and church had developed an uneasy truce over their competing priorities – preservation versus active worship – for the space, until the elimination of Kirilivska from the state’s dual-use list in 2004 set off alarm bells in the minds of museum officials. The real alarm was yet to come. In the fall of 2006, a church newsletter, the Moscow Patriarchate expressed its opinion that the Kirilovska Church paintings of the Russian artist Vrubel are not “iconic” because they contain too many secular elements or other elements that the Church has not approved for its icons. (Vrubel’s 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century murals cover older frescoes on the second floor of Kirilovska Church. Vrubel’s paintings also decorate the interior of St. Volodymyr’s Cathedral and portions of interiors at the Monastery of the Caves, the *Pecherska Lavra*.) As opposed to the older icons, which are frescos, Vrubel’s paintings are oils. Their shiny finish is not what irks church officials, though. A vivid rainbow rings one painting. The face of Christ is not highly stylized. The Madonna and child at the front of the church are portraits of a benefactor’s wife whom Vrubel’ was allegedly trying to seduce during his restoration stint in Kiev. The church did not confine its condemnation to Vrubel’.

In an interview on STB channel news on October 13, 2006, the Father Superior of Kirilovksa Church was asked about the 12<sup>th</sup> century icons. He responded, “What do you mean by icons? This one’s missing a head, that one’s missing a nose.” He went on to say the paintings decorating the inside of Kirilovska Church are lacking the quality essential to a real icon, that which evokes a feeling of splendour and holiness in the viewer. Museum officials then learned that an official appraisal of the monetary value of Kirilovska Church had been undertaken, which is a step taken on the way to transferring a property out of state ownership. The official appraisal fixed the value of Kirilovska Church, which the Moscow Patriarchate would owe the Ukrainian state upon restitution, at 998 hryvnya (which, at the 2006 exchange rate, would have equaled \$50).

Pani Nataliya handed me a letter summarizing what the museum administration interpreted as very worrying signs (outlined in the preceding paragraphs) and plead for

help saving the church.<sup>330</sup> “The Moscow Patriarchate is threatening. The Orange government does nothing. Please help. They might be ashamed in front of foreigners.”

### *Remediation: Intervention on Existing Objects*

The term remediation is borrowed from the field of art history and criticism, in particular the analysis of new media.<sup>331</sup> In many contemporary art practices, objects are not assembled from scratch but from ready-made parts identified and selected from databases of already existing items. Remediation is not limited only to items. It may also be the selection and reassemblage of already existing procedural techniques. It refers to a wider variety of conventions used by designers of new media objects to “organize data and structure user's experience.”<sup>332</sup>

Several distinctions are in order that bear on our understanding the place of the past in the present. The past has yielded an object but has also endowed it with difficulties. The past has reopened questions stimulating diverse and perhaps competing answers. When we undertake remediation, the past is actively present in our perceptions and our institutions, but our perceptions of the original object do not survive untouched. This makes remediation different from “representation.”<sup>333</sup> As historical preservationists, archeologists, art historians, and others are sometimes painfully aware, with remediation, there is no simultaneous existence of the remediated object with an “original” or an “authentic.” While a remediated form retains features of the original, it does not share a double identity with it. The practice of remediation does not create a new manifestation but manipulates what already was. This raises the stakes of remedial intervention for those who value the archaic features of the unremediated object. One does not get another original Vrubel’ mural to work on if remediation of this one does not meet expectations.

### *Remediation and Performance*

Recall that analysis of new media does not limit the work of “remediation” only to items. Remediation may involve selecting from already existing procedural techniques which are part of “language” in Manovich's use, where “language” is “an umbrella term to refer to a number of various conventions used by designers of new media objects to organize data and structure user's experience.”<sup>334</sup> If remediation can be accomplished by selecting from among “conventions” that organize data and structure the user’s experience, I propose that remediation can work on performance as well as on the material.

Take, for example, a religious service. Describing St. Peter’s Italian church in London, Fortier reflects on her own creation of self in the performance of spectating. “As I sat there in the pews, it seemed as if I was watching a re-run of part of my identity in the making: the ‘stylized repetition of acts’ (Butler 1990) reached into some deep-

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<sup>330</sup> Letter, and church newsletter, on file with author.

<sup>331</sup> LEV MANOVICH, IN *THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW MEDIA* (2001) (adapts the term from JAY DAVID BOULTER AND RICHARD GURSIN, *REMEDICATION: UNDERSTANDING NEW MEDIA* (1999)).

<sup>332</sup> MANOVICH, IN *THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW MEDIA* 7.

<sup>333</sup> The comparison of remediation and representation in this paragraph is based on Labinar discussions, in particular the formulations of simultaneity and double identity are from the ARC Wiki, <http://www.anthropos-lab.net/arcwiki/index.php/Remediation>.

<sup>334</sup> MANOVICH, IN *THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW MEDIA* 7.

seated sense of selfhood ... The rituals, in turn, cultivated as sense of belonging.”<sup>335</sup> Here, she understands “ethnicity” afresh and the annual church procession from St. Peter’s becomes a “display of presence”:

Ritualization and formalization lie at the basis of the invention of tradition, thus exalting into timelessness a culture that is said to be represented by the different forms of remembering. Yet, beyond the processes through which tradition is invented, I want to emphasize how it becomes, when performed, a ground of remembrances and how, as such, it becomes an open site for multiple memories.<sup>336</sup>

Several themes come to the fore in Fortier’s work that are salient for the work that place, sometimes, does in Kyiv: the recollection of identity, an emergent sense of self-hood and belonging; the elevation into timelessness of certain cultural forms and the invention of tradition; and the seeding of a ground of remembrances, the cultivation of an open site for multiple memories.

*Sheltering Performance: The Walls of Kyrilivska Tserkva*

The walls at Kyrilivska Tserkva hold particular appeal. I was not the only one who was drawn to the place because of the walls, and the walls posed particular problems. Museum workers, both care-takers and higher-ups at Kyrilivska Tserkva, expressed concern to me that certain practices during the religious service – lighting candles, sprinkling holy water, even having more people in the church at one time – would harm the frescos and paintings that make the interior of the church so visually rich. I wondered if these concerns were overblown, or were tactical deployments in the museum’s skirmishes with church authorities over control of the building, until I went to observe services on a Sunday morning. Worshippers were packed in. In the several times that I went back to observe, I could not get passed the back third of the small interior, and even with the obscured view from there, I counted no less than 150 people packed into a space perhaps the area of half a basketball court. Even in the middle of winter in the unheated stone structure,<sup>337</sup> the interior of the church was humid with their breathing and body heat. Bodies in wool coats were leaning against the 900-year old frescos on the pillars. At the point where liturgy calls for holy water, the priest at the front of the church dipped a horsehair brush into a deep chalice. Thwack! He had to fling it with gusto to reach those of us towards the back, but reach us he did. As I wiped water drops off of my glasses, I noticed water drops on the paintings of the pillar walls closest to me.

I cornered people coming out of the church to ask them why they undertook the inconvenience of coming so far from any residential neighborhood to attend. Most

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<sup>335</sup> Anne-Marie Fortier, *Re-Membering Places and the Performance of Belonging*, 16:2 THEORY, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY 41, 49.

<sup>336</sup> Fortier, *Re-Membering Places* 50.

<sup>337</sup> Sunday morning observations were undertaken on two Sundays in January 2007; one in October 2007; and one in November 2007.

seemed reluctant to engage with a questioning stranger, not an unreasonable response in a place where public religious observance had been so stigmatized for so long during Soviet times. Nearly a score of interviews, however, yielded a uniform response: they came for the walls. I thought that might mean the images or frescos on the walls, until one woman, a pretty, bundled-up, energetic person in her mid-thirties, set me straight. She explained that what she meant by saying that she came “for the walls” was that she came to that church to worship because of its age, and specifically because of the age of the walls: one receives energy from the walls, and the older the walls, the better the quantity and quality of the energy. Others subsequently repeated this belief about the energy imparted by the walls of the church. For worshippers like her, as well as prosaic art enthusiasts like me, the experience of the religious service is inflected by the setting, of Kyrilivska Tserkva itself.

In response to the museum’s concerns about the use of holy water and smoke, the priests have altered some parts of the religious service, abbreviating the sprinkling practices and using electric lights instead of candles (the former, observed at least in part in the breach, from my experience; the latter, a serious concession for a church that considers incense and smoke a symbol and a form of communion and communication with the divine). The arrangement of the spatial interior of the church, placement of pillars, balcony, iconostasis, further dictates other forms of their service.

We see a dialogic process, the invention of “traditions” inflected by the setting in which they occur, and which in turn changes the experience of the place by participants and the physical condition of the space itself. This simple example hints at some of the many different experiences of place. And throughout, the worshipper may remember the walls, and the water, and the electric candles; the museum worker may remember the discussions with the priests and attempts to persuade them to alter the performance of the service; and the priests may remember those same discussions, and their own discussions of adapting the rituals. The processes through which tradition is invented become an open site for multiple memories.

### *Remediation, Preservation, and Reproduction*

Another distinction is in order, the distinction between remediation and production. The field of historical preservation offers some interesting examples for understanding the difference. While both involve remediation and production involve reworking existing materials, production depends on continuity whereas remediation occurs within problematization.

Look at the work of historical preservation, for example, as a productive enterprise. Anthropology suggests that we start by understanding that work produces both objects and subjects. What does this mean? Althusser reminds us that, to be sustained over time, any system of production must produce, in addition to its object, both the means to reproduce itself and the relations of production.<sup>338</sup> A shoe factory, to continue its existence, needs to produce shoes; to replace worn-out machinery; and to replenish its labor force. If its managers ignore the need for a steady supply of workers, in time their factory will fail to produce shoes just as surely as if the managers ignore the need to keep the machinery humming in good working order. The individual who works

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<sup>338</sup> LOUIS ALTHUSSER, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, in *LENIN AND PHILOSOPHY AND OTHER ESSAYS* 85, 119 (1971).

there, whether the boot-maker or the manager, would not be the same person if the factory or another like it did not exist. The shoe factory produces both shoes and shoe-makers.

From this simple re-telling of Marx's insight, Althusser uses a paradigmatic scene to describe the creation of a subject. Imagine ten people walking down a street, he suggests. A policeman calls out from behind, "Hey you!" and one person turns around. The person already knows that he is the one being hailed because he already has some idea of why a policeman might be calling someone, and he knows how to respond similarly because he knows if it is he who is hailed, he should turn around. An individual becomes subject, in Althusser's schema – whether a legal subject, a religious subject, a laboring subject – by answering a call. This key moment, of calling, hearing, and turning, Althusser terms interpellation.<sup>339</sup>

"Subject" here is an ambiguous term meaning simultaneously "a free subjectivity, the center of initiatives, and a subjected being who submits to higher authority."<sup>340</sup> Butler, building on Althusser's formation, suggests that the hailing and the turning is "not a single act but a status incessantly reproduced, to become a subject is to be continuously in the process" of hearing and turning.<sup>341</sup> In ritual, the repetition of a performance, "a belief is spawned which is then incorporated into the performance in its subsequent operations."<sup>342</sup> In fact, for Butler, "the very notion of ritual is meant to render belief and practice inseparable."<sup>343</sup> As we have seen in our discussion of religious ritual, above, the formation of subjectivity and performance of the self does not take place in a physical vacuum. Nelson argues for geographers to map the settings in which these processes take place, for a situated subjectivity.<sup>344</sup> A situated subjectivity might lead us to understand further the recursive nature between spatial object and subject, between performance, place, and person.

This is not to mystify the idea of ritual or performance. To take a different example, a historical preservationist might believe that the present owes the future certain objects, delivered in a certain condition. He repeatedly undertakes operations to deliver objects in that condition. To be more specific, a historical preservationist might believe that the responsibility of the profession is to develop the skills to read a building like a text, to understand social history from that text, to transmit the text to an educable public, and to pass the building on with the text fully readable to future readers. He undertakes operations, performance of his work, based on those beliefs. Work becomes ritual, in which belief and practice are inseparable.

### *Technologies of Remediation: Historical Preservation*

My visit to Kirilivska Church to photograph the angel unrolling the night sky on December 27, 2006 ended with an unexpected conversation with the on-site director, Pani Nataliya. After she had told me orally about the Church's threats to paint over all the

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<sup>339</sup> ALTHUSSER, *Ideology*, 188.

<sup>340</sup> ALTHUSSER, *Ideology* 123.

<sup>341</sup> JUDITH BUTLER, 'Conscience Doth Make Subjects of Us All', *THE PSYCHIC LIFE OF POWER* 107, 118 (1997).

<sup>342</sup> BUTLER, 'Conscience' 119.

<sup>343</sup> BUTLER, 'Conscience' 120.

<sup>344</sup> Lise Nelson, *Bodies (and Spaces) do Matter: the Limits of Performativity*, 6:44 *GENDER, PLACE, AND CULTURE* 331-353 (1999).

icons and murals in the interior of the church starting as early as February 2007, Pani Natalia gave me a xerox copy of an appeal. What follows is a literal translation of that note. (Where some background is needed to explain a reference or to give more nuance to a word that's hard to translate, you will see my additions in brackets.)

“Kirilovska Church Museum’

In the issue of the newspaper “Kirilivska” (a Kirilovska Church newsheet published by the Moscow Patriarchate) devoted to the 10-year anniversary of the founding of the Kirilovska Church parish, on the next-to-last page in an article is a statement that the paintings of the Russian artist M.A. Vrubel are not ‘iconic.’ And on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2006, on the television channel STB on the news in an interview the Father Superior of the Kirilovska parish, asked about the frescoes of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, says: “What do you mean by ‘icons’? One doesn’t have a head, another doesn’t have a nose.” He re-insisted [confirmed] that in the church there’s no splendour [“blagolepiya,” the quality of a painting that evokes a feeling of holiness as an icon should]. From 1994 the church was dual-use, officially recognized both as a museum and as a church of the Moscow patriarchate. Two years ago the memorial (i.e., Kirilovska Church) was taken off of the list of objects not liable for transfer.

Now the question has been raised and stands before us about changing the property status of the structure.

Please help us preserve the ancient paintings and the works of Vrubel.

What’s more, the balance value has been evaluated at 998 hryvnya!

Address of the preserve is:

01034 vyl. Vladimirska 24  
N.Z. [natsionalna zapovednik, i.e. national preserve] Sofia Kiev

Contact telephone: (044) 278-62-12,  
Margonina Irina Evgenia  
Assistant General Director for Scholarly Matters

Truly alarmed myself, I returned home and rang up the director of the Fulbright Office in Kyiv, Myron, who is by profession himself a historical preservationist who had previously worked at, among other places, the Massachusetts living history museum Old Sturbridge Village. With her permission, I made a copy of Pani Nataliya’s letter and dropped it off at Myron’s office that afternoon.

Three days later, I received an inquiry from Ambassador William Miller, who had been the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine in the mid-1990s when I served in Embassy Kiev. Ambassador Miller was calling from the U.S. “I heard that they’re going to destroy the angel unrolling the night sky!” he said. “What’s being done to stop it? What can I do?” This confirmed the reports that I had heard from alarmed museum workers. When I

asked Ambassador Miller where he had heard the news, he told me he had received an email message with details of the destruction and appealing for help from a civic organization in New York. Over the course of the next two days, despite it being in the middle of the winter holidays, I heard from a score of other U.S.-based fans of the Kyrilivska frescos, contacting me because they had heard the frescos were being painted over or destroyed. People were ready to “stand in front of the tank,” as one interlocutor referring to the heroes of the Tiananmen Square massacre, to stop it. This had all developed shortly after Viktor Yanukovych had been re-appointed Prime Minister. First, he had authorized grain confiscations. Now, this. The news about the imminent wanton destruction of 900-year-old paintings seemed to confirm the worst fears about Yanukovych, being thick-witted and, what is more, a stooge for the machinations of the powers of Moscow in Ukraine. My alarm grew.

I reached Myron after New Year’s, telling him I had heard more and wanting to compare notes. When we met, he told me that he had enlisted a powerful ally: a Ukrainian-American art historian who had written her Ph.D. dissertation on the frescos of Kyrilivska Tserkva. “She’s an absolute dynamo!” Myron told me. In the first three days after Myron had passed a summary of the contents of the letter on to her, she had sent out more than one thousand letters appealing for help saving the frescos, to everyone from the U.N. Secretary General to the art historians’ professional guilds in the United States and Canada. As we talked, it dawned on me that everyone who had contacted me and further alarmed me had actually heard about the Kyrilivska destruction from another person or a civic organization, who had heard about it from the art historian, who had heard about it from Myron, who had heard about it from me. As it turns out, I had started the whole conflagration. The rates of circulation of news, rumor, and anxiety fascinated me. Within less than three days, thousands of people across at least twelve time zones were in a panic, based, ultimately, on an alarm bell rung over words uttered by a rival in a television interview and in a mimeographed newsletter.

In mid-January, as soon as people in Kyiv were back in their offices after the winter holidays, Myron and I went to see Irina Margonina, the Assistant General Director for Scholarly Matters of the Kyiv-Sophia National Historic Preserve. Pani Irina was a trim, lively, efficient woman in her mid-forties. She and Myron bonded: she was a professional preservationist as well. We asked for an update on the Kyrilivska frescos. Pani Irina summed up the situation as something that they needed to monitor but nothing to be alarmed about in near term. “It’s not as if the church officials have set a date for repainting the interior or anything. It’s not as if the frescos won’t be there in a couple of weeks if we want to go see them.” Myron and I breathed a sigh of relief, exchanged a sheepish glance, and returned to our computers to send out reassuring emails back to the fans of Kyrilivska in the U.S.

Pani Irina invited Myron and me to participate in an international conference of preservationists to be held in October 2007 in the rectory building at St.Sophia’s. Preservation specialists and art historians from Russia, Poland, and Ukraine -- as well as me and Myron – gathered to hear about the latest technologies of historical preservation. Myron and I were to present a co-authored paper. The title was, The Place of the Past in the Present. Myron was going to talk about a theme in U.S. historical preservation work, a trend actually, of not fixing up or restoring dilapidated or destroyed structures. His part was called The Importance of Ruins. I was going to follow him, talking about Althusser,



and interpellation, and Butler, and subjectivity: how one could feel called by a place, how a place like St. Sophia's or Kyrilivksa Tserkva encoded the efforts and mishaps of past humans, how their use of land and recreation of space calls to us, interpellates us, how we are "called" by the structures of the past around us.

I felt nervous. First, it would be my first public presentation in Ukrainian. More significantly, over the course of the three-day conference, all of the discussions I heard were highly technical: humidity readers, fresco preservation techniques, the specifics of first millennium woods, evaluation of materials for restoration of various interiors and exteriors. I stepped in with my talk about remediation, performance of the self, and space as a shelter for performance. The group looked riveted. I could not tell if their attention derives from scholarly interest or from bafflement.

### *Interpellation, Space into Place, and Individuals into Subjects*

I finished my presentation at the St. Sophia's conference showing a slide of the magnificent Ukrainian Baroque belltower of the complex, with the following words.

"This leads us to a final consideration of remediation, the past, and the present. We think of remediation as being worked upon objects – churches, monuments, historical sites. What is also clear is that we are also the subjects of remediation: the objects do work upon us. Let's return to our example, that of historical preservationists working on the monumental sites of the St. Sophia complex in central Kyiv. Preservationists formulate a certain set of responses to a problematization, namely the problematization of the present and what to do with inherited monuments. The work that they do is remediation of those sites. However, why are they preservationists, and why do they work on these sites? At some time, either in a moment or as a process of education and training, they have heard a call. Their subjectivity is the result of interpellation. Who has issued the call? The sites themselves are the product of centuries of human production and remediation. The sites may be said to stand for an accumulation of people's focused attention that has turned space into place. Here we can understand the monumental sites as a medium for a call, and the past reaches us as a chorus call of dissonant voices. Heteroglossia<sup>345</sup> can be no less demanding in its cacophony, and similarly, a problematic situation complicates the present. Under conditions of discursive rupture, different people experience the sites differently, hear different strands of the call, find different responsibilities to the future. Heteroglossia of course can also create a present populated by those who consciously tolerate ambiguity, shared use and dissonant preservation. The tradition that can be created is one of deliberate openness rather than an insistence on one answer to the past and the future.

The past calls to us, and we respond. In the labor of remediation, we work on the objects; but in it we also produce ourselves. And in our labor, we respond to the call of the future. Competing responses to the problematization of the present are in part the result of different imaginations of those people of the future to who demand from us an inheritance. The place of the past in our present, which technologies of remediation we choose, will determine our present in their future."

I wondered if this made any sense to this gathering of experts. The Assistant Director called me the following week. I asked her how the conference had gone. The

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<sup>345</sup> For an exploration of heteroglossia, see MIKHAIL M. BAKHTIN, *Epic and Novel*, in *THE DIALOGIC IMAGINATION* (Michael Holquist & Caryl Emerson, eds., Michael Holquist, trans.) (2002 (1975)).

technical talks are always useful, and it is valuable to maintain contacts with our colleagues in Poland and Russia, she said. “But, Pani Monika, your talk was the one that got to the heart of the matter. Everyone was talking about it afterwards: the place of the past in the present: that is our problem.” The word she used for problem is *zadacha*, the same word one uses for a homework assignment. The problematization, the disruption of what was once taken for granted, of the past is worked out in property disputes across Ukraine. The unavoidable role of the present as a shelter for the past is a cliché; what is up for grabs is, which past. The past itself is still under construction in contemporary Ukraine, leaving the future much more open.

## Chapter 9

### 2-D Setting:

#### Europe, the Dissolving State, and the Flat-Screen Synthetic Future

On April 2, 2007, the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yushchenko, surprised the country by announcing the dissolution of the Ukrainian parliament. I immediately got a phone call from one friend yelling, “Turn on your t.v.!” and a text message from another saying, “It’s ON!!!” This act fundamentally challenged the emergent political system in Ukraine. Note that Ukraine’s parliamentary system is not like, say, Great Britain’s, in which the chief executive is elected by members of parliament and can dissolve parliament as a relatively routine matter. Yushchenko is President, not Prime Minister. His dissolution of parliament was as astonishing as if the U.S. President went on television to announce that he was dissolving the Congress. In dissolving the parliament, the President was not just contesting a particular law passed by the Parliament, nor even contesting a rule for constituting parliament itself, like an elections law. He was acting outside of his constitutional authority to dissolve a part of the system, without rules or precedent. No one knew what this meant, or where it would lead.

How does an awareness of uncertainty shape the present? Methodologically, how does one conduct fieldwork in a field site that has been dissolved? More generally, how are some of the relationships between space and subjectivity inflected by uncertainty? Uncertainty is a framing device often associated with the future. This chapter considers uncertainty as a quality of the present, rather than the future. It is informed by fieldwork among legislators and other law-makers in Ukraine between April and September 2007, a period in which the President dissolved the parliament (the field site), a measure outside of both his constitutional powers and the expectations of many political elites and first-order observers.

Here, I draw on Niklas Luhmann’s distinction between first- and second-order observers. For Luhmann, observation is “any kind of operation that makes a distinction so as to designate one (but not the other) side. Such a definition is itself contingent, since what is defined would have another meaning given another situation.” As Rabinow notes, “First-order observations ... are ordinary realist attempts to grasp a referent.”<sup>346</sup> Second-order observations are “observations of observations.”<sup>347</sup> When President Yushchenko dissolved the Ukrainian parliament, a host of first-order observers sprang into action.

Delanda’s distinction between the “ordinary” and the “critical event”<sup>348</sup> illuminates our consideration of this turn in parliamentary politics. Each event does not stand as an example for others. Rather, each event marks a unique point on a line of flight, the arc of which describes the development of a post-Soviet Ukrainian assemblage.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> NIKLAS LUHMANN, *Contingency as Modern Society’s Defining Attribute*, in *OBSERVATIONS ON MODERNITY* 47 (1998 [1992]).

<sup>347</sup> NIKLAS LUHMANN, *Contingency as Modern Society’s Defining Attribute*, in *OBSERVATIONS ON MODERNITY* 47-48 (1998 [1992]).

<sup>348</sup> MANUEL DELANDA, *INTENSIVE SCIENCE AND VIRTUAL PHILOSOPHY* (2007 (2002)).

<sup>349</sup> For consideration of assemblages in other contexts, see *GLOBAL ASSEMBLAGES: TECHNOLOGY, POLITICS, AND ETHICS AS ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS* (Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier, eds.)

The assemblage at issue in this inquiry is the parliament. It is interesting as a venue, a site of “serious speech acts.”<sup>350</sup> The parliament in post-Soviet Ukraine is not a stable object. It is instead an emergent assemblage whose components – practices, spaces, methods of inclusion and exclusion, modes – are not fixed or settled. They are subject to experimentation and contest. Since it took measures that led to the legal dissolution of its host political structure, the U.S.S.R., the milieu of the Ukrainian parliament has been shaped by assumption of uncertainty in the present, marked by an absence of planning but an abundance of preparation. This does not mean that parliament lacks for ordinary events. Its ordinary events could be considered passing legislation, which involves a multitude of discursive practices: drafting proposals, reading bills, slapping backs, rejecting ideas, interpreting gestures, setting priorities, making speeches. In this chapter, I look at an instance of deliberate introduction of heightened uncertainty into an assemblage already in flux and consider whether it constitutes a critical event.

### *The Event, Proposed*

When President Yushchenko announced he was dissolving the parliament, he was taking a new position in Luhmann’s field of observers. For the previous eight months, Yushchenko -- as party interested in but external to parliamentary deliberations -- had acted as a second-order observer relative to the parliament. Parliamentarians were clearly watching each other, a nest of first-order observers, and Yushchenko, powers compromised by constitutional restrictions on Presidential powers agreed to during the Orange Revolution tumult in 2004, had been reduced to observing the observers. In dissolving parliament, Yushchenko was moving from second-order observer into the field of actors, the field of first-order observers jockeying for position.

Yushchenko, in making the move, was playing both defense and offense. He was attempting to prevent the formation of a “supermajority” in parliament which would further strip him of constitutional powers, and he was attempting to use recourse to elections as a way of increasing his own faction’s margin in parliament, force other factions into coalitions favoring his, and to re-calibrate the balance of power (between parliamentary factions, but more fundamentally, between the Presidency, the Prime Minister’s office, and the parliament). Dissolving parliament and calling new elections, Ukrainian commentators agreed, was an attempt by Yushchenko to create an “action-forcing event.”

What does it mean to “dissolve the Parliament?” It had never happened before in Ukraine and was not provided for by Constitution or law. The Ukrainian parliament is the only one in the former Soviet space that has not changed its name from the Soviet era. In Ukrainian, the parliament is called the “*Verkhovna Rada*,” which translates as the “Supreme Soviet.” The body meets in the same Soviet-era building, with a small Ukrainian flag flying where the Soviet flag used to. While the contents of parliamentary activity and legislative object are radically different, the vessel until now had been

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(Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005). See also PAUL RABINOW, *FRENCH DNA: TROUBLE IN PURGATORY* (1999).

<sup>350</sup> This phrase is adopted by HUBERT L. DREYFUS AND PAUL RABINOW, *MICHEL FOUCAULT: BEYOND STRUCTURALISM AND HERMENEUTICS* xxiv (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1983 (1982)).

somewhat comfortingly unchanged, an anomalous survivor in a landscape littered with the wreckage of Soviet institutions.

Let us provisionally refer to the dissolution of parliament as an “event.” Its temporality is striking: this event took its shape, and shaped its social landscape, by the fact that it was not anticipated. Rather, the element of surprise gave it a particular kind of formative power. In studying it, event-approach practices are largely not in evidence. There are events and practices that made possible, pushed, or forced, the action-forcing event. What practices and modes constituted the event itself?

### *Public Spaces*

Yushchenko took his case directly to national television audience in an unscheduled address just after 9 p.m. on Monday, April 2, 2007. As soon as he announced that he was dissolving parliament, my phone rang again. “You have to get to the Square!” Independence Square (in Ukrainian, *Maidan Nezalezhnosti*), occupies an iconic place in the imaginary of public spaces of Kyiv. In 1990, the Maidan was the site of hardly-believing, late-*perestroika* demonstrations for Ukrainian independence. In the early 1990s, it became the “Hyde Park” of the capital city, where citizens would gather daily to declaim, dissent, and discuss political developments of the new state. Nothing was too grand or too local for the discussants who gathered in front of the main post office which anchors one side of the Square. By the late 1990s, when the Kuchma presidency was growing more heavy-handed towards political opponents, the *Maidan* became cluttered with monuments: first a modest statute of Archangel Mikhail, the guardian angel of Kyiv; then a gigantic pillar reaching to the sky topped with another quasi-human, gilt figure; next two enormous fountains, ringed by benches, that took up most of the square footage of the *Maidan*. “They’re cluttering up the place, and it’s no accident,” speculated Yuriy Khimich, a painter and Ukrainian-independence enthusiast. “They’re trying to drive out spontaneous political discussion, crowd out free speech. They don’t have to forbid it if they make no place for it.” The Square did seem pretty crowded, and the circles of political discussants marginalized into ever-tighter nooks.

The occupation of the *Maidan* seemed complete when, in 2002, the Mayor of Kyiv unveiled glitzy and space-consuming entrances and skylight-domes for a fancy underground shopping mall built directly under the Square. However, politics reclaimed the Square when it became the site of the 2004 “Orange Revolution” that had brought nearly a million Ukrainians into the core of downtown Kyiv for three weeks to safeguard the 2004 presidential elections from electoral fraud. In spring of 2007, the apartment I was renting happened to be two blocks off the Square.

Within just a few minutes of the President’s announcement dissolving the parliament, a small group of Kyivans including me had gathered on the *Maidan*. Yulia Tymoshenko, Yushchenko’s Orange Revolution ally, zoomed up in a small motorcade. Her public support was not taken for granted, since Yushchenko had double-crossed her after the Orange Revolution. Surrounded by television cameras, Tymoshenko defended the president, excoriated the dastardly tactics of their Orange Revolution foes, the Party of Regions, and called on Ukrainian citizens to defend their rights by participating in the elections that would be called to constitute a new parliament.

The following day, the Square was relatively empty and quiet. But by Wednesday morning, April 4, a remarkable show of Regions’ strength began: daily

demonstrations, attended by 20,000-60,000 protesters. They occupied the Square to protest the President's dissolution of the parliament and, in part, to keep supporters of the President from occupying the Square themselves. Regions, the foes of the Orange Revolution, had learned something by watching it on t.v. The staging in 2007 was dominated by citation to the Orange Revolution: two large-screen televisions flanked a stage, in front of which were packed thousands of demonstrators, some waving party and Ukrainian flags, others holding signs, just like during the Orange Revolution.

Towards the back of the Square, a small tent city had been erected. In November 2004, in sub-freezing temperatures and snow, protesters from around Ukraine had vowed not to leave the Square until new elections whose fairness was verified by external monitors were held, until the outgoing authoritarian president, Kuchma, and his stooges were ousted, until change was delivered. The tent city in spring 2007 was occupied by young men who would not leave until ... things did not change? In front of the tent city, protesters, largely young men or late-middle-aged women, milled around for roughly 8 hours per day, demonstrating in favor of the status quo. "Don't dismiss our parliament!" read their signs. "Obey the results of elections! Stand for the rule of law! No dissolving Parliament!" declaimed their orators.

These crowds were dwarfed by the Orange Revolution crowds by a factor of 50 or more, but for t.v. cameras trained at the right angle, the difference in visuals could look negligible. The protesters occupied the *Maidan* with a largely desultory but committed air, rarely chanting, singing, or paying attention to the speakers on the dais, but faithfully occupying space. The protests began between 8:30 and 9 a.m. daily, and wound up like clockwork by 5 p.m. They broke only for weekends and holidays (although a few tent-sitters stayed throughout, to prevent usurpation of the space by the Orange forces).

Meanwhile, their champions, those parliamentarians unaffiliated with Yushchenko or Timoshenko's Orange factions, continued showing up at the Parliament, undaunted. Starting by calling an extraordinary late-night session just after Yushchenko's televised bombshell, they met in order to defy the president. They came to parliament building, submitted bills, pled for a legislative quorum, and regularly gave long speeches in defense of constitutional order, rule of law, and parliamentary democracy. Their workdays were broadcast on the *Rada* (Parliament) channel, a television channel with national reach, and were simulcast on giant screens down at Independence Square to entertain and energize the protesters.

212 parliamentarians stayed away from the *Rada* (the Parliament). Parliament kept meeting, or at least 238/450ths of it did, without a quorum and after it had been dissolved by presidential decree. Instead of disappearing, parliament seemed rather to have been duplicated, enlarged, and displaced to the larger-than-life but two-dimensional venues at the front of the Square. If dissolved, it had recondensed on screens around the country. Formalism, a hardy survivor of Soviet legality, reigned its proceedings: none of the "rebels" (if someone bent on maintaining the status quo can be so called) claimed that their activity could result in law because they lacked a legislative quorum. Bills were introduced in first reading and sent on to non-existent committees. Reports and hearings were mandated from absent bodies. Rules of parliamentary procedure were followed to a T.

The protests continued until late May, when a compromise was signed between the factions. Under the agreement, parliament was dissolved and new elections were set for September 30, 2007. Like magic, the protesters – and the parliament -- vanished.

*What is an event?*

For those following Michel Foucault, an event is a breakdown in self-evidence. “Events problematize classifications, practices, things.”<sup>351</sup> An emergence of a problematization is an event,<sup>352</sup> as is the emergence of an assemblage, albeit on a different scale.<sup>353</sup> Manuel Delanda, refining the term further, uses the metaphor of a phase transition to explain an “event” in Gilles Deleuze’s work. Delanda describes what happens to water, condensing from steam to liquid at 100° centigrade, as a “critical event.” The critical event which occurs at 100° is preceded and followed by a series of “ordinary events,” meaning each degree of cooling or heating that has only a linear effect on liquid water, until it reaches 0° centigrade, at which point another critical event, freezing, occurs.<sup>354</sup> An event, then, is any non-recurring incident in a process, and an observer can distinguish a critical event from an ordinary event.

To use these terms to describe the problem at hand, the event that frames my overall project is the dissolution of the Soviet Union. My inquiry takes post-Soviet Ukraine as an emergent assemblage. I focus on one prominent feature of this emergent landscape, the creation of private property, for several reasons. Private property was one response offered when the self-evidence of Soviet Communism broke down and the question was raised again, What then must be done?<sup>355</sup> Among its proponents, particularly those from outside the former Soviet space, private property was taken as a technology that would refashion subjects and subjectivity. Owners would become efficient, hard-working, responsible. The means of adopting a private property regime was seen as a corollary process having ameliorative effects of its own. Property ownership would be drafted into law by democratically elected legislators, and the electoral process by which they themselves were chosen and the voting by which they would pass legislation were also seen as technologies which recreate them as new subjects. Both the parliamentarians and the voters who had voted them into office would embody a post-Soviet democratization. My fieldwork in Ukraine was to focus on new owners, who had received property under the privatization scheme; on the parliamentarians who drafted and passed the law; and on voters who had conferred authority on them through multi-party elections.

One event, in the Deleuzian sense, that became an object of my inquiry was the Parliament’s passing of the 2001 Land Code, in which private ownership of land was legalized (and, in most categories, mandated). However, when I arrived in 2006, implementation of one key technology of a private property apparatus, alienability, was

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<sup>351</sup> PAUL RABINOW, *ANTHROPOS TODAY: REFLECTIONS ON MODERN EQUIPMENT* 67 (2003).

<sup>352</sup> RABINOW, *ANTHROPOS TODAY* 67 and 55 (2003).

<sup>353</sup> RABINOW, *ANTHROPOS TODAY* 55, 56 (2003).

<sup>354</sup> MANUEL DELANDA, *INTENSIVE SCIENCE AND VIRTUAL PHILOSOPHY* 81 (2007(2002)).

<sup>355</sup> This question is famously reiterated in Russian-empire and Soviet revolutionary literature. For its earliest manifestation, see the revolutionary novel, NIKOLAY G. CHERNISHEVSKY, *CHTO DELAT’? IZ RASSKAZOV O NOVYKH LIUDIAXH* [WHAT IS TO BE DONE? FROM TALES OF NEW PEOPLE] (1947 (1863)). For its most influential, see VLADIMIR I. LENIN, *Chto Delat’?* [What is to be Done?] (1902), in *COLLECTED WORKS*. Vol. 4. (1964).

put on hold by the parliament: a Ukrainian could – in fact, former collective farmers must – own land, but could not legally sell it. The parliamentary side of my inquiry involved looking into the micropractices of power that yielded both the 2001 passage and the 2006 moratorium, as well as emergent subjectivities of the law-makers. Parliament was one of my primary field sites for the study of serious speech acts, until the president dissolved my field site. Keenly trained to sniff out a breakdown in self-evidence, I sensed that I had a Foucauldian event on my hands.

This small catalogue offers opportunity to consider events, temporalities, and practices. One key variable is the point of entry of uncertainty, and another, its object. First, consider the dissolution of the Soviet Union, an event that caught Soviets themselves by surprise. I did not meet a single person who had prepared, emotionally or materially, for it. It was not a feature of an anticipated future. The 1980s were marked by an absence of planning, preparation, and other “event-approach practices.” My friend Konstantin gave a typical response. Konstantin spent the last decade of Soviet power as a “good kid” – successful in school, in touch with other good students, active in constructive after-school activities – in the eastern Ukrainian intellectual capital, Kharkiv.

Kostya, if you think back to yourself in 1990, what did you think the future would bring? “Oh, NONE of this, Monika!” By 2007, Kostya owned a small apartment in the center of Kyiv, a car, and a small plot on the outskirts where he was trying to get a house built. He had done well in the post-Soviet economy, creating an adoptions brokerage for foreign parents seeking to adopt from Ukrainian orphanages. How about the future, beyond your personal life? Kostya paused, looked down at his hands, then looked at me. “I believed in the brotherhood of man. I expected to live in a future where we had conquered inequality, poverty, and racism. I believed in a future against nuclear weapons, where instead scientists worked on an end to disease and hunger. I believed in the inevitability of international communism.” Konstantin paused again. “You know, Monika, I never to let myself think about how much we lost. It’s so sad.”<sup>356</sup> The loss of a future that had seemed so certain went unmourned, overwhelmed as Ukrainians were with the uncertainty of the present.

If the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. was a critical event, passing the 2001 Land Code was an ordinary event. Its passage was contested and opposed for 10 years, but the disbanding of collective farms and the privatization of factories in the mid-1990s had made it seem only a matter of time before agricultural land was made private property as well. The Land Code passage was presented as part of a narrative, either of progress or regress depending on the teller of tale, but in either case as one incident in a process, an ordinary event. The moratorium on land sales clouds its categorization, though. Disbanding collectives and splitting up their assets was a clear hift in the law, one that disorganized people’s lives. But could this new regime, without the legal right to sell, be called “private property”? Was this a change, or not?

Similarly, we can contrast a clear critical event with an unclear ordinary event in the emergence of the assemblage under the name of electoral order. Ukrainians describe the 2004 Orange Revolution with the attributes of a critical event. “The Orange Revolution may be the only time in Ukraine’s history that it became an actor in its own

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<sup>356</sup> Interview with Konstantin Yakubenko, resident of Kyiv (October 7, 2007).



history,” is how Yale historian Timothy Snyder put it.<sup>357</sup> Ukrainians, even those opposed to the 2004 protests and the political outcome, consider the mass street demonstrations, public interest, and spontaneous participation unprecedented. Ukrainians had not demonstrated in this manner – with this level of participation or urgency -- for independence or for an end to the Soviet Union. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster and its radioactive aftermath had not roused such mass public protest. Late 1990s tactics of the increasingly authoritarian President Kuchma (who was to be replaced in the 2004 elections) – beatings of journalists and parliamentarians, suspicious car accidents in which political opponents died, the beheading of a critic blamed on common criminals – had gone without public protest. Ukrainians had treated the practices, speech acts, and activities of the political class as a separate genre of event, all by definition ordinary. Even when the chief of Kuchma’s security detail, one Major Melnichenko, fled to Switzerland and released secretly-made tape recordings of the president ordering the hits on political opponents and critical journalists, and arranging massive thefts of privatized industries, “ordinary Ukrainians” (those not members of the political class) seemed unshockable, or complacent, convinced of leaders’ unaccountability or their own inefficacy. That the irregularities of the 2004 electoral campaign, including the dioxin poisoning of candidate Yushchenko, culminating in the falsification of election results, had finally elicited mass public response from Ukrainian citizens: this was what distinguished the Orange Revolution as a “breakdown in self-evidence.” The previously self-evident inability of ordinary Ukrainians to effect change in politicians’ conduct broke down; the self-evident ability of the politically-connected to fight by different rules, not subject to the usual laws and proscriptions by which others might be judged, also broke down.

When President Yushchenko dissolved the legislature in April 2007, an action not provided for in the Ukrainian constitution, an extraordinary extension of executive authority outside the bounds provided in law, one question that arose was, Is this a breakdown in self-evidence? And, if so, self-evidence of what? One answer was, self-evidence of parliamentary order, of the utility of a sitting parliament or the notion of checks on executive power that a three-branch political formation is meant to ensure. The self-evidence of predictability was what was at stake. The question that then arose was, is this event an ordinary event, a non-recurring incident in a process? Or, is it a critical event, that would result in a phase transition, a reconfiguration of elements into a new form? To study the dissolution of parliament as an event, I look at the discursive practices surrounding it. To repeat a point mentioned earlier in this chapter, I here, I consider first-order observation inseparable from action. To describe this, I borrow Rabinow’s notes on Cogan’s study of speeches in Thucydides’ work on the Peloponnesian War: “Discourse in such settings was political action; it was an instantiation of itself, not a representation of something else.”<sup>358</sup>

### *Formulovych/Protesters*

Inna Formulovych, a college student from the southern city of Odessa, made the trip up to Kyiv to participate in the protests, not out of political conviction but out of

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<sup>357</sup> Timothy Snyder, Professor of Ukrainian and European History at Yale University, Lecture (September 6, 2005).

<sup>358</sup> PAUL RABINOW, MARKING TIME: ON THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CONTEMPORARY 71 (2008).

scholarly curiosity. A self-professed Goth who left her hometown on the outskirts of Moscow as a kid, Inna's effort to "dress up" and thus blend in with the normal, meticulously kempt Ukrainian girls for the day only partly succeeded. Habituee belied the attempt. Wearing a skirt did not outweigh the impression of clunky shoes and disheveled hair. "At least I put on lipstick," she offered.

On the day she occupied the Square, Inna told me about her experience. Inna came to Kyiv on a bus from Odesa organized by the Party of Regions. Would-be protesters were instructed to meet at 9 p.m. the night before at a given massing point just outside the center of town. When she got there, Inna was directed to board one of 20 buses waiting to take protesters. She was one of the few who had not come with a buddy with whom to while away the time. Most of her fellow protesters were college-student age, like her, or women in their mid-50s or older, pension age for women in Ukraine. Once on the bus, protesters were asked to sign a sheet giving their name, address, and cell phone number, and stating that they promised neither to drink alcohol, do drugs, or embarrass the Party of Regions during their day in Kyiv. The buses stopped at two other pick-up points on their way out of Odesa, and then roared up the central highway for the eight-hour, all-night drive.

Inna had found her way to the bus organizers with some effort. Using the municipal telephone information number (equivalent to dialing 411 in the U.S.), she had gotten the Odesa City Party of Regions listed number and left a message indicating her interest in joining the protests but no one returned her call. Finally, happening by chance onto a small pro-Regions protest of a few dozen in downtown Odesa, she ran to join them and tried to engage demonstrators to learn how she too could get involved. Recruiting was not their bailiwick, and her interest inspired suspicion and alarm. She was uniformly shooed away, shushed, and shunned until one woman took pity and pointed out a face at the front of the group. "Ask him," Inna was told. The gentleman indicated told Inna the address of Regions' Odesa office. When she finally found the office, a person recognized her from her telephone message and another man promised to call the next time they were organizing for Kyiv. Although teams of buses left every night, the next several nights were already booked, apparently. The man called Inna when they had an opening the following week and gave her the location of the meeting point. Once on the bus, she settled in next to an erstwhile journalist, the only other solo traveler, who regaled her with stories of local Regions politics and speculation about their fellow-travellers.

After riding all night, the Odesa bus pulled up into a parking area near the Pecherska Lavra (a medieval monastery famous throughout the former Soviet space, with a few bus-parking spaces to accommodate the new phenomenon of post-Soviet pilgrimages). As they de-boarded, protesters were told to stick together and be sure to return at 5 p.m. "Remember, no drinking, drugs, or tardiness." Inna was given a Party of Regions flag and, with another woman, led the way following streams of other protesters – from Donetsk, Mariupol, Kherson, and other eastern and southern cities – down the street. Unaware of their surroundings, they unknowingly passed all of the political landmarks of the capital, including blithely marching by the very Parliament building within which their heroes were daily still coming to work. Unlike most in her group, Inna had been to Kyiv a few times for other reasons before the protests, but she was completely disoriented and had no idea where she was. No one else did either. Leading

her group, she had to ask “Which way to the *Maidan* [Square[?]” when they were already standing on it.

The day consisted mostly of standing with the small herd of their busmates on the Square. There were no stools or benches, although some people occasionally sat down on the shallow granite steps leading away from the center fountains. Busmates did not introduce themselves to each other, nor did they chat amongst themselves except with the one buddy most had come with. They stuck together, wary of other groups but without particular camaraderie amongst their own, an anti-informal *kollektiv*. The weather was chill but sunny with no showers, typical for the protest months. A few brave souls from their group snuck off to try to see Kyiv sights, but all were wary of getting on the metro and getting lost, so they generally stayed on the Square until it was time to return to the bus.

At the end of the day, as they boarded the bus, each was given 100 hryvnya (the equivalent of \$20). No promise of payment had been made, nor had any payment been discussed on the trip down, but all the protesters in Inna’s group knew how much they would be paid if they avoided the three cardinal sins. Everyone on the bus except Inna had made a protest trip before, and everyone she talked with planned to do it again. They needed the money. Most were on a regular schedule: one night down, one day on the Square, one night back, a couple of days to recover, and then, repeat the cycle.

Day after day, the din in downtown Kyiv from the protests was enormous. Speeches generally came at the end of the day. During the parts of the day parliament was in session, large-screen t.v.s simulcast the Rada channel (CSPAN-like parliamentary channel) broadcast of their proceedings. In between, pop music entertainers were brought in to while away the time. Most nationally famous entertainers are signed by one of a few management companies, each of which is affiliated with one of the three national television channels, which are likewise aligned with certain industries or products to be promoted and with one of the political parties. The pop singers’ talent agencies and their stables of television and music stars are generally assets of the financial-industrial groups, or *klani*, described in chapter 3. Regions failed to attract any of the major acts that had volunteered to perform in the spontaneous bonhomie of the Orange Revolution, but it did not lack for affiliated talent nonetheless.

#### *Makarevych/People of the Past, People of the Future*

Yushchenko’s dissolution of parliament was precipitated, he said, by an alarming shift within its factions. These formations, too, referenced the Orange Revolution, although they had been works-in-progress for some years before. My friend Sasha lent some insight into the formation of parliamentary factions over time, the internal developments inside of members of parliament as well as tactics and alliances between them. Sasha had been a member of parliament from 1994-2002. He reflected on a hardening of tactics at the end of the first decade of Ukrainian independence; opposed to the outgoing President Kuchma, Sasha himself had been badly beaten in 2001.

*It was frightening enough, when they beat me and the police refused to open an investigation. The police announced it was a street mugging, even though the attackers didn’t take my wallet or watch. It happened on*

*my walk home from Parliament, just in front of the Hotel Ukraina [a state-owned hotel overlooking the Maidan where parliamentarians like Sasha were housed when the Rada was in session, just about six blocks from the Parliament]. February, so already dark at 7 p.m. Two guys, beating me in the face. They broke my glasses. I wound up in the hospital!*

That had been a terrifying experience, but it paled in comparison to the experience of having his fears confirmed, that President Kuchma himself had ordered it. Sasha recalled the experience of hearing the President's voice on the Melnichenko tapes ordering the beating.

*I could hear my own voice on t.v. in the background. They [in the President's office] were watching the parliament in session on the Rada channel. I had come up to the tribuna [podium] and was making a speech denouncing Kuchma as becoming corrupt, authoritarian, and violent. When I heard the tape, I knew exactly what day it was, because I knew when I made that speech.*

Sasha took a breath and continued.

*Then I heard Kuchma's voice talking over the sound of the t.v. He started yelling, 'That g\*\*d\*\*\*\* Zhid [an anti-Semitic slur]! That fucking Zhid! Someone needs to shut him up.' That night was the night those thugs were waiting for me outside the Ukraina. ... Monika, when I heard that, my blood ran cold. I felt a chill to the center.<sup>359</sup>*

Sasha had previously joined the political movement and parliamentary faction of Yulia Tymoshenko, a firebrand populist opposed to Kuchma whose affiliation with a natural-gas supply company ensured ample funds to pay for protection for her allies. Even she and all of her millions could not protect Sasha, though.

Sasha told me about the beating a year afterwards, after he had fled Ukraine. A couple of months later, I tracked down a colleague of Sasha's, Vitya Fialkovskiy, a fellow parliamentarian who came from the same region, with whom Sasha had been on friendly terms. At this point, Sasha had applied for asylum in the United States, on the grounds of political persecution in Ukraine, but had not yet been granted it; having called Kuchma an agent of political persecution and heard Kuchma's voice ordering a hit on him, Sasha did not feel safe returning to Ukraine. At the time I was speaking with Fialkovskiy, Sasha had just left off being a member of Parliament to become a stateless refugee. Was he considered *svoi* by his *kollektiv*? Or had he crossed a line that marked

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<sup>359</sup> Interview with Sasha Makarevych, member of Parliament 1994-2002 (May 5, 2002).

him as too different, as *vne*? “Vitya, do you think Sasha is paranoid? Do you think Kuchma did it? Do you think Sasha was right to leave?”

*Oh, Monika. You know, that happened last year and Sasha was already starting to seem strange. Afterwards, it just got worse. You know, the last two months before he left Ukraine, he came to Parliament every day and, whenever he could get recognized by the Speaker, he approached the tribuna and hung a picture of Kuchma from the front, making speeches calling Kuchma an enemy of the people.*

Using the Soviet nickname for Don Quixote [the rough equivalent of the English “Man of La Mancha”], Fialkovskiy said, “Amongst ourselves, we [parliamentarians] started calling Sasha, *chelovek s pechal’nim litsom*, ‘The Man with the Sad Face.’”<sup>360</sup> For his part, Sasha had told me prior to that, that he had quietly distanced himself from Fialkovskiy after Fialkovskiy’s name and company became associated with the murder of a business rival in their hometown.

Members of the political class thus started to sort themselves into categories of professional and personal affiliation. Parliamentarians in the mid-1990s had lined up along the lines of support or opposition to restrictions on state ownership, continuation of Communist Party structures, or other big-picture debates over market economics or post-Soviet democracy. By the end of the decade, increasingly, they sorted themselves into anti- and pro-Kuchma forces. These groupings took clearer shape in the five or six years before the Orange Revolution. One political observer, a television journalist, told me as early as 2002 how the approach of the end of Kuchma’s term presented Kuchma with a problem since Kuchma had personally enriched himself during the years of privatizing state property. “He’s put himself in a cul-de-sac,” Slavko told me.

*You see, Monika, Kuchma’s problem is this. He has created two sets of people, the trustworthy and the strong. Kuchma needs someone ‘guarantee’ his retirement, to protect him from any investigation into his crimes and to allow him to keep the millions he’s stolen. So he needs someone whom he can trust to keep a bargain who is also strong enough to keep others from investigating or punishing him. Unfortunately, he’s driven out or eliminated anyone trustworthy. The only people around him now are the strong, but he can’t trust them.*<sup>361</sup>

It was June of 2002 and Slavko and I were sitting, sipping coffee at an outdoor café. Slavko was an old acquaintance of mine. He had been an independent journalist when I had lived in Ukraine 1995-97 and had become anchor of his own nationally-broadcast news interview show after I had left Ukraine. A mutual friend had told me that during

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<sup>360</sup> Interview with Vitya Fialkovskiy, member of Ukrainian parliament 1998-2006 (June 15, 2002).

<sup>361</sup> Interview with Slavko Plokhovshek, journalist, (June 17, 2002).

the 1999 Presidential election, Slavko was walking into the side door of the television studio to host a debate among the major candidates, a debate in which Kuchma had not wished to participate, when Slavko was handed a note. He immediately called for a car to take him to hospital where he checked himself in and stayed for some days. The debate was cancelled, and Slavko had not been the same since. As of our meeting in 2002, I did not know if the story was true; Kuchma had been re-elected in 1999; everyone was speculating over whether he would, or could, leave the Presidency when he reached his constitutional term-limit in 2004, and his tactics against any opposition seemed to be growing more aggressive. The possibility of “people-power” demonstrations in 2004 was far from anyone’s consciousness. As we were sitting at the outdoor café in 2002, Slavko’s cell phone rang and he put down his coffee.

“Yes, yes, very good. Bring them now.” His tone had taken on an unkind sneer as he hung up. “That was one of my friends, who’s bringing a busload of pensioners that we’ve hired to protest at Matvienko’s bank,” he told me. Matvienko was a politician, an ally of Sasha’s and an opponent of Kuchma’s. Slavko, trying to harrass Matvienko, had hired elderly women to walk picket lines outside a branch bank of a chain owned by Matvienko. They would be supplied with signs alleging Matvienko’s bank had cheated them of their pension and savings. “Gotta run, Monika.” Slavko sniggered. “That bastard. I’ll have my film crew there. Watch it on t.v. this Sunday.”

It was against the backdrop of ordinary incidents like this that the poisoning of candidate Viktor Yushchenko, opposing Kuchma’s hand-picked successor in the 2004 elections, had occurred. The political class had followed each other’s moves and counter-moves for a decade, but few ordinary Ukrainians had. The Yushchenko poisoning had shocked some into paying attention. Timoshenko’s ability to rally people to the streets on behalf of Yushchenko and fair elections, both through public appeals, behind the scenes organizing, and catalyzing “flash mobs” of friends summoning friends through chains of text messages, had surprised everyone.

An even bigger surprise during the 2004 Orange Revolution was the conduct of the protesters. People began to behave towards strangers the way they behave towards people about whom they care. Seeing protesters on t.v. spending in the night out in below-zero temperatures, ordinary Kyivans began taking hot coffee, vodka, then coats and scarves to the Square. Once on the Square, many stayed or returned as protesters themselves. Protesters, strangers to each other, struck up intimate conversations, held hands, danced together. “Monika, you wouldn’t believe it,” one friend, Vsevolod, told me when he was describing his experience on the Square. Vsevolod, a Constitutional law specialist at the prestigious Law Faculty of Kharkiv University, had traveled abroad.

*This is Kyiv. This is Ukraine. We make a big difference between people we know and people we don’t. We don’t treat strangers as friends. And this harshness has grown since the Soviet Union fell apart. I couldn’t believe it myself, when I got to the Square. Everyone was so kind, so considerate of each other. I saw people stretching out a hand, to help an older person just step off the curb so they wouldn’t stumble. I saw people give another person the hat off their head, because the other looked cold. Everyone was*

*filled with goodness. Everyone was kind. It was like people of the future came to visit us. And those people were us.*<sup>362</sup>

It was as if the normal conventions for distinguishing *svoi* and *vne*, “our own” and “outsiders” were relaxed, as if the burden of proof was not on the other to prove they fit with the group. In conversation after conversation with those who had participated, this quality of mutual belonging was the most striking memory from the 2004 street demonstrations.

As we have seen, the Orange Revolution brought into open conflict configurations long in the forming. Kuchma and his allies put up a Russophone candidate from Eastern Ukraine, Yanukovich, to oppose Kuchma’s former Prime Minister, Yushchenko, campaigning in favor of free markets and a Western identity for Ukraine (membership in the European Union and NATO). The populist Timoshenko, who had taken to wearing her hair in long braids wrapped around her head in a stereotypical Ukrainian peasant hairstyle (regardless of her former chic and a childhood spent as a city girl in one of the largest industrial centers of Ukraine), came out in support of Yushchenko. The political parties that they formed were Yanukovich’s Party of Regions, Yushchenko’s *Nasha Ukraina* [Our Ukraine], and Timoshenko’s *BYuT* [Block of Yulia Timoshenko].

#### *Merezhko/Parliamentarians and Patrons*

These three factions dominated the Ukrainian parliament elected in March 2006, in order of seats won: *BYuT*, *Nasha Ukraina*, and Regions. Since her faction won the most seats, Timoshenko should have been made Prime Minister. However, Yushchenko had become jealous and suspicious of her popularity and delayed supporting her. By combining with a few smaller parties, Regions formed a faction numbering 238 when Parliament convened after the 2006 elections. After several months of behind-the-scenes negotiating, infighting, and double-crossing, one of the smaller parties switched factions and gave Regions the necessary margin to lead the parliament and pick the Prime Minister. Yushchenko’s Orange Revolution rival, Yanukovich, became his Prime Minister. This uneasy division of executive authority held when, in the last week of March 2007, twenty-four members of parliament announced that they were “switching factions.”

This faction-switching seemed fishy. Members of the Ukrainian parliament are not elected individually to the parliament from separate territorial districts but rather by proportionate party list. (Before an election, a party publishes a list of 450 names. If the party wins 100% of the national vote, then those 450 people will occupy the 450 seats in parliament. If the party wins 50%, then it will send the first 225 individuals off the top of its list to occupy its 50% share of the parliamentary seats. And so on.)

This system of proportional representation means that parliamentarians are not said to hold an “individual mandate”; only the party, not the person, is elected to parliament. However, this system was new for Ukraine, just introduced in 2006 and rather untested. Those were the rules that were being flaunted in that last week of March 2007, when twenty-four parliamentarians announced that they were switching factions to

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<sup>362</sup> Interview with Vsevolod Rechitskiy, Professor at Kharkiv University Law Faculty and participant in the Orange Revolution (September 10, 2007).

the president's rival, Party of Regions. Regions boasted that within days it would announce the "persuasion" of some twenty-eight more, which would take it to a "supermajority" of 300 members of parliament, the margin required to re-write the Constitution and strip the president of his remaining powers.

Among its first wave of recruits, perhaps the feather in Regions' cap was Serhiy Holovatiy. Holovatiy had been an ally in the same faction as Yushchenko, young liberal reformers, since the 1994 parliament. He had been Justice Minister, the young turk in favor of post-Soviet civil liberties and democratic reforms when Yushchenko as Governor of the Central Bank had been his young-turk equal in post-Soviet economic reforms. Holovatiy had never been allied with the Party of Regions, the depressed southeastern coal-and-steel region it represents, or the shady oligarchs who central and western Ukrainians fear actually run it. Holovatiy was seen as a reformer, a legal expert, a Westernizer, an apostle for the rule of law. When Holovatiy jumped ship from Yushchenko's party, Yushchenko allies panicked and his foes rejoiced. Each faction-switcher, Holovatiy and the 23 others, had his or her own reasons for abandoning the President's or Timoshenko's ship. The Kyiv legal elite immediately speculated as to what had gotten into Holovatiy.

Actually, there was little speculation but early arrival at a consensus which, true or false, stuck. The consensus centers on the European Court of Human Rights. The ECHR, among Ukrainian lawyers, judges, and journalists is highly regarded for its impartiality, considered at least a high-level manufacturing site of the social production of indifference and at times a source of justice. Beyond the contested venues in Ukraine, the ECHR is accepted as a venue for discourses of truth perceived as admired but not always practiced in Ukraine, a trusted venue for modes of veridiction relatively settled. Member states each send one judge to the ECHR, and the judge serves an eight-year term. The sitting Ukrainian judge, Anton Buteyko, was due to rotate out in August 2007. In preparation, on April 17, the Ukrainian government was due to send three names to Brussels for selection as the next Ukrainian judge for the European Court of Human Rights. The ECHR is a coveted perch for Ukrainian jurists: a way to make a name for oneself beyond Ukraine in a forum that still has jurisdiction over Ukraine, as a member of a prestigious juridical body, as a European institution which naturally only accept someone "European enough" to judge other judges. Not insignificantly, the ECHR pays in euros; although the hryvnya exchange rate had been stable for almost a decade at 5 hr. to \$1, vivid memories from the first post-Soviet years of "galloping inflation" make a dollar- or euro-denominated salary sought after among most Ukrainians.

One of the leading contenders for the judgeship, Oleksandr Merezhko, described the process to me. Under ECHR rules, any citizen of a member state could apply for consideration. The process had to be open and transparent. Merezhko's parents saw an ad on t.v. to that effect in February 2007, took down the address on the screen, and phoned their son immediately. He thought they were crazy. He was a relatively politically unconnected law professor in Kyiv. In his mid-thirties, with an unassuming demeanor, an encyclopedic memory for legal rules, cases, and Foucault, and a commitment to wearing jeans to class to defy law-faculty pretensions, Merezhko is a workhorse and a thoughtful rebel. On his first U.S. scholarship in the early 1990s, he joined the Young Republicans club at University of Denver. Subsequently, he rethought his political positions and took up volunteer legislative drafting work for the marginalized



Socialist Party of Ukraine parliamentary faction. He worked at a less prestigious law school after his dean (who happened to be Buteyko, now the outgoing ECHR judge) himself had fired Merezhko from the top law faculty for refusing to refuse research time on a foreign fellowship.

Merezhko was certain the process was rigged and his application would get “lost in the mail.” Nonetheless, as an experiment, he sent his name and address to the selection commission run by the Ministry of Justice. To his wonder, within a few weeks he received an information packet with instructions. He emailed me on April 1,

I’m reading now ‘People’s history’ by Howard Zinn which was translated into Russian in 2006. I bought this book a few days ago and now I’m under great impression from reading it. It is so powerful that reminds me “GULAG Archipelago”. I hope that someone will write similar book on Ukrainian history. History from the point of view of the oppressed people. Another piece of news: I applied for vacancy of the judge from Ukraine at the European court of human rights. Selecting Commission is headed by Lavrinovich and I’m under no illusion as for its work. I just decided to make hopeless experiment.

The selection process was to take two days. The first was a test of English language proficiency. (Of the official ECHR languages, Ukraine has designated English as the one required for its judges.) The Ministry of Justice had contracted with a private-sector educational outfit whose normal business was to tutor students prepping for the TOEFL and GRE to conduct the English tests. The testing would take place at the company’s offices in a newer neighborhood of Kyiv, far from any of the public transport on which Merezhko normally relies. “When I arrived at their offices in my high school friend’s beat up taxi with split seats, and saw the line of black A-plate chauffeured sedans [indicating government officials within] that had brought the other applicants, I knew I didn’t have a chance.” “Did you were your jeans?” I asked to be impish. “Of course,” with a twinkle in his voice. The applicants were to take a day-long battery of tests in written English and reading comprehension, culminating in a solo interview with a group of English language instructors, after which they would be rank-ordered by the end of Day One. The assumption was that the government had contracted with a private testing firm in order to meet European standards and defuse any allegations of testing distorted by favoritism.

On Day Two, applicants were to present themselves at the Ministry of Justice for a two-hour solo interview with a group of MinJust officials, testing their knowledge of doctrine and procedures of the ECHR, after which they would also be given numerical scores and rank-ordering. The two days’ scores would then be weighted and averaged, and the whole group of applicants would be informed right there at the Ministry, in front of each other, as to their relative performance. The Ministry of Justice would then forward its top three names to the ECHR administration in Brussels. The ECHR then, without regard for their Ukrainian test scores but solely on the basis of the experience and

publishing record on their c.v., would choose which of the three would serve as the Ukrainian judge. The two days of interviews were to take place the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April.

To his self-professed surprise, Merezhko emerged from Day One, the English testing, as the most highly-ranked candidate. “The teachers told me in my solo interview at the end of the day that if it were up to them, they would choose me as Ukraine’s judge. So at least I have won some moral satisfaction,” he called that evening to tell me. He told me the following week about Day Two. There were some 13 candidates in total. Two of them, while not personally known to him previously, were jurists, one from southern Ukraine and one from the famous law school in Kharkiv in Eastern Ukraine, whose writings he greatly admired. There were a few obscure unknowns, aspirants who had no significant publishing, teaching, or judging record, who had seen the same televised ad as his parents and thought they’d have a try. There was a woman who currently worked as a legal clerk on the staff of the ECHR. While intimately familiar with the institution, he considered her chances poor because she had recently applied to the ECHR administration for a promotion and been rejected. And, there was Holovatiy, well-known in European legal circles. Holovatiy had served as Minister of Justice for a stint in the mid-1990s when the Parliament drafted and passed a post-Soviet Constitution. Since then, he had been a prominent member of parliament, since the Orange Revolution a member of the progressive pro-Presidential minority faction ... until he had switched factions three weeks earlier, at the end of March. Merezhko felt the questions in the Ministry of Justice interview were fair, and that he had given sophisticated and thorough answers. Only one, he felt, tripped him up, and he recovered in time to answer satisfactorily.

At the end of the day, the group was called in to hear their results. Minister of Justice Lavrynovych himself was there to deliver the news. Lavrynovych had been another of the pro-reform young-Turk Ukrainian nationalists through the nineties, but after his party standard bearer had been assassinated (assumedly by agents for then-President Kuchma) running for President in 1999 and some personnel and policy changes altered the party, Lavrynovych switched to the pro-Kuchma (anti-nationalist) party, Regions. His new party made him Minister of Justice when it dealt its way into a majority after the March 2006 parliamentary elections. Lavrynovych, and his bosses at the Prime Minister’s office, apparently got final say as to Ukraine’s ECHR nominees. Lavrynovych named the top three as Holovatiy, no surprise; an unknown, ill-spoken law professor from an obscure department who had practically failed the English language test; and the ECHR staffer whom the ECHR itself had recently denied a promotion. One man, upon hearing that they ranked him near the bottom, fainted. Merezhko heard himself placed fifth.

Although he had gone into the process jovially, with a certain lightness of disposition and a cheery cynicism, he emerged beaten down, thoroughly demoralized by what seemed to be blatant manipulation, making a sham of would-be meritocratic processes. He sent me a brief message.

“Dear Pani Monica,  
Miracle didn’t happen. As I predicted I failed.  
Out of 13 candidates I took only 5-th place. The  
results of voting were following.

Marmazov – 9 votes, Some kind of woman chosen for the sake of gender balance – 9, Holovatyj – 6, Shevchuk – 4 and me – 2 votes. Other candidates didn't receive any votes at all, which is strange.

The whole selection process was very interesting in terms of its cynicism and I hope to tell you about this in detail if you have time for our meeting.

Warmest regards,  
Alexander.”

Merezhko then disappeared for a few days. He told me later he spent a week at the dacha (rural cottage) of family friends, needing a few days of rest and sunshine to recover from the stress of the ordeal. When the list of Ukrainian nominees made the newspapers, press commentary reflected the expectation that among the three candidates forwarded, Holovatyj was a shoe-in.

### *Gordichuk/Private Sectors*

The Kyiv Region Association of Private Farmers met at the end of April. None of the “farmers” had grown up on a farm. That meant, among other things, that none of them had been allotted land when the collective farms were split up under the land privatization scheme. Whereas in other parts of Ukraine, private investors from cities were traveling into rural areas in order to reaggregate and rent land, land around Kyiv (which had exploded to three times its former population in the span of 10 years) was too dear to rent. Developers were saturating the region with new high-rises for Kyiv-bound workers. The only business model that gave the new bedroom communities a run for their money was vegetable farming for Kyiv's open markets and new grocery stores.

This is where the Association of Private Farmers came in, Nikolay Gordichuk told me. Himself a “private farmer” and organizer of others, Nikolay explained how it worked. An urbanite with access to capital – either from knowledge of how banks work, or from network connections to oligarchs – would scout out a former collective farm and drop in on either one of the farmers or the former director. The investor (nearly all of whom were male) would cut a deal with the farmer to pay for the acreage he or she had received in decollectivization. Then the investor would work with the farmer to get documents reissued by the local village council in the name of the investor rather than the farmer. No one knew if their scheme was going to work, because the sale of land was illegal in the first place. If an investor was lucky, the farmer was unsophisticated and uninformed about his legal rights (or, rather, the illegality of his right to sell land). If the farmer was canny, he could challenge the investor's occupancy of the land in local court –often shortly before vegetable harvest season – and either re-occupy the land or sell it to another investor. If the farmer was not canny, he would accept a fraction of what could be made in one-year's vegetable production as the sale price, buy a car and leave town. Speculation among investors and the former farmer's neighbors usually ran that the farmer would run through his money pretty quick and end up back in his home village, landless, someday. But that point still lay in the future for most buyers and sellers.

Nikolay is a no-nonsense guy who doesn't waste time. The Association of Private Farmers was a group of Kyiv city businessmen who invested in vegetable production in

Kyiv region. (Kyiv names both the capital city and the surrounding district.) They banded together to trade information about sources and prices of inputs, and, more frequently, to protect their interests against those scoundrels, the farmers. If parliament were meeting regularly and factions were settled, they would be lobbying parliamentarians to lift the land sale moratorium; but in the absence of that, for the previous five years they had been buying land, raising vegetables, and making a killing. Although available land was growing increasingly scarce in Kyiv region, land sales continued apace as the dispute played out in the Maidan and corridors of power. Nikolay judged the Association to be worth his time, and went to the meeting.

### *Posters and Panickers*

A tone of panic overtook experts who make Ukrainian politics their business in early April 2007. Witness an April 3, 2007 blogpost to The Ukraine List (UKL) #410, a Ukraine-focused internet blog compiled by Professor Dominique Arel, by Kyiv-based, Canadian-Ukrainian Mykhailo Wynnyckyj.<sup>363</sup> The text summarizes well the tangle of contradictory performative speech acts and the affect of first-order observers upon the announcement of the Rada dissolution.

“#1

Late Night Update from Kyiv—April 2-3, 2007

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For those who are as yet unaware: at approximately 9pm Kyiv-time on April 2, 2007, Ukraine’s President Viktor Yushchenko signed a Decree (‘ukaz’) that dissolves Parliament, and calls for new elections to be held on May 27, 2007.

It is now 2 am April 3, 2007, and Ukraine’s Cabinet of Ministers has just completed a televised meeting during which it officially adopted a “postanova” (resolution) that expressly prohibits the executive branch of the Government of Ukraine – including all agencies and ministries at both the central and regional levels – from obeying Yushchenko’s Decree. The meeting of the Cabinet was televised live, and all ministers except those appointed by the President – i.e. Yatsyniuk (Foreign Affairs) and Hrytsenko (Defense) - spoke in favor and voted for the adoption of the resolution. The Yanukovych Cabinet’s text specifically forbids the enacting of the President’s decree, and supports the previously adopted resolutions of Parliament which labeled Yushchenko’s order to dissolve the legislature as ‘unconstitutional’.

To anyone who is not yet alarmed by the above, I’ll be more blunt: both the Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers have refused to obey Yushchenko’s Decree – a fact that has plunged Ukraine into extreme political crisis. The resolutions of the Cabinet and Parliament forbid the financing of early elections, and expressly prohibit any and all

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<sup>363</sup> Accessed at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/2007-78-9.cfm>

activities by the executive branch aimed at preparing such a vote. An optimist would call these latest events “a stand-off”, and a pessimist might refer to the current state in Ukraine as a “latent coup d’etat” (either by Yushchenko-Tymoshenko or by Yanukovych-Moroz –depending on your personal allegiances).

Firstly, a comment on the constitutionality of the Presidential Decree: from the point of view of “rule of law” (i.e. decision-making in strict accordance with written statute) Yushchenko’s document is highly dubious. Article 90 of the Constitution of Ukraine expressly enumerates the conditions under which the President may dissolve Parliament. None of those conditions currently exists. The parliamentary majority, and the Cabinet have repeatedly reminded Yushchenko of this fact, and have reacted to the President’s Decree accordingly. One of the final resolutions adopted by Parliament this evening called for the Constitutional Court to rule within 5 days as to the constitutionality of the Decree, and Parliamentarians have every basis to feel confident that the Court will rule in their favor.

On the other hand, Article 8 of the Constitution states that the principle of the “rule of right” (“pravo”) functions in Ukraine. At the time of the adoption of this article in 1996, Parliamentarians debated the final text extensively, and paradoxically, it was speaker Oleksander Moroz who convinced deputies that the formulation “vekhovenstvo prava” (rule of right) was more democratic than “verkhovenstvo zakonu” (rule of statute) arguing that written law may be unjust whereas rights are universally just. In accordance with this principle, Yushchenko’s argument tonight was that the rights of Ukraine’s voters have been usurped by Parliamentarians (elected according to Party lists – not constituencies) who have switched sides from the opposition to the coalition. Article 83 of the amended Constitution states that a majority coalition in Parliament is to be formed through an agreement between factions. There is no mention of individual deputies joining the coalition – as occurred last week when 11 Parliamentarians from BYuT and Our Ukraine defected to the ruling majority. According to Yushchenko, voters must therefore be given a chance to express their political opinion yet again.

To be honest, the President’s legal argument is quite weak, and both the Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers are counting on the fact that the Constitutional Court will agree. However, it is very unlikely that the Court will rule quickly, and until a ruling is published by the Court, the Presidential Decree dissolving Parliament is considered valid.

However, (yet another “but”), according to Ukrainian law, Presidential Decrees are considered promulgated (i.e. enacted) only after they have been published by one of the two official newspapers of the Ukrainian government. Potentially, a problem could arise here for Yushchenko due to the fact that the newspaper “Uriadovyj Kurier” is controlled by the Cabinet of Ministers, and “Holos Ukrayiny” is the official newspaper of Parliament. The President does not directly control any official newspaper. But, even if this problem is surmounted, and either newspaper publishes the text of the Decree tomorrow, the resolutions passed by Parliament tonight (prior to the promulgation of the President’s text), are still considered valid.

In other words, the President has signed a Decree that dissolves Parliament, but that Decree becomes law only tomorrow. In the meantime, tonight, the Parliamentary majority passed several resolutions that make the enacting of Yushchenko's Decree difficult at best. For example, the legislature voted to rescind its previous resolutions – passed on December 8, 2004 (during the height of the Orange Revolution) – that dismissed the old membership of the Central Election Commission (widely believed to have complied with the mass falsifications of the 2004 Presidential election), and appointed a new membership of the CEC. In other words, as of tonight, Serhiy Kivalov is yet again legally the Chair of Ukraine's Central Election Commission (although he cannot actually take up the post because he is now a member of Parliament). Ironically, this decision places a question mark on the legitimacy of the mandates of the current Parliamentary deputies since their election in 2006 was supervised by a CEC that is now considered illegitimate. Clearly, this was not the Parliamentarians intent. Rather, they have created a condition under which early elections (i.e. the enacting of Yushchenko's decree) has become practically impossible since Ukraine's current Central Election Commission is now legally illegitimate.

Legal arguments are obviously not a way out of the current crisis. The question now is: what is the way out? Parliamentary speaker Moroz and Prime Minister Yanukovich have demonstrated that they are not going to easily accept a dissolution of Parliament and early elections. Both have publicly called upon Yushchenko not to publish his Decree, or to rescind it quickly. Clearly, neither are options for Ukraine's already beleaguered President since backing down now would lead to his losing all political clout.

Ukraine's politicians and journalists have started actively discussing parallels between today's situation in Kyiv, and the situation in Moscow in 1993 which ended in President Yeltsin ordering tanks to fire on the Russian Parliament. In Ukraine, Yushchenko controls the army and the SBU (Intelligence Agency) which has several special forces units within its hierarchy. Yanukovich, as Prime Minister, controls the Ministry of the Interior which includes the "Berkut" special forces, and the latter, two weeks ago, staged very public demonstrations of their crowd control methods – demonstrations that were broadcast on practically all Ukrainian television channels. According to news reports (later publicly denied by Minister of the Interior Sushko), several busloads of "Berkut" soldiers were on their way from Donetsk to Kyiv tonight. On the other side, during the debate in Parliament tonight, one of the deputies asserted that ammunition was being distributed to several army units – an assertion that was later denied by Minister of Defense Hrytsenko.

I don't mean to alarm anyone, but the current situation in Kyiv is quite different from that of November 2004. At that time, the population of the capital was united in its desire to change the country's political direction, and the army and police followed the united will of the people. Today, Kyiv's population (disillusioned by the aftermath of the Orange Revolution) has learned to live outside of politics – the economy is growing (despite politicians), and so is Kyiv's middle class. Now, protests are not mass events, but rather gatherings of radicals from both sides.

Combine radicalism on the part of two consolidated groups with mass public apathy, plus add questionable legal/moral arguments (on both sides), and split control of the agencies that control the guns (army, police, intelligence), and you have a powder keg. That's the current state of Kyiv, and its more than just a little frightening..."

### *Timoshenko/Paragons*

The weekend between that fateful last week of March when the Orange parliamentarians defected to the Regions faction, and the president's dissolution action on Monday (April 2), Yulia Timoshenko held a large rally of her own on Independence Square. The Saturday gathering was an impressive show of political force, bringing more than 30,000 protesters out at short notice. The message was clear: parliamentarians switching factions was a violation of the proportional representation system enshrined in Ukrainian election law. Members who said they would "switch parties" or "switch factions" from the list on which they were elected to parliament should be stripped of their parliamentary seat and replaced with a loyal party member who would serve the party constituents elected him or her to. Friends and rivals of Holovatiy speculated about his discomfort with this possibility.

Stripping parliamentarians of their individual seats was obviated by Yushchenko's surprise announcement on Monday. After her brief appearance on the square for cameras Monday night, Timoshenko ceded the Square to Regions. In the following eight weeks, her team held only two short after-work rallies in conjunction with pro-presidential forces, attended largely by local Kyivans, in order to show some counter-demonstration to the Regions' daily show of strength. Held on European Square (in front of the former Lenin Museum, now called *Ukrainiskyi Dim*, "Ukraine House") one block away from the Regions' rallies on the Maidan, it was easy to contrast the two crowds; local vs. imported; stylish light spring colors vs. dark cloth coats or leather jackets that don't show soil; smokers vs. non-smokers; up-scale urban Kyivans vs. retired or unemployed down-market provincials. Even a Regions sympathizer, herself a sophisticated, well-dressed Kyivan, confided as she looked over the assembled at a Regions rally, "They are so poor. Look at them. People say they're thugs. That's not a thug. That's an unemployed coal miner."<sup>364</sup> The affect at Regions' rallies was guarded, cool, truculently defiant; at Timoshenko's, open, sunny, confident.

The only time that I personally felt fear during the political crisis of the spring of 2007 came after the second Timoshenko rally on European Square. The rally lasted for a couple of hours into the spring twilight on an early May evening after work. A few singers, crooning favorite old ballads or remixes of Ukrainian folk music, alternated with fiery dissolved parliamentarians warming up the crowd. A few organized demonstrators, mostly students hired from Kyiv-area universities, marched into the square under colorful banners. The rest of the crowd were urbane, local volunteers. The crowd was cheery, enthusiastic, and pro-Ukrainian. After the headline speakers (a stand-in for Timoshenko, Lutsenko, a righteous young lawyer whose ardour sometimes borders on demagoguery) made their final "throw the bums out" pitch (in Ukrainian, the slogan was *het' zradu*, a play on words meaning both "Out with the Traitors," and "Parliament be gone!"). Police

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<sup>364</sup> Conversation with Krolika, Kyiv office worker (April 7, 2007).

in relaxed lines directed ralliers into two of the main streets leading from the square but blocked off the third, as it lead directly to Independence Square where Regions had been rallying for weeks, one block away. Although the mood of the rally was relaxed, the precaution seemed wise.

As I walked up the hill on the exit route that took me closest to home, though, the glow from the music, bonhomie, and spring evening quickly evaporated. Regions ralliers, those black-leather-jacketed young toughs, those who were not thugs but rather merely poor, were lining both sides of the street leading away from the Timoshenko rally. They had set up their gauntlet along a stretch of road uninterrupted by side streets; it ran for the equivalent of six city blocks or more. They blocked the sidewalks and forced Timoshenko ralliers into the gutter, and then into traffic on the cobble-stoned street. Of course, they could not tell who was or was not coming from the rally as opposed to returning home from work to this residential neighborhood. They choose seemingly based on the newness of clothes, the erectness of gait. The black leathers linked arms standing across the sidewalk so that pedestrians were forced off. They pushed elderly men and women. They jeered. They catcalled, they whistled. After one set of young toughs had forced a frail-looking elderly woman off the sidewalk and onto the uneven cobblestones, I asked why. "Orders, ma'am." "Whose orders?" "The boss." "Who's the boss?" A more senior tough stepped up and intervened. To his colleague: "Don't talk to her." To me: "It has to be this way." Police along the route were sparse, silent, and timid. They hung back behind the rows of leather jackets, invisible to those being bullied. The noise, the whistles, the jeering, the shoving, were intense; the intimidation was palpable. Confident Kyivans hurried along, looking at the pavement as they hustled, trying to avoid eye contact and any extra attention. It lasted for me until I got to the first turn-off, which luckily for me lead towards my block, just passed the Cabinet of Ministers building. A policeman stepped out of the shadows to stop me. "You can't go down this street," he said. "You have to stay on that route," gesturing to the gauntlet. "I live on Gorodetsky," I said – in Russian, rather than in Ukrainian which would mark me as more likely one of the nationalists, naming my street one block over and clearly unreachable by any other path. Gruffly, he stood aside. Until then, dissolution of the Parliament had meant daily rallies, free pop music, endless people watching. Suddenly, I wondered if this festive crisis was going to turn ugly.

### *Uncertainty, Event, and Action*

Uncertainty, or destabilization, is one of the necessary characteristics of an event. Under the Deleuzian conception, another characteristic of a critical event would be "action," if we can use action to stand for the reconfiguration of elements that occurs after a phase transition.

After summer passed quietly and September passed in a flurry of campaigning, elections came on September 30, 2007. In an election judged by outside observers as largely free and fair, Regions and *BYuT* gained seats at the expense of the president's party. After two more months of deal-making, Timoshenko returned as Prime Minister, the position she had held between the March 2006 elections and a double-crossing move by the president in August 2006. In the midst of the campaign, the presidential administration announced that it was revoking the list of ECHR nominees it had sent to



Brussels and starting from scratch. Between the dissolution, the campaign, and the wrangling over selecting a PM, parliament had not drafted or passed any but the most pro-forma legislation since March 2007. Despite the legislative calendar, year ended with the moratorium on land sales still in place. In other words, most of the players and policies ended up more or less where they started, with the exception of the president, whose hand vis-à-vis Timoshenko was arguably weaker than it had been.

In dissolving parliament, the president attempted to conduct an action-forcing event. Had he succeeded?

*Living in the Subjunctive: The Ukrainian Synthetic Future*

Events depend on certain forms of the past and the future. The concept of problematization presupposes a certain kind of past. Something must have become normalized in the past, or become self-evident, in order for there to be a “break in self-evidence.” Put in Deleuzian terms, a critical event depends the prior existence of a “state space” created by a set of ordinary events. Some events in the emergent parliamentary order of post-Soviet Ukraine had become routine, or even ordinary. However, the assemblage of parliamentary order in Ukraine can not be called “stable.” Interpretations fluctuate. The past is not predictable. Some features of the present were not self-evident. The concept of a critical event also presupposes a certain kind of future, a future that can be changed, a future that can be the product of performative speech acts or gestures. Is that the kind of past, or future, that was issue in the dissolution of the Ukrainian parliament in 2007?

To answer this question, we return to the concept of performative utterances. In his initial discussion of performatives, John Austin outlines two categories of utterance, the constative (in which language represents reality) and the performative (in which language creates reality). Austin refrained from categorizing the case of fictitious or play-acted performatives. An actor and actress who say “I do” in the course of a play do not leave the theater newly married to each other; they fail to meet the felicity condition of sincerity.<sup>365</sup> How to categorize play-acted performatives has become a bone of contention among philosophers of language. John Searle avers that Austin does recognize that play-acted performatives derive their meaning from their mimicry of actual performatives, but that does not mean that Austin dismissed play-acted performatives. It means merely that he did not address them in the initial outline of his theory.<sup>366</sup> Searle repeats Austin in referring to such utterances as “parasitic.”<sup>367</sup>

Others object that Austin (and Searle’s) conception of performatives, and speech act theory in general, puts too much stock in the force (in Austin’s terms, the “illocutionary force”) imparted by the intentions of the speaker.<sup>368</sup> One alternative given in response to the questions, From where do performatives get their illocutionary force? What is it about a performative that makes that kind of utterance capable of changing reality? is the answer, “context.” Culler, for example, reverses the precedence of “real” and “play-acted” utterances in the argument. “If it were not possible for a character in a play to make a promise, there could be no promises in real life, for what makes it possible

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<sup>365</sup> JOHN AUSTIN, HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS.

<sup>366</sup> John Searle, *A Reply to Derrida*, 1 GLYPH 198, 205 (1977).

<sup>367</sup> John Searle, *A Reply to Derrida*, 1 GLYPH 198, 204-208 (1977).

<sup>368</sup> See, e.g., Jacques Derrida, *Signature Event Context*, 1 GLYPH 172-197 (1977).

to promise, as Austin tells us, is the existence of a conventional procedure, of formulae one can repeat. For me to be able to make a promise in ‘real life,’ there must be iterable procedures or formulae, such as are used on stage.”<sup>369</sup> For Culler, speech act theorists have gotten it wrong; context, not intention, is the key. His proof? “[T]he possibility of grafting an utterance upon a new context, of repeating a formula in different circumstances, ... confirms this principle [that illocutionary force is determined by context rather than by intention]: in citation, iteration, or framing, it is new contextual features that alter illocutionary force.”<sup>370</sup> Culler continues, “Meaning is context-bound, but context is boundless.”<sup>371</sup>

In spring 2007, the President dissolved my field site, the Parliament. No one knew if President Yushchenko had the authority to dissolve the parliament. No one knew, or rather, many authoritative speakers had many differing opinions. Many know and they know many different things, and therefore appeals resting on knowledge or other forms of authority within the same system are indeterminate. The Party of Regions, for one, answered, No, the President does not have the authority to dissolve parliament. However, at the same time, Regions behaved as if he might. The Parliament, or at least 238/450 of the Parliament under the leadership of Prime Minister Yanukovych and the Party of Regions, continued to meet every day as parliamentarians in the Parliament building and to do Parliamentary business, or at least as much as could be done without a quorum. The Cabinet of Ministers had passed resolutions forbidding any Ukrainian government ministry or employee from acting as if the Parliament had been disbanded. At the same time, of course, the Party of Regions was behaving exactly as if the parliament had been illegally disbanded. It sponsored daily demonstrations on the *Maidan*. It broadcast, on television screens the height of a two-story building, the debates of the Parliament. It paid for pop music singers to entertain the demonstrators and for television coverage of the demonstrations; in fact, as we have seen, it paid for the demonstrators themselves. Yulia Timoshenko and her allies answered, Of course the President has the authority to dissolve parliament under these circumstances, when parliamentarians are abandoning the party lists on which they were elected to office. But she and her allies held a few public counter-demonstrations to oppose Regions’ message, just in case the issue of the President’s authority was not self-evident.

Regions’ demonstrations on the *Maidan*, as staged, cited heavily to the somewhat more spontaneous and cathartic Orange Revolution demonstrations in favor of new elections, free and fair, in 2004. Tents, flags, young people, sound stage, all on Independence Square, the frame of performance of citizen engagement in national political life. They even repeated slogans that sounded like the Orange Revolution slogans of 2004: safeguard the electoral process! Defend the Rule of Law! Don’t allow our elections to be stolen! In this case, we have citation, in the replication of the performance frame and its props; and we have iteration, the repetition of the same (and similar) utterances. We also have the broadcast of parliamentary proceedings, proceedings which even those holding admitted had no performative force, to the *Maidan*; in this displacement of “parliament” to the flat-screen venue set up for public viewing on the *Maidan* and replicated on screens nationwide, we have a performance of

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<sup>369</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Convention and Meaning*, 15, 21 13 NEW LITERARY HISTORY (1981).

<sup>370</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Convention and Meaning*, 15, 24 13 NEW LITERARY HISTORY (1981).

<sup>371</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Convention and Meaning*, 15, 24 13 NEW LITERARY HISTORY (1981).

parliamentary rule that would be described as “parasitic” by Austin, his supporters, and his detractors alike.

The model fails us here, however. Parasitism, in Austin, Searle, Derrida, Culler, and others participating in the evaluation of performative speech acts and pretend performatives, presumes a break between the fictitious and the non-fictitious, between the fake and the authentic. In the performance of parliament, and the performance of its dissolution, in Ukraine in 2007 such a distinction does not seem salient. Rupture, a defining feature of the post-Soviet Ukrainian context, had disrupted the context for the production and reproduction of the convention upon which performative utterances depend for felicity. Even the normal slippage that inheres in iterability may be precipitous to the point of nonsense in the context of rupture.

Instead, to understand the situation, I would use as a metaphor a grammatical feature that Ukrainian language has (and that many other Slavic languages, including Russian, do not). The grammatical form is called the “synthetic future.”<sup>372</sup> Like other Slavic languages, Ukrainian has two other forms of the future, the perfective future, a statement of what will be finished or accomplished or perfected in the future; and the imperfective analytic future, an action that will continue, ongoing, in the future. In addition to this standards perfective/imperfective set, Ukrainian has a third way grammatical form to express future tense, the “synthetic future.”<sup>373</sup>

In field research, Erin Coyne has found several dominant uses for the synthetic future among native speakers in contemporary Ukrainian usage. First, as an expression of hypothetical future events. (82% of respondents chose the synthetic future form for the prompt, “I want to have a daughter; I will never abandon her, I can already imagine how I **will braid** her hair and **will walk** with her in the park.”) Second, in condition-dependent structures. (65% of respondents chose the synthetic future form for the second blank in the prompt, “What (will) you do tomorrow? And if it rains, what (**will**) **you (do)**?”) Similarly, 88% of respondents chose the synthetic future form for the second blank in the prompt, “Tomorrow I (will) probably (go for a walk), but if it rains, I (**will stay**) home.”) Third, with an imperative. (Citing lyrics of the rock group Okean Elzy, the synthetic future is used for the second clause in the sentence, “Write me a letter and I **will read** all night.”) Finally, as an expression of future conditional. (As in the first and third verbs in the sentence, If you **knew** that in two days you would die, what **would you do** on those days?)

I adopt the synthetic future as a way of describing the kind of future at issue in the collective life of Ukrainian subjects. That future is not a future of promised performance of certain actions, nor of continuation of present actions. It is a future marked by hypothetical future events, condition-dependent structures, and future conditionals. The synthetic future is a future cast in the subjunctive mood. The present is lived not with an eye towards future contingencies; the present itself is experienced as an unfolding contingency. The present is lived in the “what-if” mode of the subjunctive. That marks

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<sup>372</sup> This discussion owes its existence to linguist Erin Coyne and her presentation, Semantic Differentiation of the Ukrainian Synthetic Future Tense, at the conference Slavic Languages: Time and Contingency, held at the University of California, Berkeley, February 12, 2010.

<sup>373</sup> The paradigm for conjugating a verb in the synthetic future, using the verb *robyty* (“to do”) as an example for singular 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons followed by plural 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons: *ya robytymu, ty robytymesh, vin/vona robytyme; my robytymemo, vy robytymete, vony robytymut’*.

the Ukrainian contemporary as a different mode of modernity than is usually described.<sup>374</sup>

Rupture has opened up the space of “what-if,” made living the subjunctive present possible (and, at times, unavoidable). Rupture also recasts the terms so as to call into question the presumed gap between “parasitic” and “performative.” As the vignettes in this chapter demonstrate, performances on the *Maidan*, in the parliament, and associated machinations, while no less “real” as a form of lived experience, are no more determinant as performatives. The Rada dissolution was not a Deleuzian critical event that crystallized the next phase after a phase transition. Rather, it resulted in an indeterminate slush, and that slush is the milieu of the what-if. It is not clear that the past had emerged from a set of ordinary events, or that the future was capable of being produced by a performative utterance. The context is much more fundamentally emergent than that.

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<sup>374</sup> Compare, for example, with the contemporary at issue in PAUL RABINOW, *MARKING TIME* (2008).

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, I undertook to study a context marked by rupture. The context of post-Socialism is defined by rupture. Modes of production and reproduction of ideology, speech, agriculture, human life, symbolic systems: none were spared. Rupture in the case of post-Soviet Ukraine took many forms, but one of the most pronounced was fragmentation. The territory of the new state is a fragment of the former collection of republics; the parcels of its new landowners are fragments of former collectives. One strand of inquiry followed performances of the self when performance spaces, both geographic and social, had fragmented.

I identified one set of practices that emerged from the experience of dislocation, namely, attempts to reformulate and formalize the legal organization of space, as particularly salient. These attempts tackled both the national territory (through a post-Soviet Ukrainian Constitution) and local terrains of home and field (through a new Land Code and creation of private ownership of property). A starting focus on one genre of performative utterance, legal acts, allowed for inquiry into the construction of conventions and authority that underwrite felicitous execution on which a performative depends. The radical legal reorganization of space, in turn, led us to the spontaneous and, particularly, the emergent.

A picture of ecologically-intertwined social forms came into view: of emergent forms of family, friendship, society, state, corporation. Analyzing human performance and practice oriented toward the conceptualization, organization, or disruption of spatial forms showed how discourses of inclusion and exclusion produce boundaries, outsiders, and insiders. It connected the creation of private property and market forms with a speeded-up temporality, in turn linked to a demise of certain practices of sociability and the extinction of certain forms of friendship and the self.

Several concepts emerge as recurrent themes in this study. In looking at modes of power at play in Ukraine, we reviewed extensions of sovereign power as a mode resembling, but distinct from, colonial power. The center of sovereign power, the locus for production of performative speech acts under Soviet authority, was removed from the territory of Ukraine as a colonial power would be. At the same time, Ukrainians in Moscow and Soviet leaders at local levels were involved in the production of these speech acts and in performances they structured. If the present demands decolonization, one contemporary interlocutor reminded his fellow Ukrainians, it demands decolonization from ourselves. Exercises of sovereign power, violent practices of marking people into binary categories of *kulak* or not, operated in tandem with a security apparatus that calculated probabilities of scarcity and controlled circulations of grain and people between countryside and city. At the same time as a vast exercise in destruction was being conducted in the Ukrainian countryside, an enormous project of construction was begun. This entailed a reorganization of the social that takes land as its object. Disciplinary mechanisms guided the formation of collective farm and collective farmer. They saw the emergence of a modern rural self, literate, specialized, integrated into a labor *kollektiv* based on division of labor and applied science. Contemporary commemorations, naming a Famine reforming discursive formations around it, are taking place against the backdrop of the veiled violence of the unraveling of rural collectives.

Those who pressed for the creation of private property in land in Ukraine predicted two outcomes: greater prosperity, as individual owners acting in rational self-interest managed resources efficiently, and greater democracy, as the concentrations of productive resources that had underwritten authoritarianism in the past were dispersed. Instead, we found at least two disparate outcomes that belie these predictions. Recollectivization of the countryside under corporate forms of organization has yielded greater productivity, and even greater wealth for rural residents; but it reinforces patterns of patron-client relations in ways that favor patrons in electoral politics. The result in these locals is a wealthier populace governed by an increasingly entrenched oligarchy. In parts of the countryside where outside investors have not arrived, production is organized by household labor working family plots and parcels. These villages are poorer, but consolidation of political power seems not to be a problem. Where local democracy falters, it does so because of lack of those wanting to be in power, not from oligarchy.

I identified two distinct practices of movement, roaming and mobility. Roaming alerts us to the spatial organization of domestication and of “nature,” and the practices and life forms that traverse those bounds. Mobility, I found, depends on several conditions of possibility: a dissolution in some of the disciplinary mechanisms, in the form of documenting a citizen’s ties to a location of residence; enhanced technologies for mobilizing networks of acquaintances; and increased reliance on literacy and the contacts between strangers that it allows.

Remediation is another theme that emerged in this work. Property in the present becomes a setting for inventing tradition and reformulating the past. Public space has assumed prominence as a performance space for contesting collective political identity in the present, while a synthetic future, living in the subjunctive, plays out on a flat-screen setting.

Overall, this dissertation has considered the legal organization of space and conditions of possibility for performances of the self. This leads us to consider the relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity in regard to space. In Western legal scholarship, sovereignty is discussed as operating on one of two levels. For international relations theorists, sovereignty signifies the capacity of a state to act within its own territory without interference from other states.<sup>375</sup> For property theorists, sovereignty signifies the capacity of an individual, a property owner, to exercise autonomous decisions over a piece of territory or an object.<sup>376</sup> I find, however, some terms neglected. If the subject is a collective subject; if the personhood is a dispersed personhood; if the self is an emergent, intersubjective form arising from dialogic practices: Western legal scholarship has offered poor tools to consider forms of sovereignty that might adhere in these instances. Experiences of sovereignty that mattered, that still matter, to some Ukrainians are rendered out of reach or improbable in a domain of dissolving collectives. Modes of property, sovereignty, state, and self that emerge have yet to assume clearly predictable forms.

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<sup>375</sup> See, e.g., STEPHEN KRASNER, *SOVEREIGNTY: ORGANIZED HYPOCRISY* (1999). For an exploration of limits and emerging new forms of state sovereignty, see ABRAM CHAYES AND ANTONIA HANDLER CHAYES, *THE NEW SOVEREIGNTY* (2001).

<sup>376</sup> See, e.g., MEIR DAN-COHEN, *The Value of Ownership*, *HARMFUL THOUGHTS: ESSAYS ON LAW, SELF, AND MORALITY* 265 (2002).

The concept of setting gave us purchase to consider types of Soviet formations and their disposition in the post-Soviet context. In the social space of the “informal *kollektiv*,” I mapped changes in perceptions of time and forms of sociability. The problematized past forces us to consider the place of the past in the present and forms of remediation that are reshaping the past as a setting. Finally, I reconsidered performative speech acts, particularly “parasitic” speech acts and forms of power and authority emergent in their deployment. Where parasitism ends and the performance of an emergent collective identity begins: that may be what is at stake in the demonstrations on the public squares of Kyiv and the flat-screen venues onto which performances are displaced.

These concepts, taken together, allow us to reconsider performative utterances, like laws, in the context of rupture. The cliché’s of “nation-building” do not capture what is at stake. Forms of the self, instead, are at a moment of greater peril and possibility. In this context, performatives may help to shape the space for that moment of emergence in which claims upon an audience are poised in the balance, to be embraced or rejected, but they do not determine the denouements of the performances.

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Interview with Suzanna Zaetseva, (Kyiv office manager) and Valeriy Smolyar' (Rita's cousin, a farmer-resident of Gruzenskoye village in his mid-40s) Gruzenskoye Village, Ukraine. September 18, 2009.

## APPENDIX A

### Public Discourse around the 2006 Grain Confiscation

#### UKRAINE MAY INTRODUCE QUOTAS ON EXPORTS OF WHEAT, BARLEY, CORN AND RYE

Interfax-Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, October 3, 2006

KYIV - Ukraine may introduce export quotas for wheat, barley, corn and rye until December 31. According to a draft governmental resolution, the quota on wheat exports will be 400,000 tonnes, barley 600,000 tonnes, corn 100,000 tonnes, and rye 3,000 tonnes.

As the memo to the draft resolution reads, the introduction of quotas will prevent domestic shortages of certain types of grain. According to the document, the quotas were calculated on the basis of grain demand and supply estimates.

According to the Agriculture Ministry, additional exports of grain from Ukraine until July 1 2007 must not exceed 5 million tonnes, including 1.35 million tonnes of wheat.

At the same time, according to the document, the exchange market as of October 5 have registered contracts for the export of 5.5 million tonnes of grain, including 2.9 million tonnes of wheat.<sup>377</sup>

#### HOT YEAR HELPS WHEAT PRICES SOAR

By Kevin Morrison and Lucy Warwick-Ching in London  
Financial Times, London, United Kingdom, Wed, October 11 2006

US wheat prices struck a 10-year high yesterday on fears of a further decline in global production at a time when world stockpiles are near 20-year lows. The latest rise is expected to lead to higher food prices.

Wheat harvests from Australia to Argentina, Europe and North America have been affected by drought, heatwaves and, in Ukraine, infestation from the Eurygaster beetle. Global wheat supplies have fallen about 5 per cent – or 30m tonnes - from last year.

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<sup>377</sup> *Ukraine may Introduce Quotas on Exports of Wheat, Barley, Corn and Rye*, INTERFAX-UKRAINE, Tuesday, October 3, 2006; archived in ACTION UKRAINE REPORT, (E. Morgan Williams), October 11, 2006, available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1> (a newsletter compiling news reports about Ukraine).

Also Ukraine's wheat exports were stalled after authorities in Kiev insisted that grain traders apply for export licences.

Wheat futures in Chicago reached a 10-year high yesterday morning, \$5.24 a bushel, a rise of more than 13 per cent in two days.

Traders said if the highs of 1996 were stripped out, current prices would represent their highest levels in 30 years, referring to the heatwave of 1976.

Chicago wheat futures rose more than a third in the past month on dramatic revisions of the outlook for Australia's wheat crop, now expected to be less than half last year's 24m tonnes.

About 70 per cent of Australia's wheat output is exported, mainly to flour millers in Asia. Other big wheat importers include Egypt, Nigeria and Iraq.

"This is not just an issue of an odd drought here and there but a structural issue with the wheat market, with global stockpiles so low and demand continuing to rise," said Chris Brodie, a partner at Krom River Partners, a London-based hedge fund.

Investors have waded into global wheat futures in recent weeks, betting on further price rises.

The US department of agriculture is expected this week to lower its assessment of global wheat stockpiles. Its current estimate of 126m tonnes - about 57 days of global demand - is the lowest level of demand cover in more than 20 years.

Gary Sharkey, head of wheat at the National Association of British and Irish Millers, said global markets would remain finely balanced over the next 12 months. "If we have another dry spring or summer in the US, then we could be facing all sorts of issues," he said.

Analysts said flour and food prices would rise if current wheat prices held. Analyst Andrew Saunders at Numis, the investment bank, said: "Food producers will seek to pass this on to the retailers and in turn consumers will bear the brunt."<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Kevin Morrison and Lucy Warwick-Ching, *Hot Year Helps Wheat Prices Soar*, FINANCIAL TIMES, , October 11, 2006,; in ACTION UKRAINE REPORT (E. Morgan Williams), October 11, 2006, available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1> (a newsletter compiling reports about Ukraine).

**Prime Minister Yanukovich: Government's decisions on grain export license and quotas are temporary**

16.10.2006 | 21:47 | Ukrinform

print version

The Government's decisions to introduce grain export licenses and quotas are a temporary measure aimed at ensuring the country's food security, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich said on Monday.

"We need to fill the state and regional reserves in the near future. After that, the resolution will be cancelled," he said.

According to him, the Government was forced to intervene when the quantity of grain that exporters planned to export exceeded the country's export capability and thus ensure that the country will not be forced to buy grain at prices that are higher than the prices at which grain is presently being exported at the start of next year

The Cabinet of Ministers introduced licenses for export grain in late September. As a result, grain exports from the country were temporarily suspended.

The Cabinet of Ministers decided on October 11 to introduce quotas for export of grain until the end of 2006. The quotas are 400,000 tons for wheat and wheat-and-rye mixtures, 600,000 tons for barley, 100,000 tons for corn, and 3,000 tons for rye.

Grain traders said that this quota was 4-5 times smaller than the volume of grain they contracted to export and that they had incurred losses totaling US\$ 1.5 million as of October 12 as a result of the suspension of grain exports and that the losses were increasing by US\$ 400,000 per day.

Meanwhile, several embassies, including the United States embassy, have appealed to the Government to abolish the quota.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> *Government's decisions on grain export license and quotas are temporary*, in ACTION UKRAINE REPORT #772 (E. Morgan Williams), October 11, 2006, available at <http://www.usubc.org/AUR/aur772.php#a1> (a newsletter compiling reports about Ukraine).

## Appendix B

I Could Taste Poison in my Husband's Kiss; Leader's Wife Tells of 'Plot'

Byline: MARK ELLIS, Foreign  
Editor

THE wife of Ukrainian  
opposition leader Viktor  
Yushchenko yesterday said  
she had tasted poison when  
she kissed him and blamed it  
for disfiguring his face.

Kateryna Yushchenko said: "I  
tasted some medicine on his  
breath, on his lips.

"And I asked him about it, he  
brushed it away, saying there  
is nothing."

The next day he was rushed to  
hospital. She said: "We were  
told that if we had only  
waited a few hours, we might  
have lost him."

He was flown to Austria for  
treatment after falling ill in  
September and claims the  
authorities, who don't want  
him to take control in  
Ukraine, tried to kill him.

Yushchenko was back in  
Vienna yesterday for more  
tests to find out what exactly  
is poisoning him.

US-born Kateryna said of her  
husband's pockmarked face:  
"Doctors assure us that when  
the poison goes away, his  
face will return to the way it  
looked before."

A s k e d w h o m i g h t h a v e  
p o i s o n e d h i m , s h e r e p l i e d :  
" M y h u s b a n d h a s s a i d i t ' s  
b a s i c a l l y t h e p e o p l e i n  
p o w e r , t h e p e o p l e w h o d o n ' t  
w a n t t h e s y s t e m t o c h a n g e . "

M o s c o w - b a c k e d P r i m e M i n i s t e r  
V i k t o r Y a n u k o v i c h w a s  
d e c l a r e d t h e w i n n e r i n t h e  
U k r a i n i a n e l e c t i o n t h r e e  
w e e k s a g o . B u t U k r a i n e ' s  
S u p r e m e C o u r t l a t e r a n n u l l e d  
t h e r e s u l t o n g r o u n d s o f m a s s  
f r a u d a n d c a l l e d f o r a r e r u n  
o f t h e v o t e o n B o x i n g D a y .

Y u s h c h e n k o s a i d y e s t e r d a y h e  
w a s c o n f i d e n t o f w i n n i n g .