

# Introduction

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In 1990 students from the National University in Kyiv formed a movement of youthful activists committed to social change. Dissatisfied with the absence of democracy, and inspired by the example of the Chinese students' hunger strike in Tiananmen Square, they erected a "tent encampment" on *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* (Independence Square), where on 2 October a core of 150–200 students commenced a hunger strike. It quickly attracted about 2,000 new participants and continued to build support by the thousands each day until the students staged a demonstration in front of the Ukrainian Parliament building on 15 October. One of their leaders, Oles Doniy, presented a list of demands before the legislative body, and urged students everywhere to coordinate supportive sit-ins at their own institutions.<sup>1</sup>

That same day some of the protestors took possession of the University building in Kyiv, while those demonstrating at the Supreme Soviet (parliament) broke into smaller groups and carried their message to schools and factories throughout the city, with a significant measure of success. Pro-communist workers from the Arsenal factory—a communist stronghold—soon joined the youthful activists. This was a major turning point in the students' protests, strengthened by the fact that their peers from all over the country were adding their endorsements. The "blindsided" authorities capitulated and on 17 October agreed to some of the protesters' demands. Among them were resignation of the authoritarian prime minister, Vitaly Andreyevich Masol, multiparty elections, and deployment of Ukrainian men in military service only within their home territory. The Revolution on Granite had scored a huge victory, although much of it proved short-lived as the result of an eventual government rollback of its concessions. The demonstrators did score an important victory in the resignation of the prime minister, seen as a major impediment to liberalizing the country's Soviet-style economy, and symbol of abhorrent authoritarianism. Doniy also pronounced the students a crucial factor in the impending defeat of the communist regime.

But why now? What had motivated these youthful protesters to erect barricades and agitate for reforms while the Soviet Union, under which

they had all been socialized, was still intact? Of significance was their interpretation of human rights, representing imported Western values that the students engaged, redefined, and shaped to fit their own needs. In so doing, they took the first crucial step toward achieving the creation of that New Imaginary—neither Soviet nor Western—that is the focus of this volume. In the Ukrainian context such a “floating signifier ... [came to] represent a new form of human dignity and moral worth” (Goodal 2007: 160, cited in Fournier 2010: 180). Since the 1980s new principles had been filtering in from the West, and by 1990 they had firmly engaged this late Soviet generation—ideas which gained currency as the students reconciled selected elements of Soviet modernity with an articulation of their own quest for freedom and democracy (Fournier 2010: 180).<sup>2</sup> Although it was not yet about gender, the revolution was also important for the fact that it encouraged open opposition to the existing ideology, the dominant values, and a regime of hated practitioners—all of which would soon fire up female activists to seek reforms as well.

The next game-changing event would be Ukraine’s Orange Revolution in 2004, in which youths once again took the lead, acting as organizers, strategists, and active participants. Without the prior organizational expertise (acquired during the 1990 revolution), the mounting student protests that helped to launch that revolution, and the financial backing of many of those who went into business (especially in Lviv) after the 1990 revolution, the “Orange Days” might not have happened. Unlike the Revolution on Granite, the Orange Revolution introduced an important feminist tenet when it elevated to power an outstanding political leader—Yulia Tymoshenko. In 2005 she became Ukraine’s first female prime minister, and was named by *Forbes* as the third most powerful woman in the world that same year. Although Tymoshenko remained on the *Forbes* list in various positions for the next few years, her ability to influence events gradually diminished over time until it stalled in August 2011 when, in a political ploy, she was imprisoned by President Victor Yanukovich for alleged corruption. Even in prison Tymoshenko remained a female public figure to be reckoned with for much of the time, however. Moreover, despite her disavowal of “feminist” as a self-descriptor she became, to borrow a description from Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, “a feminist despite herself.”<sup>3</sup>

## Women and Revolution

In 2010 a newly installed chauvinistic regime began exemplifying, as Ukraine’s Euromaidan Revolution would confirm, unexampled corruption, intimidation, authoritarianism, and capacity for savage violence.

Under Yanukovich, whose electoral victory was hailed by Western pundits as “open and democratic,”<sup>4</sup> Ukraine began its backward slide toward authoritarianism. Late 2013 brought a spiraling political crisis; it spawned yet another mass protest, spearheaded by several thousand students demanding that Ukraine sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. The protesters were quickly joined by others, people of all ages from all walks of life.<sup>5</sup> In evidence this time were large numbers of women, although other than Ruslana Lyzhychko (more on her below) no woman came close to approximating Tymoshenko’s stature as a leader. Nonetheless, as Sarah Phillips suggests, “Maidan was a productive space for Ukraine’s feminists, providing opportunities for the articulation of divergent yet reconcilable perspectives on women’s activism. The imaginative responses of Ukraine’s feminists to the challenges of the Maidan have paved the way for a potential broadening of the base of Ukrainian feminism.”<sup>6</sup>

That said, it is important to emphasize that a number of women began to ascend to prominence, with one literally taking center stage. She was the already-mentioned Ruslana Lyzhychko, a parliamentary deputy and songstress who had placed first in the 2004 Eurovision contest, an achievement that was followed by other international triumphs. After her term as a parliamentary deputy expired in 2006 Ruslana became a tireless social activist and an important symbol of hope during those agonizing months of protests. She took to the stage erected on revolutionary Maidan to belt out inspirational songs urging protesters to stay the course. Ruslana also visited a number of European countries in early 2014, to which she carried Maidan’s message. During a plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) meeting in Brussels on 21 January 2014 she issued an urgent appeal to EU leaders, asking them to enact sanctions against the corrupt Yanukovich regime. We now are fully aware that the regime was nothing more than Russia’s puppet, carrying out under Putin’s guidance acts of sadistic brutality, intimidation, Soviet-style propaganda, and a massive misinformation campaign in an attempt to move Ukraine into Russia’s ambit. In a press conference held during the Brussels’ EESC meeting, requested by its President Henri Malossi, Ruslana repeated her plea for sanctions to help resolve the escalating crisis in Ukraine. Sadly, little of the fervent support expressed by members of the European Union moved beyond lip service.

In recognition of her unwavering commitment to peaceful resistance and national unity in the fight against corruption and human rights violations, Ruslana Lyzhychko received the 2014 International Women of Courage award from First Lady Michelle Obama.<sup>7</sup> By this time she had already garnered considerable international attention. On 7 March 2014 CNN’s Wolf Blitzer cast her as the “voice of Ukraine.”

A second outstanding female dissenter was Tetiana Chornovol, a muck-raking journalist, brilliant political analyst, and uncompromising activist during the Euromaidan conflict. She began exposing the astounding wealth stolen from the Ukrainian people by a handful of oligarchs—most notably President Yanukovich’s “family” (biological and political), and Attorney General Viktor Pshonka. It was her relentless investigation and revelation of the assets criminally amassed by yet another prominent politician, Interior Minister Vitaly Zakharchenko, however, that precipitated a brutal attack on her person shortly after midnight on 25 December 2013. While driving home from Maidan that night, Chornovol was followed by men in a black SUV that eventually ran her off the road. She was dragged from her vehicle and savagely beaten about the head and face by three young assailants, who left her for dead in a ditch.<sup>8</sup> Astonishingly, she survived this attack to become a major galvanizing force for the growing radicalization of the antigovernment protesters who subsequently forced President Yanukovich from office. The post-Yanukovich interim government named Chornovol chair of the government’s anticorruption committee, but she was not offered a ministerial post, either in the interim administration or its succeeding male-dominated governing body.<sup>9</sup>

I also wish to call attention to the names of two women taken from a long list of female volunteers who labored selflessly on Maidan providing medical services to the injured. The first is that of Maidan’s medical coordinator, Dr. Olha Bohomolets. Later when Ukraine’s post-Maidan government was being assembled, she rejected an offer of minister for humanitarian issues on the grounds that there was much left to be done to improve the quality of medical treatments for Maidan’s victims. The other is emergency medical worker Nina Matviyiv, who arrived on 18 February 2014 as the only female among thirty protest volunteers from the town of Busk (Lviv region in western Ukraine). Without a helmet, shield, or bulletproof vest Matviyiv tended to the wounded with unexampled courage and total disregard for her own safety under the hail of snipers’ bullets raining down on Maidan.<sup>10</sup> During the protests Ukrainian society consolidated as a nation. That same impulse was to motivate women to assert themselves as fully-valued human beings.

## **Rethinking Gender Equality**

As the conflict wore on, a surge in violence extended it to nearby Hrushevsky Street by mid-January (2014), where it escalated into a full-blown war zone. Female protesters began to seek approval to join the men in active combat on an equal footing. Whether from a misplaced idea of chivalry, or decision stemming from some deeply-rooted gender prejudice,

on 20 January 2014 Maidan's commandant Andriy Parubiy ordered a ban on female fighting, justifying his decision with a concern for the safety of women untrained for combat. Their response was to organize themselves into All-Women's Squadrons. To highlight this initiative Nadia Parfan organized a "Night of Women's Solidarity," featuring marches among other forms of opposition to the patriarchal system under which they lived. "This evolved into an informal, nonhierarchical grassroots initiative ... called 'Half the Maidan: Women's Voices of Protest.'" Gradually women would become visible not as mere auxiliary volunteers but as active fighters on the barricades.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, on 4 February 2014 the newspaper *Volyn Post* informed its readers that Maidan's women had begun organizing self-defense squadrons (*sotni*).<sup>12</sup> Soon these would be replicated elsewhere in Ukraine, in locations such as Lviv, Lutsk, Kharkiv, and Ternopil (Oblast), among others. Ruslana Panukhnyk, one of the organizers of Kyiv's first and most prominent women's formation—the 39<sup>th</sup> All-Women's Self-Defense Squadron—explained that having been turned away from fighting on the barricades they were forced to break ranks with the men and establish themselves as independent units. Ironically, although this was an important example of a female civil initiative, with potentially far-reaching consequences, the endeavor had its limits. Too many women remained relegated to distributing sandwiches and tea, and cleaning up garbage ("The Untold Story," note 14). The head and founder of a second women's squadron, Irma Krat, was also motivated by the same deeply felt outrage over what she perceived as men's hypocrisy. A third volunteer, Nina Potarska coordinated the work of these two units, with their core membership of thirty, plus some eight hundred (and growing) external supporters.<sup>13</sup>

Ruslana Panukhnyk instituted women's training sessions, and professional athlete Olena Shevchenko, one of the initiators of the 39<sup>th</sup> Squadron, quickly began offering master classes in self-defense, initially designed to train women to protect themselves.<sup>14</sup> By late February 2014, however, women wearing helmets could be seen in active combat alongside the men.<sup>15</sup> Feminist activists had carved out a space for themselves on Maidan, and their involvement soon escalated to active combat as the protests were followed by a war in Ukraine's East. Will the women extend their efforts to deconstruct traditional gender roles once that fight comes to an end, as it surely must? This remains an open question.

In early March 2014, as hostilities in Kyiv wound down on Maidan, the women's post-Maidan objective became a twofold one: to join their male counterparts in active combat against the Russian forces and separatists when the violence moved to Ukraine's eastern region; and to become a permanent force in the struggle against the nation's entrenched patriarchy. The ongoing conflict opened up two questions: will Sarah Phillips' obser-

vation that fighting in the conflict zone had a transformative experience,<sup>16</sup> that it opened up a host of exciting possibilities for effecting change, for participating in a successful social movement designed to overthrow patriarchal discourses, for discouraging a willingness to tolerate discrimination hold true?<sup>17</sup> Or will remarks such as that pronounced by Right Sector leader Dmytro Yarosh: “Through the experience of frontline fighting, a new Ukrainian identity is being forged ... From this group of men a new political culture will also emerge ... They will be the post-war core for a renaissance society,”<sup>18</sup> foreshadow the women’s own willingness to leave forging that new political culture to the men?

Although nominally combat has remained a masculine domain, women did start to penetrate its ranks, on Maidan and especially in the war in Ukraine’s east. By the end of 2014 the media were routinely featuring them in battle fatigues fighting alongside the men, and commanding military formations.<sup>19</sup> Of course, not all women elected this way of contributing to the war effort. Some chose traditional female means to support the war effort, such as preparing food packs to be sent to the troops at the front, for instance. A variety of women’s Squads sprang up throughout Ukraine and many of them organized kitchens to produce packaged meals for those doing the fighting, an activity reminiscent of the kind of work in which many women had engaged on Maidan. The 39<sup>th</sup> All-Women’s Self Defense Squad, the very one that had spearheaded the feminist initiative on Maidan for inclusion of women in active combat saw some of its own members turn to such auxiliary activities during the war raging in the East.

Clearly, attitudes toward achieving gender justice varied just as widely in the post-Maidan period as they had during the protests in Kyiv. And so I ask yet again: Will women finally create that social movement “designed to overthrow patriarchal discourses,” and “discourage discrimination,” as Sarah Phillips has suggested? This is likely to remain an open question for some time to come.

## **Nation in Transition**

In the year that followed those first student protests in 1990 Ukraine became a sovereign state and Soviet barriers to the outside world collapsed, producing an ideological vacuum. Distancing themselves from their dictatorial socialist past, reform-minded women hastened to help fill the void. That same year the late Solomea Pavlychko lobbed the first feminist salvo with her article “Do Ukrainian Literary Studies Need a Feminist School?”<sup>20</sup> In 1993 this preliminary feminist initiative expanded its reach to a Kyiv launch of the self-proclaimed “first truly feminist maga-

zine,” *Piata Pora* (Fifth Season), aimed at a popular readership. For most Ukrainian readers feminism was an alien concept representing a Western importation that no one understood or desired, yet it refused to disappear. In the end, a lack of funding caused the publication’s demise before the third edition could be brought into print. Following that early attempt to raise a feminist consciousness in Ukraine, in May 1994 the literati commenced a serious literary engagement with the West in the form of a serialized publication in translation of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*.<sup>21</sup>

July 1995 was pivotal for those early post-Soviet reform-minded women pursuing gender justice, although the term *gender* itself was yet to make its way into the Ukrainian lexicon. They had been lobbying for a special parliamentary hearing on women’s issues for some time and one was finally scheduled for the twenty-sixth of the month. Little of consequence changed as a result of those initial proceedings, but media coverage did raise a measure of public awareness, setting off an early round of discourses on women’s rights. In September a delegation of Ukrainian women, headed by a male spokesman, attended the Fourth Women’s Conference in Beijing. In preparation for their report on Ukraine’s implementation of the “UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,” to which Soviet Ukraine was a signatory, the delegates conducted extensive research. Their efforts revealed much about discrimination against women in Ukraine that was not widely known. In Beijing these women were introduced to some of the ways in which gender justice was dispensed in other countries. Still reflecting the patriarchal mindset to which they were habituated, however, when asked why they had entrusted their leadership to a man, and authorized him to speak on their behalf in Beijing, they all agreed that his presence in both capacities was calculated to enhance the prestige of the delegation.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the predictability of such reflexive patriarchally conditioned responses did begin to diminish somewhat as reformers threw themselves into the work of organizing gender-oriented seminars, retreats, workshops, and conferences featuring dialogue on women’s problems.

During the first half of the 2000s unremitting pressure from the early female activists yielded a series of initiatives addressing abuses against women. On 25 November Ukraine signed on to the UN-sponsored “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence,” scheduled to run annually between 5 November and 10 December, and unveiled a nationwide crusade for gender awareness titled “Ukraine 2015: Millennium Development Goals.” Legislative reforms followed, beginning with the law on “Prevention of Violence in the Family” enacted on 15 November 2001. Following this, in an effort to expand gender parity throughout the various governmental institutions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a decree in 2003 calling for cooperation from all enforcement agencies.<sup>23</sup> After

passage of a series of (albeit imperfect) laws addressing women's rights, an unprecedented piece of legislation was introduced on 8 September 2005. This was the landmark Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, considered the most important legislative act on equal rights in Ukraine to date. It entered into force on 1 January 2006 as the first legally established definition of prejudice based on sex in Ukrainian history. This was the realization of a decade-long campaign by the early post-Soviet women activists to persuade tradition-minded legislators that gender inequality was indeed a painful reality in Ukrainian society. Without the political will to establish guidelines for enforcing this and other laws on gender justice, however, the laws remained static declarations of intent. And before they could even take root as instruments of practical applications women's rights issues they were shunted to the margins with the accession to power of the Yanukovich administration in 2010. The newly installed regime's indifference to gender problems emboldened police, those "criminals in uniform" who extorted sexual favors from violated women in return for registering their complaints, to continue turning a blind eye to abuses against women (Amnesty International 2007; Network Women's Program 2009). Societal norms also exacerbated the continuing absence of gender justice with the general public frequently condoning the criminal behavior of male assailants while impugning their female victims (Network 2009).

For their part, although two earlier parliamentary hearings (1995, 2004) registered only minor modifications in their rhetoric, the sessions did keep discourse on women's rights alive. A hopeful note was struck on 21 November 2006 when participants in yet another parliamentary session on women's issues no longer focused mainly on pleas for creating an environment conducive to the special needs of "women as women"—appeals that had so dominated the earlier hearings. For the first time advances in gender education became a topic of serious discussion, stressing the proliferation of gender-oriented programs in schools, and the founding of centers for gender studies throughout Ukraine—an umbrella organization based in Kharkiv, and gender centers in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Ternopil, Dnipropetrovsk, Mariupil, Zhytomyr, Uzhorod, Slovianska, Cherkassy, and Zaporizhzhia. Most recently a women's studies program was added to the offerings of Lviv's Catholic University.<sup>24</sup> Papers and dissertations on the subject were/are also written, and the number of scholars working on gender issues continues to grow. On a discordant note, however, the drumbeat of calls for reform and more effective laws also went on, testifying to the ongoing absence of implementation mechanisms, along with an imperfect comprehension of questions surrounding women's rights.

At the 2006 hearing Olga Kobets, chair of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Gender Policy, summed up the need to shift from words to deeds:



This is not the first time that we have met to discuss gender parity ... each time promises followed, “solutions” were proposed and duly registered, but they never materialized. ... Why? Because the political will was not there. Our politicians live in a virtual world of their own power structures. This is one problem. Another is the relentless use of catchphrases, the endless posturing. ... In this chamber we can identify representatives of public organizations who still remember the first All-Ukrainian Congress of women held back in 1994 where question of establishing quotas for political representation by women were high on the agenda. The issue was raised yet again in 2001. Unfortunately, as before the politicians heard but did not listen.

The session concluded with an all-too-familiar assurance from the chair that a special committee would be appointed to systematize the day’s recommendations, to be presented before the legislature for consideration. In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, “It’s like *déjà vu*, all over again.”

## Women and Nation

In nations like Ukraine, which have achieved independence after a protracted period of foreign domination, it is not unusual for scholars and quasi-scholars to draw inspiration from the past in order to validate the age-old existence of some idealized nation, albeit constructed in the present by “masculinized imaginings.” As Akhil Gupta so aptly phrased it: “One of the first things that new nation states do is write the history of the nation ... [as one that stretches] into the distant past, where women are generally recognized only in their role as producers of citizens and are thus precariously positioned as subjects of the nation.”<sup>25</sup>

During the first decade of Ukraine’s independence, narratives of the country’s past followed this traditional trajectory. Ideologically driven historical and pseudo-historical books of varying quality were marked by rosy-hued versions of the primordial existence of Ukraine as a nation, and heavily charged with ethno-nationalist rhetoric. In such authors’ eyes their patriotically driven historical narratives authenticated Ukraine’s being as a discrete entity following a teleological path toward its ultimate destiny as a modern European nation.

Women’s history was eclipsed by this nation-building discourse. Women themselves have been complicit in such a suppression of their contributions to the nation’s historical evolution. As an early example I offer a statement made on the eve of Ukraine’s independence, in 1990, by Oksana Sapeliak, president of the Ukrainian Association of Women in Lviv, in which she insisted that before she and her sisters begin liberating women they must first turn their attention to the liberation of the nation.<sup>26</sup> Soon the nation would be liberated, but the old essentialist arguments remained.

By 2010 women's history had received a boost with the founding of "The Ukrainian Association of Researchers of Women in History."<sup>27</sup> In 2012 the work of the Association was augmented by the inauguration of the Women's Studies Program at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.

All progress to the contrary, among the most compelling markers of the women's continuing inferior status were the annual condescending greetings from prominent males on "International Woman's Day." Oksana Kis captured their all too predictable form:

Leading politicians in the state (including the presidents of Ukraine, parliamentary speakers, as well as local political authorities) keep on publishing their greetings on this occasion. Despite their connections to different, or even opposite, segments of the political spectrum (from liberal to conservative, from nationalist to communist, etc.) the rhetoric is almost identical. Politicians of all stripes and genders unanimously continue to essentialize Ukrainian women.<sup>28</sup>

During the Soviet era the political meaning of International Women's Day was modified to reflect communist propaganda exhorting women to participate in the formation of a radiant Soviet future. Eventually, this socialist greeting evolved into one celebrating spring and extolling women's beauty, with men being urged to mark the occasion by presenting flowers, candy, and other such tokens of affection to their wives, sweethearts, female acquaintances, employees, etc.<sup>29</sup>

By 2011 this persistent Soviet tradition, with its unremitting "canned" sexist greetings from politicians, was infuriating many reform-minded women. In an expression of their outrage Kis authored and distributed via the Internet an open letter to the president, following the publication of one of his "Hallmark" felicitations. In her statement she emphasized the women's outrage. An excerpt reads:

Do we truly merit the men's gratitude only for our family output? What about our creativity, knowledge, professionalism, experience, talents, leadership? We believe that the President of Ukraine has to value us—full-fledged Ukrainian citizens—especially for these features. . . . We are not the "weaker sex," and do not want to be considered an embellishment of [male] society—its "beautiful half"; we demand to be regarded as equal and competent citizens of a democratic country.<sup>30</sup>

Sadly, on 10 March 2015 Kis felt compelled, yet again, to raise her voice in protest. Although, she explains that the nation has undergone a radical transformation, there are new functionaries in office, Ukrainians have become aware of themselves as a political nation, yet we continue to see in the latest round of greetings to women on 8 March the same mindless clichés, the same tired refrain extolling "spring, beauty, love, and femininity."<sup>31</sup> Recovery of women's missing history and assertion of their

equality has been undertaken in a different way in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, where members of a gender studies center have established the nation's first Women's (now Gender) Museum dedicated to reclaiming women's history from its obscurity. Supported by the "Global Fund for Women," on 3 March 2009 its founder Tetiana Isaieva and her fellow organizers mounted their inaugural exhibit on the premises of Kharkiv's national university (the museum was still searching for a permanent home at this time). In due course they produced four panoramas of male and female roles in society, and assembled twelve exhibits—one of which was titled "Stop Sexism." A recent key event was the launch of a sixteen-page interactive digital display *Pravda pro 8 Bereznia* (The Truth about 8 March). It was posted on the Internet at the beginning of March 2011 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Its portal lists the museum's activities and special events, and reports on the work of NGOs. Articles and rare photographs pertaining to women's history are also posted, and consciousness-raising gender forums are routinely organized. The founders of the museum announced their intent to make their own history as well. In the voice of Isaieva: "We are ... re-writing history as it has been recorded up to now."<sup>32</sup> With the advent of Maidan, much of their material highlights the activities of the Women's Squads.

## Whither FEMEN?

The year 2008 represented a watershed in Ukraine's quest for change in its gender dynamic. Visible signs of economic and social progress were everywhere. Cheerless Soviet cities had given way to vibrant European-like metropolises, filled with brightly lit modern shops and teeming with young people—products of a free society with a view of life that would not sanction a return to a communist past.<sup>33</sup> In the spring of that year a new female force with an unorthodox approach to civil disobedience was preparing to emerge. Members of this first free generation in Ukraine organized themselves into a colorful if bizarre group of mostly female university students dedicated to challenging sexism, prostitution, and abuses against women.

The first women activists to begin agitating for reforms in independent Ukraine had been schooled in the Soviet authoritarian principles of a now-disgraced Moscow-centered regime that, to borrow a phrase from Brian J. Forest (2010), was "stretching its claws to reclaim influence"<sup>34</sup> and socialized to have a firm respect for authority. Not surprisingly, they were motivated to advocate changes by working within the dominant social structures. Among their youthful offspring, who came to maturity

in Ukraine's post-Soviet open society, there arrived a fearless postmodern assemblage of women who had reached adulthood with a set of values that prompted them to challenge the status quo—not from within but through direct confrontations. Styled a “most daring and unorthodox protest group” by Jeffrey Tayler,<sup>35</sup> they formed an organization of dissenters in the spring of 2008 under the leadership of Anna Hutsol,<sup>36</sup> labeled themselves FEMEN, adopted pink as their signature color, announced their disavowal of feminism as a self-descriptor, and put forth an ambitious goal of reversing the exploitation of women—with a special emphasis on prostitution, coerced sex, and violence.

The nature of FEMEN's dissent is without historical precedent in Ukraine. The group began its rise to prominence by appropriating a public arena typically inhabited by men—the street. Protests challenging abuses against women, and the negative stereotyping that encouraged such behavior, took the form of street theater. FEMEN filled it with daringly innovative tongue-in-cheek parodies of crimes against women performed for passers-by on Kyiv's main thoroughfares, with role-playing simulating prostitution, sex-for-grades, political corruption, etc., designed to ridicule these practices. It did not take long for FEMEN's leaders to recognize the limitations of this kind of theater in advancing the group's cause, however. Accordingly, they resolved on more daring modes of expression, and topless demonstrations soon became FEMEN's hallmark.<sup>37</sup>

During the early stages of the group's existence Ukrainian authorities took scant notice of it, but by 2010 this began to change as Ukraine commenced its backward slide toward authoritarianism under the newly installed Yanukovich regime. In this atmosphere FEMEN came under increased scrutiny and persecution even as the organization was catapulting to worldwide fame. This, accompanied by increasing harassment and traumatic physical attacks, caused FEMEN's leaders to turn their gaze Westward. Soon they were mounting dramatic protests on foreign shores, their methods described by a New York reporter writing in Europe as “a new age art form.”<sup>38</sup>

Today, FEMEN's Ukrainian saga appears to have ended,<sup>39</sup> its mission compromised by global notoriety, and growing addiction to publicity and self-promotion, augmented by a series of ill-chosen acts of defiance. Under severe pressure from domestic authorities, who did not eschew subjecting women to brutal attacks, three members of the core leadership were driven to seek asylum in France, where they established a second base. Once again, organized resistance against entrenched authority in Ukraine had fallen short of its goal, this time without leaving a legacy of protest. Unlike the students in 1990 who had attracted a nationwide following, FEMEN never drew the critical mass support required by such a cause and never evolved into the cutting-edge feminist movement of its

early promise,<sup>40</sup> although, to be fair, the organization did broaden public discourse, often producing passionate debates on the relevance of gender and women's rights.

After establishing their alternate headquarters in Paris, FEMEN recruited new members to its cause, but by early 2014 signs of erosion in their new home were palpable, added to which was a serious drop-off in membership. Contributing to its difficulties, a disaffected French recruit left the movement and announced that she is writing a book about her disillusionment over the disorganized internal mechanism of FEMEN's organization, and its lack of adherence to feminist principles.<sup>41</sup> A handful of its foreign members do appear to be continuing FEMEN's struggle against patriarchy, but interest and associated coverage began falling off dramatically as the revolutionary events started to unfold in Ukraine. A recent example showed Simferopol police dragging a topless activist away from the scene of her protest against Putin's invasion of Crimea. The scene did not attract much interest, only a brief reference noted that one of the two protesters was savagely beaten about the legs.<sup>42</sup>

Even as FEMEN was losing much of its relevance in Ukraine, an alternative organization arose calling itself *Ofenzyva* (Feminist Offensive), an overtly feminist grassroots women's group dedicated to changing Ukraine's patriarchal culture that had been agitating for women's rights since 2010. In a bid to reinstate the political significance of International Women's Day *Ofenzyva's* stated objective was to turn its organization away from the candy and flowers celebration of women's beauty that the holiday had become. Unlike FEMEN, fully clothed *Ofenzyva* members eschewed exhibitionism, choosing instead to express opposition to anti-women prejudice in the form of annual marches on 8 March, mount appropriate displays, and organize "dialogue-enriched conferences."<sup>43</sup> Also unlike FEMEN, it neither rejected feminism nor confounded its meaning. The core decision-making body was limited to women because, as *Ofenzyva* organizers argued, they were not represented in the highest echelons of political power where resolutions affecting their lives are passed, therefore they must have a female alternative to advance women's needs.<sup>44</sup> The group was recently dissolved.<sup>45</sup>

## Winds of Change

Although in large part shaped by its past, today's Ukraine is part of a changing world as well. One has only to walk the streets of major cities to appreciate the physical alterations to the cityscapes that have occurred over the past two and a half decades. As for the young post-Soviet generation, it seems more willing than ever to take to the streets in defi-

ance of outdated cultural norms.<sup>46</sup> Without abandoning their traditional Ukrainian values, the first-generation female activists had broken new ground in promoting public awareness of the absence of women's rights, establishing thereby a solid foundation for reforms that the younger activists might build upon.

Today, gender—unrecognized or simply dismissed until recently—has become something of a buzzword, especially within the proliferating gender studies centers and university programs. Rallies and protest marches, no longer confined to student groups, are also on the rise. In March 2009, for instance, women took to the streets to voice their indignation over ongoing gender discrimination,<sup>47</sup> and in 2011, in observance of the Centennial of International Women's Day, a march consisting of a diverse crowd of supporters chanted feminist slogans as it made its way from the parliament and surrounding government buildings to Independence Square. For the first time in Ukraine's history the term feminism was heard on a broad public scale.<sup>48</sup>

Rising acceptance of gender as a viable concept also had its dark side. It spawned a severe backlash in the form of an anti-gender campaign labeled "STOP Gender." Assisted by a well-planned, well-funded organizational structure, the campaign attracted support from a large segment of the Ukrainian population. Its success was based upon a program of message consistency,<sup>49</sup> a standard package of disinformation, and the use of familiar channels of the negative publicity that permeated every sector of society, right on up to the various levels of government.<sup>50</sup>

The axis—an "imagined" divide between the democratic Western-tilting part of the nation and its Eastern, Russian-oriented, counterpart—represents a dichotomous relationship of competing interests, but the two poles of that axis are united in their abhorrence of feminism and gender (misunderstood by supporters and detractors alike). Western Ukraine has become a particular focus of the movement's anti-gender misinformation campaign owing to the perceived hazards of its shared borders with Western Europe through which dangerous ideas are certain to flow.

STOP Gender's range of (mis)information posted on one website warned Ukrainians that a successful gender policy represents a menace to the nation's traditional family values, that it is bound to result in the dictatorship of a pro-homosexual minority over the tradition-oriented majority. In sum, a positive gender policy allegedly would provide a "road map" of tolerance for trans-sexuality that leaves women and men free to determine their own sex, condones sadomasochism, invites pedophilia, and tolerates the ritual killing of children. Legislators were routinely pressed to avoid European integration, the result of which purportedly would increase the influx of those treacherous Western values, with their promotion of the freedom to practice homosexuality, engage in same-sex

marriage, and subscribe to a variety of alternative lifestyles.<sup>51</sup> The threat of homosexuality alone represented a compelling argument in a homophobic country such as Ukraine still struggling to validate its national identity as an age-old society of traditional values.

The rogue Ukrainian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church—an unofficial NGO—fueled the STOP Gender campaign, with many of the country's religiously oriented organizations falling into line. Some of the uninformed or misinformed government officials organized public disinformation campaigns of their own in which they portrayed gender as a dangerous Western import (a throwback to Soviet propaganda). Such forces argued that the proliferation of the very notion of gender must be halted before it, together with gender studies centers, women's studies programs, and the Western values that they stand for lead to a Ukrainian genocide (Hankivsky).

## About the Book

In 2011 my first volume of collected works brought together an interdisciplinary group of Ukrainian and American scholars who wrote on the status of women in Ukraine during the opening decade and a half of the nation's independence.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile a new breed of scholar was coming of age—researchers who reached maturity in an independent Ukraine, or were born after 1991. The current collection features chapters written by such rising young scholars who provide us with a more nuanced appreciation of the cultural tectonic shifts in Ukraine since independence. Having been spared the constraints imposed by a regime that shaped the worldview of the previous generation, the young contributors to this volume work in an atmosphere that is free of the dictates that once stifled individual thought and creativity. This latest generation of researchers populates a country that, at least in the popular imagination, aligns itself more closely with a Western model of society, although blind adoption of Western-centric values is no more acceptable to them than nostalgia for a lingering Soviet past.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, to quote Tetyana Bulakh: “Soviet-constructed dominants of political, social, and cultural life continue to impact the value system of even the new generation” (chap. 4). One of the most glaring residues of the Soviet legacy is to be found in Ukraine's still heavily centralized educational system.<sup>54</sup> Although this does not act as a necessary constraint on the scholarship of the current post-Soviet generation, its young researchers are products of this system, and their writing style, presentation, and argumentation have been shaped, to a greater or lesser degree, by its traditions. Thus one can appreciate all the more readily the impact of Western influences on current Ukrainian research and writing

practices, as they interact with the residue of Soviet scholarly conventions to produce a paradigm shift—a New Imaginaries scholarly paradigm.

In their scholarly pursuits today's researchers engage, and are at liberty to modify, the ideological theories and practices arriving from the West in an atmosphere of unobstructed intellectual creativity and uncensored scholarship. Transforming the former stultifying conventions dictated by state-sponsored scholarship into a dynamic intellectual force marked by an independent outlook on life, these youthful scholars are infusing them with elements to which they can relate despite the lingering vestiges of Soviet-imposed ideas, research methodology, and scholarly apparatus. Such interactive principles are creating what Anne Fournier, in her pioneering work on Ukraine's new democracy, describes as the interplay between Soviet and Western methods capable of beginning an articulation of New Imaginaries that are neither Soviet nor Western.<sup>55</sup>

To date this latest Ukrainian scholarship, viewed through a gender prism, has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention in the West, where neither here, nor elsewhere, does such an English-language anthology, written exclusively by the young Ukrainian authors, exist.<sup>56</sup> The present volume offers these pioneering contributions in an attempt to help fill that lacuna. Aside from drawing attention to indispensable priorities for future research on gender policy development in Ukraine, the contents of this book lend themselves to comparisons with studies of similar changes throughout the post-communist world, as well as to critical cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural communication on paradigmatic alterations and enhancement of gender relations.

The present volume is divided into four sections—gender politics; interpretations of the arts and literature; changing demographics; and paradigm shifts—fourteen chapters in all, with an introductory essay and a preface. The collection opens with a section on politics in recognition of the vital role that they play in the organization of people's lives. Notwithstanding that Ukraine was among the first of the former Soviet countries to implement the kind of progressive gender legislation that should have facilitated an equitable gender distribution in mainstream politics, as well as in the corridors of power, the post-Soviet parliamentary component of women has scarcely ever exceeded 10 percent, and is unlikely to rise anytime soon. Tamara Martsenyuk probes for answers to this unequal distribution of power. She begins by examining the political landscape using a combination of in-depth interviews, Ukraine's compliance with the international documents to which it was a signatory, the results of sociological polls and surveys on women's political activity, women's NGOs, grassroots initiatives aimed at achieving women's empowerment, and the overall public controversy surrounding gender party quotas designed to reverse the political injustice. Using quantitative and qualitative meth-



odologies as analytical tools, Martsenyuk creates a composite portrait of Ukraine's turbulent political life.<sup>57</sup>

Oksana Yarosh asks questions about the way that both society and Ukraine's political system work to determine gender representation: How do electoral models impact gender distribution in mainstream politics? Is a reformed political system possible with Ukraine's deeply entrenched biases against women? To what extent does women's lack of solidarity play a role in their own underrepresentation? Do many women even aspire to prominent roles in mainstream politics? How do neo-traditional values inhibit women's representation on the highest rungs of political power? A richly detailed overview of Ukraine's electoral process leads Yarosh to conclude that in and of itself the electoral model does not necessarily determine women's political agency—the key lies in its interpretation. Women have it in their power to expand their influence—their organizations number in the hundreds. Instead of pursuing competing agendas they would do well to unite in the pursuit of some collective goals. At present, a “women's movement,” aptly described by psychologist Valentyna Bondarovska during the 2006 parliamentary hearing on women's issues as extremely weak to nonexistent, has little prospect of breaking into that male citadel of politics any time soon unless women themselves make some effort to coalesce into a nationwide movement with readily identifiable and uniform goals.

Art critic, curator, and feminist scholar Tamara Zlobina moves the political needle from the electoral process to the effects on people's lives of political decisions and their accompanying rhetoric. She suggests that the so-called guaranteed private space for women, as articulated in the Soviet Union, represented a useful framework from which to begin developing policies on the women's private lives in post-Soviet Ukraine. What did happen in reality? During the 1990s two conflicting models evolved. The first reflected a conservative paradigm of womanhood as embodied in the “Berehynia” image of domesticity (widely and wildly popularized during the late Soviet period) that in post-Soviet Ukraine resonated with its allegedly age-old national traditions of spirituality and acceptable morality. The second paradigm was rooted in the evolving post-Soviet market economy, where an ideology of commodifying and commercializing women's bodies emerged as a reflection of the “Barbie” image, representing Western-style glamour.

This binary was widely publicized in the media. Together the two images—Berehynia and Barbie—were promoted simultaneously to convey a double standard for the socialization of young girls. They were somehow to be reconciled as young women to this construction of their individual identities. Despite this seeming binary, argues Zlobina, in actual fact none is in evidence. No double standard emerged, there was no need to

reconcile two opposites because these seemingly opposing views simply reflected two sides of a single coin, with each designed to serve men.

Like Zlobina, Tetiana Bureychak and Oksana Kis discuss the commercialization and exploitation of women's bodies, and they too attend to public policy. Instead of the media at large, however, although the media are addressed in the chapter, the authors target the advertising industry. In contrast to Zlobina's argument for the nonexistent binary, Bureychak and Kis see the Barbie/Berehynia trope as the embodiment of two opposing and separate values—one symbolizes glamour and the other traditional womanhood (more on this later).

Part 2 opens with Tetiana Bulakh's study of the phenomenon of glamour in post-Soviet Ukraine as a distorted overcompensation for the deprivations of the Soviet past, as well as the desire to create an exclusive social space for an emerging bourgeoisie. As she observes: "In its contemporary application glamour correlates with the creation of an illusory reality, an enchanting world of magic, luxury, and perpetual leisure." This myth was eagerly embraced on the heels of Ukrainian independence by a class of post-Soviet *nouveaux riches*, known as New Ukrainians, who adopted Western values and patterns of conduct while preserving only their externals. Re-imagined Western influences drew on, and challenged, Soviet consumption styles to produce a New Imaginary best exemplified as a *nouveaux riche cliché*.<sup>58</sup> It embodied the contrast between the evolution of Western glamour as a succession of authentic cultural expressions, and its Ukrainian imitation that reflected the country's Soviet past during which glamour was demonized as a decadent Western import. The resulting New Imaginary, expressed in fashion, was forged within a social milieu that lacked an uncompromised cultural legacy. As Bulakh reminds us, "the Soviet system had not simply detached the Ukrainian upper class from its cultural moorings, it had effectively cut it off from the cultural traditions of the West as well." In post-Soviet Ukraine the initial result was a tendency toward vulgarism, ostentatious display, excessive ornamentation, and tasteless immoderation. This comprised the new aesthetic—kitsch from its very inception. Although the Soviet connection is diminishing, vestiges of it have not died out altogether. They can still be discerned in their contrast with incoming Western values.

As mentioned, Bureychak and Kis in their collaborative effort scrutinized public representations of a newly conceived post-Soviet prestige marker—the female body, positioned in degrading poses, and featuring the luxurious objects being offered for purchase. This "status-conferring merchandise" emerged as the most up-to-the-minute validation of success in Ukraine, with images designed to appeal to male pride, exaggerated masculinity, and exhilarating sense of power.

The authors offer a critical analysis of the way that Western theories of gender and advertising play out in this non-Western cultural setting. Western modes of commercial advertising have flooded the Ukrainian media and the nation's public spaces. They work as agents of socialization to the new values that are systematically replacing the lingering Soviet ideals. This leads us to the inescapable conclusion that the absence of laws regulating advertising will continue to sustain the exaggerated eroticization of women's bodies in ways that degrade them, for use as marketing devices.

The authors also provide a content analysis of videos that appear on Ukrainian television, but their primary focus is on outdoor advertising, with its special outreach capability. Sexism pervades the public space in the shape of billboards, posters, and displays in shop windows assault the viewer at every turn. They cannot be turned off at will in the way that a television message or a print ad might simply be ignored or disconnected with a click of the remote or setting aside a published piece. Outdoor messages that objectify and commodify women are organized in such a way as to capture the attention of passers-by on both the liminal and subliminal levels during the few seconds that they remain in sight. Their messages, devoid of surplus images and captions, do the work of transmitting the new capitalist creed in a manner that is reminiscent of the Soviet political poster. In so doing, they offer a facet of the evolving New Imaginaries paradigm—neither Western nor Soviet—in a non-scholarly setting.

In her second contribution to this volume, that comes in Chapter 6, Tamara Zlobina ushers us into the world of women's contributions to the contemporary art scene. She centers this piece on the oeuvre of three outstanding female artists struggling for recognition in a patriarchal climate. For the sake of their art and the feminist message they wish to convey, the artists resort to a form of subterfuge that Zlobina labels "masquerade." It functions as a guerilla strategy acting as a protective shield that permits a woman to create and disseminate an independent female agenda while feigning conformance to the patriarchal ideology that supports the socially approved needs, desires, and fantasies of men. This masquerade of womanliness veils the traditionally perceived "inappropriateness" of feminine behavior as active agent (still a male monopoly), rendering the artist's installations more palatable to a conservative viewing public. At the same time the approach appeals to the sophisticated viewer, capable of understanding its cloaked message. Zlobina examines the encoded feminist philosophy that disguises, facilitates, and stresses its capacity for conveying meaning through a medium that transcends the knowable on the surface of a typical woman's existence. Imperceptibly, this masquerade transports the viewer's gaze to the inner recess of the mind where the feminist message resides.

Maria Tytarenko turns to a different medium in her examination of what it means to be a professional woman in a country experiencing a dynamic transformation from authoritarian control to an open democratic society. She shines her spotlight on the achievements of Ukrainian women in literary journalism. Centralized Soviet control over intellectual discourses made it impossible for Ukrainian journalists to adopt the transformative world patterns of literary journalism active in the free world during the twentieth century, where Western women made their mark. As latecomers to such changes, post-Soviet Ukrainian journalists incorporated the imported mature ideas and practices into their own literary/journalistic tradition by a process of “leap-frogging”—adapting Western progress to the needs of a modernizing post-Soviet society (somewhat reminiscent of the earlier Soviet push for rapid industrialization). Together with residual, albeit declining, Soviet influences something fresh and innovative was born—a New Imaginaries literary paradigm. This adaptation of the achievements of their Western counterparts to their own current needs enabled Ukrainian “witnesses of history” to reconstruct their historical memory through the application of formerly inaccessible forms of experimentation, using mixed genres to portray more precisely the historical periods about which they wrote.

Part 3 moves on to an exploration of some of the underlying causes and effects of Ukraine’s changing demographics as women become *de facto* breadwinners, despite the continuation of traditional rhetoric favoring an ideology of the hegemonic patriarchal system. Victoriya Volodko opens with an in-depth look at the direct impact on families sending female workers to foreign shores in pursuit of desperately needed income.<sup>59</sup> Laboring under intense feelings of guilt, migrant women leave behind children who are unable to understand why their mothers must remain absent for so long, with many of these offspring exhibiting signs of psychological traumas as a result. To be sure, remittances sent home made it possible for the children to enjoy a higher standard of living, better nutrition, and an otherwise unaffordable education, perhaps even an apartment, but the social costs came high. In some instances, with the passage of time the children’s dependence on these remittances grew, and the goods that the money earned abroad led to an inversion in values, as possessions surpassed family ties in value, and led to a multitude of social problems.

For their part, the men left behind faced the dangers inherent in their loss of status as breadwinners, a loss that might generate mounting feelings of inadequacy. Such consequences are capable of producing broken relationships, alcoholism, drug abuse, and other forms of antisocial behavior. Meanwhile, the women’s relatively high earnings rendered them vulnerable to suspicions of immoral behavior abroad, inflamed by the envy of those left behind to struggle in a broken economy.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, at

one time President Kuchma referred to all Ukrainian women working in Italy as prostitutes.<sup>61</sup> Others are now often known to accuse such migrant women of being bad mothers.

Galyna Gorodetska limits her focus to a case study of women migrant workers in Basque country. Like Volodko, she argues that the bleak economic picture—hyperinflation, falling wages, unemployment, mounting debts, a defunct social safety net that excessively impacts women, and the high incidence of domestic violence—are factors that motivate female outmigration. A contributing cause, Gorodetska argues, is Spain's long-standing attraction as a desirable country of destination. This appeal is augmented by the more recent influx of family members and friends. In Basque country, as elsewhere in the world of migrant labor, workers tend to concentrate in similar occupations, around which diasporan communities form. With their ability to provide social, psychological, and material support communities such as the one in Spain are in a favored position to serve as powerful magnets for the new arrivals.<sup>62</sup>

Halyna Labinska studies women's migration more narrowly, centering it primarily on a single Ukrainian region—the Lviv Oblast. Her case study serves as a microcosm of the national process, but also takes into account an internal migration pattern—from village to city. The author rounds out her chapter with a discussion of reproductive processes in the region, and its high male mortality rate, both of which are said to contribute to the unstable demographic balance.

Against this backdrop Labinska also weighs in on the labor migration from this westernmost Ukrainian territory to nearby foreign destinations; clearly, geography matters. Among the factors that determine the women's decisions to migrate abroad the author cites proximity to potential host countries as a compelling incentive. Labinska concludes with a discussion of the transformative process that brings together the residue of ideas and practices formed in a discredited Soviet system, and incoming Western tenets that lead to heightened expectations, to the framing of a New Imaginaries cultural profile, although she does not apply the term itself.

The closing chapter in this section provides an interesting counterpoint to the post-Soviet Ukrainian migrations, both in kind and in motivation. Liudmyla Males analyzes a series of celebratory wedding songs for evidence of what can be termed the internal migrations of newly-married women during the early modern era of Ukraine's historical development. Her primary source consisted of papers written by senior college students on the subject in partial fulfillment of their practicum requirements.<sup>63</sup> Pre-existing symbolic structures still lodged in popular memory confirmed a tradition of women's historical freedoms persisting in early modern times. As the nation progressively morphed into a patriarchal social order<sup>64</sup> these

freedoms were gradually eroded until they applied exclusively to single females. Unmarried women preserved their traditional liberties, but upon betrothal an internal “migration” to the husband’s family commenced, ending with the young wife’s subordination in a new authority structure. Wedding songs illustrating this “migration” are replete with references to her unhappy fate, particularly if a mother-in-law existed to exercise her not always benevolent, yet unquestioned, authority.<sup>65</sup>

The single most important factor that unites all four patterns of migration is female sacrifice, regardless of historical time, setting, or motivation, and in each case family plays a decisive part as women take up their migrant roles. Contemporary workers make sacrifices for the benefit of established families, while pre-modern women relocated to new and unfamiliar settings in the expectation of forming a family, although clearly this was not their sole motive for marriage.

Marfa Skoryk opens the fourth and final section with her interpretation of the ways in which both Soviet and Western influences have conflated to create a New Imaginary paradigm in the study of psychology, and its relationship to gender studies. She starts with a brief historical summary of the evolution of psychology as a discipline during the twentieth century in the West, where biology came to define sexual differences. Akin to what occurred in literary journalism, as described by Maria Tytarenko in her chapter, the long reign of Soviet ideology behind the iron curtain precluded any reception and adaptation of Western achievements and values. When the latter ultimately made their way into post-Soviet Ukrainian academic psychology programs they were considered a viable point of entry for all gender studies. In addition, consistent with the Soviet practice of insisting on practical applications in every sphere of life, during the initial period of reception and adaptation of the mature Western conventions psychologists in post-Soviet Ukraine tended to consider the fact that the study of gender must have a practical function, that it needs to be applied to “concrete” spheres such as the economy, for instance. Not unlike the adaptation of mature Western developments to post-Soviet Ukraine’s literary journalism, foreign achievements in psychology also provided a “jumping-off point” for bringing that discipline up to contemporary Western professional standards in Ukraine. Contrary to developments in other disciplines, however, psychologists also adopted measures to provide an autonomous space for gender (a gender “ghetto”) where it, together with psychology, might progress undisturbed toward creating a paradigm shift that serves those professional interests.

Hanna Chernenko’s succeeding chapter channels the discussion toward Ukraine’s persistent attraction for hegemonic patriarchy. Her research rests primarily upon reader’s comments found in a single, long-running journal known today as *Zhinka* (Woman). Although a seemingly overly

narrow primary source base for scholarship, this journal's extensive run and huge popularity render it a useful vehicle for gauging women's reactions to patriarchal influences and ideals over the course of nearly a century, and vicissitudes of frequent and dramatic political changes in contemporary Ukraine.<sup>66</sup> The concept of an egalitarian family as defined in the West began inserting itself in independent Ukraine only when it was no longer possible to ignore the influence of women's emancipation theories flowing in from abroad. This collision of cultural values reflected Soviet conditioning and the uneven pace of adaptation of Western theories to locally specific needs, forging yet another component of the emerging New Imaginaries paradigm.

The volume concludes with Tetyana Bureychak's concentration on men in crisis, a subject that was influenced by the kind of Western scholarship that had received serious academic attention for decades before beginning to engage Ukrainian scholarly discourse. The continuing institutionalized patriarchy that defines post-Soviet Ukrainian values does pay rich dividends in privileges for men, privileges they enjoy but that come at a price. These include social constructions of masculinity to which men are no longer able to respond adequately. Accordingly, they tend to induce a lifestyle or social behavior in men that can lead to death as the most serious of their consequences. The mass media play a critical, if negative, role by publicizing conflicting solutions to the men's dilemma. On the one hand they valorize an environment that reinforces traditional masculinity, and on the other the media encourage a modification in the social expectations of men by suggesting that certain obligations might be best met by women and the state. Nowhere is there a reference to men's accountability for their own weaknesses, or their impotence in shaping their own destiny.

Volodko and Gorodetska also address the potential consequences of men's inability to adapt to the post-Soviet alteration in their status. Male feebleness is traceable in part to the Soviet era when women gained in strength as a result of assuming by necessity that infamous Soviet-style double (even triple) burden. Meanwhile, men were progressively weakened as their responsibilities virtually contracted to public service alone. In addition to working full-time, women were charged with child rearing, tending to domestic duties, taking care of the elderly, and performing public service. At the same time, "backed by tough state regulations," men's obligations to their families were so diminished that they were pushed to the sidelines of private life. The disparity widened between an exaggerated publicly-created image of "macho" masculinity and men's inability to rise to its publicized level. In this way, "the totalitarian regime ... ushered in a spirit of servility ... among males, [especially] those more or less involved in the socio-political sphere."<sup>67</sup> A merger of Soviet-induced limitations on men's responsibilities, and Western scholarly attention to male issues as an

integral part of gender studies filtering into Ukraine, yielded an impressive set of building blocks for use in the construction of a new and different kind of paradigm for the study of gender relations.

This volume is equipped to serve a wide audience across the various branches of learning. It brings together studies from a range of disciplines, diversity of views, and methodologies, produced by a generation of post-totalitarian Ukrainian researchers who are recasting normative axioms in the context of their rapidly-changing world. Rather than imposing a Western model of scholarship generally requiring, by way of one example, an abstract that presents a thesis and proposed methodology, I have chosen to preserve the texture of Ukrainian scholarly conventions in writing patterns: organization, flow of argumentation, and presentation. In the interest of technical consistency, however, transliterations that did not conform to uniform Western conventions were reformatted. Accordingly, *yu, ya, ye* have been rendered as *iu, ia, ie*, for example, and the soft sign<sup>7</sup> in proper names has been eliminated. Exceptions to this last modification are the names of authors in the bibliography or notes section, where they appear as they did in the original publications, or as the authors themselves commonly render them.

The offerings in this collection portray a range of pre-2013 arenas of feminist engagement, conversation, and debate. They take us through the expected topics of women's representation in politics; the role of women's movements in achieving political agency; the effects of state gender policies; the kinds of models society supports for women's behavior, ways in which their images are used in commercial advertising; demographic changes produced by female behavioral patterns; and more, all offered from a pre-Euromaidan perspective. Any attempt to analyze the full impact of recent events in Ukraine on future developments would be premature.

Inasmuch as no overall theme was imposed on the authors, no reconciliation of divergent perspectives was considered necessary. In bringing together the individual views of each author for a discussion on contemporary Ukraine, the diverse strands of their scholarship were woven into an intriguing tapestry of its post-Soviet life. By scrutinizing the diverse aspects of that life through a gender prism the contributors have created a new and unique form of women's scholarship—the nuanced New Imaginaries paradigm exemplified in this volume.

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cluding Kharkiv University's Summer School in Foros, Crimea for senior scholars of women's and gender studies. Rubchak translated, annotated, and provided the introduction to volume 17 of Sergei Soloviev's *History of Western Russia*; her most recent publication is an edited collection, *Mapping Difference: The Many Faces of Women in Contemporary Ukraine*, for which she also provided an introduction. Her current research interests include identity construction in various contexts, gender studies, and the impact of historical memory on the formation of a feminist consciousness.

## Notes

1. The Revolution on Granite initiative was instrumental in mobilizing the youth to protest in the next, the Orange Revolution of 2004. Doniy's commitment also extended to the 2013 Euromaidan Revolution. Some of the "Orange" student activists, having gone on to become businesspeople in their turn, offered organizational skills and monetary assistance. The same was true of the Revolution on the Granite generation. In 2014 Oles Doniy was elected as a non-affiliated member of the Ukrainian parliament.
2. The young people were articulating a new formulation of rights discourses and strategies that embrace neoliberal self-regulation and Soviet-style governmental care.
3. Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak 1988.
4. The electoral process was in fact riddled with corruption, but the media, as well as some historians, simply kept mindlessly repeating the same "free and fair" election characterization that someone initially (for whatever reason) put out there.
5. The impetus and leadership provided by the youth—comprising largely university students—has been widely acknowledged.
6. Phillips 2014.
7. "Ukrainian pop star Ruslana honored with an International Women of Courage award!" *Voices of Ukraine*. 6 March 2014.
8. Documents recovered after Yanukovych and his bodyguards fled Ukraine point directly to the president ordering the attack that three of his bodyguards executed. A notebook belonging to the head of his bodyguards was retrieved after his hasty retreat in late February. It offers evidence of a planned attack and its price. See <http://stories.yanukovychleaks.org/notatki-osobystogo-oborontsya/>.
9. One woman holds a cabinet position: Minister of Social Policy Liudmyla Denisova.
10. Yuriy Butusov 2014.
11. Phillips 2014.
12. Radio Liberty was its source. Nataliya Trach. 2014. "Standing Guard: The men and women protecting Euromaidan" in which one of the protest leaders, Havryliuk, announced that women were welcome as participants but would not form an actual component of any self-defense unit. See also *News Global*. 15 February 2014.
13. See <http://euromaidanpr.wordpress.com/2014/02/05/a-female-squadron-forms-for-euromaidan>.

14. For a fuller account, see *Kyiv Post* 14 February 2014; and *Volyn Post* 14 February 2014. *Ukrainska Pravda: Zhyttia* 2 March 2014. And “The Untold Story of the Ukrainian Revolution.” 27 February 2014. All were posted on the Euromaidan listserv on 25 June 2014.
15. Female Squadron (*Zhinocha Sotnia*), 16th Squadron of “Maidan Self-Defence” (*Samooborony Maidanu*). Reference sent to author by a female activist on Maidan on 5 March 2014. On 15 May 2014 I received an email notification from *Fulbright Ukraine* that several women’s organizations in Ukraine, including *Zhinocha Sotnia* (organized during the January 2014 protests in Kyiv), in conjunction with a number of Fulbright programs were inaugurating a photo exhibition titled *Zhinky Maidanu* (Women of Maidan) documenting their selfless dedication to the cause of an open Western-oriented democratic society.
16. See also Trina R. Mamoon. 2012.
17. Phillips. 2014. It was reprinted online without pagination. Accessed on line on 15 August 2014.
18. “All efforts for the front: Everything for victory.” Internet post, 31 August 2014.
19. On 10 Nov 2014 Oksana Kis posted a notification of a video aired on Channel 1+1 about other women in active combat. See <http://tsn.ua/.../zhinkivyskovi-u-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni...>
20. Vira Aheieva, ed. 2002.
21. In 1992 Solomea Pavlychko launched her publishing house (*Osnovy*), dedicated to the production of important Western literature on feminism in translation. She headed it until her untimely passing on New Year’s Eve, 1999.
22. From personal conversations with female deputies following the 1995 parliamentary hearing that I witnessed.
23. Responses to this legislation are available in Halyna Fedkovych. 2005.
24. Shortly after this change in the curriculum, the program began to attract considerable opposition, however; although it continued to function it still faces an uphill struggle.
25. Akhil Gupta 1992. Cited in Rubchak. 1996.
26. In *News from Ukraine*. 1990, no. 5. During a personal conversation with her some years later she reiterated her conviction that the women’s only priority must be nation building.
27. Oksana Kis. 2013: 18–21.
28. Oksana Kis. 2012. Men’s Day is also observed in Ukraine, on 23 February, but unlike International Women’s Day it is not a national holiday.
29. During one of my numerous stays in Kyiv men were out on the streets on 8 March offering women small nosegays of mimosas attached to cards bearing the customary saccharine greetings.
30. Kis. 2011.
31. “Spring’s irritation.” 2015.
32. Materials received from Tetiana Isaieva, director of the Gender Museum, in 2013.
33. Events playing out on Euromaidan at the time of this writing between Westward-leaning forces in opposition to the Yanukovich regime and pro-Russian supporters to the east and south are signaling the danger of Ukraine’s return to its authoritarian past.

34. As late as 24 November 2013 Kyiv's bilingual newspaper *Den*' characterized this same force as: "Saber-toothed tigers ... roaming nearby."
35. Reported by *Radio Liberty*, Jeffrey Taylor. 2013.
36. In *Ukraine is Not a Brothel*, a film produced by Kitty Green, a 32-year-old male political scientist, Victor Sviatsky, hinted obliquely that he might have been the founder of FEMEN, a claim that FEMEN's leaders vehemently deny.
37. See Rubchak. 2013 on the Berghahn Books blog site, from which some of this text was excerpted. <http://www.berghahnbooks.com/history/>.
38. Herszenhorn. 2013.
39. It finds itself in serious difficulty in the West as well.
40. Rubchak 2012a. Also in Ukrainian in *Krytyka*. XIV: 4(174); and Rubchak. 2012b.
41. Announcement of the forthcoming book appeared online on 12 February 2014 on the *Myr* site. By this time FEMEN had begun referring to itself as *feminist* without being able to articulate what it means. Its leaders resorted to terms like *ultra-feminists* but offered no definitions.
42. "Stop Putin," *Euromaidan SOS*. 1:7 March 2014: 11.
43. Rachkevych 2012.
44. *Ibid*.
45. For a spirited debate on this turn of events, see dialogue in *Krytyka* between May-erchuk 2014b and Martsenyuk 2014. Cited in Phillips. 2014
46. An example of continued student involvement is the 27 February 2013 rally protesting hearings by the Parliamentary Committee on Education on new laws and regulations that, if passed, would have paralyzed institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and student mobility to a graduate study curriculum of choice. <http://youtu.be/edKACcsBFTY>.
47. Kis. 2012.
48. All such initiatives transpired before the tragic events of 2013–2014 on Kyiv's Euromaidan, and the subsequent incursions of Russian armed forces and Russian-supported separatists in eastern and southern Ukraine. The landscape—human and physical—has changed dramatically, and the outcome of this warfare is yet to be determined as of late 2014.
49. "A lie told often enough becomes truth," Lenin once pronounced in a statement paraphrased from William James (1842–1910), father of modern psychology, who declared earlier: "There's nothing so absurd that if you repeat it often enough, people will believe it." The anti-gender movement STOP Gender appears to be operating according to the same principle.
50. Olena Hankivsky (unpublished). "STOP Gender! The current situation and potential responses to the anti-gender movement in Ukraine," with the author's permission.
51. It is important to mention in this context that Ukraine already holds the distinction of a society with a serious breakdown of the traditional family structure.
52. Rubchak. 2011.
53. The Euromaidan uprising since mid-November 2013 has demonstrated how much of the Soviet past still lingers. The corrupt authorities and their oligarchic allies are resorting to coercion, brutal force by the Special Forces (*Berkut*), savage attacks by unidentified assailants, intimidation, and unconstitutional mandates

- that include Soviet-style “show trials” to keep themselves in power and consistently above the law.
54. This changed recently. A new bill on higher education has been introduced providing greater autonomy and scope for reforms within the inherited Soviet-era system controlled by a retrograde Ministry of Education.
  55. Anna Fournier. 2012.
  56. Partial exceptions to this include my *Mapping Difference. The Many Faces of Women in Contemporary Ukraine*, but it also includes chapters by Western researchers.
  57. The final chapter of Ukraine’s struggle for an open democratic society that played out for three months in 2013–2014 has yet to be written, but protesters scored a massive victory (at the cost of scores of lives) when parliament voted on 22 February to remove the Yanukovich regime and allow the formation of a provisional government. Elections to bring in a new slate of officers were held on 25 May 2014. They returned a male-dominated governing body.
  58. “Clothes that accentuated a woman’s figure were banned. . . . Ukrainian women wore no low necks, used padded shoulders, and were clad in long, loose skirts.” For a further explanation, see “Gender in the USSR.” 2012. 18 April: 3.
  59. Official figures place the entire process of women’s labor migration at 233,000. Unofficially this is estimated at closer to 1.8 million.
  60. This also reflects former Soviet attitudes toward any woman’s travel abroad to such “dens of iniquity” where women are said to work in the sex trade. Today it can determine a woman’s decision to remain in the host country.
  61. Olena Fedyuk. n.d.
  62. The author earned her PhD here. Her residence in the country provided ample opportunity for extensive research on the Ukrainian diaspora in Spain.
  63. Practicum is the practical application of previously studied course material (theory).
  64. Although this thesis is generally accepted, the emphasis on matriarchy that accompanies it remains a contentious issue, but it is a suitable subject for a separate study.
  65. Not surprisingly, of course, that authority has given way to serious opposition in today’s world.
  66. The journal was founded back in 1920 under the title *Communard*, then changed in 1929 to *Radianska Zhinka* (Soviet Woman), and finally it became simply *Zhinka* after Ukrainian independence was declared in 1991.
  67. Oleksandr Pahiria. 2012.

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