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## Ukraine's Revolution: Triumphant—and Wary

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Kiev — In Poland in 1989, there was the satisfaction of a long struggle against Soviet domination completed. In Serbia in 2000, the relief of an end to Slobodan Milosevic's wars and isolation. In Egypt in 2011, euphoria and chaos.

Every revolution has different mood music. What's Ukraine like now? Somber. Anxious. Wary. Tough days are ahead, but this is the attitude that Ukraine will need to make its revolution a success.

There's no euphoria here. The regime of Viktor Yanukovich crumbled in hours on Friday after three hard months of street protests, but the aftermath has been marked by funereal religious chants coming from Kiev's Independence Square, or the Maidan. Mounds of flowers and red candles, too many to count, mark the spots nearby where some 77 people were killed by snipers and riot police in last week's clashes. No one here expected such brute violence, and the experience has changed this place.

On television news, the images of crassly lavish Yanukovich presidential palaces are followed by reports from funerals for the "victims of the regime." Eulogizing one of them, an Orthodox priest wonders: "Why? So one 'Family' can hold on to power?" The Family is the Yanukovich clan, now on the run, like their leader.

Across Ukraine, statues of Lenin are falling. A few pro-Russian towns are holding out, but 22 years after the Soviet Union's collapse — an entire generation — there's a previously missing consensus about the disastrous toll from Moscow's domination over the past century. Millions of Ukrainians were killed in Stalin's man-made famine in 1932-33. The language and culture were decimated as well.

Vladimir Putin's television channels call this awakening "neo-fascism" and "ultranationalism" and a threat to Russians here. The Kremlin won't accept the fluidity and diversity of Ukrainian identity. A local channel last weekend started running short films of famous and random Ukrainians, speaking in Russian and Ukrainian about their

backgrounds. At the end, all hold hands while standing on a bridge and say in unison: “We are one country.”

Repeated assertions of the need for national unity come from anxiety over Russia’s intentions. The Maidan uprising stopped the Kremlin from steering Ukraine away from the European Union and into Mr. Putin’s Eurasian Union, otherwise known as the club of corrupt autocrats. His failure last week set in motion the contingency plan for Crimea, Ukraine’s sole majority-Russian region.

Crimea has been the dog that barely ever whimpered and never bit after the Soviet collapse. Aside from a large bastion of Russian Black Sea Fleet servicemen in the port of Sevastopol, the ethnic Russians in Crimea are mostly retirees and cranks — not exactly a rebel vanguard. The hardest-working and most organized ethnic group is the Crimean Tatars. On Wednesday, they held a large pro-Ukrainian

counterprotest in Simferopol, the regional capital. The Tatars were expelled from their homeland en masse by Stalin and returned only in the past two decades. Like the ethnic Ukrainians, they have reason to fear an assertion of Russian influence.

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*The protesters mourn their dead, worry about the Kremlin menace and mistrust their country’s putative new leaders.*

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Mr. Putin can make life difficult for Ukraine’s leaders just by raising the prospect of violence or a territorial carve-up. On Wednesday the Russian president ordered a test of “battle readiness” of 150,000 troops along Ukraine’s border. Mr. Putin can’t afford a democratic, pro-Western success story in a country that Russians consider so similar to their own.

But Kiev has a long way to go on that score. Ukrainians distrust, with good reason, the entire political class. Mr. Yanukovich wasn’t the only greedy or incompetent pol here. But the Maidan crowds can’t rule the country, and in the past five days, parliament has assumed that role. On Wednesday night, the names of those who would lead a proposed new transitional government were announced before thousands packed in at the Maidan. Some were booed, others were cheered.

Behind closed doors, the politicians are “trying to recreate the old system,” says Mustafa Naim, an Afghan-Ukrainian journalist, furious at the signs of deal-making by the same old faces. “You can see it in their eyes. We may need to go out on the Maidan again.” He says Ukraine needs to clean the whole political slate by scheduling a parliamentary elec-

tion to coincide with the planned presidential vote in late May.

Mr. Naim started all this in late November by calling a meeting on the Maidan to protest Mr. Yanukovych's decision to abandon an EU "association" pact. Now he hosts a show on a new television channel, Hromadske, created out of the Maidan movement and funded by donations. "I think it's very good that people don't believe the politicians," he says. "It means they won't allow them to disappoint us again."

Nine years ago, the Orange Revolution here overturned a fraudulent election result but failed to change Ukraine's political ways. The recent revolt pitted a grass-roots movement against a Kremlin desperate to save its favorite embezzler in Kiev. The Maidan won. Another hard battle has just begun, but I wouldn't bet against these determined people.

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*Mr. Kaminski is a member of the Journal's editorial board.*