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The Ukrainian Journal

Ukrainian revolution: The Power of the Powerless





Dear Readers,

we have prepared a special edition of the Ukrainian Journal in English, in which we describe events taking place from the end of November, 2013 until the beginning of 2015. During this period, the Ukraine has faced its most challenging obstacles since achieving its independence. The Ukraine has witnessed demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people, barricades, street fights, foreign occupation followed by the annexation of the Crimea, and an undeclared and unofficial war with Russia.

Three years of governance by Mr. Yanukovich, combined with small contributions from his predecessors, have left the state apparatus in ruins. However, the empty treasury has not been the biggest challenge.

Former President Yanukovich, after his escape to Russia, left not just an opulent private residence – Mezhyhiria, but also a desolate army and secret services infiltrated by Russian agents and collaborators. Internally destabilized, the Ukraine will not be an easy victim for Russia. The events that followed only proved the theory that the destabilization was not accidental.

However, the script written for the Ukraine encountered an unexpected factor which took the scriptwriters by surprise. This was the Ukrainian Political Nation, born during our 22 years of independence, in spite of adverse post-Soviet conditions.

Not even the Ukrainian political elite could imagine that Ukrainian citizens were willing to endure such sacrifices for a corrupt and unjust state, which was, and still is, the Ukraine. Additionally, Moscow fell victim to its own lies when it assumed the Russian-speaking population of the Ukraine would automatically be pro-Russian.

This is a story that began on the 21st of November, 2013 and has not yet come to an end.

The editors of the Ukrainian Journal

Ukrainian revolution:

The Power of the Powerless

Special issue of The Ukrainian Journal in English

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Catching-up Revolution

Shortly after the overthrow of Yanukovich a journalist from Prague called me and asked for my comments. She asked me, “In your opinion, is what happened in Kiev a putsch or a revolution?”

Photo Vlad Sodel



» After three months of being asked this question, I was frustrated and wanted to advise her to come to Kiev instead of following Russia Today, or at least to take a look at some of the Ukrainian press. However, I kept my temper and answered her question with another question.

"And what happened in Prague in 1989, was it a putsch or a revolution?"

She paused in surprise. This simple comparison of their legendary Velvet revolution, which is glorified by writers and film makers, to some shady fascist coup on the edge of Eurasia probably seemed like blasphemy to her.

"Of course it was a revolution!" she answered with genuine patriotic pride.

"And according to you, what is the difference?"

"Our revolution was peaceful," she said in the voice of a diligent schoolgirl. "It was a stand against communist dictatorship. In your case a democratically elected president was overthrown!"

"Hitler was also democratically elected. After the war your communist party was as well. So what?"

I didn't start explaining the difference between the current leader of the Kremlin and the one back then. Nor did I remind her of the tenfold difference between gas prices in 1989 and 2013. Or the fact, that at the time of the Velvet Revolution, the Soviet Union was bankrupt and fully dependent on Western loans. So, even if Gorbachev were Putin, he would hardly dare to use the hundreds of thousands of his little green men who were already settled in Eastern Europe.

"Freedom From" and "Freedom To"

All revolutions are similar in the sense that they are trying to cardinal change the social structure, revise current political, economic and legal relations, achieve goals that for some reason weren't previously achieved in the course of evolution (where insurmountable obstacles appeared), implement civilizing breakthroughs toward a different, higher quality as imagined by the most active and most enthusiastic segment of the population.

Every Eastern European revolution has been the reaction by the local society to three interdependent problems: 1) economic stagnation; which led to the considerable inability of communist systems to satisfy the material needs of its citizens; 2) the

political repression of the communist regimes and their unwillingness to provide optimal opportunities for self-realization to the most active, creative, ambitious, and entrepreneurial of their citizens; and 3) colonial or semi-colonial dependence of local regimes and societies at large upon the Moscow centre.

Either way, all these problems can be reduced to one which is common for all Eastern European countries: the need for modernization, that is, the implementation of systemic reforms in order to overcome their historical backwardness vis-a-vis freer, richer and more democratic Western states.

All the Eastern European revolutions were undoubtedly democratic but their liberal component was quite limited. They were carried out by odd coalitions of liberals, socialists, conservatives, anarchists, clerics, populists and nationalists, barely conceivable under any other circumstance. It was only logical that after the disappearance of a common enemy those coalitions had to disintegrate and to muse on the "freedom to", not only the "freedom from". Yet, as long as authoritarian pro-Moscow regimes were in power, the inner divisions within coalitions – between the left and the right, nationalists and cosmopolitans, radicals and conservatives – were of little importance.

In the Ukraine, we observed the very same – a broad coalition of political forces rose up against a criminal kleptocratic regime, which managed, within a few years, to usurp all power, embezzle enormous resources and put our national sovereignty – our last not fully embezzled resource – on sale. And, at the same time the regime was kidnapping, torturing and killing Euromaidan activists, while quite a few Western pundits kept on talking about the alleged ambiguity of Maidan where mythical fascists, nationalists and anti-Semites reportedly reigned supreme.

Even today quite a few Westerners ask me questions like: what influence do radical nationalists have on your armed forces? Is it true that the whole National Guard consists of the Right Sector? Or: why don't you let Russians speak their own language in the Ukraine?

I patiently explain that in the Ukraine the problem is not with the use of the Russian language but, rather, with Ukrainian which has been marginalized for centuries, much

like Gaelic in Ireland. I explain that Russia wages undeclared war on the Ukraine, that part of our state is being occupied by Russian mercenaries and that in such a situation I care as much about the political views of Ukrainian soldiers as for their artistic preferences or sexual orientation. Like everywhere else in the world, the members of our armed forces take an oath and fulfill their duties. They can express their political views by voting in Parliamentary and

Presidential elections, in which – by the way, the proverbial "ultranationalists" failed to pass even the 5% electoral threshold.

The third attempt

The Ukrainian revolution had a lot of issues and impetuses, but primarily it was a revolution of values. It was

Russian identity is based on a perverted belief that Ukrainians are not a separate nation, but only a regional subspecies of Russians. Ukrainians don't have much of a choice there: either they become part of the East Slavic/Russian super-ethnos, or they must resolutely disassociate themselves from Russia.

a revolt of the middle class, roughly an analogue to "bourgeoisie", against oligarchic quasi-feudalism. According to sociological research, almost two thirds of the protesters had higher education. Their average age was 37 years. They spoke both Ukrainian and Russian. They represented different regions and ethnic groups, even though ethnic Ukrainians and inhabitants of the western regions and the city of Kiev predictably predominated.

Maidan was another attempt to complete the Eastern European revolution of 1989 – the one that has cardinally changed the nature of Central and Eastern Europe and the

Baltic states, but in the Balkans and post-Soviet republics, got only halfway through. In the Balkans the outcome of the revolutions was partially improved with the help of the West. While in the post-Soviet states, they were hijacked by the post-communist nomenclature, which hand in hand with the criminal world has created a hybrid political system – the so called oligarchy. The year 1991 showed both the strength and the weakness of Ukrainian society, which was able to support national independence in referendum by an impressive 90% vote, but wasn't capable of radically breaking with its Soviet past nor of setting out on a Central European path of development.

Ukrainian society had to experience a whole decade of decline, disappointment and atomization before it initiated a new era of civil mobilization. Its catalyst was the "Kuchmagate" in 2000–2001 (a protest movement against the incumbent president Leonid Kuchma, implicated in the murder of an opposition journalist, G. Gongadze – translator's note) and the de-legitimization of the current power. The Orange Revolution in 2004 was the second attempt by Ukrainians to get rid of Soviet legacies and reorient the country towards "Europe" – to the rule of law, institutional efficiency, liberal democratic practices and procedures. But the Ukrainians failed again – partly because of their leader's incompetence and irresponsibility, who instead of realizing institutional reforms, wasted revolutionary energy on petty quarrels, and also in part because of their own civic immaturity and inexperience. Civil society proved to be well organized and strong enough to protect its own democratic choice, but not strong or persistent enough to force their new leaders to work on a new basis.

The third attempt which started out peacefully as Euromaidan, suddenly became violent. Therefore, it was more likely to be associated with the Romanian Revolution against Ceaușescu than with the velvet revolutions in Germany, Czechoslovakia or even Kiev back in 2004. The regime's fall and the formation of a provisional government were rather the beginning than the end of a long and painful process of social transformation – an actual restart of the whole system. The country has entered this new era with embezzled state finances, astronomical debts,

a devastated economy and hopelessly corrupted institutions, which have degraded the judiciary and security authorities in particular.

Instead of dealing with those issues, the new government had to embark on something else – it had to resist Russian aggression in the Crimea and Donbas, to curb violent provocations in other regions, and adequately react to raging propagandistic, diplomatic and economic pressure from a much stronger and better prepared neighbour. Since its independence the Ukraine has never been in such a desperate situation. But it has also never had so many people determined to actively protect their European choice.

The civilization choice

At this time, it is rather difficult to make any short-term prognosis, but the long-term tendency seems apparent. The Ukraine's reorientation towards the West is inevitable for many reasons. One of them is geopolitical or may we even say, existential. The Ukraine as an independent entity, a political nation would have no *raison d'être*, no sense or prospect as a part of Russia or any Russia-led "union". Russian identity is based on a perverted belief that Ukrainians are not a separate nation, but only a regional subspecies of Russians, some provincial cousin, who is basically harmless, but quite dull, and therefore the older brother is obliged to constantly oversee him and give him the occasional brotherly punch. Ukrainians don't have much of a choice there: either they become part of the East Slavic/Russian super-ethnos (and confirm this Russian self-fulfilling prophecy), or they must resolutely disassociate themselves from Russia.

The other reason is civilizational, closely correlated with the desperate need for modernization – something absolutely impossible under the rule of backward, authoritarian and corrupt Russia, but quite possible within the EU – as the experience of the Ukraine's Western post-communist neighbours graphically confirms. A worldwide survey of value orientations (World Value Survey), which is performed regularly in many countries, shows a noticeable transition from survival to self-expression values within the last decade. This transition is particularly observable amongst people with higher education. On one side it reflects the

weakening of paternalistic features of Homo Sovieticus, who is oriented toward preserving the status quo, that is, a "bad peace" as the only alternative to a "good war" (whereas the option of a "good peace" is totally beyond this false binary scheme), and rejects therefore, any change since it could be, in his opinion, only for the worse. On the other side this transition reflects the growth of the middle (creative) class, which is positive about social change and tries to influence or even initiate it.

And finally there is a demographic factor, which makes the Ukraine's re-orientation towards the West rather inevitable. All the sociological surveys show a very strong correlation between the age of respondents and their pro-Western orientation. Statistically speaking, the younger the people,

A European, modernized Ukraine can turn into a deadly strike for Putinism as a specific form of authoritarian ideology and for Russian imperial identity, as a specific complex of pre-modern values and orientations.

the more pro-Western they are. With differing intensity, this correlation is observable in all Ukrainian regions, and among all ethnic and linguistic groups. If we understand the Ukrainian revolution as value-based and value-driven, we would see that the basic divide in the country is not between the proverbial East and West, Russians and Ukrainians or even between Russian and Ukrainian speakers. The basic divide is ideological, in particular value-related, since any ideology has an indisputable value dimension. In this regard, we observe a deeper and deeper schism – between the Ukraine with a Soviet and an anti-Soviet world view, between the Eurasian Ukraine and the European one, between the Ukraine of paternalistic subjects and the Ukraine of self-confident citizens. In this regard, all other dividing lines are

obviously subsidiary. They statistically correlate with the main divide but do not determine it.

The challenge and the opportunity

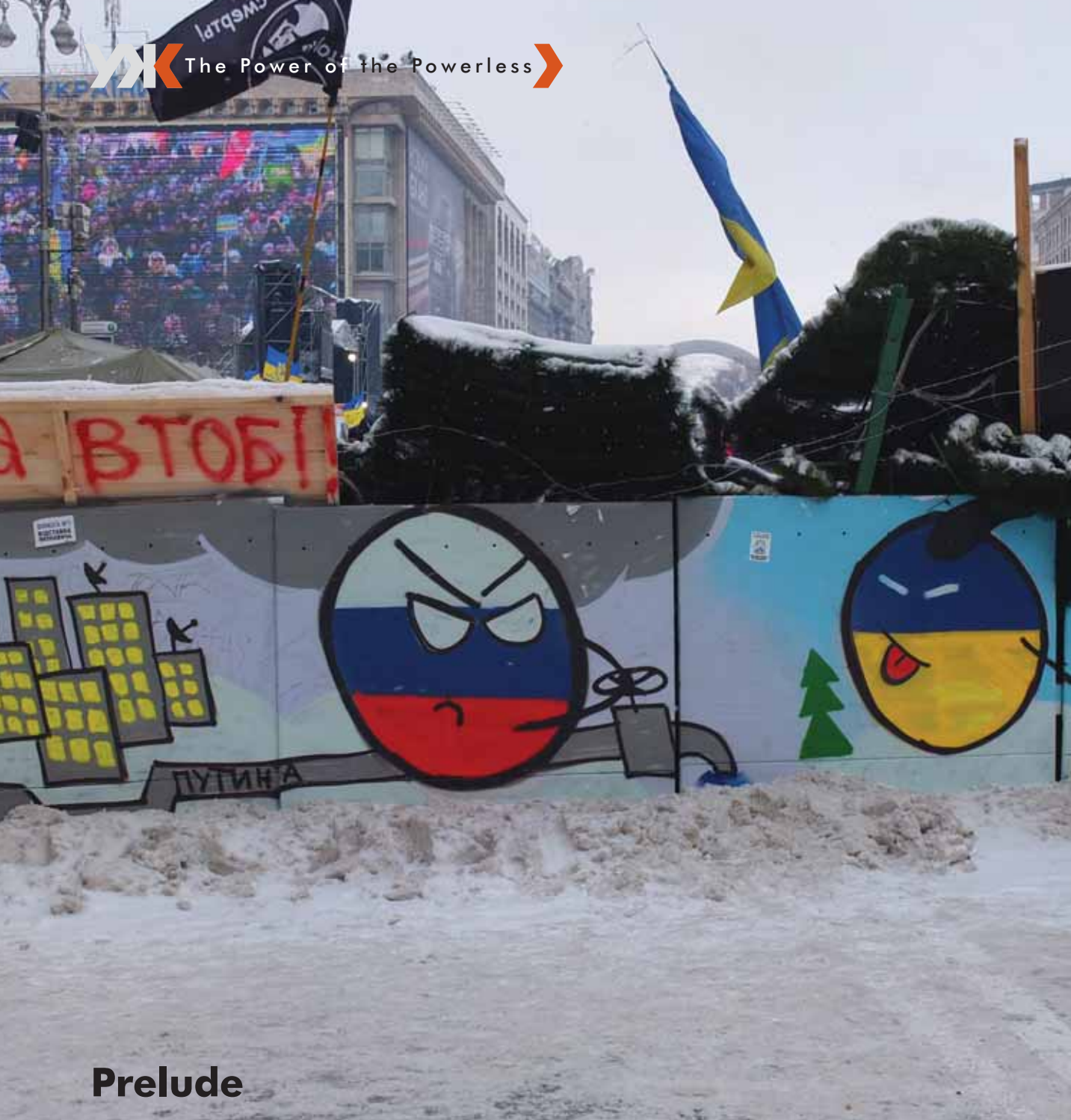
The Russian invasion, despite its ugly and even mortal aspects, also became a catalyst for the ongoing consolidation of Ukrainian civic identity. It forced a huge mass of politically ambivalent, mainly Russian-speaking inhabitants to make a difficult choice between civic loyalty to the Ukraine and residual cultural belonging to the post-Soviet/mythical Slavic world appropriated and largely epitomized by Russia. Most of them have chosen the Ukraine. That comes as a big surprise for Putin and his ideologists, who were convinced – fully in line with archaic 19th-century theories, that a nation is determined by a common blood and language, rather than by civil rights and duties.

As irrational as Russian aggression is, it absolutely corresponds with the inner logic of Putinism and the Kremlin's international politics of the last decade. A European, modernized Ukraine can turn into a deadly strike for Putinism as a specific form of authoritarian ideology and for Russian imperial identity, as a specific complex of pre-modern values and orientations. One may compare the Ukraine to a folkloric egg, in which the dragon's immortality is hidden.

Maybe even the immortality of Europe is hidden there – even though it is not so evident for the heavily "Schröderized" Western- European politicians.

Russia will probably keep on doing everything possible to keep the Ukraine in a state somewhere between war and peace, to make it difficult or even impossible, to complete economic reforms and attract international investments. The Ukraine should fail because only a failed Ukraine gives the Kremlin the opportunity for revenge. This is a great challenge for the Ukrainian elite and population at large. But this is also a strong impulse for radical reforms, national consolidation and civic maturity. As a German philosopher put it, everything that does not kill us makes us stronger.





Prelude

➤ In early September 2013, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich proclaimed that there was no other alternative for the Ukraine but integration with the European Union. The Ukrainian government had approved a proposal to ratify the Association Agreement with the EU and preparatory teams began working at full speed.

According to Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, on November 5, 2013 the Ukraine concluded most of the procedures required for signing the Association agreement with the EU. "We understand that we will have to face many difficult moments on this journey. We are not merely liberalizing trade with the EU, but also

committing ourselves to reforms in technical regulations and standards, for which we will need 160 million euros". However, on November 11th, Russia introduced new customs rules for the Ukraine and two days later, Mykola Azarov announced that the settlement of trade cooperation with Russia was the Ukraine's number one priority, adding that the Ukraine had been offered no compensation for the loss of the Russian market.

On the 21st of November, the Ukrainian government therefore decided to suspend negotiations with the EU. The Ukrainian Prime Minister proposed the formation of a commission to include representatives of the EU, the

Ukraine and Russia to further discuss issues of concern. The same day, Ukrainian President Yanukovich, on a visit to Vienna, reassured Europe and Ukrainian citizens that the Ukraine would not divert from the path toward European integration.

At that time, it was already public knowledge that Mr. Yanukovich had, within a short period of time, attended several meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin. What was agreed on during those meeting remains a mystery. There was still a small chance that Mr. Yanukovich was bluffing and that he was still trying to negotiate the best possible conditions for the Ukraine.



Photo
Piotr Andrusieczko

The Beginnings of Euromaidan

➤ On the 21st of November, a well-known Ukrainian freelance reporter, Mustafa Nayem, urges his friends via Facebook to express discontent with the decision of the Ukrainian government to suspend the signing of the Association agreement with the EU. Several hundred people gather in the center of Kiev – on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square). Similar events are also take place in other cities in the Ukraine. The government deploys special police force, Berkut, on the streets of Kiev. On the 23rd of November, the Berkut units start to remove people from Maidan in order to install “The Main Ukrainian National Christmas Tree”. At night, the lighting in the European Square is turned off and the Berkut attempt to force the protesters out. In the northern Ukrainian city of Chernigiv, they succeed. As well as in Mykolayiv and Odessa, in the Southern Ukraine. In Kharkiv, demonstrations are banned

because of the threat of “flu infection”. But the next day, the 24th of November, about 100 thousand Ukrainians attend a demonstration in support of a European Ukraine. It becomes the largest demonstration since the 2004 Orange Revolution demonstrations. Euromaidan, as it is later called, adopts a resolution on that same day. If the Association agreement is not signed in Vilnius, the demonstrators will demand the resignation of Mr. Yanukovych and his government. The Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov announces that he does not consider Maidan a threat, and that he will not allow another Orange Revolution. Until the end of the summit in Vilnius, the organizers of demonstrations deny any party affiliation and the President declares his support for the demonstrators before departing for the summit. By November 27th, demonstrations will have taken place in at least 24 cities throughout the Ukraine.

Photo Ivo Dokoupil





The Vilnius Summit

➤ On November 28th and 29th in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, the long-awaited summit of the Eastern Partnership is held. The Ukraine signs an agreement with the EU concerning

common airspace. Ukrainian First Deputy Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov declares that the Ukraine remains faithful to the euro-integration plans. Until the last moment he reassures politicians

and journalists that the Association agreement will be signed. It does not happen. The Ukrainian delegation leaves Vilnius without Mr. Yanukovich having signed the agreement.



Photo Vladyslav Musiienko

Violence because of the Christmas Tree

➤ On November 30th at about four o'clock in the morning, Berkut special units brutally attack youths, mostly students, in the Maidan area of Kiev. The justification given is again "the installation of the National Christmas tree". The crowd relocates to nearby Michael Square.

According to an independent web server, Ukrayinska Pravda, the event had been planned a week in advance and directed by National Security Council Secretary Andriy Kluyev. He and his deputy, Volodymyr Sivkovych are supposed to have relocated Berkut units to Kiev, in order to carry out the dirty work. Meanwhile, the President enjoys a night-time hunt and neither he nor his office chief, Serhiy Lovochkin are available during this time. He is first to hear about the night's events from the American ambassador the following morning when an explanation is requested.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko





Photo Ivo Dokoupil

Maidan Self-defense (Samooborona Maidanu)

On November 30th, after the brutal attack by Berkut units on the inhabitants of Michael Square – where the protesters have been relocated, the first spontaneously constituted sections of Maidan Self-defense are organized: the Euromaidan “peace armies” consisting of several thousand people who have volunteered to defend the rights of citizens to peaceful protest. Andriy Parubiy, Member of Parliament (Batkivshchyna Party) already the Commander of the Euromaidan, becomes Maidan Self-defense Commander.

The composition of the Self-defense units is very varied and ranges from managers and IT specialists to representatives of right-wing groups.

The main task is to defend the outer perimeter of Euromaidan. Alternating shifts are organized on the barricades, tired and frozen squads are relieved by fresh ones. Patrolling units are also assisted by “rapid response forces” formed of former professional soldiers. Tiny squads are doing daily rounds on all Euromaidan barricades and, if necessary, summon reinforcement units by radio.

The synergy between the “front lines” and the “backup” is organized in an optimum way. According to the approved plan, in the case of a breach

of the defense line at any of the barricades, only “reserve forces” will be deployed for assistance, the rest of the Self-defense, without panic or haste, will continue to hold the perimeter. In the event that it fails, all organized Self-defense will retreat to the second line of defense, marked by the House of Trade Unions, the main stage and the Main Post Office building. The efficiency of this scheme is confirmed on the night of December 11th when protesters push back the offensive of the much bigger and better armed Berkut units and maintain control over key locations of resistance. Maidan administers its own “Intelligence Service”. Outside the Maidan areas, several dozen “agents” infiltrate central metro stations and the government district, and try to gather the maximum available information on the plans and movements of police units. The Maidan “Intelligence Service” does not trust mobile communication and any information on the intentions of enemy forces is usually passed through word of mouth.

Self-defense is also organized in other Ukrainian cities. After the adoption of the law for the creation of the National Guard in March 2014, many volunteers from the Maidan Self-defense transfer to the Ukrainian National Guard.



Automaidan

➤ A mobile section of the Euromaidan spontaneously rises after students are beaten on November 30th. Members of the initiative organize street patrols, as well as help to accompany and evacuate activists, block off administrative buildings and organize a protest car-convoy to the family residences of President Viktor Yanukovich, and Viktor Pshonka, the Prosecutor General as well as those of other government representatives.

In December 2013, centers for the movement are established in a number of Ukrainian cities, especially in

Kiev, Donetsk, Lutsk, Lviv, Odessa, Uzhgorod, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytsky, Cherkasy.

The effectiveness of the Automaidan actions force Mr. Yanukovich's regime to resort to harsh, and sometimes grotesque, repressions. One repressive law dating from January 16th, 2014 bars motorists from traveling in convoys of more than five vehicles. In response to the ban, stickers with the inscription: "Do not drive behind me, I am the fifth!" start appearing on the rear bumpers and the rear windows of cars.

On January 19th, 2014 one of the active members of Automaidan, Serhiy Koba, calls on people to protest against the "laws of January 16th" on Hrushevskoho Street by peacefully picketing parliamentary buildings until the dictatorship laws are annulled. This event triggers a conflict on the barricades, whose attributes have become symbols of the revolution – burning fires, Molotov cocktails, gas masks and rhythmic strokes on iron barrels. It is during the riots on Hrushevskoho Street that the first activists die.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko



Provocation Near the Presidential Administration Buildings

On the 1st of December several hundred thousand people gather in Maidan to voice their protest against the violence of the Berkut units. Protesters besiege some of the key administration buildings in the center of Kiev. In the meantime, a group of masked protesters on Bankova Street near the Presidential Administration building, attack Berkut units with chains, bomb bottles and tear gas, while other factions of protesters attempt to defer the fences with a stolen front loader. Amateur photos taken on that evening and published on the internet, show how the wall of policemen spread out and aggressive youth walk easily toward one of the administration squares. This intentional and planned move culminates in violent attacks on the protesters. The Berkut units violently beat everyone in that

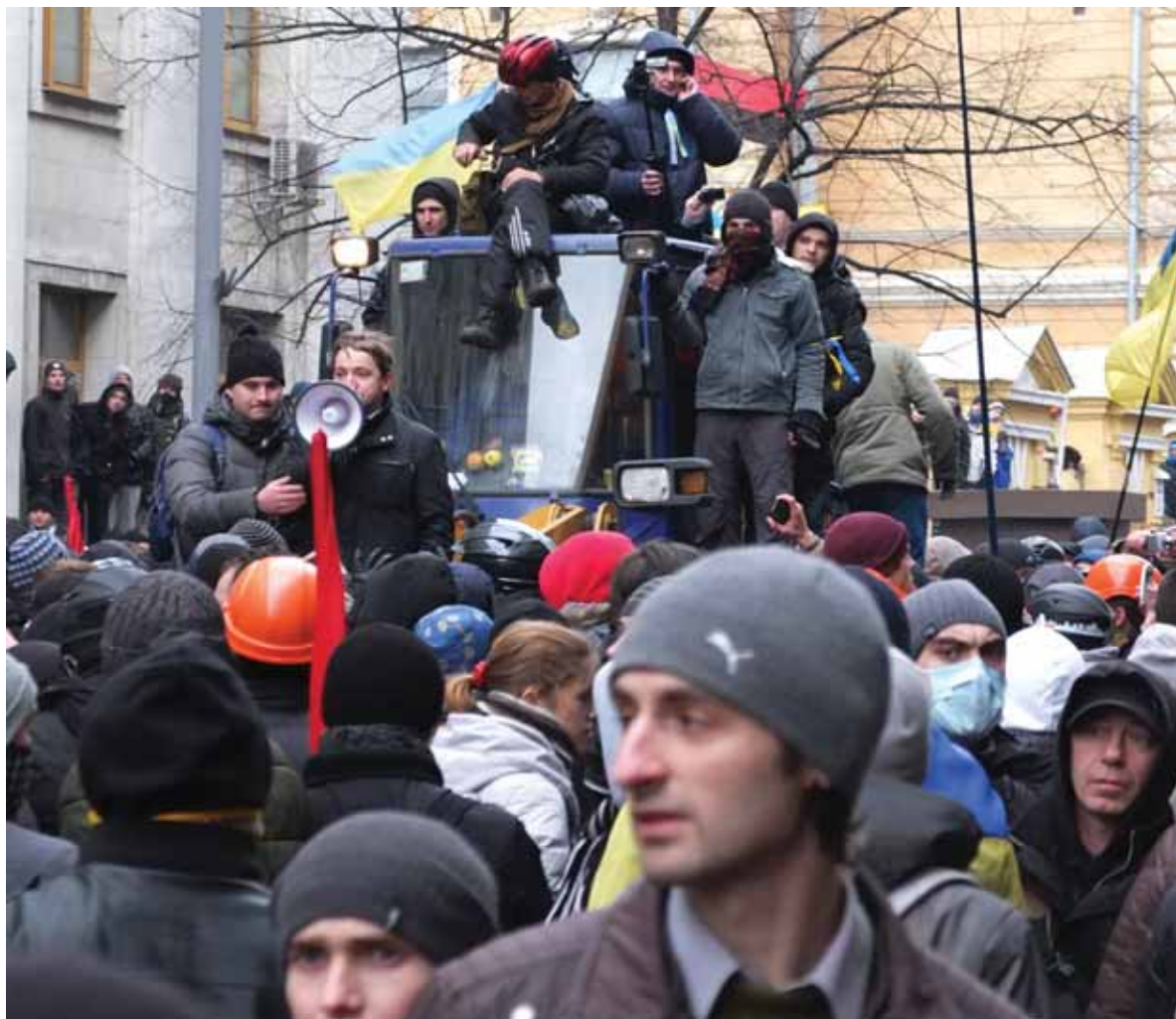
area – including journalists, arrested protesters and passers-by. Nine severely injured protesters are arrested.

That same day Head of Presidential Administration Serhiy Levochkin resigns. The reasons for his resignation are not disclosed, however, it is speculated that disapproval of the previous night's events and failure to sign the agreement at the Eastern Partnership Summit are the main reasons for his resignation. Also that same day, Inna Bohoslovka resigns from both the pro-presidential Regions Party and the Parliamentary Club, together with fellow member David Zhvania.

Other Regions Party members condemn the actions of the police. Demands for investigations into events from the night of December 30th, the resignation of the Minister of Interior

and new elections (parliamentary and presidential) are being voiced. Many of the Yanukovych's former partisans are seen engaging in anti-government demonstrations. But when the opposition pushes for a vote of no confidence for the Government, the Government and Regions Party resist it. Later, it becomes public that the president did not accept the resignation of Serhiy Levochkin. And even though Mr. Yanukovych expresses his deep concern by the police violence against the protesters, he does nothing to prosecute the culprits. On December 3rd, protesters block all access roads to the Presidential Administration and demand the government's resignation. Yanukovych remains silent and on the 6th of December, he departs for Sochi (Russia), where he meets once again with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko



Leninopad – The Fall of A Communist Idol

➤ On the 8th of December, several hundred thousand people again take to the streets of Kiev. The “main” monument to Vladimir Lenin is torn down in the center of Kiev. Until a few days ago it had been protected by the Berkut units. Members of the right-wing party Svoboda claim responsibility. It marks the beginning of a period called “Leninopad” (Falling of Lenin). During 2014, more than 500 memorials to Lenin are destroyed in all Ukrainian regions.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko



Berkut attacks again

➤ On the 11th of December, Berkut units attack Euromaidan and manage to break through several of the barricades with around a thousand people on the square at the time. At two o'clock in the morning the bells of St. Michael's Cathedral start to ring, as in times of major disaster. Citizens of Kiev begin to gather in the city center. At four in the morning there are already more protesters than members of the Berkut. Riot police initially recede, but at nine o'clock in the morning attacks start again as the police attempt to regain the besieged Kiev City Administration Building. Protesters pour water from the windows on the riot police, which freezes instantly. Consequently, the riot police withdraw and leave. Events in Kiev are closely followed by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, who calls for

dialogue and additionally reassures Ukrainian government representatives that the EU will not interfere in the conflict. Mr. Yanukovich promises her that he will resolve the situation; however he refuses to withdraw Mykola Azarov's government. Kiev Mayor Oleksandr Popov and Police Chief Valery Kuryak will assume responsibility for the crackdown on Maidan on November 30th. According to Ukrainian Prosecutor General Ukraine Viktor Pshonka they give the order to attack the students. Oleksandr Popov, however, when interrogated at the prosecutor's office states that the order to disperse demonstrations had been given by Ukrainian Security Council Secretary Andriy Kluyev. On December 15th, several hundred thousand people once again gather on Maidan.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Trade Agreement or Charity?

➤ On December 17th, Russia and the Ukraine sign an action plan to regulate trade restrictions in bilateral trade relations for the year 2013-2014. Russia agrees to buy Ukrainian eurobonds worth \$15 million and lower the price of natural gas from \$400 to \$260 per

1,000 cubic meters under the condition that the Ukraine will increase their consumption of Russian gas. This price is only valid for one quarter. Both country's presidents agree on cooperation in ship and aircraft production and on the removal of custom restrictions on certain

imports. According to former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma private close agreements between Yanukovich and Putin must exist. "Mr. Putin was never interested in charity work and he most certainly won't be in the future," said Kuchma.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Attacks on Activists

➤ On Christmas Eve opposition journalist Tetyana Chornovol is found severely beaten. She has devoted the last three years of her professional and private life to a “war with one man” – Viktor Yanukovych. That evening Tetyana decided not to stay at her friends’ house as she had done during the past month, working on protest activities but had instead decided to go home to the village of Hora near Kiev, to spend the day with her two small children. While driving her car she notices she is being followed by a black jeep. Tetyana decides not to go to her house, but to return to Maidan. The black Porsche attempts to stop her on several occasions. Twice she manages to pull away, but the third time not. A recording from a camera in the car published on Christmas Day on social networks ends at the moment when two athletic-looking

young men jump out of the black jeep. “When I realized that it made no sense to stay in the car any longer, I got out and began to run. Someone hit me in the head from behind. I only remember how they were beating me in the head”, she said in an interview with TV Channel 5. About an hour later a security guard in a nearby gas station reports a battered car with its lights on stopped on the road to Boryspil Airport. That is how a beaten and disoriented Tetyana Chornovol is found.

The same night another Euromaidan activist – Dmytro Pylypets is attacked and taken in critical condition to the hospital in Kharkiv after having received 12 stab wounds. Other activists have had their cars or doors to their apartments burnt. Detentions and arrests have begun.

Tetyana Chornovol has been a poli-

tical activist for many years. Already in 2001, she joined the protest movement “A Ukraine without Kuchma” and she ran in the 2012 Parliamentary elections. She was involved in the Euromaidan movement. On the day of her assault, Tetyana had published an article about the home of Ukrainian Minister of Interior Vitaliy Zakharchenko with the headline: “This is where a butcher lives!” The article suggests that Vitaliy Zakharchenko is responsible for the bloody crackdown on the students at Maidan. She has also been working on an article about the Prosecutor General Viktor Pshonka. Both politicians belonged to Viktor Yanukovych’s inner circle. However, her main investigations revolve around Viktor Yanukovych personally and his property. It is Tetyana who first draws attention to the plush private residence of Mr. Yanukovitch Mezhyhirya.

Dictatorships Laws

On the 16th of January, the Ukrainian Parliament adopts, without prior consideration and in gross violation of the Rules of Procedure, a package of laws, which later become known as the Dictatorship Laws. The electronic vote counting system is disconnected and members of Parliament vote by a raising of hands. Some of the MP’s later deny voting in favor of the law, even though their names appear on the list of those in favor. According to Ukrainian constitutional lawyers these laws violate twelve points of the Ukrainian Constitution. President

Yanukovich signs them into law the very same week.

The package of laws adopted on January 16th significantly limits civil liberties and there are to be further legislative steps to enhance and sustain the Ukrainian president in office. The laws are designed in the knowledge that force will be required in order to disperse the unrest. It is aimed at intimidating Ukrainians and at providing the Ukrainian police, the prosecution and courts sufficient means to pacify the enemies of the president. The protesters do not take long to react.

Photo Vlad Sodel





January 19th to 22nd, and the First Victims of the Revolution

➤ The next Sunday, the 19th of January during the so-called People Viche (Assembly) on Maidan part of the protesters decide to descend upon the Ukrainian Parliament and call for the abolition of the Dictatorship Laws. They are stopped by Berkut units. Peaceful demonstrations gradually escalate into violent clashes. Opposition leaders demand an immediate solution to an out-of-control situation from Mr Yanukovych. Three days of severe clashes result in five dead, hundreds injured and dozens of detainees. On the 22nd of January, Serhiy Nigoyan, a twenty year old Armenian from Dnipropetrovsk and a young Belarusian named Mykhailo Zhyznecky, are shot dead. Yanukovych's

tactics involve torture and kidnapping. The police hold protesters under arrest for hours or even days without letting them contact family or lawyers. People are disappearing from the streets and from hospitals. On the 21st of January, Ihor Lutsenko and Yuri Verbytsky are kidnapped from hospital. The body of 50 year old academic and seismologist from Lviv, Yuri Verbytsky is later found with signs of torture in the forest near Kiev. A field hospital is built on Maidan and doctors offer home visits in order to prevent the possible abduction of wounded protesters from hospitals. Barricades in central Kiev start to grow and rise.

Photo Ivo Dokoupil

The Beginning of Negotiations

On the 28th of January, after the situation in the streets has escalated, Yanukovich finally begins negotiations with the opposition. Yanukovich's two month silence and waiting have managed to fully discredit and weaken opposition leaders, who are forced to face constant accusations of political extremism and irresponsibility and who fail to provide protesters with

a single victory. Radicalization of the situation in the streets corners Yanukovich into certain concessions. Prime Minister Mykola Azarov offers his resignation. The Ukrainian Parliament vote to abolish 9 of the 12 restrictive laws, by 361 of 450 votes. However, simultaneous to these "concessions" Berkut special police units continue the brutal crackdown on protesters in the

south and east of the Ukraine, arresting activists in these regions. The Ukrainian government makes the decision to increase the number of Berkut and Gryphon units and to purchase new weapons and ammunition for them.

The call for the destruction of any property belonging to representatives of Yanukovich's regime and "even their disposal" spreads on social networks.



Photo Vlad Sodel

Amnesty Law

On the 29th of January, the Ukrainian Parliament, under pressure from Viktor Yanukovich, adopts a bill on amnesty for protesters, according to which the "regime's prisoners" will be released on the condition that the protesters vacate buildings they have occupied in Kiev.

The law, however, is drafted in such a way that the amnesty also extends to members of the Berkut units, civil servants and politicians responsible for the brutal crackdown on protests. On February 2nd, the Prosecution concludes the investigation into police action against demonstrating students

taking place on November 30th. On the 15th of February, Maidan activists partially dismantle the barricades in Hrushevskoho Street and release the Kiev City Administration Building. Ukrainian Prosecutor General Viktor Pshonka promises the release of 268 detainees within a month.



Photo Vladyslav Musiienko

The Right Sector

➤ The world first hears of the Right sector on January 19th, when the unofficial union of the most radical Ukrainian rightist parties claims responsibility for violent attacks. They occur during a demonstration against the adoption of restrictive laws on January 16th. It remains unclear if the youths with Molotov cocktails really belong to this union. These claims of accountability notwithstanding, the Right sector enters the media limelight and gains the trust of Ukrainian protesters. The Right sector become, to a certain degree, undeservedly the symbol of Euromaidan, despite the fact that it forms only a small part of it. Its members form just one unit from more than thirty companies of the Maidan Self-defense. Russian media significantly help to promote the Right sector, as their masked gunmen constitute the perfect example of the “Bandera’s opposition” that “overthrew the legitimate Ukrainian

President and took power by force in Kiev”.

Dmytro Yarosh, the quiet, moderate leader of the Right sector becomes overnight, one of the most popular representatives of the Ukrainian opposition. It is an opposition that is against the regime, which doesn’t not shake hands with tyrants and which does not believe in complex negotiations or compromises.

This image, however, begins to dissipate when, after the Ukrainian President flees the country, it becomes known that on February 20th, when people are dying in the streets of Kiev, Dmytro Yarosh met with Mr. Yanukovych. Yarosh reflects on the content of a meeting, which lasts more than an hour, in a few sentences.

The Right Sector’s actions quickly began to discredit the Ukrainian revolution and hence the new Ukrainian government. In addition to the arbitrary appropriation of fleeing

politicians’ property, the best example constituted footage shown all around the world in which one of the regional leaders of the Right sector Oleksandr Muzychko alias “Sashko Bily” threatens a prosecutor with an arm. Kremlin propaganda had evidence of “Banderism” among the protesters in the Ukraine and many Ukrainians were under the impression that they were provocateurs from Russia.

After the war starts up in the Eastern Ukraine, the Right Sector moves there. Eventually the Right Sector manages to get rid of the most militant cells, such as the Patriot of the Ukraine, which, according to an expert on far-right radical movements in Europe, Anton Shekhovtsov, is providing the shield; protection against other criminal gangs and state authorities. In the autumn parliamentary elections in 2014, two members of the Right sector, Dmytro Yarosh and Boryslav Bereza are voted into the Ukrainian parliament.



The Beginning of the War in the City

On the 18th of February, Maidan Self-defense units advance on the Ukrainian Parliament. The opposition demand the restoration of the Ukrainian Constitution to its 2004 form, which will significantly reduce the power of the President. They are stopped by the police. After protesters try to force their way through the police cordon in Hrushevskoho Street, the police use rubber bullets, tear gas, flash grenades and water cannons

on them. The protesters answer with Molotov cocktails, cobblestones and burning tires. Insurgents again besiege the Kiev City Administration Building. Armored personnel carriers are seen on the streets and the roofs of the buildings are occupied by police special forces. TV Channel 5 is disconnected and the subway lines stopped. Traffic police totally block off the city center. The Trade Unions Building, the Euromaidan

headquarters, alongside the hospital are burned down. Barricades rise again on the streets. Leaders of the opposition meet with Yanukovich for negotiations. At two o'clock in the morning opposition leaders announce they have not reached an agreement with Yanukovitch. In the early morning hours, several buses from Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions arrive with protesters. Violent clashes result in twenty dead and hundreds injured.



Launch of anti-terrorist operations

➤ On the 19th of February, the Minister of Interior affairs, Vitaliy Zakharchenko, declares he does not feel responsible for the deaths of people and the Security Service of the Ukraine launches an investigation into the attempted coup and starts the so-called “anti-terrorism operation”. In the meantime, trucks begin to evacuate the treasures from the private estate of the Ukrainian President, Mezhyhiria. In the evening, Yanukovich dismisses

general Volodymyr Zamana from the position of Chief of General Staff, replacing him with the more loyal Yuriy Ilyin. Up-risings spread throughout cities across the Ukraine. Protesters besiege state institutions, police stations, the prosecutor’s offices and Security Service buildings. In Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia tens of thousands of people march into the streets. Yanukovich and the opposition agree to a truce.

Photo Vlad Sodel



Photo Vladyslav Musiienko

Black Thursday

On the 20th of February, the protesters unexpectedly counter-attack and push Berkut units behind the outer perimeter of Maidan. Police use weapons against protesters. The highest number of people will die this day. As a result of the situation, the

head of the Kiev City Administration, Volodymyr Makeyenko, announces his withdrawal from the Regions Party and gives orders to resume the operation of subway lines. Maidan is crowded with people again. Some members of the Regions Party

leave the Ukraine. During the day, the parliament decides to stop the "anti-terrorism operation". From February 18th to 21st, 117 people die in the streets of Kiev and more than a thousand are injured.



Photo Vladyslav Musiienko

The necessary but useless compromise

➤ February 21st, is the night the largest number of Lenin monuments is torn down ever in the history of the Ukraine. Deputy Chief of General Staff, Yuri Dumansky, resigns. He later confirms that Mr. Yanukovych had planned to use the army against the protesters. More buses with protesters arrive to Kiev from the western regions of the Ukraine. In the presence of foreign ministers from Poland, Germany, France as well as representatives from Russia, Mr. Yanukovych commits to the opposition to signing the law on constitutional change. This means the restoration of the Constitution of the Ukraine to its previous 2004 form, which would transfer a large part of his power to the Ukrainian Parliament. In return, the opposition agrees to allow Yanukovych to stay in office for another year – until December 2014. Following the agreement between the opposition leaders and Yanukovych, described to the Ukrainians as a necessary compromise, chief editor of the weekly *Dzerkalo tyzhnya*, Yulia Mostova, writes in one of her articles: “Maidan will not forgive the government for the deaths. Voters won’t forgive opposition leaders their

weakness. Half a ton of blood shed just to get teenagers to play around with the parliamentary powers of the 2004 Constitution, and Yanukovych has time to lick his wounds ... Maidan – it is a rebellion of the people against the state apparatus, which does not perform its duties: where the president does not reform, but increases his property; where the police do not protect, but blackmail; where the courts do not seek the truth but sell their judgments; where the prosecutor’s office does not investigate, but dooms. The people decided to get rid of scabies, and they offer them redistribution of competences between parasites and the chance to bathe in December?”

The people in Maidan condemn the opposition leaders for signing this agreement and call for Yanukovych’s immediate resignation. That same night Yanukovych left Kiev.

The Parliament restores the 2004 Constitution and dismisses Minister of the Interior, Vitaliy Zakharchenko. Maidan self-defense units take control of the Parliament, the Government building, the Presidential Administration offices and other government buildings.

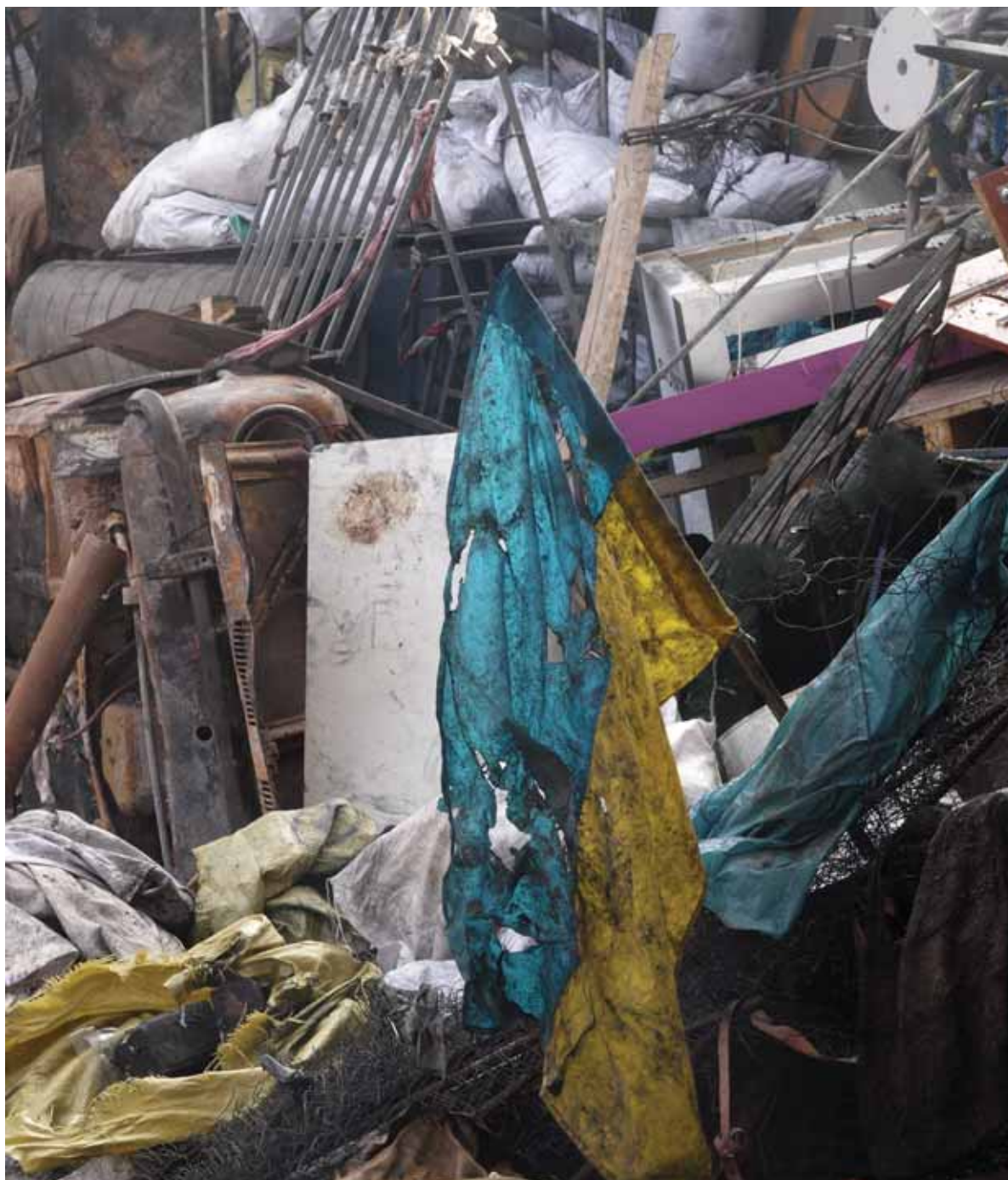


Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Resignation of Yanukovych

On February 22nd, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Volodymyr Rybak retires. The Ukrainian parliament votes to impeach President Viktor Yanukovych and announces new presidential elections on May 25th. These decisions were taken under the presumption that Yanukovych would voluntarily choose to resign. Oleksandr Turchynov is elected the Ukrainian Parliament

chairman, and simultaneously is named acting President of the Ukraine. Mr Yanukovich, from the eastern city of Kharkiv, counters that he will not resign, and denounces the parliamentary procedures as illegal. He describes the events in Kiev as banditry and a coup. The Maidan self-defense takes control of his private estate Mezhyhirya around noon. All day, crowds of people visit the

estate to contemplate what was referred to by journalists as the "Museum of Corruption". In Kharkiv, the so-called "Congress of Separatists" is held, Mr. Janukovych is expected to be attend. He doesn't arrive and the crowds disperse. On the same day, Yulia Tymoshenko is released from prison, however she receives a lukewarm welcome from the Maidan crowds.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

The Museum of Corruption

➤ Mezhyhirya, the private residence of former Ukraine president, Viktor Yanukovych, is located in the village of Novi Petrivtsi near Kiev. From 1935 to 2007 the residence was in state ownership. Viktor Yanukovych occupied the residence as early as 2002, as Ukrainian Prime Minister. In 2007 he decided to privatize Mezhyhirya. This luxurious residence boasting a golf course, a yacht club, an equestrian club, a shooting gallery,

tennis courts, guest houses and a staff of servants among its other attractions served as the topic of many reports by the independent Internet server, Ukrayinska Pravda. Mezhyhirya covers an area of 140 hectares and is enclosed by a five meter fence with a perimeter of 54 km. The residence protected by special police units, is not however, Mr. Yanukovych's only estate. According to Tetyana Chornovol, Mr. Yanukovych was in the process of acquiring

another large estate in the Crimea, at Cape Aya. The extravagance of the residence in Crimea is, in her words, inconceivable. Chornovol discovered another of Viktor Yanukovych's residences, officially owned by one of the people closest to the president – the businessman and member of the Regions Party, Yuriy Ivanyushchenko. On the 23rd of February, 2014 the Ukrainian parliament decides to return Mezhyhirya to state ownership.

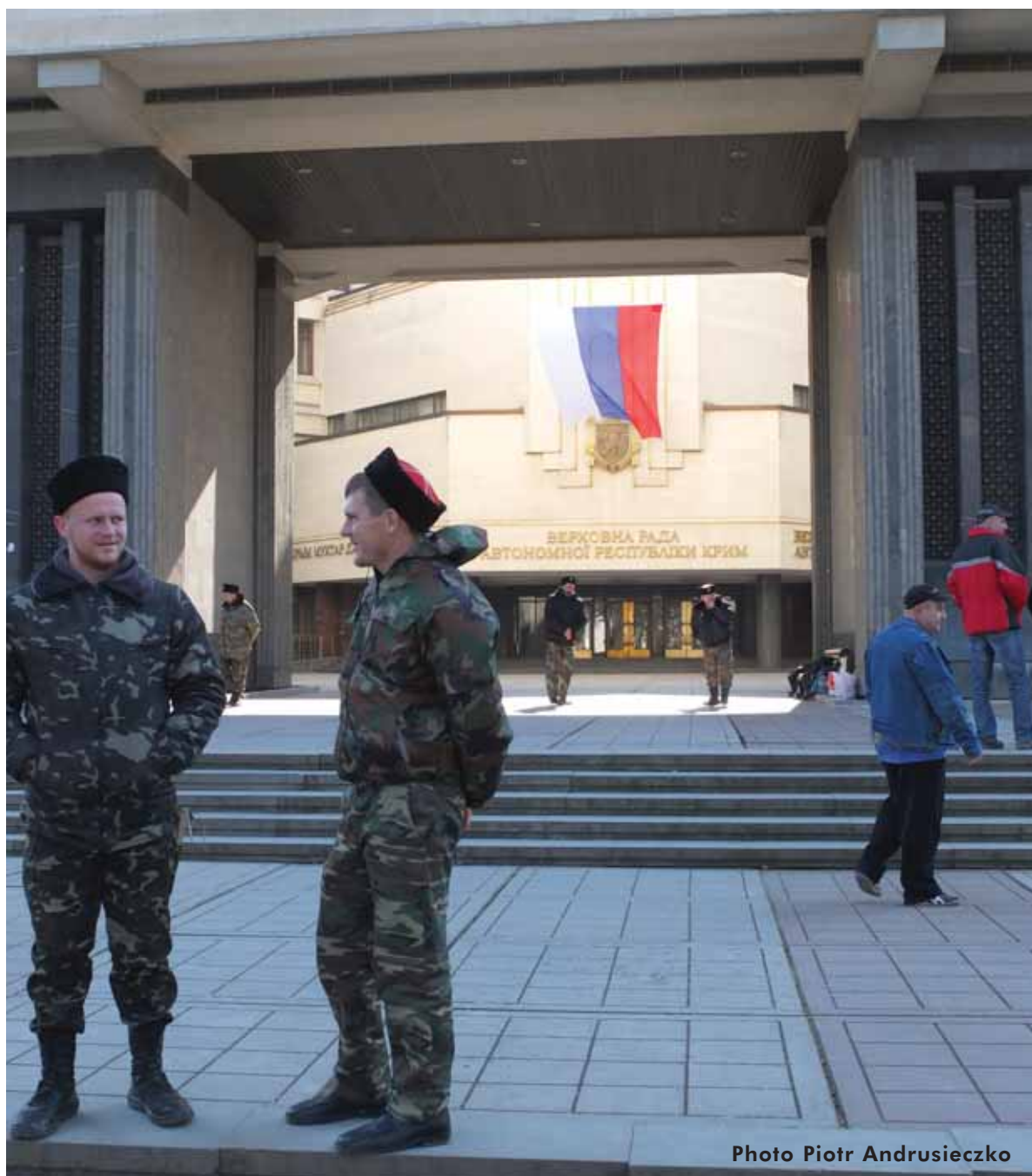


Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Russia begins her Annexation of Crimea

On the 27th of February, unknown gunmen seize the buildings of the Crimean parliament and government in Simferopol. Russian flags are hoisted over the two buildings.

On the same day, in a closed session of the Crimean parliament, Sergey Aksyonov, a member of the Russian Unity Party, is elected prime minister of the Crimean government. Aksyonov enjoys a certain notoriety in Crimea and has been known in criminal circles by the nickname the Goblin since the 1990s. Ukrainian Minister of Internal

Affairs, Arsen Avakov, announced that Russian troops have occupied the Crimean airport. According to Chairman of Ukrainian Parliament, Oleksandr Turchynov, Russia is about to repeat in Crimea the "Abkhazian scenario". Men in green uniforms with neither insignia nor identification appear all around the peninsula. Their task is to block Ukrainian military units. They are assisted by Crimean self-defense made up of pro-Russian activists, "Russian Cassacks", "Russian Orthodox" and former members of

the special units Berkut, which had been dismantled only a few days earlier by the Minister of Internal Affairs. The Crimean self-defense is to be blamed for kidnappings and torture, especially among the Crimean-Tatar local population. Reshat Ametov is kidnapped on the 3rd of March and found dead two weeks later. Abu Jusuf, kidnapped on the 17th of March, is later exiled from Crimea. On March 20th, Nuri Suleimanov is kidnapped...



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

The Domino effect

➤ Unrest is spreading towards the east of the Ukraine. On the 26th of February, people with St. George (the symbol of pro-Russian activists) ribbons of raise the Russian flag outside the City council in Kharkiv. On March 1st, the first attack on Euromaidan activists in Kharkiv is launched. Pro-Russian demonstrations are held also in Donetsk and other cities in the eastern Ukraine. On March 2nd, the Lugansk City administration building is seized by activists calling themselves Russian Spring. Around four

hundred Russian flag-waving protesters, request military help from Vladimir Putin. On March 14th, clashes between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian activists result in two dead and five injured. Pro-Russian demonstrations and the seizure of administrative buildings, alongside raisings of Russian flags continue in Donetsk, Odessa, Kharkiv and Luhansk.

On the 1st of March, Russian president, Vladimir Putin requests the Russian parliament to deploy

Russian troops to the Ukraine "until the normalization of the social-political situation in the country is resumed". Parliament approves Putin's request. The same day, newly elected Crimean Prime Minister, Aksyonov declares that entrance to the Crimea, as well as other important areas are under the supervision and protection of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. On the 6th of March, Crimean parliament adopts the decision to join the Russian Federation, allegedly by 78 of 81 votes.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

The Crimean “Referendum”

On Sunday March 16th, the so-called “referendum” is held in the Crimea. It is scheduled first for May 25th, but is later rescheduled for March 30th, before finally being set to be held on March 16th. The apparent grounds of the rescheduling is the condemnation and negative attitude of Western countries, and the uncertain support of the Crimean population. The population of the Crimean peninsula is more than 58% Russian: Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars form a minority here. Nonetheless, according to the

latest pre-occupation sociological surveys, 40% of the population wished to remain part of the Ukraine and 38% to join Russia. Only 10% of the population vote for an independent Crimea. The ratio is very delicate, but another factor strongly influences the outcome – the presence of very politically active and pro-Ukrainian Crimean Tatars, who have strong historical aversions to the annexation of the Crimea to Russia.

The “referendum” is organized in violation of Ukrainian laws. Oddly

worded questions do not allow for the possibility of maintaining the status quo. Voters can only choose between the annexation of Crimea to Russia or the extension of the autonomy of Crimea within the Ukraine. According to the new pro-Russian Crimean “government”, the annexation of Crimea is supported by 97, 5% of the population. The very next day, Russian President Vladimir Putin issues a decree recognizing Crimea as an independent state, and signs the annexation treaty with Sergey Aksyonov.



Photo archive Dmytro Tymchuk

The Information Vacuum

➤ On the 25th of March (almost a month after the beginning of the unrest in the Crimea) the Kiev District Administrative Court rules on the suspension of broadcasts of four Russian TV channels – Channel 1, RTR, NTV and Rossiya 24 – within the territory of the Ukraine. Within two days, 90 percent of the operators discontinue broadcasting all Russian channels. All this time, half of the Ukraine are misinformed by Russian media propaganda and disoriented by silence from Kiev. The worst happens when Russian troops occupy the Crimea and cut the peninsula off from the continental Ukraine; both physically and with regard to information. Ukrainian media outlets' broadcasts are discontinued almost immediately following the occupation. After about two weeks, the NGO Centre for Military-Political Research announces that starting from March 2nd it will launch the Information Resistance civil movement that has decided to track and report on the situation in Crimea and later in the eastern Ukraine. For many

media and ordinary Internet users, it embodies the sole means of acquiring unbiased information.

Facebook posts from Dmytro Tymchuk begin to appear in early March. A month later, they are being translated by volunteers into English, Polish, Lithuanian and French. Russian media have initially discredited the existence of Dmytro Tymchuk, the coordinator of the Information resistance. Dmytro Tymchuk is not a fictional character and is well known among experts in the field. He graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at Lviv Higher Military-Political School and, as a military journalist, tracked activities of Ukrainian troops in Iraq and Kosovo. He had confidants within the military and as an expert could assess which information can and cannot, for safety reasons, be published. In the Ukraine he remains one the most followed people on the Internet. In his Facebook posts, which become sources of information for both Ukrainian and international media, he criticizes the

conduct of both Kiev and the Kremlin. Information resistance substitutes for the state. "What our group is dedicated to should be covered by the state," said Dmytro Tymchuk, "We only provide operational information. And in the case of harsh confrontation with our neighboring state, we should develop strong counter-propaganda and should use information on psychological operations. Of course, the Ukrainian secret services have adequate structural units for this kind of operation. But those are oriented primarily to work during war time. And the Ukraine, as it is known today, is not at war".

Information resistance is yet another volunteer, civic and unpaid movement that appears after Maidan that acts instead of dysfunctional state institutions. Dmytro Tymchuk is now a member of the Ukrainian parliament. In the extraordinary parliamentary elections in October, 2014 he was a candidate for the People's Front party of Ukrainian Prime Minister, Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

The Counterattack

➤ On the 7th of April, pro-Ukrainian activists disperse the separatist demonstration crowd in the southern Ukrainian city of Mykolayiv. On the same day police oust the pro-Russian activists from the Kharkiv Regional State Administration building and special police units liberate the previously occupied Security Service building in Donetsk. On the 9th of April, residents of Mykolayiv attack Regions Party deputy, Oleg Tsaryov, who arrives to support the pro-Russian activists. Subsequently, on April 10th residents of Zaporizhya begin the construction of blockades at the entrance to the city to prevent the arrival of pro-Russian activists from other regions and Russia.

Up til now, the southern Ukraine has successfully prevented the Crimean scenario. The separatists' plans have failed in both Odessa and Kherson. Russia, with the much desired status of

a peacemaker, has little to achieve in this area. They do not encounter the major support required to divide the Ukraine and simultaneously can not find any "populist leaders" like Aksionov or Konstantinov in Crimea. However, the situation differs in the east of the Ukraine where the local political and business elite decide to use Russian influence for their own gain.

The richest Ukrainian oligarch, Rinat Akhmetov, appears on the scene for the first time when the situation in his hometown begin to look serious, but at a time when it is still possible to enter negotiations as a mediator between the government in Kiev and the angry citizens of Donetsk. He nominates himself for the position of mediator; attempting to "appease" the passionate protesters. He immediately submits points for discussions. They are exactly the same questions asked by

the Regions Party in Kiev and they bear a striking resemblance to the proposals from Moscow: the federalization of the Ukraine, the right to conduct a local referendum and, of course that the Russian language become the second official language. Akhmetov briefly and concisely explains his goals in an interview with the separatists: "Separation isn't a goal; it's a means to an end". And it would not be the first time that the Donbas local elite employ the term "means" to promote their own interests. They were never concerned about the division of Ukraine or about the annexation of its eastern areas to Russia, their sole goal was to maintain their positions on "their territory" and the guarantee of their inviolability. But this time, everything will turn out differently. Eventually, Akhmetov is forced to leave Donbas and find refuge in Kiev.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko





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The Ukrainian National Guard

➤ The implausible tales of bloodthirsty criminal expeditions of the Ukrainian National Guard, subordinate to no one but themselves and their Banderism sentiment and crackdowns on the 'peaceful separatists' have constituted the most popular topics of the Russian television since the end of the Maidan.

In fact, the Ukrainian National Guard was originally created on November 4, 1991 as a national force units, which was to be deployed with special tasks: for the assistance of the border troops for border protection, for protection of critical infrastructure and to participate in military operations in cooperation with the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The reason for its creation was the presence of the Soviet army, subordinate to Moscow, on the territory of Ukraine even after the declaration of independence. Therefore, the Ukrainian leadership decided to create its own national defense. Later, the National Guard existed side by side with the Armed Forces of Ukraine, conceived on 6

December 1991 and whose hardcore was formed by the Soviet army units.

On the 11th of January, 2000, president Leonid Kuchma abolished the National Guard, and its personnel, military equipment and functions were divided between Armed Forces and the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Interior. The leadership of Ukraine justified this step by stating that the National Guard doubled the function of the army and the internal troops, and it was therefore redundant.

Following the events related to the Maidan and the annexation of the Crimea on March 11, 2014 the National Guard of Ukraine was restored. The key purpose for this step was the necessity to strengthen the Armed Forces units because of Russian aggression.

Today's National Guard troops are essentially the former Internal Troop of the Ministry of Interior boosted with heavy equipment and personnel to assist the Ukrainian army in conflict in Eastern Ukraine. National Guard today consists of 60,000 conscripts and professional soldiers.

The National Guard has also become a platform for organization of Maidan participants, who joined the army as volunteers to fight with Russian troops in Eastern Ukraine. First Volunteer Battalion of the National Guard was established on April 5, 2014, and its manpower consisted of 350 soldiers. This battalion, together with the special operation unit Omega was among the first units deployed in April 2014 in Sloviansk to fight the terrorists who seized the city.

Nowadays the National Guard of Ukraine contains three volunteer battalions:

- The Rapid Deployment Battalion of General Kulchytskiy, formed by the Maidan Self-defence members
- The Special Force Battalion Donbas, whose commander was the legendary Semen Semchenko, until he was elected an MP
- The Rapid Deployment Battalion Kruk, formed by volunteers from several regions of Ukraine



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Green Men II

On the 11th of April in the Eastern Ukrainian city of Sloviansk the men in green uniforms without insignia appeared. The Security Council of Ukraine launches an anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country. Leader of rebels Vyacheslav Ponomarev asks the Russian president to intervene in the Donbas clashes. The separatists seize the city police station in Horlivka. On

April 16, separatists attacked police station and military base in Mariupol. Approximately 300 people require the handover of arms. The attackers use Molotov cocktails and the clashes result in three dead, 13 wounded and 63 detainees. The following day, on April 17 the Horlivka City Council member Volodymyr Rybak is kidnapped. He is found dead several days later. The separatists seize the

television transmitters to disconnect the Ukrainian TV channels. On the 17th of April, Russian president Putin declares in a TV appearance, that Russian and Ukrainian people are essentially the same nation, temporarily divided into two states. He calls the South and East Ukraine with name "Novorossiya" and tells that Ukraine got this territory by mistake.

Thank you for the lesson

➤ I will not once again describe what happened today [28th April – Ed.] in Donetsk – you can see it in the videos, on the photos and in the news. Let me just say one thing: after the recent events, I began to believe that Russia has always wanted to destroy the Ukrainian nation, as claimed by the Ukrainian nationalists.

I am penitent that I had my doubts earlier. I did not consider the Holodomor was a genocide of the Ukrainian people, although I understood why Yushchenko insisted on those exact words. I always adopted a more moderate attitudes towards Russia than the Ukrainian nationalists. But now I understand I was wrong. Thank you for this lesson.

After what I had a chance to witness over the past few days, I've no doubt that Russia always wanted to destroy us. Russia deliberately plagued us with famine; it extinguished and assimilated us because of our Ukrainian origin. I don't doubt it, because I beheld with my own eyes how they tried to kill someone just because of the Ukrainian flag. I understood how it happened before – in the 30s, 40s, 50s in the USSR.

Earlier I was not able to build the complete picture, now I've seen it myself, personally, and I believe my eyes. Now I know that the Soviet history does not speak a true word about the Bandera movement. I comprehend now how they made them into monsters and how they lied about them, because I have in front of my eyes a vivid example. I see how Russia is lying now and I realize that it lied always. It is clear to me that everything that has been written about Ukraine in Russian books and everything about Ukraine you can see in Russian movies are just lies and slander. If they are able to lie so skillfully in the age of Internet, when all the information is available on the network, what can be said about the 30s and the 40s?

ITAR-TASS wrote that nationalists in Donetsk attacked an anti-fascist demonstration. On the entire pro-Ukrainian demonstration in Donetsk today, there was not a single person speaking Ukrainian. There were no other flags than Ukrainian. It was not a clash between fascists and antifascists, not even in the perverse sense of this confrontation, as Russia wishes to see it. It was about the Russian neo-Nazis violently beating Ukrainians, while the Ukrainians were beaten up solely for their ethnic origin. It was ethnic cleansing.



**Denis Kazanskyy,
Donetsk**



Russian democracy Zone

Following the annexation of the Crimea, the Crimean Tatars adopted a rather quiet position. In late March, at the last National Assembly, called Kurultay, the more militant wing was overruled and an agreement was reached on a minimal form of cooperation with the new government in Moscow. A delegation from Russian Tatarstan arrived to the Crimea that kept assuring their Muslim brothers about the advantages of joining the Russian Federation, they offered financing for new mosques, and Vladimir Putin himself in a telephone interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev promised that he will do more for the Crimean Tatars in a year than what Ukraine did for them over the past twenty years. Of course he forgot to mention that the biggest obstacles for the Crimean Tatars were not posed by Kiev, but rather by the Russian-speaking population of Crimea, which Mustafa Dzhemilev politely reminded Mr Putin of.

On the 22nd of April, Russia banned the Crimean leader Mustafa Dzhemilev from entering into Russia's territory, and thus into the Crimea. Mustafa devoted his entire life to the return of his nation to

the Crimea, and thus became a symbol of the Crimean Tatars. This was all ruined by his single visit to Simferopol and raising of the Ukrainian flag on the Medzlis building. Dzhemilev was handed a document on the border when returning to Crimea informing him that he is banned from entering Russian territory for five years. It was not clear which institution issued the protocol as it lacked the stamp, a signature and a reason. The protocol was not handed to him by a Russian border police, but by an unknown member of the militia. Initially, the Russian border police attempted to disassociate themselves from the Protocol. However when Mustafa tried on May 3 to change from the flight Kiev – Moscow to flight Moscow – Simferopol, he was informed that the ban was in place. This proved that its release could not be initiated by a puppet Crimean "prime minister" Sergey Aksyonov, but an officials in Moscow. Mustafa had to go back to Kyiv and go to the Crimea by car. A few thousand Crimean Tatars were expecting him on the newly created borders, which were determined to bring him to the Crimea at any price, but the

Russian special forces units with heavy weapons were present at the border. Mustafa Dzhemilev decided to avoid any violent confrontation and return to Kyiv. According to Aksyonov there could be no doubt "that this man was trying to destabilize Crimea under instruction from Western secret services". The next day, officials from Crimean Tatar Mejlis received a notice from the prosecutor's office accusing them of extremist activity, including threats addressed to the leader of the Mejlis Refat Chubarov with destruction of the Mejlis, unless provocations cease.

Nonetheless Mejlis is not an official institution. It is the traditional representative body of the Crimean Tatars, which is elected at the Congress in Kurultai. Mejlis is neither a civic organization nor a political party.

On July 3, returning from the continental Ukraine, the leader of Mejlis, Refat Chubarov, was banned from entering Crimea. He likewise was banned from entering Russian territory for a period of five years. He was exiled in September and his property and accounts were frozen after a court judgment.

Photo Ivo Dokoupil



Mustafa Dzhemilev

➤ Mustafa Dzhemilev is Qırımoğlu – a son of Crimea. He is a Crimean Tatar, a dissident, a human rights defender, former chairman of Mejlis and since 1998 a member of the Ukrainian Parliament. In 1944, when Mustafa was only six months old, his family was displaced to Uzbekistan. For his efforts to return his people to the Crimea he was arrested seven times and served 15 years in Russian labor camps. Mustafa has been on hunger strikes on several occasions, the longest lasted 303 days. The spirit of Mustafa Dzhemilev is unbreakable and according to Igor Semyvolos, the Director of the Institute for Middle Eastern Research, this is the reason the soft-voiced, 160cm tall man irritates Russian authorities so much. According to official statistics, the displacement of the Crimean Tartar people was fatal for one in four of them. As a consequence, only about 20% of the population can speak the Crimean Tatar language.

Photo

Leniara Abibulaeva

“I spent three years in a prison in 1968 when I publicly denounced the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. Today the President of Czech Republic asks me to accept the annexation of Crimea.”

Mustafa Dzhemilev

The Odessa Tragedy

On May 2nd, the clashes between the pro-Russian separatists and the pro-Ukrainian activists lead to 46 dead and nearly 200 injured.

Initially the conflict erupts in the centre of Odessa, when the pro-Russian provocateurs assault the participants in a rally for Ukrainian national unity. There is evidence proving provocation by pro-Russian groups and the firing into a crowd of pro-Ukrainian rally participants.

Provocation and brawls escalate into a chase of pro-Russian separatists, who flee to their encampment in the Trade Unions House building in the Kulikovo Field area, where a fire breaks out whose cause is unclear. At the time of the fire, a few hundred separatists are found in the building. Investigations, yet to be completed, indicate that the fire has most likely started inside the building, and not outside, as the pro-Russian

separatists claimed. According to the Ukrainian government, the aim of the provocations on May 2nd in Odessa was to produce the same scenario as in Donetsk and Lugansk, i.e. to take control of the city and proclaim another pro-Russian "People's Republic". During the investigation it is discovered that Russian citizens and unrecognized men from Transnistria have participated in the events in Odessa.

Further investigation reveals contact between the separatists and the local police. Investigators claim that both inaction and direct support of separatists by local police has led to an escalation of the violence and to the considerable casualties. One of the chiefs of the Odessa's Police Department, Dmytro Fuchedzhi, flees to Transnistria and is still in hiding from Ukrainian authorities.

Photo Anton Volk





Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Separatist Insurgency in Mariupol

➤ On May 9th, Victory Day (celebrated while under the USSR), pro-Russian forces attempt to seize the City Administration in Mariupol – a key city on the coast of the Azov Sea, which provides open access from Russia into the Crimea. Additionally, the separatists attempt to set up an illegal referendum on the self-declared ‘Donetsk People’s Republic’, which is to be held on May 11th. Approximately 60 gunmen try to seize the local main police station and a shootout ensues. Separatists break into the ground and the first floors of the building, barricading themselves and opening fire with automatic weapons on members of the National Guard, the Ukrainian Security Service and the Armed Forces who surround the building. During the clashes the police station is burnt to the ground. One Ukrainian soldier is killed in

combat and nearly 20 separatists are murdered. The rest of the pro-Russian militants scatter into the residential areas of Mariupol, leaving their weapons behind.

Immediately afterward, a fire breaks out in the Mariupol City Administration building, where pro-Russian separatist are hiding. Subsequently, Ukrainian Armed Forces armored vehicles enter the city. Due to the large crowds in the city centre of Mariupol, gathered for the Victory Day celebrations, the commanding officers decide to withdraw the military equipment and the troops from the city to avoid casualties. The separatists successfully create unrest in the city, setting fire to cars on the streets and attacking military units deployed around the city. The night sees violent riots and looting.

At dawn on June 13th the special

units of the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs together with the National Guard units and with the support of volunteer battalions Azov and Dnipro, launch an operation to cleanup the Mariupol separatists. By that evening, the operation is successfully completed. The separatist footholds and encampments are now destroyed and control is re-established over all the besieged buildings. The separatists, however, continue to destabilize the situation in the city. On the morning of June 14th, the terrorists, firing a grenade launcher hit a vehicle full of Ukrainian border guards. Five border guards are killed during the attack. According to the press, a total of nine civilians, 25 separatists and 6 members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces are killed during the unrest in Mariupol.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Volunteer Battalions

When Russia started the annexation of the Crimea in February 2014, the new Ukrainian government had not yet been fully formalized. Following the events of the Maidan, Ministry of Internal Affairs troops were demoralized. The Ukrainian Security Service was dysfunctional; in some regions it was barely noticeable that Kiev had any power over the country at all. The Ukrainian Armed Forces were weakened by the absence of a Defense Minister and needed some time to restore combat capabilities. The idea of establishing volunteer battalions that would prevent the implementation of the Crimean scenario in the eastern Ukraine, first arose in Dnipropetrovsk, which was, at the time, run by one of the biggest Ukrainian oligarchs, Igor Kolomoysky. The battalion, Dnipro, was formed there in April 2014. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov, consequently ordered the formation of volunteer battalions in all regions of the Ukraine. The

establishment of these battalions helped stabilize the situation in most regions and to monitor the pro-Russian terrorist groups in southern and eastern Ukraine. Concurrently, volunteer battalions started to be formed within the Ukrainian Army and the National Guard.

Ukrainian Ministry of Defense Territorial Defense Battalions are established in all regions according to the mobilization plan of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Ukraine. The battalion officers are appointed by the Ministry of Defense and its members are volunteers and reservists who underwent comprehensive training in military training centres. One of the most famous battalions of this kind is Aidar – the 24th Territorial Defense Battalion in the Lugansk Oblast. To date, 31 battalions of this kind have been established.

Ukrainian Ministry of Interior Special Forces Battalions are subordinate to

the administration of the Ministry of Interior in each region of the Ukraine. The most notorious battalions of this type include the Dnipro and the Azov. Up to this point, 33 battalions and companies of this type have been established. Simultaneously the battalion Azov, enlarged into a regiment and armed with heavy weapons, is given its mission to defend one of the most essential parts of the front near Mariupol, and is subordinate to the Ukrainian National Guard.

The Ukrainian National Guard Reserve battalions played the role of combat avant-garde at the beginning of conflict in the east of the Ukraine. Already in April, after the creation of its first battalion composed of volunteers from Maidan self-defense, this unit is deployed in separatist occupied Sloviansk. At this moment, there are three volunteer battalions under the National Guard, including the prominent battalion Donbas.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Illegal referendum in the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts

➤ On the 11th of May, illegal referendums were held in some districts of Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts regarding the status of the Donetsk and Lugansk "People's Republics". Referendums were initiated by the separatists and violated the protocols of the Ukrainian constitution. Referendums and their results were not recognized by the Ukrainian government, nor are they by the European Union or the USA.

A single question is posed at the referendum: "Do you support the act of independence of the Donetsk (Lugansk) People's Republic?"

According to the separatists, the turnout in the Donetsk region was 74.87%, 89.07% voting for independence and 10.19% against. According to Lugansk separatists, the independence was supported by 96% of voters as opposed to the 3.8% voting against, with the overall turnout of 75%. However, there was no evidence to confirm the reliability of this information. No international organization, and neither the OSCE nor the Council of Europe provide the referendums with

their own international observers. None of Russia's official observers are present. The referendum ballots have no security features and are printed on simple paper. One person can vote several times without restrictions or even simultaneously in several districts. Many of the polling stations are located outdoors, in parks and squares, while the publicized polling stations are crowded with municipal service employees to provide an "image" of queueing voters for television broadcasting. In addition, there is no evidence that proof of identity is required for scrutiny at the referendum, neither is Ukrainian citizenship nor residency in Donetsk region a prerequisite. It is suggested that a significant number of ballots were prepared in advance, while at each polling station there are personnel armed with automatic guns.

After the referendum, on May 12 the "Prime Minister" of the self-proclaimed "DPR", Denis Pushylin, declared the "Donetsk People's Republic" a sovereign state and requested Russia to consider its annexation to the

Russian Federation. It is also stated that the "DPR" wish to amalgamate with the "Lugansk People's Republic", given that the "LPR government" has declared the independence of the "Lugansk People's Republic" on May 12.

May 24th brings the announcement that the Donetsk and Lugansk "People's Republics" have joined and formed the so-called "Novorossiya". It is then suggested that the Odessa, Mykolayiv, Kherson, Zaporizhya, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions should, in the future, join the "new state". The "DPR" and "LPR" will continue to join and separate on several occasions over time and other "people's republics" will be born in the territory, like the "Horlivka" and "Stakhanov" Republics. On May 15th, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office declares "DPR" and "LPR" to be terrorist organizations and on July 20th, Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, requests UN officials to declare the "DLR" and "LPR" terrorist organizations. A similar petition is also presented to the US Congress. The issue is not yet resolved.

We don't have much time left



**Vasyl Arbuzov,
Kharkiv**

› Have you ever been to the working-class town of Donbas? Can you imagine a city that became impoverished overnight twenty-four years ago? Have you ever put yourself in the shoes of a twenty-five year old man who has never traveled beyond the Donetsk region? Has never had a normal job, didn't get an adequate education? He can not expect anything from his parents.

For the past six months this young man has been exposed to tremendous psychological pressure to a degree we can barely imagine. All the KGB propaganda machinery is aimed directly at him.

The young man is surrounded by lies in every direction, the apocalyptic scenario of the world in which his fellow citizens want to destroy everything that is sacred to him, has been written with precisely him in mind. He honestly fears the mythical Right sector. He hears about the bloodthirsty Banderists on TV, in church he has listened for years to tales of attacks by the West on the "Russian World" and third rate websites scare him with stories of European gays who would happily rape his grandfather - a war veteran. Then all of a sudden, he gets a chance to resolve the situation. He gets a chance to save himself and his family - if only he will support the idea of "DPR" [Donetsk People's Republic].

It begins with innocent meetings, carefully organized by the Regions Party and the Communists under Russian Federation flags. It then starts gaining momentum and in a few weeks' time this young man is handed a machine gun and sent to defend the idea that he has been indoctrinated with and that he honestly believes. I'm not sure whether it's possible to hate him for it, to strip him of his identity and to kill him. He's not a mercenary and he's not a foreign soldier. He's just an ordinary young man who's been lied to for too long. His only fault is that he was born in a shattered country, in which the regional elite did not give him or his city the chance to develop. He's simply a hostage of the country we live in.

Stop insulting the "DPR" supporters; do not pass on the propaganda that they are all -without exception, monsters, drunks and junkies. We must stop seeing them as enemies. They were misled and betrayed. Do you think that you've never been deceived? We must admit that the KGB is gunning for a civil war. Eighty percent of separatist militants are now foreign mercenaries who will leave as quickly as they arrived. What will be left is a people burdened with grief, a people that will call for revenge. It will be too late for any explanations when that time arrives.



Petro Poroshenko is elected the new Ukrainian President

➤ On the 25th of May, the Ukrainian presidential elections are held, and become the starting point for the establishment of new state authoritative institutions after the Revolution of Dignity. They are meant to prove that Ukrainian society is able to begin construction of a new Ukraine regardless of the ongoing armed conflict with Russia. Russian leadership and the infiltrated separatists understand clearly that in the case of the successful election of a new Ukrainian President, their main propaganda points would be dismantled. It is based on the ideology that after the “Kiev coup, the Ukraine as a country stopped existing, that the Ukraine is left without any state control and its territory is occupied by fascists”.

That is why, during the election campaign, the pro-Russian separatists attempted to destabilize the situation in the eastern and southern Ukraine and implement the Donetsk and Lugansk scenario. The Odessa tragedy, a separatist rebellion in Mariupol, and illegal referendums in Donetsk and Lugansk are the culminations of separatist actions. Russia and the pro-Russian separatists count on the maximum possible length of the presidential campaign – initially the first round, the second round two weeks later, and lastly a prolonged counting of votes and disputes surrounding the election winner. For the Ukraine, this means almost two months of severely weakened central government, without any commander in chief nor political leader, who could give stability to the old Parliament, elected in 2012.

Regardless of that, the presidential elections held on May 25th are successful, transparent and democratic. Most importantly in the given situation, the President is elected in the first round. Petro Poroshenko obtained 54.70% of votes, Yulia Tymoshenko – 12.81%, Oleh Lyashko – 8.32%, Anatoly Hrytsenko – 5.48% of votes.

The election results yet again prove that the Ukraine is not divided into east and west, as Russian propaganda always suggested. The voters affection for candidates is not divided into “pro-Western” versus “pro-Russian”. The absolute majority of Ukrainian citizens in all of the regions of the country voted for the candidates who sought a united democratic Ukraine with a European future.

Immediately following the election, a new stage commences in the formation of state authorities, in reforms for the armed forces and other state structures, and chiefly, it marks the beginning of preparations for early parliamentary elections, which are to complete the reconstruction of the central bodies of state.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

The Defense of the Donetsk International Airport begins. Ukrainian Cyborgs

On the night of May 26th, pro-Russian battalions Vostok and Oplot comprising a total of about 300 men together with special force units from Spetnaz GRU, FSB and Chechen-Kadyrov units, attempt to seize the International Airport in Donetsk. Donetsk airport is to become a strategic bridgehead for the advance of Russian troops into Ukrainian territory and further constitute a strategic setting for the deployment of the Russian Air Force. Russian command is convinced that the Ukrainian Armed Forces will not resort to open conflict on the day of Presidential elections in order to prevent further destabilization of the current situation. Nonetheless, the Ukrainian command gives the order to fight.

At that time, about 150 soldiers from the 3rd Separate Regiment of the Ukrainian Defense Intelligence Special Forces are mobilized near Donetsk airport. It is they, assisted by the attack helicopters and combat

aircraft of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, who conduct an operation in which over 140 Russian soldiers are killed, including an instructor of the Centre for Special Purpose FSB RF, Sergey Zhdanovich.

From that day on, the Russian army and the pro-Russian terrorists conduct attacks on the airport on almost a daily basis. In addition to the Special Forces 3rd Separate Regiment, soldiers from the 72nd and 93rd Mechanized Brigades and the 95th and 79th Air-mobile Brigades of the Ukrainian Armed Forces are involved in the defense of the airport. Furthermore, volunteer units from the Right sector are present as well. Since July, the entire airport has been surrounded by Russian forces, which extremely complicate the supply options for the Ukrainian soldiers with respect to food, water and ammunition. Nevertheless, the Ukrainians managed to break through "a road of life" and to ensure supply

lines and replacements. In September the most intensive attacks of the airport begin, immediately following the declaration of "ceasefire". The separatists baptized the Ukrainian defenders, Cyborgs. The Ukrainian public quickly adopts this designation. Every day and every night Russian soldiers together with the pro-Russian terrorists, conduct 3 to 4 attacks on the airport using Grad multiple rocket launchers, heavy artillery, tanks and armored vehicles. Every time amid the inaccessible ruins of the airport terminals, the Russian units suffer great losses.

Several Ukrainian soldiers die in the clashes during the defense of the airport, including the 93rd Mechanized Brigade Company Commander, Captain Serhiy Kolodiy, and the Group Commander of the 3rd Separate Regiment of Special Forces, Lieutenant Yevgen Podolyanchuk. The defense of the Donetsk airport continues.

Photo Iv Bogdan



Our Own Ukrainian Epic Poem

➤ The Cyborgs at Donetsk airport together with the Nebesna Sotnia (patriots of Ukraine killed at Maidan) are like a Ukrainian epic poem that we have never had. I easily confess: Until recently, I had a problem with cultural identification. All those blind musicians with bandura never inspired any stirrings of pride or fear in me during my school days. When I discovered Bruce Lee movies, I let all that nonsense out of my head.

Years later, when I began traveling abroad, I realized that the Ukraine I knew (with its writers, painters, musicians and great ordinary people), remained unknown to those around us. Sure, some knew that cool guy who sings with Madonna, that's a Eugene Hutz from Obolon; somebody else read something from Andriukhovich or Deresh, others saw images of Savadov or Roytburd. But this was a narrow circle. The Ukraine was seen as this bizarre country somewhere near Russia, where two boxers reside, both of them named Klichko. And there's that one football player Shevchenko, who is apparently also a renowned poet. The image of the Ukraine was even worse in the post-Soviet states. Thanks to an enemy claiming to be our brother, Ukrainians were perceived as stupid hicks with reddish muzzles, who love salo and shriek laughter.

Although I always knew I was Ukrainian, I didn't fully comprehend what it meant and what I was supposed to do about it. "I am a Ukrainian, I do not want to do anything about it and I want to be proud of it" – do you remember? I'd never before thought of pressing the Ukrainian flag into my chest until a flag riddled with dozens of bullets ended up in my hands.

Everything has changed. Now we are Ukrainians like never before. We are recognized, strong, and serious. Moreover, we are eternal now, because we have written our own epic poem. Thank you, guys. The new generations that will be raised in your example, will have entirely different feelings about this country and about themselves in this country. And your parents that used to slap you on the shoulder or share coffee from tin cups will grow in the eyes of their children. And for this you deserve a distinct thank you. ➤



**Matvii Nikitin,
Kiev**

Terrorists Shoot Down a Ukrainian National Guard Helicopter, 12 Dead

On May 29th, terrorists shoot down a Ukrainian National Guard Mi-8 helicopter near Sloviansk. 12 soldiers are killed, including Major General and Head of the National

Guard Special Training Directorate, Serhiy Kulchytsky. The helicopter guaranteed supplies of food and water to the encampment located on Mount Korochun and is of strategic

importance for the Ukrainian troops obstructing the city of Sloviansk which has been seized by terrorists. The Ukrainian helicopter is shot down by a Russian anti-aircraft man pad.



Terrorists Shoot Down Ilyushin Il-76MD. 49 Ukrainian Soldiers Dead

On the night of June 13th to the 14th, Ukrainian Air Force military transport aircraft, Ilyushin Il-76MD, transporting paratroopers, equipment and food, is shot down near Lugansk airport by terrorists. Among the dead are

nine crew members from Melitopol Air Transport Brigade and 40 paratroopers from the 25th Separate Airborne Brigade, Dnipropetrovsk. The Ukrainian soldiers killed by terrorists come mostly from

different eastern Ukrainian regions, particularly Zaporizhya, Donetsk, Kherson, Odessa, Kharkiv, Lugansk, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, but also other regions of the Ukraine.



Photo archive

A Song that Cost the Minister his Chair

➤ On June 14th a protest demonstration is held outside the Russian Federation Embassy in Kiev, triggered by the downing of a Ukrainian aircraft in Lugansk and the death of 49 Ukrainian soldiers. The most radical protesters, who blame the incident on Russia, overturn several cars belonging to Russian embassy staff and throw stones and smoke shells at the embassy. Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andriy Deshchytisia, arrives and requests the protesters to calm down and in an attempt to reduce the tension, he sings the popular chant "Putin Khuilo" – the vulgar and offensive chant of the Kharkiv football fans.

A recording of the chant on Youtube is viewed by more than 2 million people. The atmosphere at the protest calms down and does not escalate into violence. Nevertheless, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is forced to resign. Andriy Deshchytisia assumes the post of Ukrainian Ambassador to Poland.

Photo Hryhorij Spodarek



Gas Wars

On June 16th at 9 am, the Russian gas company Gazprom suspends natural gas supplies to the Ukraine. That same day, the Ukrainian company Naftogaz files a lawsuit with the Stockholm Arbitration Court against Gazprom demanding a fair market price for natural gas supplies from Gazprom to Ukraine. The lawsuit also includes a request to recover over-payments made to Gazprom in 2010. According to Ukrainian estimates, the over-payments amount to close to \$6 billion. Gazprom concurrently

files a counter-suit with the Stockholm International Arbitration Court against Naftogaz seeking the recovery of \$4.5 billion in debts. Under pressure from the European Union, a temporary deal for the supply of Russian gas is signed in Brussels between the Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The agreement specifies that Russia agrees to supply the Ukraine with the required amount of gas at a price of \$365 per 1,000 cubic meters in the first quarter of 2015.

Photo Andrej Bán





Photo Ivo Dokoupil

Signed

➤ On June 27th, the economic part of the Association Agreement between the EU and the Ukraine is signed at the EU Summit in Brussels. The Ukraine is represented by President Petro Poroshenko. The political part of the Association Agreement had already been signed on March 21st by then Ukrainian Prime Minister, Arseniy

Yatsenyuk. The implementation of the economic part of the agreement allows for the removal of the vast majority of import tariffs between the EU and the Ukraine (82.6% for the Ukrainian side and 91.8% for the EU). A transitional period, from one to seven years, is set for the rest of the goods. Gradually, conformity will be achieved between the

Ukrainian and EU standards and will facilitate the access of Ukrainian goods into the European market.

President Petro Poroshenko signs the Association Agreement with the exact same pen that Viktor Yanukovich refuses to sign with in Vilnius on November 29, 2013.

The Liberation of Sloviansk

➤ Sloviansk becomes the battlefield between the separatists and the Ukrainian Armed Forces in early April 2014. On the night of April 11th, an armed conflict begins as the pro-Russian terrorists storm the local police station with automatic weapons and raise the Russian Federation. On April 13th, in response to these attacks, The Ukrainian government launches an Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO). By April 25th, Ukrainian forces manage to surround the city forcing

the terrorists to attempt to break through the blockade. The fighting, which has lasted several months, results in civilian casualties and severe damage to several official buildings.

On the 3rd of July, 2014, ATO forces blockade the city of Mykolayivka, where 6 points of support for pro-Russian terrorists as well as an arsenal of weapons, are destroyed. ATO units conclude the liberation of Mykolayivka on July 4th. Over 50 terrorists, including

one of the commanders nicknamed "the Scorpion", are captured.

On the night of July 4th, the terrorists evacuate the city of Sloviansk. According to one of the most famous separatist commanders, Igor Girkin-Strelkov, the decision is made as a part of a "forces saving" plan. The terrorists relocate to the city of Donetsk. The retreat of the terrorists allows the Ukrainian troops to enter Sloviansk and consequently launch a humanitarian aid mission.

Photo Iv Bogdan





Photo Ivo Dokoupil

The Sloviansk Diary: Volunteers

› Another week of our mission goes by. We distribute food and medicine where most needed. This is undertaken by helpers; volunteers, as they say here. Where did they come from, who are they and how could one best describe them? Imagine an anthill with its bustle of hundreds of thousands of ants and then several hundred individual ants with red scarves like Ferdie the Ant around their necks. They do everything in their power to keep the anthill going, and whenever possible, problem-free. They do all this before the battle and long after the unrest is over. They can be youths, adults or the elderly. Often they exist on the constant verge of an emergency, they stay in tents or on the grounds of schools, but they stay where they will be most needed at any moment. "We are the state and nobody else," explains my friend Oleg, one of the volunteers. He is the owner of a company that employs a few people; however he has spent the last several months distributing

food to those in need. What he means to say is that the state is not an anonymous institution that sends an aid package in times of disaster. That is not how things work in the Ukraine anyway; the state is just a group of government employees that leech off other people's work. What Oleg wants to say is that the state is not of any help now, so we must help ourselves. In times of emergency, we all represent the state and its survival falls to us. This war, hybrid and clandestine, that takes place here, unraveled thousands of people whose hearts are open to foreign cries and who put helping others before their own comfort. War, as in any catastrophe, tears away the veils from people's faces and reveals who they really are. "It is as if Sloviansk cleansed itself, only the best of us are left now", adds Oleg.

In a few weeks we will commemorate a year since the beginning of the Ukrainian revolution. It is a revolution of volunteers – they are the heroes who,

months on end and with determination, ensured the proper functioning of the Maidan encampment, cooked, served hot tea and borscht at the barricades, cared for the wounded and hid them from the police. It is a revolution of those serving in the hospitals in Donetsk and distributing food in bombed-out basements in the outskirts of the city. These, who never attended a political meeting, not even from afar, whose determination, persistence and dedication have caused the downfall of the much hated Yanukovich regime. They never ask for remuneration for their work, their reward is the hope of a country with a decent life in a decent society where laws apply to all and where the stronger or richer cannot terrorize the community with impunity. A nation that is blessed with such citizens, will not be defeated in its quest for freedom by Berkut units, Russian tanks, nor by well-paid terrorists. Their determination is invincible.

Ivo Dokoupil, Sloviansk



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Pilot kidnapped

› The kidnapping of Lieutenant Nadia Savchenko within the territory of the Ukraine became one of the most conclusive indications of direct Russian involvement in the war in the Ukraine. Nadia Savchenko was a volunteer in the Aidar battalion fighting against pro-Russian terrorists in Donbas, while she simultaneously served as an officer in the Ukrainian Armed Forces; navigator of a Mi-24 helicopter in the 16th Separate Ukrainian Army Aviation Brigade.

Nadia was captured by the pro-Russian militia during fighting near the village of Metalist near Lugansk. On June 19th, a video recording of her interrogation is released on the Internet and Nadia becomes one of the most celebrated Ukrainian heroines. When asked by the interviewers how numerous were the Ukrainian forces they were fighting, she answered: "Do you think I know? I believe the whole Ukraine is fighting you". On June 22nd, Nadia Savchenko's sister, Vira announced that she had been contacted by the terrorists with a proposal to exchange her sister for four pro-Russian terrorists. The media also circulated information that Nadia had been transported from Lugansk to Donetsk. On July 8th, it suddenly transpires that Nadia Savchenko is being held in custody in Voronezh, Russia, and accused of killing two Russian journalists. According to the Russians, Savchenko had been arrested in Russian Federation territory, disguised as a refugee where she had allegedly voluntarily and illegally crossed the Ukrainian-Russian border.

Russia fails to explain how and why a captured Ukrainian officer would cross the border, neither could the Russian side explain how a person held in custody could kill two Russian journalists. Savchenko's trial was in line with paramount Soviet traditions – including forced psychiatric examination, and the absence of logic, facts or any evidence. On the 10th of July, the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice appeals to the Council of Europe for help in the liberation of Savchenko, Russia's prisoner. The European Court of Human Rights President requests that the Russian Federation explain the circumstances that have led to the arrest and detention of Savchenko in Russian territory, as well as clarification of the obstacles that prevented her from meeting with the Ukrainian Consul.

In the October parliamentary elections Nadia Savchenko runs for office as a member of Yulia Tymoshenko's party, Batkivshchyna. She is elected and sworn in, in writing.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

The Downing of a Malaysian Airliner

➤ On the 17th of July at 4:20 in the afternoon, a Boeing-777 belonging to Malaysia Airlines, flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, is downed by pro-Russian terrorists. The plane is apparently shot down with BUK M1 surface-to-air missile systems, which have been delivered to the Ukraine from Russia. The tragedy results in 298 casualties. Among the victims are 193 Dutch citizens, 43 Indonesians and 10 British. Additionally, citizens of Belgium, Germany, the Philippines, Canada and New Zealand are traveling on this flight.

That same day, the Ukrainian Security Service releases recordings of telephone

conversations between terrorists, which provide evidence of direct responsibility for the Boeing-777 tragedy. According to the SSU, as soon as twenty minutes after the downing of the aircraft, at 4:40 pm, one of the pro-Russian leaders, Igor Bezler, alias Bes, reports to GRU (Russian military intelligence) Colonel Vasili Geranin that the "Russian Cassacks" have downed a plane.

Initially, Bezler reports that a Ukrainian military aircraft has been shot down, however he makes a second call clarifying that it is a civil aircraft. According to the SSU, the rocket was fired from the separatist-controlled city of Snizhne in

the Donetsk region, and the missile system BUK M1 was operated by three members of the Russian army, who had arrived in the Ukraine together with the missile through an uncontrolled part of the Russian-Ukrainian border.

The investigation has yet to be concluded. Similar events occur in this area only a few days before the Malaysian aircraft catastrophe. On June 14th, an Il-76 aircraft is shot down in Lugansk, causing the death of 49 Ukrainian soldiers. That same day, Ukrainian military transport An-26 is downed in the Lugansk region by pro-Russian terrorists and on July 16th, also the combat aircraft Su-25.

Maidan Clean-up

On the 10th of August, Kiev residents remove the leftover barricades and encampment tents from Maidan Square and Khreshchatyk Street. It follows long negotiations between the municipality of Kiev and the eviction-resistant “residents of Maidan”. Residents of the Ukrainian capital come to help the Mayor of Kiev, as the current state of

Maidan has lost its significance for them once the fighting moves to the east of the Ukraine. Furthermore, the armed thefts that had occurred are attributed to the people of Maidan thus souring their public image.

All previous attempts of Kiev Mayor, Vitaliy Klichko, to reach an agreement have failed. When on August 7th, the

municipal services attempt to clean the city centre, they are met with active resistance. Vitaliy Klichko opts for allowing the people of Kiev to decide for themselves whether they want to keep Maidan or not. On August 9th and 10th, following his request, around two thousand people peacefully gather to clean the city centre.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko



The Ilovajsk Pocket

➤ During the second half of August, the Ukrainian forces successfully oust the pro-Russian separatists and succeed in cutting off the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk from the rest of the separatist-controlled areas. Nonetheless, on August 23rd, the separatists receive support from Russian regular troops, who have crossed the Russian-Ukrainian border in the Amvrosiyivka–Biloyarivka area. Two or three Russian army task force battalions operate in this area. Concurrently, more Russian battalions invade the territory of the Ukraine in the areas of Krasnodon and Novoazovsk (from the direction

of Mariupol). Russia escalates its offensive and maneuvers in four separate directions. Ultimately, the Ukrainian forces in Illovaisk near Donetsk are surrounded, the enemy can progress to Mariupol, free Lugansk and push the Ukrainian army toward the north to Seversky Donets river.

The battles in the Illovaisk region last two weeks. In the end, the Russian army together with the separatists succeed in coercing the Ukrainian forces into retreat. In the attempt to break through the blockade, the Ukrainian units suffer huge losses, the exact number of victims has not

yet been determined, but it is in the hundreds.

On the opposing side, Russian human rights defenders, concerned with the participation of Russian forces in the war in the Ukraine, likewise report casualties in the hundreds. Eventually, the Ukrainian army succeeds in stopping Russian forces en route to Mariupol. The attempt of Russian units to surround the city from the north is not effective. The situation in Mariupol stabilizes. This route is of particular importance to Russia, with regard to creating an unobstructed corridor towards the occupied Crimea.

Photo Iv Bogdan



Just don't panic!



**Yevgen Dykyi,
Aidar Battalion,
ATO**

› Nothing irredeemable or unexpected happened. We just survived another level of this terrible game: we won convincingly over the separatists, in fact we almost pushed them out, and quite obviously we reached a higher level, which is of course challenging the Russian Federation army in a direct conflict.

Did anyone suppose it would come to this? We should be happy it has only happened now and perhaps not in March or April. Back then we didn't know how to fight. Did you forget the about the Maidan? The Maidan events advanced likewise in accordance with the rules of a computer game: a victory in one level and then progress to the next, where the enemy's resistance becomes even more ruthless. Another victory leads to an escalated ruthlessness. This is how it will be up to the final victory over Putin. Today's level is far from being the last.

Yes, every new level starts with big losses (they gradually increased), and up till now merely with defeats - Novozovsk, Illovaïsk, Chryashchivate... But losing a battle does not mean losing the war. Just think of the victorious "men in uniform" in Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, look at the map today, but let us not resort to an unwise panic. It's terrible, but it is a damn war. That's what war is like. There's no war without casualties and nobody has yet been able to fight a serious enemy (and our enemy is not to be taken lightly) without losses, and just march around victoriously all the time. Needless to lament, needless to shout: "Ah, all is lost!" "How could this happen? They betrayed us!". Yes, our generals are not perfect; it is their first war, after all, until now all they did was sit in their offices. But first, we don't have any other generals now, and secondly, do not confuse inexperience and a lack of professionalism with treachery. No one betrayed anyone; it's just war, a war with a very qualified enemy. We have to grit our teeth, to remember the fallen and push on.

It will get worse in the near future. It won't be about sporadic bombings, but about mass bombings, which will quite possibly affect not only the troops, but also civilians in cities; there will be a battle in Mariupol, there may be an effort to open a "second front" from Transnistria to the Odessa region. Neither will be the end, just the

beginning. But the enemy's reserves are not infinite either.

After a few lost battles a victory will arrive and the pendulum will swing back to our side. The important thing is to endure, not to succumb to unwise and tenuous panic.

Our response to aggression should be a massive volunteer movement. At this stage, there are 54 volunteer battalions at the front or engaged in various stages of military training. This number should increase to 540. We all have to go to war or to work behind the lines for the needs at the front. This way we will win. It is a war of the Ukrainian nation (with an almost decomposed state apparatus), which organizes itself against the Imperial Russian apparatus (with a completely decayed civil society). It is a war of freedom against oppression. We are 46 million citizens; they count merely as an oversized state apparatus. The numbers are on our side.

Remember, the Russian army is far from invincible. To pacify Chechnya with (450,000 inhabitants before the war and an area of the size of the Kiev region) they needed 10 years and a contingent of one hundred thousand troops. They are not strong enough to pacify us. If we, of course, defend ourselves.

The main mission for those at the rear right now – is not to allow the politicians to betray us. To prevent politicians somewhere in Brussels or in Minsk from destroying everything that was gained in Donbas with the blood of our boys. Not to allow our politicians to get scared - like they constantly were during the events at Maidan, unlike us, just ordinary citizens. If we are not betrayed by the ones at the top, we will manage. The danger is not lurking for us in the trenches, but in Pechersk (central administrative district in Kiev – editor's notes). But again, we must not confuse the control of politicians with simple hysteria "Ahh, everything is lost, all of them out, we want another small revolution". After the war is over we will deal with recriminations, but we must not resort to any foolish coups during the war. We need only a strict daily control of the government. And one last time: No hysteria! Stop the silly panic and get to work. And those who fall victim to hysteria, are to be considered traitors. According to the laws of war.



The Minsk Summit and the Minsk Protocol

➤ On the 26th of August in Minsk, Belarus, there was a meeting of the highest representatives from Customs Union member countries, the Ukraine and the European Union. It was the first meeting regarding the regulation of the eastern Ukrainian crisis with the direct participation of the presidents of the Ukraine and Russia. In addition to Petro Poroshenko and Vladimir Putin, the summit was also attended by Belarussian President, Alexander Lukashenko, Kazakhstani President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Head of European Diplomacy, Catherine Ashton, EU Commissioner for Energy, Günther Oettinger, and EU Commissioner for Trade, Karel De Gucht.

Late in the evening on the same day, a private discussion between the Presidents of the Ukraine and Russia took place. Subsequently Petro Poroshenko met with Catherine Ashton.

The Minsk Protocol was signed in Minsk, Belarus, on September 5th by the participants of the Trilateral Contact Group on the Ukraine, the OSCE Representative, Heidi Tagliavini, former Ukrainian President, Leonid Kuchma, and Russian Ambassador to the Ukraine, Mikhail Zurabov. The Protocol resulted from the negotiations of the Trilateral Contact Group on the Ukraine to develop common strategies towards Petro Poroshenko's peace plan and the initiatives of Vladimir Putin.

The protocol was signed by Aleksandr Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky, although the document itself did not indicate whom they were representing. At that time, Zakharchenko was the leader of the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" and Plotnitsky was the representative of the "Lugansk People's Republic".

In the Protocol, which consisted of 12 points, the parties committed themselves to ensure an immediate

ceasefire, to immediately release all hostages and to continue the inclusive national dialogue. The Protocol also provides for the implementation of early local elections in accordance with Ukrainian law; "local government provisional arrangements in some areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts."

A ceasefire was declared once the protocol had been signed, which was supposed to lead to a withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory, to a normalization of the situation in the region and to local elections in accordance with Ukrainian law. The UN revealed that 957 people died as a result of combat missions between the 5th of September, when the protocol was originally signed and when the "ceasefire" was enforced, on the 18th of November. The separatists' attacks persisted and their intensity increased in the area of the Donetsk airport, Debaltseve, Shchast and Mariupol.

The Law on special status

➤ In accordance with the September 16th Minsk protocol, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a law on the introduction of special procedural self-governance in certain areas of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions for a period of three years. 277 deputies voted for this decision, nonetheless, its adoption was accompanied by confusion and controversy. Some MPs, journalists and activists accused the President of using coercion and compared the procedure to the process of the passing of the "Law on January 16, 2014" by the Yanukovich regime. The President was also suspected of having come to a secret agreement with Mr. Putin and was accused of deliberately losing part of Donbas territory in exchange for "freezing" the conflict with Russia.

The law of temporary self-governance procured an annual financial support from the Ukrainian state budget for social and economic needs in the affected areas of the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblast.

With this law, the Ukraine guaranteed the impossibility of prosecution or punishment of any person connected with the events that occurred in some of the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblast districts, and also granted the citizens the right to use Russian or another language in all the spheres of social and private life. The law also guaranteed the execution of early local elections on December 7th, in accordance with Ukrainian law.

Later it became clear that neither Russia nor the pro-Russian separatists intended to comply with either public or "secret" agreements. Attacks on Ukrainian forces persisted and Russia continued transferring its troops into Ukrainian territory.



Photo Ivo Dokoupil

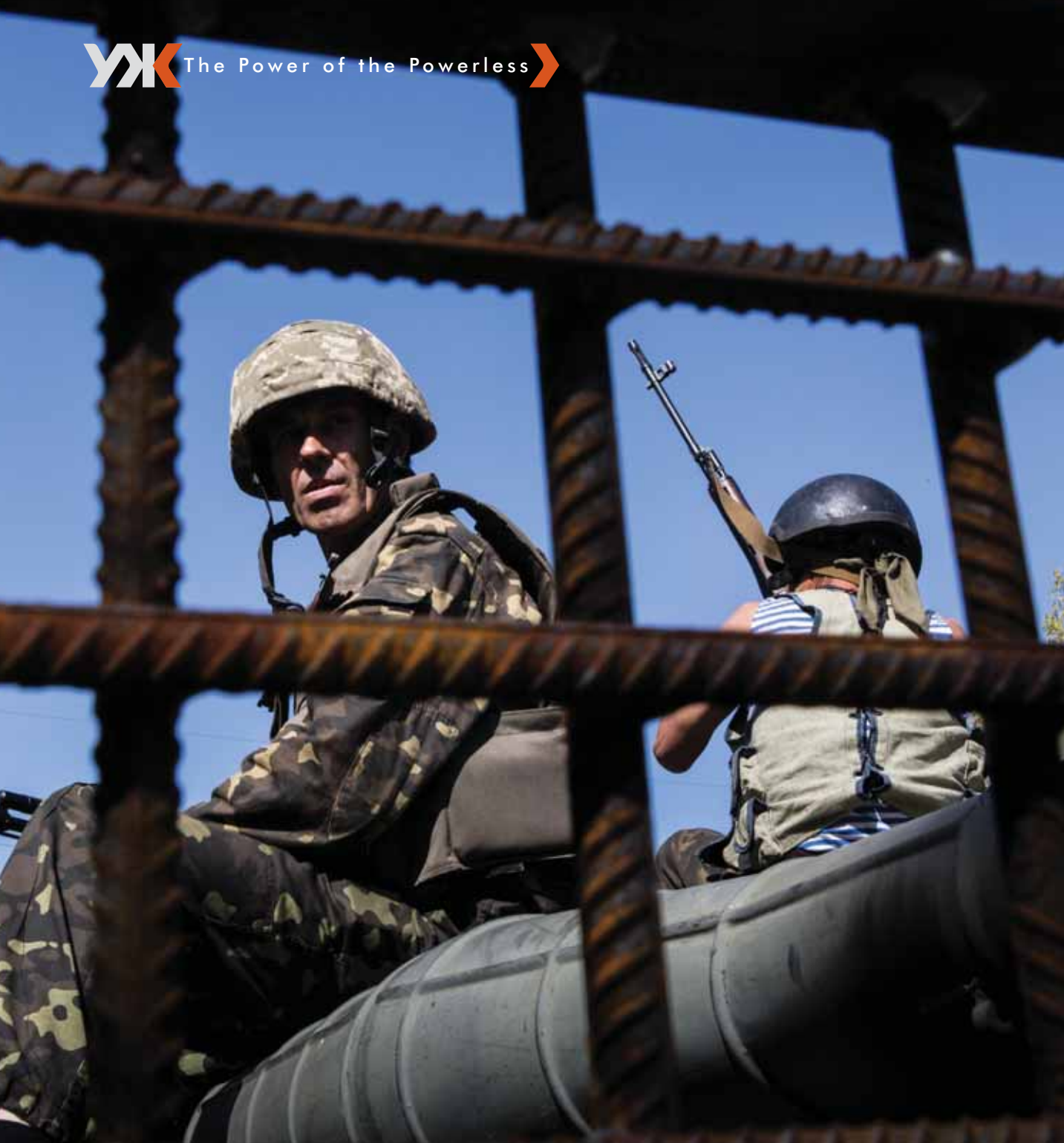


Photo Iv Bogdan

Life behind the Wall

On the 10th of September, Ukrainian authorities initiated a project to build a Wall on the border with Russia as part of a system of fortifications.

According to the plan, two defense lines are to be build, whose main purpose is to prevent enemy troops from entering Ukrainian territory. The basic project provides for 1,500km of communication lines, over 8,000

foxholes for special equipment, more than 4,000 dugouts and the construction of a "blast-resistant" fence. The borders between the Ukraine and Russia in the Sumy, Kharkiv and Chernihiv regions are to be protected by a three meters wide and two meters deep ditch, signal bands with observation towers every 20 km. The Donetsk and Lugansk

regional borders should be further reinforced with electronic monitoring and engineering dykes.

The Wall project covers both the maritime and terrestrial borders with the Crimea, most especially in Mariupol, Berdyansk and Henichesk. Five hundred million hryvnas have been set aside as the preliminary budget for this project.

Is there life without Pushkin?

➤ It is universally acknowledged that Tomáš Bata, the genius of Czech business, was the most successful shoe manufacturer in Europe. However, I read, in the book, *Gottland* by Mariusz Szczygieł, that Bata was also a huge literary connoisseur. And although he advised his employees to spend as much of their free time as possible reading; he at the same time painted the factory walls with warning signs that read in big letters: "DO NOT READ RUSSIAN NOVELS! RUSSIAN NOVELS KILL ALL THE JOY OF LIFE!".

At the moment, I am reminded of this episode from Bata's life almost every day. Nowadays in the Ukraine I encounter inflamed debates about this topic, some even among educated and well-behaved people, on a daily basis. The bone of contention lies in the question: How should we approach Russian literature? The question of how should Ukrainian citizens (I do not mean "citizens" of Luganda and Donbabva) approach the Russian government, was answered in the mouths of football fans: "Putin – la-la-la". Then they realized the fact that roughly 90 percent of Russians are devoted supporters of Putin and therefore in Russia the la-la-la part of the song does not merely apply to the feral government, but also to its zealous people.

If I am to be completely honest, these people are even more "la-la-la" than Putin himself. Victor Yerofeyev recently alluded to this fact with a somewhat unexpected genuineness: "We liked the drunk cattle. We considered it saintly. Now the time has come for these saints (...). We thought there was a treasure with jewels. The best of the 19th century helped us: Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy. Almost all our writers believed that, including the representatives of rural prose, Solzhenitsyn ... But it turned out that all there is, is a coffin and rotting entrails. In 2014, the coffin was opened. And the smell hit us right in the nose."

(Please check this bit over because I didn't know the cattle reference so I may not have phrased it as intended)

Thus, all is explained about the Russian people. The last triumph is left: "Great Russian Literature." The sensible remnants of the Russian intelligentsia, ashamed of this government and of its society, appeal to the world: "Excuse me," they say, "our country behaves like cattle, but there is another Russia – the Russia of Pushkin, and not the one of Putin".

Well, I fully support the microscopic minority of sensible Russians and I remain grateful for their sober judgment. But the problem is: from the Ukrainian perspective, and the perspective of various other "small" Slavic countries, the Russia of Pushkin is not too far from the Russia of Putin. And even if these two Russias do differ in some aspects, that does not make one of them automatically more attractive. Why should we love Pushkin? For his "silent Ukrainian night"? These are the exact lines from the poem *Poltava*, in which Pushkin acts like a typical servant of the empire that depicts the enemies of the Tsar and the enemies of Russia and insults Mazepa as a traitor without a homeland. The same is to be said of the poem, "Klevetnikam Rossii", which even propaganda guru Dmitry Kiselyov would be proud of. In this poem, Pushkin threatens to bury in Russian fields all the representatives of European society that supported "the proud Poles" who dared to stand up against the Russian autocracy. Something like the Ukraine today. The best part of it is that Pushkin's false propaganda did not prevent him from, in the spirit of Churkin, proclaiming himself the defender of freedom and calling for compassion for the victims in his brutal times.

My attitude toward Pushkin is only softened by the fact that in comparison with later Russian chauvinists, Alexander Sergeyevich is still quite sober. Although he licked the emperor's everything with all his strength, at least he did not fall to the level of Dostoyevsky with phrases such as "Jews will exterminate Russians," or "Jews will drink the blood of our nation".

He likewise called for an immediate occupation of the Crimea by Russians;



**Olexandr Boychenko,
Chernivtsi**

otherwise the land would be inhabited by Jews who would deaden the soil of the Crimea. And so on. For those who are interested, Russian literature contains plenty of examples of xenophobia in general and in particular, Ukraine-phobia: such as the Ukrainian language is a "vile language that does not even exist" (Mikhail Bulgakov) to the graphomaniac epistle of Joseph Brodsky "On Ukrainian independence". Not even mentioning clinical idiots such as Eduard Limonov or Zachar Prilepin. So how to approach "Great Russian literature"? You don't. Strictly speaking. Do you know what Plato and Aristotle, Spinoza and Kant, Dante and Shakespeare, Cervantes and Rabelais, Bach and Mozart, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci have in common? Not too much. Nonetheless something definitely connects them. None of them read a line of Pushkin or Dostoyevsky, Bulgakov or Brodsky in their entire lives, not to mention those clinical idiots Limonov and Prilepin. None of them, let's be honest, mastered Russian. And somehow they made their peace with it, somehow they survived, had some access to world culture, and even achieved something in their respective fields. ➤



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

The Minsk Memorandum

On September 19th, representatives of the OSCE, the Ukraine and Russia met again in the capital of Belarus, where they signed a Memorandum on the implementation of resolutions of the Protocol on the negotiation results of the Trilateral Contact Group developing common strategies towards Petro Poroshenko's peace plan and the initiatives of Vladimir Putin. The Minsk Memorandum contained specific strategies for implementation

of the Protocol from September 5th. Additionally, the Memorandum requested a complete ceasefire and determined a line separating the Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces according to their positions on September 19th. The process of removing all heavy weaponry to 15km behind each side of the line of contact was to be initiated within 24 hours of the signing of the Memorandum, resulting into a 30-kilometre buffer

zone. All aircraft, including unmanned aerial vehicles, were to be banned over the security zone. The memorandum also envisaged the establishment of an OSCE monitoring mission, the withdrawal of all foreign armed forces, militants, mercenaries and military equipment from the territory of the Ukraine under the supervision of the OSCE. None of these resolutions, however, were implemented.

The “Help the Ukrainian Army” Initiative

➤ On October 13th, 2014, The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense announced that until that day 150 million hryvnas were received as part of the initiative to “Help the Ukrainian Army”, of which almost 140 were spent on military equipment for the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the rest of the donations were destined for medical supplies. On top of that, 154,500 USD, 77,700 EURO, 5,300 CZK, 450 Canadian dollars, Swiss francs and 140,500 zloty reached the Ministry of Defense accounts. The initiative to “Help the Ukrainian army” was launched on March 15, 2014.



Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Ukrainian Holidays Instead of Soviet ones

➤ On the 14th of October, President Petro Poroshenko abolished another of the relics of the old Soviet system in the Ukraine – Red Army Day, which is celebrated every year on February 23rd. This was first celebrated in 1923 and for many of the “Soviet people” it symbolized “Men’s Day.”

Instead, the Ukraine established the Day of the Defenders of the Ukraine,

which will be celebrated on October 14th. This bank holiday has deep historic origins.

In the Ukrainian tradition, the Ascension of the Virgin Mary was celebrated on this day, which is closely associated with the idea of protection from the enemy. According to the chronicles, Prince Yaroslav the Wise consecrated Kiev and the

entire Kievan Rus to the Virgin Mary. Moreover, October 14th was one of the most important days for the Ukrainian Cossacks, on which the Main Council was held, and the Hetmans were elected. This tradition continued into the 20th century, with the army of the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

Early parliamentary Elections

As a consequence of the early parliamentary elections held on October 26th, the highest number of pro-European politicians are elected to the Verkhovna Rada in the entire history of Ukrainian independence. The results of the elections are, in a large part, affected by a low turnout in the east of the country and the exclusion of the occupied territories from voting.

Despite efforts to modify the electoral law, elections are held in accordance with the former laws. Half of the Parliament, i.e. 225 deputies, are elected in single-member constituencies, the other half of the seats are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system.

The Central Election Commission registers 2,321 international observers, of whom 304 are representatives of 21 States and 2017 embody 20 international organizations. The

largest number of observers – 769 people, are delegates from the OSCE, ENEMO provides 242 observers and Denmark and Germany contribute 24 observers each.

The voting takes place, for the most part, without any major problems. Some polling stations register attempts to obstruct the vote, mostly in areas close to the combat zone. Several polling stations in the Donbas are bombarded.

Turnout reaches 52.42%. In the Donetsk region 32.4% vote and in Lugansk, 32.87%.

On the basis of the proportional representation system six parties are voted into the parliament: the People's Front with 22.14%, Petro Poroshenko's Block with 21.81%, 10.97% for Samopomich, the Opposition block with 9.43%, the Radical Party with 7.44% and Batkivshchina with 5.68% of votes.

The Communist Party, with 3.88%, will for the first time not be represented in Ukrainian parliament.

And for the first time in history the pro-European parties form a constitutional majority in the Ukrainian parliament. We could say that Russia's politics are a decisive factor in the election results, as they inadvertently conspired to rearrange the electoral patterns in the Ukraine in half a year. The annexation of the Crimea and the support of the separatists in the east of the country, where elections did not take place means support for the traditional pro-Russian parties has been substantially reduced. If the vote were to take place in the Crimea and the entire Donbas, the results would be completely different and the constitutional changes and reforms, which Petro Poroshenko plans to carry out, would not be so easily executed.

Photo Vlad Sodel





ЗА БУДУЩЕЕ!

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko

Separatists' Elections

➤ Precisely one week after the parliamentary elections, on November 2nd, the separatists held elections in the occupied areas of Donbas. The establishment of the elections is in breach of the Ukrainian Constitution and the Minsk Protocol, signed by representatives from Russia, the Ukraine, and the so-called leaders of the "DPR" and "LPR". Analogously with Section 9 of this Protocol, the Ukraine pledges to ensure early local elections in accordance with Ukrainian law on the basis laws regarding special status

in some districts of the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblast regions.

Under this law, elections are to be held on December 7th. Elections, which result in the appointment of Alexandr Zacharchenko as the highest representative of the "Donetsk People's Republic" and Igor Plotnitskiy as representative for the "Lugansk People's Republic", which are not internationally recognized. Even representatives of the Russian Federation with "respect to the self-expression of the southeast regions of the Ukraine" talk about local elections,

which they consider will legitimize the representatives of the "DPR" and "LPR" and begin negotiations with Kiev on "practical issues". (Please check that this bit is correct. It was a bit confusing as to who was doing what to whom) Following these elections, the Ukraine begins to express doubts on the effectiveness of the negotiations in the current OSCE-Ukraine-Russia format and advocates the return to negotiations in the EU-US-Ukraine- Russia format.

The End of Financing

➤ The elections held by the separatists in a certain sense loosen Kiev hold. On Monday, November 3rd, Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, declares he will seek to repeal the law on the special status of some districts of Donetsk and Lugansk Oblast and will, consequently, adopt a new law, which will implement a decentralized budget. This means that the districts with special status should live off their own money, that way no one can say that Donbas provides for the Ukraine.

Poroshenko likewise reiterated that while the International Fund for War-affected Donbas will ensure a complete repair of the infrastructure, only areas under the control of the Ukraine will be included.

Within a week of the presidential decision, all state institutions are to be relocated to territory controlled by Kiev. Within a month the Ukrainian National Bank is to discontinue all operations on accounts in banks controlled by the "DPR" and "LPR". The payments

of subsidies, pensions and other social benefits are to be similarly suspended in the occupied territory.

According to experts, the Ukraine will save at least 15 billion hryvnas with this policy, although they warn of the possible severe deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the occupied territories. In any case, since Kiev has not been able to control the distribution of funds from the state budget, it has been left with no other option.

Photo Piotr Andrusieczko



On the 12th of January, 2015 Interpol issued an international red notice for Viktor Yanukovych. His name appeared on the Interpol ‘wanted’ list on charges of “misappropriation, embezzlement or conversion of property by malversation, if committed in respect of an especially gross amount, or by an organized group.”



A screengrab of former President Yanukovych’s Interpol red notice, issued on Jan. 12, 2015

This is a story that began on the
21st of November, 2013 and has
not yet come to an end.

Photo Ivo Dokoupil



