

ON THE HOOK: WHO DICTATES
DECISIONS THAT ARE CRUCIAL
FOR THE NATION **PAGE 12**

WHO WILL BENEFIT
FROM SHALE GAS EXTRACTION
IN UKRAINE **PAGE 22**

SOVIET "LIBERATION" OF UKRAINIANS
IN 1943-44: A REFLECTION OF
NAZI OCCUPATION IN 1941 **PAGE 36**

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The Ukrainian Week

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WHY PEOPLE DO NOT TRUST OPPOSITION LEADERS



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BRIEFING

The Unfinished Gongadze Case:
Sentenced to life, the murderer says Kuchma and Lytvyn should also be behind bars

4



FOCUS

Acting Leader:
Arseniy Yatseniuk appears too inconsistent and unpredictable to inspire trust in the majority of Ukrainian voters

6



Zenon Zavada
on why he does not trust opposition leaders

9

POLITICS



A Crack in the United Opposition?
Centrifugal tendencies in the united camp, and what they signal

10

The Sabotage of European Integration:
Who dictates decisions that are crucial for the nation?

12



Hanne Severinsen:
The General Prosecutor's Office Runs Amok?

16

NEIGHBOURS

Janusz Bugajski
on Russia's soft power wars as tools to reintegrate its neighbours around Moscow's orbit

17



Three in a Boat: PACE's failure to recognize Azerbaijan's political prisoners signals problems for their counterparts in Ukraine

20

ECONOMICS

Aspirations to Control the Gas Market: Who will benefit from the newly-signed shale gas exploration agreement with Royal Dutch Shell

22



Monetary Security:
The Ukrainian Week invites politicians and experts to a panel discussion to find out what the hryvnia will face in 2013

24

SOCIETY



Online Protests: Internet movements help Ukrainians to overcome fear through laughter, give them reliable information and inspire them to act

28

The Voice of Moscow: Yuriy Makarov on the recent sale of one of Ukraine's most popular TV channels

31



Everything is Connected:
Can Internet activism turn into a real political movement?

32

HISTORY



Freedom Without Liberation:
For a large part of the Ukrainian population, Stalin's "liberation from the Germans" was a mirror image of Hitler's "liberation from the Bolsheviks" in 1941

36

French philosopher Philippe de Lara
on the bitter legacy of totalitarian regimes which, even if dead, still exert a strong influence on many countries and cultures

40



The Earth's Star Scars:
How impact events have greatly changed our planet, including the territory of contemporary Ukraine

44

CULTURE & ARTS

A Gallery of Inspiration: Art curator Pavlo Hudimov talks about the promising future of Ukrainian art and ways to attract people to something they don't understand

42



NAVIGATOR



Top 10 Tourist Attractions in Kharkiv Oblast worth seeing, regardless of the season or weather

48

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16 January



High Administrative Court recognizes OUN-UPA members as fighters for Ukraine's independence



24 January

Viktor Yanukovich signs an agreement on shale gas exploration in Ukraine with Royal Dutch Shell (read more on p. 22)



29 January

People in many cities commemorate the 400 Ukrainian soldiers, who fought against a 4,000-strong Bolshevik army in the 1918 Battle of Kruty

The Unfinished Gongadze



Author:
Milan Lelich

The Pechersk District Court in Kyiv announced its verdict against the last of those directly involved in the murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze in September 2000. The ex-chief of the Criminal Investigation Office, General Oleksiy Pukach, was sentenced to life in prison. In 2008, his accomplices, three subordinate policemen, were sentenced to 12-13 years.

Pukach's evidence often surprised those present in court – but not the press, which was not allowed in. Among other things, he claimed that Gongadze was a foreign intelligence agent or had been plotting a state overthrow. He pleaded partly guilty in the murder of Gongadze saying that he wanted

to threaten him, but accidentally broke his neck, leading to his death. However, the court did not take this argument into account.

The reasons Pukach gave as his motive for the crime look more intriguing. He said that he was executing the order of ex-Interior Minister Yuriy Kravchenko in the hope of getting a promotion and higher rank. "It surprises me that the court deemed the fact of the Interior Minister Kravchenko's order to Pukach to be proved, yet did not see that it was a contract killing," said Valentyna Telychenko, the lawyer for Gongadze's widow Myroslava immediately after the verdict was announced. "The verdict does not mention the names of those who

hypothetically contracted the murder."

Telychenko hopes to appeal the verdict against Pukach and demand the determination by the court that the crime was a contract murder. She added that, together with Myroslava Gongadze, she will demand the renewal of proceedings in the case against Yuriy Kravchenko, which was previously separated out into an individual file. "The case against those who ordered the murder of Gongadze is not formally closed and has to be reopened" Telychenko said.

Pukach disclosed the names of those who potentially ordered the murder in summer 2011. They included ex-president Leonid Kuchma, and Volodymyr Lytvyn, the then Chief of Staff and ex-Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada. He mentioned their names again after he heard his verdict: "I will agree (to the verdict – **Ed.**) when Kuchma and Lytvyn are in this cage with me." So far, there has been no reaction from the Prosecutor General's Office. Of all the cases related to the murder of Gongadze, only the one concerning ex-Interior Minister Yuriy Kravchenko's complicity remains open. It has been eight years since the mysterious death of the latter, so it looks as if it will stay that way.

Clearly, Kravchenko is the most convenient participant in the Gongadze case. The late minister cannot give anyone away. But the question of Kuchma's and Lytvyn's involvement in the murder remains unanswered for society

The month
in history

6 February 1893



Dmytro Hryhorovych, Ukrainian aircraft designer and hydroplane inventor, is born

7 February 1483



Yuriy Drohobych's *Prognosis Evaluation of the Current Year 1483* is published as the first printed book by a Ukrainian author in Rome

9 February 1648



Bohdan Khmelnytsky is elected Hetman of Zaporizhia Sich

5 February



The BOBs, an annual blog contest by Deutsche Welle, includes Ukrainian as one of its 14 official contest languages



Opposition MPs block the work of parliament, demanding the Party of Regions and its allies to vote in person, using the new sensor button

6 February



The court postpones the appeal in the Pavlychenko case till March. Rallies in their support soon spread all over Ukraine (read more on p. 28)

e Case

even after Pukach's sentencing. In fact, keeping them both on the hook is convenient for those in power. Even though he has stayed out of politics for a while now, Kuchma has influence over Viktor Pinchuk (notably, Pinchuk's TV channels turned a blind eye to the fact that Pukach mentioned Kuchma and Lytvyn in his final words in court) and politicians linked to him – and he may become yet another prosecution witness in cases against Yulia Tymoshenko, since the relevant events took place when he was president. Volodymyr Lytvyn, as well as a number of people linked to him, remains part of the majority in parliament, although his one-time political influence has plummeted, and the phantom of the Gongadze case guarantees his loyalty when voting.

Apparently, it is no coincidence that the Prosecutor General charged Tymoshenko with involvement in the murder of Donetsk businessman Yevhen Shcherban in 1996 at the same time as Pukach heard his verdict – she could also end up serving a life term for this. All this looks like an attempt to persuade Ukrainian society, and most importantly, Western politicians, that the Ukrainian judiciary does not only punish opposition politicians for scandalous contract murders. However, since those who really ordered the murder of Gongadze have not yet faced due punishment, the Gongadze case remains a tool of political games – as it has been for the past decade. ■

GONGADZE CASE CHRONICLES

16 September 2000

Journalist Georgiy Gongadze leaves his office at 10.30p.m. and disappears in an unknown direction

2 November 2000

An unidentified beheaded body is found in a forest near Tarashcha, a town in Kyiv Oblast, later recognized as the body of the murdered journalist

28 November 2000

The leader of the Socialist Party, Oleksandr Moroz, accuses President Leonid Kuchma of the murder and reveals the existence of Melnychenko's tapes

December 2000

A tent city is set up on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kyiv and the Ukraine Without Kuchma protest begins

January 2001

The Prosecutor General initiates a case against Major Melnychenko, accusing him of slander

27 February 2001

The Prosecutor General initiates a case under charges of murder

9 March 2001

After clashes in front of the Presidential Administration, the Ukraine Without Kuchma protest ends

April 2001

Mykola Melnychenko and Gongadze's widow, Myroslava, are granted political asylum in the USA

15 May 2001

Interior Minister Yuriy Smyrnov announces that Gongadze's murder was not politically motivated and was committed by former prisoners who died in December 2000

September 2002

The Temporary Investigation Committee of the Verkhovna Rada demands the initiation by the Prosecutor General of a criminal case against Leonid Kuchma and his closest circle, including Volodymyr Lytvyn, Yuriy Kravchenko and Leonid Derkach, for contracting Gongadze's kidnapping

October-November 2003

General Oleksiy Pukach is arrested on charges of destroying documents that prove the organization of the surveillance of Gongadze, but is soon released under a pledge to stay in town and cleared of all charges

14 January 2005

A criminal case for abuse of office is launched against Oleksiy Pukach; he is put on a wanted list on 24 January

1 March 2005

President Viktor Yushchenko announces the arrest of Gongadze's murderers

3 March 2005

The Prosecutor General, Sviatoslav Piskun, discloses the intent to interrogate ex-Interior Minister Yuriy Kravchenko regarding his involvement in the Gongadze case

4 March 2005

Kravchenko is found dead at his country home in Konchazaspa, Kyiv Oblast. Investigators qualify this as suicide, although two gunshot wounds are found in his head

9 January 2006

The Kyiv Court of Appeal starts hearings on the involvement of ex-police officers Mykola Protasov, Valeriy Kostenko and Oleksandr Popovych in the murder of Gongadze. The trial takes place behind closed doors

29 August 2006

Lesia Gongadze, the mother of Georgiy Gongadze, makes a public statement, saying that she has no confidence in the investigation and the court as regards her son's case

15 March 2008

The Kyiv Court of Appeal sentences Protasov to 13 years in jail, and Kostenko and Popovych to 12

31 May 2009

Retired Major-General Eduard Fere, considered to be close to Oleksiy Pukach, dies after a lengthy coma

21 July 2009

Pukach is arrested in a village in Zhytomyr Oblast

28 July 2009

Pukach mentions a village in Kyiv Oblast where investigators find fragments of a skull considered to be Gongadze's

10 September 2010

The pre-trial investigation on the Gongadze case is completed - Pukach is the only one charged. According to prosecution's conclusions, he acted on an order issued by Kravchenko

28 April 2011

Pukach's trial begins at the Pechersk District Court in Kyiv

23 May 2011

The Prosecutor General's Office files charges of abuse of office leading to the death of Gongadze against Leonid Kuchma

30 August 2011

Oleksiy Pukach names Kuchma, Lytvyn and Kravchenko as those who ordered Gongadze's murder

21 October 2011

The Constitutional Court of Ukraine rules that the evidence collected by someone who is not authorized to collect it, cannot be used as grounds for prosecution; thus, Melnychenko's tapes are no longer valid as evidence

14 December 2011

The Pechersk District Court in Kyiv qualifies the case against Leonid Kuchma as illegitimate. On 20 January 2012, the decision is confirmed by the Kyiv Court of Appeal, then by the High Special Court of Ukraine for Civil and Criminal Cases on 26 June

29 January 2013

The Pechersk District Court sentences Oleksiy Pukach to life in prison

PHOTO: UNIAN

10 February 1773



Vasyl Karazin, Ukrainian enlightenment figure, meteorologist and the founder of the Kharkiv University, is born

11 February 1963



A conference on the Ukrainian language starts in Kyiv demanding official status for it in the Ukrainian SSR

12 February 1960



The first Ukrainian nuclear reactor is launched in Kyiv

Acting Leader

The leader of the biggest opposition faction in parliament appears too inconsistent and unpredictable to inspire trust in the majority of Ukrainian voters

Authors:
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Pototsky,
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Skumin

The leader of the United Opposition, Batkivshchyna, has lately intensified his battle in the media for the role of the key alternative to Yanukovich. Apparently, initiatives on the possible creation of a united opposition party with Yatseniuk as leader – actual or acting – are supposed to serve this purpose. Is the Ukrainian majority ready to follow leaders like him? Not at this time, as it has many questions to the leader of arguably the main political force.

Most voters do not see Yatseniuk as a potential leader. Sociological surveys confirm this, reflecting ratings that are much lower than Batkivshchyna's – the party he has been trying to become the patron of. Many observers have the impression that this is the reason why the party ended up with three times less seats in parliament after the 2012 parliamentary election than in the 2007 campaign – and this includes seats won in first-past-the-post constituencies.

With his lack of specificity, demagoguery, self-adoration, dependence on promotion and constant attempts to evade answering tough questions, Yatseniuk has forced many think of him as a representative of the “establishment” that is foreign to the interests of most voters and lives a totally different, post-soviet life. Of course, he seems to be the lesser evil. And that is enough to encourage people to vote for him or his political party in the election, yet insufficient to make the Ukrainian majority believe that he is ready for an open conflict with those in power. Most voters have no idea how Yatseniuk will act, should he take the helm.

WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

The first reason for this is the history of Yatseniuk's political ascent, linked to proactive support from the most influential oligarchs at the

time. He began his career in the entities of Viktor Pinchuk, the son-in-law of then President Leonid Kuchma, in the late 1990s. Pinchuk helped to promote Yatseniuk to the position of Minister in the Crimean Cabinet and subsequently First Deputy Chairman of the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU). Yatseniuk launched his own political project in 2008 with the support of Dmytro Firtash. The media controlled by Firtash provided him with the necessary media promotion to boost the young politician's rating in a society that was deeply frustrated with Viktor Yushchenko and old elites as a whole. Later, information surfaced that Rinat Akhmetov contributed to the financial support of Yatseniuk through Leonid Yurushev, his business partner and former owner of the Forum bank. Notably, Yatseniuk never mentioned that the close ties of oligarchs with politics were a major problem for the country.

By allowing people backstage to control him and influence his decision-making, Yatseniuk is turning into a puppet. This makes it impossible for him to become a true national leader. One part of Yatseniuk's 2009 presidential campaign was organized by a team of Russian spin doctors headed by Iskander Valitov. Reportedly, they were the ones who had offered the concept of dividing Ukrainians into three sorts based on a region they live in. Later, Yatseniuk, who was seen as a pro-Western liberal and intellectual, ended up with their “military” concept, as well as speculation on nostalgic USSR-related sentiments of some voters and declarations of cooperation with post-Soviet countries as a priority as part of his campaign. The media buzzed then, that it was Pinchuk who foisted these spin doctors on Yatseniuk, demanding the right to choose convenient

projects and the “right” people to implement them in return for his financial support. Two other spin doctors, who worked for Yatseniuk at that time, Semion Uralov and Vladimir Petrov, are still actively involved in Ukraine's backstage politics. They worked in the team of the notoriously Ukrainophobic Ihor Markov who ran in one of the first-past-the-post constituencies in Odesa in the last parliamentary election. When his opponents broke into Uralov's mailbox during the campaign, they found emails confirming close contacts between Markov, the leader of the Rodina (Fatherland) party, and Viktor Medvedchuk, a consistent lobbyist of Russia's interests in Ukraine.

Yatseniuk's poor choice of team members was also obvious after



the last election. The first cross-overs, father and son Tabalov, joined the United Opposition under his patronage. The switching of opposition MPs to the pro-government majority has temporarily come to a halt, but Batkivshchyna has quite a few suspicious figures: Denys Dzenzersky, former member of the board of Viktor Baloha's Yedyni Tsentr (United Centre); Vitaliy Nemilostiviy who is considered to be the creature of professional crossover Davyd Zhvania, and so on.

Another aspect that forces voters to doubt Yatseniuk's sincerity

as leader of the opposition, stems from relations with his current partners in Batkivshchyna and Svoboda. They show his unpredictability in choosing partners and opponents: "Tymoshenko - a democrat?! It must be a new definition of democracy..."; "The choice between Tymoshenko and Yanukovich is a choice between two evils. I see no difference." These are Yatseniuk's quotes prior to Yanukovich coming to power, but even in the summer of 2010, Yatseniuk said: "I want to dispel the myth that the opposition must be united. Tell me: how can I unite with Tymoshenko and Tyahnybok?!"

WHO ARE YOU?

The second reason is the lack of clear answers from Yatseniuk as to why he wants power. Does he need it to replace the current President or to change the nature of the post-Soviet political and socio-economic model? "My objective is to shape Ukrainian ideology, to shape project Ukraine. And for this I must use all means and methods," said then presidential candidate Arseniy Yatseniuk about his ideology at the 2009 Yalta European Strategy summit. It has been almost three and a half years, but he not managed – or wanted – to outline and inform the public of his own vision of transformations in the country, should he come to power. Despite his warlike rhetoric, he sticks to general phrases, such as "democratization", "return to the European path of development" and the like.

Clearly, this raises doubts as to Yatseniuk's intent to crush the current oligarch-monopoly model that stands in the way of the country's successful development or real European integration. Given his current rhetoric, it appears that if Yatseniuk takes the helm, he will look like yet another change of decoration. If this assumption is wrong, he would be wise to answer difficult questions that are crucial for the country more frequently and clearly, rather than avoid doing so. First and foremost, he should understand the necessity, ability and political maturity to overcome postcolonial inertia, whereby Ukraine is not actually a sovereign state,

merely a fragment of the Soviet Union, developing under the inertia of post-soviet space, as opposed to a project for the development of a national European state.

Another question that remains open is whether Yatseniuk, born in Bukovyna which is a predominantly Ukrainian-speaking region, sees the Ukrainian language as an important basis for consolidation of the national identity – vital in overcoming the Russo-Soviet concept once and for all. Vladimir Putin views the Russian language not merely as a means of communication in the post-Soviet territory. It is rather an important marker that outlines the sphere of influence for him and potential frontiers of a restored superpower that he craves. He often mentions the large share of Russian-speaking population in Ukraine, which results from a targeted Russification policy and resettlements of Russians to Ukrainian territories in the past, as a reason for interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs and limiting its sovereignty in determining its own political vector (read **Russia's Soft Power Wars** on p. 17 for more details – Ed.). So, the question to Yatseniuk is whether he does have intent to turn Ukrainian into a full-fledged single official language used in the key spheres of socio-economic life in Ukraine. Or, whether he prefers to support it as a formal and ritual language, accepting the domination of the Russian language in a number of key sectors as a perfectly normal trend in Ukraine's long-term development? In public, Yatseniuk presents himself as a politician who supports Ukrainian as a single official language and takes part in protests against the new law on regional languages in summer 2012. However, whenever he thinks he is out of the public or journalist's eye, his conduct is quite the opposite. For instance, Yatseniuk and Oleksandr Turchynov spoke Russian to each other during the abovementioned language protests in summer. Why is that? Shortly before the New Year, MP Oleksandr Bryhynets left the New Year part for Batkivshchyna because the hosts spoke Russian and Ukrainian, surprised by Yatseniuk's subsequent attempts to somehow justify the bilingual party for Batkivshchyna.



It is equally important to know what Yatseniuk is going to do to change the current oligarch-controlled and monopolized model of Ukraine's economy. Apparently, this is the task of his entire team, the members of which should be in charge of specific issues and answer relevant questions on his behalf (which they partly do – sometimes during public discussion panels arranged by *Ukrayinsky Tyzhden/The Ukrainian Week*). However, their leader stubbornly avoids stating the importance of the struggle against the oligarchy and outlining the key mechanisms to do so. Moreover, his phrase “Don't worry Viktor, you're not an oligarch” to Viktor Pinchuk at the last Yalta European Strategy Summit raises doubts as to whether Yatseniuk is ready to fight the oligarchy. The same applies to his closer contacts with Ukrainian oligarch Petro Poroshenko. After serving in the Yanukovych-Azarov Cabinet, Poroshenko must have felt that the moment was right and is now trying to gain the support of the opposition, while his son Oleksiy is running for a seat in the Vinnytsia Oblast Council under the Batkivshchyna flag.

Or, is it that Yatseniuk does not see that oligarchs are the key obstacle to Ukraine's development as a normal European state? Perhaps, this is because of his friendship with so many of them, and because both he and they are mentally Soviet, therefore feel as if they are a natural part of the post-Soviet oligarchy. They are blocking the emergence of a civilized market, democratic institutions and civil society in Ukraine; prevent the emergence of normal European-type political parties and a civilized media market that would bring real freedom of speech and make journalism independent of a group of monopolistic owners, most of whom are part of the oligarchy. After all, Yatseniuk seems to be turning a blind eye to problems on the local media market, which lacks civilized competition, while key assets are being monopolized by oligarchs and other groups linked closely to Russia. There is a problem with information security whereby a large part of the population is under the systemic pressure of both the oligarch-controlled mass media, and the propaganda-

Friendly talks with oligarchs, general phrases about democracy and a few brief mentions of Tymoshenko hardly made Yatseniuk look like a European-oriented opposition politician at the latest Ukrainian lunch hosted by Viktor Pinchuk at the World Economic Forum in Davos

PHOTO: ROMAN MALKO



oriented machine of Putin's regime which does not hide its neo-imperialistic ambitions on post-Soviet territory. The impression is that Yatseniuk only views the press as a platform for commercial or political advertising and believes that the key priority is to get exclusive access to a media resource through deals with owners, in order to create the “right image” of himself.

Arseniy Yatseniuk has yet to outline his personal vision of Ukraine's geopolitical prospects. The frequent changes of his stance in the last presidential campaign cannot guarantee that he will not support the Kremlin's concepts of a “great Europe” from Lisbon to Vladivostok once again, which will

new “East European Project” Yatseniuk wanted to create entailed close cooperation with Ukraine's post-Soviet neighbours, including a common policy for energy, transport, communication, aviation, space, military, foodstuff production and other sectors.

If Arseniy Yatseniuk wants to become something more than just an acting leader of an artificial political conglomerate, he should declare actual political goals, rather than his general democratic blah-blah. What kind of a country does he want to build? Which economic, political and social pillars will it stand on? Will it offer real free entrepreneurship and protected ownership to everyone or only to the chosen few? Is he prepared to de-sovietize all spheres of life? Should the Ukrainian nation consolidate on the basis of the Ukrainian language, and what does it take to achieve this? Should the post-soviet oligarch-slave model, which is integral to “Eurasian space”, be reformed? How can Ukraine's national security be guaranteed? Is the country capable of protecting its territorial integrity in the modern world by itself?

Unless Batkivshchyna's “father” drops the tactic of feeding off the protest-oriented electorate and offers a constructive alternative project to the voters, he risks losing any political prospect he may have, while the majority of Ukrainian voters risk losing a potential leader, called on to lead it in the struggle against Yanukovych's Soviet-style regime with its usurpative ambitions and anti-Ukrainian policies. ■

YATSENIUK'S INTENT TO CRUSH THE CURRENT OLIGARCH-MONOPOLY MODEL RAISES DOUBTS

put Ukraine's identity and sovereignty under serious threat from Russia. Currently, Yatseniuk seems to be one of the most zealous proponents of Ukraine's European integration and opponents of it joining the Customs Union or any other Eurasian clubs – at least in his speeches. But during the last presidential campaign, his views were completely opposite. “The need for total modernization is not unique for Ukraine alone. Other East European countries, including Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Russia, have the same problems” said his campaign platform. The

Why I Don't Trust Opposition Leaders

The language Maidan last year at the Ukrainian Home was launched by about seven MPs of the For Ukraine! group, who ascended its steps, unfolded their cots and tied bandanas across their foreheads, declaring "I'm on a Hunger Strike!" Unfortunately, opposition members have given a new meaning to the concept of a hunger strike, changing it to "not eating for as long the mass media is interested." Several deputies disappeared after a few hours after appearing in public and on television screens. Some visited from time to time, as if it were a buffet, to inquire what's new. It's not wanted for politicians to die from hunger, but it's also not acceptable when a serious instrument of civil disobedience is turned into a cheap publicity stunt. The role played by the opposition in the hunger strike of 2012 is an example of how they approach politics in general – hackneyed, short-term maneuvers oriented towards the possibility of appearing before video cameras. There are exceptions to the rule that MPs aren't ready to sacrifice themselves. But for the most part, we have a caste of individuals that is entirely cut off from the realities and problems of Ukrainian society.

Since the Orange revolts, when I began going to protests led by opposition leaders and listening to their speeches, I was ready to give them my physical presence, but not my trust to the so-called leaders. Knowing me as a journalist, these politicians rarely viewed me as more than a mouthpiece or microphone – only to throw me some empty phrases, but never allowing me to come too close to see who they truly are. But they don't have to. I already understand that many of them are empty souls who desperately try to appear in the spotlight. And even the imprisonment or abuse against Yulia Tymoshenko hasn't caused them to react with dignity, because they don't know how. They don't respond with dignity because many of them sold it away long ago when they became a member of the Komsomol or committed their first theft (but not last) from the state budget. They are lost because they don't have moral values that would give them orientation.

To earn the trust and support of the people, they think that not eating for a few days and participating in brawls is enough to inspire tens of thousands of Ukrainians, who struggle daily with aggressive law enforcement authorities, endure abuse from bureaucrats and suffer from selective justice.

But is it worth getting struck against one's legs, which has become standard practice, or tear gas in one's face on behalf of such opposition leaders like Arseniy Yatseniuk, who change parties and "ideologies" like a pair of shoes? Or for MP Viktor Pynzenyuk, another switcher who is most remembered as the finance minister who fled the government in a critical moment, when the country was faced with financial

disaster? Or even the whole election list of UDAR, which was formed with the standard template: celebrities in the first five, businessmen tucked in deeper.

Instead we hear the phrases from opposition politicians: "We can't do anything until you come out onto the streets!" But have they come out onto the streets where average people live? Because they'd find a lot to do there. After the October elections, not a single deputy's office has been opened or advertised in Kyiv.

Since 2010, the opposition hasn't organized a national or local network of small and middle entrepreneurs to lobby their interests. Not a single national network to fight corruption in the tax and fire inspection. Not a single local organization oriented towards reforming the housing authorities. Only the ineffective Committee to Oppose the Dictatorship with its general goals.

The position of the majority of opposition leaders is practically this: you organize into civic organizations with your own paltry funds, risk your health in struggling for elementary needs, and also come out onto maidans to struggle for us politicians, because we're the opposition, and we're going to continue flying to Davos's, to remote islands, flaunt our tans before cameras, and enjoy ourselves on the *khokhliatskiy* (degrading) 95 Kvartal. And how they cry when they're not permitted to come to these circuses, where the role of ringmaster is played by Shuster or Kyseliov! They would gain a lot more political dividends if

they put as much effort into developing their party organizations and civic movements.

Svoboda is the exception so far. Even after the elections, Svoboda national deputies are active participants of protests.

But contrary to popular belief, Svoboda's high results in the October election was not so much a reaction against the politics of the Party of Regions as a protest against the ineffectiveness of Our Ukraine and Batkivshchyna. Svoboda would have remained on the margins if these political forces did the work that was expected of them.

After the elections, the opposition tried to organize a long-term, large scale protest near the Central Election Commission, once again without success. The maidan of several thousand protestors, which gathered on the morning of Nov. 5, dwindled to a few hundred by nightfall. A Batkivshchyna advisor, Oleh Medvedev, stared at Lesia Ukrayinka Boulevard in frustration, "Where are the people?" he asked. "We can't do anything without them."

Yes, you need the people because resistance is impossible without them. But it's time that the opposition leaders ask themselves, "Do the people need us?" ■



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**OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE
LOST BECAUSE THEY DON'T
HAVE MORAL VALUES THAT
WOULD GIVE THEM
ORIENTATION**

A Crack in the United Opposition?

Author:
Oleksandr
Kramar

Instead of the creation of a single party on the basis of political forces which joined together into a united opposition during the last parliamentary election, confrontations have lately been ever more noticeable among yesterday's opportunistic allies. The battle for mutual destruction that has threatened the opposition since before the election has not begun yet, but the preconditions for it are already in place.

The single election list of the Batkivshchyna All-Ukrainian Union was intended to be an attempt by the opposition to stand against the "ruling power". It became a classic pre-election conglomerate. However, this notion disappeared almost immediately after sociological surveys showed that the united opposition does not stand as a single alternative to the existing regime, and even more so when election results showed that the Batkivshchyna election list gained only half of the total votes given to opposition parties. From then on, centrifugal tendencies in the united camp have only escalated and overflowed into more or less public dissatisfaction with the activities of their leaders, first and foremost, those of Arseniy Yatseniuk, on the part of the old-guard BYuT members, Anatoliy Hrytsenko as head of the Hromadyanska Pozytisia (Civil Position) and others.

But last week, the conflicts tumultuously spilled over, becoming the number one headline in the media. First of all, the "2000" newspaper published an interview with Anatoliy Hrytsenko, in which he harshly criticized Arseniy Yatseniuk and Oleksandr Turchynov for their authoritarianism and for ignoring the positions of other MPs, particularly himself. Secondly, the conflict between Oleksandr Bryhynets, currently bipartisan, but who is considered to be a representative of a group of MPs

in the Batkivshchyna faction who are close to Petro Poroshenko, and Vyacheslav Kyrylenko, who had attempted to establish his own political project, For Ukraine!, prior to merging with the united opposition, has become public. Bryhynets criticized renewed membership in For Ukraine! by Kyrylenko and three other Batkivshchyna MPs

of Ukraine, headed by Mykola Katerynchuk, another MP who was elected at a first-past-the-post district as a candidate from Batkivshchyna, has nominated its leader for the position of Kyiv Mayor. Clearly, if the local Kyiv election were to be held this year, it would be a bone of contention between opposition forces.



and threatened to demand his resignation from the position of deputy leader of the faction.

Vyacheslav Kyrylenko also stated that this conflict is related to the selection of just one candidacy from the opposition for the position of Kyiv Mayor: in other words, Bryhynets belongs to the group that supports the candidacy of Petro Poroshenko, while Kyrylenko belongs to those who support Vitali Kitschko's candidacy. Finally, the European Party

According to *The Ukrainian Week's* sources, a number of MPs from Batkivshchyna alone have their eye on the mayoral position. Another is Petro Poroshenko, who has recently been actively contacting opposition forces. The manifestation of this was the nomination by Batkivshchyna of his son, Oleksiy for a position in the Vinnytsia Oblast Council and discussions on the possibility of Poroshenko himself being nominated as the only opposition candidate for

Kyiv Mayor. *The Ukrainian Week's* sources state that trading for seats in the Kyiv City Council is just as aggressive.

However, the fact that the conflicts in the Batkivshchyna faction have become public, can also be attributed to the reaction of some pretentious players to Arseniy Yatseniuk's active promotion of the idea of the establishment of a single party, rather than the fact that the Kyiv local election is drawing nearer. By the way, in the weekly newspaper, 2000, Hrytsenko stressed that for various reasons, none of the political forces in the Batkivshchyna faction are ready to merge into a single party. One of the deputy leaders of the faction, Serhiy Sobolev, said in an interview that it is not

made up of MPs elected under the Batkivshchyna list was already raised at the beginning of the first session of the new parliament. At that time, both Yatseniuk and Turchynov were able to secure its formal unity, but differences within the faction only deepened, particularly after the allocation of positions in parliamentary committees. Today, a number of players, who got into parliament on the "united" list for just one purpose – to make the threshold – are striving to regain their status as independent players.

At the same time, to a certain extent, Arseniy Yatseniuk can feel as if he is a hostage of the situation. When joining the ranks of Batkivshchyna, he clearly counted

a new political force rather than struggling (with doubtful results) for control over the conglomerate of the united opposition, with its representatives that are both diverse and overfilled with ambition. Viktor Baloha, who rejected battling for control over Nasha Ukraina (Our Ukraine) in favour of creating his own project, Yedyniy Tsentr (United Centre), acted in the same manner in his time. However, what differentiates the two is the fact that Yatseniuk has a high personal rating.

The fact that the government has inflated the conflict in the ranks of the opposition in the media is clear, because it is particularly interested in doing so right now. The *Segodnya* and 2000 publications are playing a particularly active role in fueling the conflict. For example, the latter conducted a scandalous interview with Hrytsenko, while the former circulated information about his expulsion from the Batkivshchyna faction. Political analysts who are close to the government, continue to peddle the theory that Yulia Tymoshenko "cannot support Yatseniuk as the single candidate from the opposition, and even if she is supporting him, she is only doing so because she is making a mistake". This could signal a broader trend that goes beyond Batkivshchyna alone. For instance, UDAR's MP Pavlo Ryzanenko has informed the media that his false blog on korrespondent.net was re-



PHOTO: UNIAN

THE GOVERNMENT HAS INFLATED THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE RANKS OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE MEDIA, BECAUSE IT IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THIS AT THE MOMENT

the time for discussions on the candidacy of Yatseniuk as the only candidate from the united opposition in the future presidential election. He stated that the decision that such nominee is Yulia Tymoshenko remains in force and that she is the only one with the right to conduct negotiations on the approval of a single candidate with other political forces.

It's worth mentioning here that the issue of the establishment of one or several factions

on transforming it into his own political force. To a large extent, this explains his recent promotion as "the father of Batkivshchyna". He is probably concerned about the possibility that his allies in the united opposition will select a different candidate for the presidential chair in the 2015 election. Being aware of losing the prospect of becoming the only opposition candidate, could nudge Yatseniuk into searching for alternative scenarios, more specifically, creating

launched, publishing materials intended to provoke the conflict with Batkivshchyna. It is also hard to miss the fact that the publication in the media of the conflicts (undoubtedly existing, even if quite old) coincided with the well-coordinated actions of the opposition regarding the extraordinary session of parliament, the battle against violations of the voting procedure and particularly the blocking of the Verkhovna Rada's work. ■

The Sabotage of European Integration

The actions of Ukrainian enforcement authorities look like efforts to disrupt the signing of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, but they could eventually prove futile

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At the briefing held on 18 January, Prosecutor General, Viktor Pshonka, announced the completion of an investigation under yet another case against Yulia Tymoshenko. In this one, she is accused of being involved in the assassination of businessman and MP, Yevhen Shcherban, who together with his wife and three more people, was shot at the Donetsk airport on 3 November 1996. Even though the investigation was begun a while ago, the decision to file charges came as a surprise. Ever since the announcement was made, Tymoshenko's health and prison conditions issues have slowly faded in the media. So has the incident with three female MPs who refused to leave her hospital ward and were literally kicked out based on a court verdict, as well as the mounting pressure on opposition MPs from enforcement authorities.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

"Such a surprise move could further complicate relations with the European Union and the US as Ukraine enters a year that analysts believe could be decisive in determining whether one of Europe's biggest nations moves closer to the EU or returns to Russia's fold. <...> The legal escalation against Tymoshenko comes just as EU diplomats were debating whether to soften their stance on the case against the ex-premier and allow the signing of the trade agreement" wrote FT in an article published on 18 January.

Two evenings later, information surfaced that Pshonka, along with Health Minister, Raisa Bohatyriova and the Head of the State Penitentiary Agency, Oleksandr Lisitskov, met with accredited diplomats in Ukraine. According to the Prosecutor General's Office, the officials briefed the delegates of 23 diplomatic missions, including those from Russia, the USA and the EU, that Tymoshenko had been notified that she was a suspect in the case and insisted that the procedure had been conducted in accordance with the law. Minister Bohatyriova provided medical reports which determine that

Tymoshenko can take part in the investigation. On 22 January, however, the US and EU ambassadors to Ukraine filed official requests at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asking for a meeting with Tymoshenko to clarify the situation.

Whatever happens, the new Tymoshenko case is likely to further damage Ukraine's relations with the West – the only question is, how much? What pushed the Prosecutor General to start it now, right before the Ukraine-EU summit, scheduled to take place in Brussels on 25 February? Was it the lack of coordination between different representatives of the government, as some Ukrainian analysts claim; an external provocation the President was unaware of, or a deliberate move by Yanukovich to disrupt the Association Agreement and hold on to the opportunity to continue walking the tightrope between the EU and Russia while reinforcing his authoritarian Family rule in the centre of Europe?

WHO IS THE DECISION-MAKER?

Some Ukrainian experts, including political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko, who favour the first scenario, note that the charges against Tymoshenko were aimed at distracting the public from the scandal of the three MPs being kicked out of her hospital ward by the guard, and hushing up Tymoshenko's protest against the conditions under which she is being kept, including constant video surveillance. According to this logic, the ex-premier's protests and the stirring-up of her supporters could signal her attempts to once again draw attention to herself before the upcoming Ukraine-EU summit and the expected decisions regarding visa facilitation and the Association Agreement. If so, Tymoshenko's advocates may fear that the signing of the Association Agreement with the Yanukovich regime will deprive them of the opportunity to push for the ex-premier's release. In turn, Party of Regions representatives have already accused the opposition of the intent to disrupt the Ukraine-EU summit and the signing of the Association Agree-

ment. Still, this scenario does not explain why MPs were brutally evicted from her hospital ward or why pressure from enforcers against members of Batkivshchyna, including Serhiy Vlasenko and Hryhoriy Nemyria, and other opposition parties has mounted – it only underscores the repressive nature of the Yanukovich regime.

Thus, the scenario of a targeted campaign orchestrated by Russian special services to provoke yet another wave of confrontation with the West looks more plausible. Under current circumstances, such a scenario is only of benefit to the Kremlin because the Association Agreement and FTA Agreement with Ukraine will hamper the implementation of its plan to draw Ukraine into its neo-imperialistic projects. Moreover, there is a curious coincidence: after the failure of Putin's first attempt to get Ukraine to join the Customs Union in spring 2011, there was a high probability that Ukraine would sign the Association Agreement with the EU at the preliminary bilateral summit in autumn 2011. But this was disrupted by Tymoshenko's arrest in August, just a few months be-

2011 AND 2013 SCENARIOS TO DISRUPT THE SIGNING OF THE UKRAINE-EU ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT HAVE MUCH IN COMMON

fore the summit. Moscow's second attempt to force Yanukovich into the Customs Union was in December 2012. However, after the cancellation of his scheduled visit to Russia, allegedly because the parties had disagreed on some integration aspects, chances increased that the final decision on the signing of the Association Agreement in 2013 would be taken at the February summit. Moreover, European structures had somewhat relaxed their stance in December, demanding only "progress" on relevant issues, not the resolution of those on political prisoners. Given these demands, all the Ukrainian authorities had to do to disrupt the signing was to

achieve setbacks on these issues. The developments of the past few weeks appear to be the development of this scenario.

Another possible assumption is that the mounting political repressions result from external pressure on Ukrainian enforcement authorities, of which the President has been unaware. If this is the case, the public may soon see some serious reshuffling in government involving people who set Yanukovich up so badly right before the Ukraine-EU summit and his visit to Davos on 23-24 January. Otherwise, developments will point to a third scenario – that the President has personally authorized the attack against the opposition. However absurd this may seem in terms of his own interests, this signals Yanukovich's efforts to disrupt the summit or at least the signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

THE SECURITY (DIS)SERVICE

The question is whether Yanukovich is taking these steps voluntarily or under external influence. On the one hand, he is obviously forced to feign “European-oriented intentions” given their popularity with the

electorate and politicians. On the other, he should view membership in the Customs Union as a much greater risk to his prospects of staying in power, than the potential signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, even though it's doubtful that it will be ratified anytime soon. Actually, for the most part, the latter does not require much of a commitment from Yanukovich, who would be able to continue to develop his Family business. He can traditionally explain to “friendly” Europe, that “everything is in line with Ukrainian legislation, which is

nal influences affect his decisions.

Obviously, the team in power, particularly enforcement authorities and the President's personal circle, is full of people who could be linked to Russian special services. It appears that these people have once again succeeded in persuading Yanukovich by fueling his fears and insecurities, or, perhaps, by using different “leverages”. Meanwhile, Ukrainian special services are still made up of the remains of the KGB, and the common belief is that there is no such thing as an ex-KGB agent. Lustrations have not taken place, and quite a few people, including the administration of the SBU, Ukraine's Security Service, still view the leaders in Moscow as “our leaders”. This makes it impossible to expect any effective resistance to special foreign operations.

So far, this influence on Yanukovich has prevented any moves that could eliminate or hamper the prospect of Ukraine's reintegration with Russia, but it has not been persuasive enough to ultimately drag Ukraine into the Customs Union. If unchanged, it would allow the Yanukovich regime to continue reinforcing itself while balancing between Russia and the EU without

TO THIS DAY, UKRAINE DOES NOT HAVE SECURITY SERVICES THAT ARE CAPABLE OF RESISTING SPECIAL FOREIGN OPERATIONS

gradually adapting to European standards, even if the process is difficult”, should he have to sweep his competitors out of the way. However, since Yanukovich chose (or was forced to choose) a different scenario, questions emerge as to how capable he is of taking decisions on his own and whether any exter-

THE YEVHEN SHCHERBAN CASE



Tymoshenko's “Killer” Case

Author: Oleksandr Mykhelson

The Prosecutor General's Office must have been looking forward to charging – or serving a notice on the suspicion of a crime, as stated in the new Code of Criminal Proceedings – Yulia Tymoshenko with contracting a murder. This was not the first attempt but until now, the investigative group did not have the opportunity to acquaint the imprisoned ex-premier with the report on her alleged involvement in the assassination of MP Yevhen Shcherban on 3 November 1996 (see photo). When Ihor Kolpashchikov, Head of the Kachanivka Prison administration, finally read the notification of suspicion on 18 January 2013, journalists were urgently called to the Prosecutor General's Office in Kyiv.

publicly dropping the idea of European integration and blaming the lack of progress in this direction on the EU or the opposition. However, the past month has seen an abrupt shift of Ukrainian politics regarding the Kremlin.

The escalated persecution of Tymoshenko and the opposition as a whole may not stop the EU from holding the February summit and signing the Association Agreement and FTA Agreement in 2013, but it could delay ratification until the Yanukovich regime fulfills all of its requirements or, more likely, is replaced. This would allow the EU to leave the Ukrainian government with no room to blame Ukraine's turn to Moscow on the EU's "double standards" and prove that European states and structures will not ratify the Association Agreement without significant transformations in Ukraine. The EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, is planning to visit Kyiv on February 6-7 as part of preparations for the summit.

THE PERSONIFICATION OF ISOLATION?

Despite the aggravation of the situation with the ex-premier, on 22 January, the European

Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs unanimously supported amendments to the Ukraine-EU visa facilitation agreement, signed in Brussels on 23 July 2012. However, the document still has a long way to go, including being voted on by the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee at the European Parliament's plenary session, before the European Council passes its final decision. The time it's taking to implement the agreement signed last July signals how long the ratification of the Association Agreement could take after the formal signing.

Widespread opinion in the West is that putting pressure on the Yanukovich regime is the task of Ukrainian society and the opposition, while the role of the outside world is to merely support them, not do it for them. The EU's strategic choice can be in favour of integration with Ukraine, accompanied by tactical personal isolation for Yanukovich and odious members of his regime, such as Renat Kuzmin who is already having difficulties entering the USA. This theory was illustrated by Yanukovich's visit to Davos, where meetings were only scheduled with Martin Schulz, the President of the European

Parliament (a representative of the Party of Regions' European partners), Georgia's Prime-Minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili (who has recently been following Yanukovich's example in persecuting the opposition) and the CEO of Royal Dutch Shell, which is planning to extract shale gas in Ukraine.

If this is the case, the Association Agreement and a slight thaw in negotiations between the EU and Ukraine will be a step that benefits Ukraine as a state, while the visible isolation of Viktor Yanukovich and part of his team, which is likely to increase

THE EU MAY AGREE TO SIGN THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT BUT RATIFY IT DEPENDING ON UKRAINE'S EXECUTION OF ITS OBLIGATIONS

further, will serve as a warning of possible personal sanctions in the future. Moreover, the signing of the agreement and communication with Ukrainian diplomats and businesses will not prevent European structures from implementing such personal sanctions. These can be two different processes. ■

According to the Prosecutor's Office, Tymoshenko, who at that time was the CEO of YeESU, United Energy Systems of Ukraine, and the then premier, Pavlo Lazarenko, had a business conflict with Shcherban: Lazarenko demanded that Donetsk enterprises buy gas from YeESU, while Shcherban was interested in reinforcing the position of the Industrial Union of Donbas on the gas market. Investigators insist that Tymoshenko had personally threatened Shcherban. According to the Prosecutor General's Office, Lazarenko and Tymoshenko finally hired a group of killers who had previously assassinated the unofficial king of Donbas, Akhat Bragin, through deceased crime boss, Oleksandr Milchenko, known as Matros (Sailor). The day after Shcherban and his wife were fatally shot at the Donetsk airport, the killers received USD 500,000 in cash from Lazarenko's assistant. A further USD 3.2mn was later transferred to their accounts from companies controlled by Tymoshenko. How investigators intended to prove that it was indeed Tymoshenko who paid for the

assassination was still unknown when this article went to print. The payment documents did not specify a designation for the funds. In theory, prosecutors could have two witnesses in the case. One is Vadim Bolotskiikh, a Russian citizen who shot the Shcherban couple and is serving life in prison, and Petro Kyrychenko, Lazarenko's right-hand man. The latter had previously cooperated with US law enforcement agencies, revealing the scheme Lazarenko used to receive kickbacks from YeESU in the money laundering case. For this, Kyrychenko ended up with US citizenship and was given protection under the Federal Witness Protection Programme. He had property, including an apartment in Kyiv that was seized. Informed sources claim that the Ukrainian special service blackmailed Kyrychenko to get evidence from him in August 2011: information was circulated that the apartment was no longer seized, but when his wife flew to Kyiv to sell it, she was arrested for attempting to sell seized property. In November 2011, Kyrychenko gave evidence by phone. Among other things, he said that the money

given to O. Milchenko for the assassination came from Tymoshenko. However, no evidence has been disclosed to prove that she knew what the money was used for. According to the Prosecutor General Pshonka, the murder of Shcherban is considered to be part of the YeESU case. The trial on the latter has not started yet as sessions are constantly postponed, since ill health prevents Tymoshenko from being present in court.

On 18 January, Pshonka said that the new charges may result in a life sentence for Tymoshenko, although it is the court that will specify the term. The investigation involving Tymoshenko was scheduled to begin on 24 January, but didn't. According to her lawyers and family, the critical state of her health does not permit it. After a visit to the hospital where her mother has been since April 2012, Yevheniya said that the ex-premier had lost weight and currently weighs 47 kg, while her body temperature is 35°C. Yevheniya Tymoshenko made public an open letter, calling on Ukrainian authorities "not to kill" her mother in prison.



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General Prosecutors Office Run Amuck?

Throw enough mud and some of it will stick. This seems to be the policy be followed by Prosecutor General Viktor Pshonka and First Deputy Prosecutor General Renat Kuzmin in 2013 in response to the international criticism of the selective judgment and imprisonment of political prisoners, most significantly, opposition Leader Yulia Tymoshenko.

There are (no doubt about it) many unsolved murder cases in Donetsk and the surrounding region, - some going back 16 years. So why not accuse her of one of them? And they claim to have evidence while not telling anyone anything about what sort of evidence they have. The presumption of innocence is not something you hear much about in the PGO.

All of this reminds one of the Stalin era when murder was followed by accusations in order to eliminate everyone the regime viewed as an enemy.

To international observers, things are appearing stranger and stranger — while the PGO overlooks the kleptocratic enrichment of the Family in power, prosecutors continue old (and start new) vendettas against not only Tymoshenko, but also those in her circle.

"The new cases against opposition law-makers Serhiy Vlasenko and Hryhoriy Nemyria are harming relations between Ukraine and the European Union." So said the European Parliament's special representative, Alexander Kwasniewski, at the 9th

Ukrainian Lunch in Davos, organized by the Victor Pinchuk Foundation. "We must remove these political mistakes, they are not necessary. Most of these things are very easy to avoid if you want to choose the best strategy — association with the EU," Kwasniewski said.

And this is true: The Association Agreement is only waiting for Ukraine to act according to its own promises to behave like a state ruled by law.

Nemyria, who earlier received a fine but was not allowed to to pay it, was last week effectively detained for about an hour (passing through pass-

port control) when his passport was withheld and he was asked to wait. Thirty minutes later, officials from the Prosecutor's Office appeared and while videotaping the incident served Nemyria a summons to appear for questioning as a witness.

Vlasenko has been intimidated because of cases against him stemming from civil disputes with his former wife. On Thursday, 24 January, he was refused permission to leave Ukraine, thus depriving him of the ability to attend a session of PACE in Strasbourg. Authorities claimed there was a court decision prohibiting him to leave the country until he pays awards in a civil dispute concerning the separation of property after his divorce. But this violates his immunity as an MP. The Law on the Status of MPs is very clear that an MP may only be arrested or detained or charged after agreement from parliament is obtained. And Vlasenko claims he had already paid this "debt".

Yevheniya Tymoshenko, the former prime minister's daughter has had her e-mail hacked and tampered with. For instance a false bill from the Berlin Clinic that treated her mother was fabricated in order to let it look like Tymoshenko was bribed, while in fact she was treated on a voluntary basis and only had her direct travel costs covered.

Hacking now seems to be the choice method for undermining critical journalists.

Ukrainska Pravda journalists Serhiy Leshchenko and Mustafa

Nayem have had their e-mail accounts hacked and fake e-mails have been written to incriminate them.

And all of this happens despite the fact that Ukraine again committed itself to reform the Prosecutor's Office at a session in PACE last year.

Some changes in legislation have been passed — but the behaviour and the implementation seems to be the reverse.

The Council of Europe continues the work of Sisyphus to try, try and try again. But, so far, the Rule of Law is still the victim. ■

**ALL OF THIS REMINDS ONE OF
THE STALIN ERA WHEN MURDER
WAS FOLLOWED BY
ACCUSATIONS IN ORDER TO
ELIMINATE EVERYONE THE
REGIME VIEWED AS AN ENEMY**

Russia's Soft Power Wars



In Moscow's calculations, Russia and the West are embroiled in a long-term competition over zones of dominance in the wider Europe and in Central Asia, despite the fact that the US and its European allies have refused to acknowledge or legitimize such a "great game." Russia's drive for its own sphere in a "multipolar" world contributes to retarding the formation of stable democratic states along its borders. Governments in these countries turn to authoritarianism to maintain the integrity and stability of the state or simply to cling to power. Such a process is invariably supported by Moscow as it contributes to disqualifying these countries from the process of Western integration.

Moscow opposes any "encroachment" by outside powers in its self-proclaimed "privileged" zone of interests or the further expansion of NATO, EU, and US influence. Russia views itself as a regional integrator, expecting neighbors to coalesce around its leadership, rather than a country to be integrated in multi-national institutions in which its own sovereignty is diminished. In this context, Russian "soft power" in all its manifestations is understood as a means for supplementing Russia's foreign policy objectives and enhancing regional integration under Moscow's tutelage.

In marked contrast, the West's "soft power" approach is intended to generate reform, internal stability, external security, democratic development, and open markets to make targeted states compatible with Western systems and institutions. In the case of the EU, the

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prospect of membership itself has been the primary "soft power" tool as it entices governments to meet the necessary legal, economic, and regulatory standards to qualify for Union accession. However, EU or NATO membership remain voluntary and are not pressured by inducements and threats, as is the case with Moscow-centered organizations. While the West promotes the pooling of sovereignty among independent states, Russia pushes for the surrender of sovereignty within assorted "Eurasian" organizations.

To advance its strategic goals, the Kremlin needs to demonstrate that it is in competition with the West and that Washington and Brussels are seeking to impose their political structures and value

article in Moskovskiy Novosti (Moscow News) in February 2012. He claimed that this weapon was being increasingly used as a means for achieving foreign policy goals without the use of force, but by exerting informational and other levers of influence. According to Putin, Western "soft power" is deployed to "develop and provoke extremist, separatist, and nationalistic attitudes, to manipulate the public and to conduct direct interference in the domestic policy of sovereign countries." Evidently, for the Kremlin, democratic pluralism is a form of extremism, national independence is a form of separatism, and state sovereignty is a form of nationalism.

Putin contends that there must be a clear division between "normal political activity" and "illegal instruments of soft power." Hence, he engages in scathing attacks on "pseudo-NGOs" inside Russia and among the post-Soviet neighbors that receive resources from Western governments and institutions, viewing this as a form of subversion. In reality, the Kremlin is envious that Western values are often more appealing to educated and ambitious segments of the population than traditional Russian values.

The global human rights agenda is berated by Putin as a Western plot, because the US and other Western states allegedly politicize human rights and use them as a means for exerting pressure on Russia and its neighbors. Human rights campaigns are depicted as a powerful form of "soft power" diplomacy intended to discredit governments that are more easily influenced by Moscow. Rus- »

**MOSCOW MUST INCREASE
RUSSIA'S EDUCATIONAL AND
CULTURAL PRESENCE
IN THE WORLD BY EXPANDING
THE RIGHTS OF CO-ETHNICS
AND CO-LINGUISTS IN ALL
NEARBY STATES SO THEY GAIN
INCREASING POLITICAL
INFLUENCE**

system on the gullible Eurasian countries. This is a classic form of psycho-political projection, with Russia's leaders acting as if Western objectives were similar to their own in undermining national independence and eliminating countervailing foreign influences.

Putin launched a blistering attack on Western "soft power" in an

sia supposedly offers a legitimate political alternative to these countries - a quasi-authoritarian "sovereign democracy" and a statist-capitalist form of economic development. "Sovereign democracy" is presented as a viable option to the alleged Western export of democratic revolutions. Russia's support for strong-arm governments is intended to entice these countries under its political and security umbrella and delegitimize the West for its criticisms of autocratic politics.

MOSCOW'S SOFT POWER INSTRUMENTS

In Putin's version of "soft power," an assortment of tools can be deployed to achieve strategic goals. These include culture, education, media, language, minority protection, Christian Orthodoxy, pan-Slavism, and Russo-focused assimilation. All these elements can supplement institutional instruments, economic incentives, energy dependence, military threats, and the political pressures applied by the Kremlin.

In a landmark article on 23 January 2012 in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (The Independent Newspaper) Putin promoted his plan for uniting Russia's multi-ethnic society and stressed the central importance of Russian culture for all former Soviet states. In sum, for Eastern Slavs Russia is supposed to be the model "older brother," while for non-Slavs it is evidently the enlightened "father figure." The stress is on uniting various ethnic communities in the Russian Federation and former USSR under the banner of Russian culture and values. Putin criticizes multiculturalism as a destabilizing force and instead supports integration through assimilation, a veiled term for Russification.

According to Putin, Russian people and culture are the binding fabric of this "unique civilization." He extolls the virtues of "cultural dominance," where Russia is depicted as a "poly-ethnic civilization" held together by a Russian "cultural core." The President notes with satisfaction that many former citizens of the Soviet Union, "who found themselves abroad, are calling themselves Russian, regardless of their ethnicity." Russian people are evidently "nation-forming" as the

"great mission of Russians is to unite and bind civilization" through language and culture. According to such ethno-racist thinking, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Georgians, and other nationalities simply do not match the historical importance of the Great Russian nation.

He has called for enhancing education, language use, and national history to buttress Russia's tradition of cultural dominance and lists numerous tools for promoting Russian culture, including television, cinema, the Internet, social media, and popular culture. All these outlets must evidently shape public opinion and set behavioral norms.

An additional important "soft power" instrument for the Kremlin is the campaign to defend human and minority rights in neighboring states - a ploy designed to increase Moscow's political leverage. Russian leaders claim the inalienable right to defend their



compatriots abroad regardless of their status and citizenship. This has involved promoting Russian as a second state language or a regional language in all former Soviet republics, including Ukraine and the Baltic countries.

Issuing passports to citizens of neighboring states has been a favored way of developing pro-Russian sectors of the population, influencing local politics, and providing a potential pretext for intervention in case of internal conflict. Some observers have dubbed the policy as "re-occupation through passportization." Georgia is believed to have about 179,000 Russian passport holders, the Transnistria enclave in Moldova about 100,000, Azerbaijan 160,000, Armenia 114,000, and up to 100,000 reside in Ukraine's Crimea out of approximately half a million Russian citizens in Ukraine.

In September 2008, the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, at-



SKETCH BY DMYTRO SKAZHENYK

gain increasing political influence. Hence, we have witnessed persistent attacks on Latvian and Estonian authorities for supposedly abusing the Russian minority as both countries have linguistic stipulations for citizenship. Meanwhile, a high percentage of post-World War Two Russian colonists view their language as superior and have not made sufficient effort to learn Estonian or Latvian.

CONFLICTING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In assessing the context of “soft power” projection, analysts often overlook some important differences between American and Russian spheres of influence. In order to grasp Moscow’s objectives and understand how its “soft power” instruments fit into grand strategy it is useful to consider four significant contrasts with Washington’s approach.

First, US administrations accept the right of each state to choose its alliances, while Russian officials endeavor to impose security arrangements on neighbors. Countries enter the Western sphere and the NATO alliance voluntarily as this contributes to their security and is not seen as a threat to their sovereignty. States invariably join the Russian sphere as a result of inducement, threat, or outright pressure. Oftentimes, there are no viable alternatives to the Russian-centered alliance because of energy dependence, trade links, and other forms of entrapment. Governments seek to avoid potential destabilization from Moscow by partially acquiescing to Kremlin demands. Nonetheless, disputes continue to simmer as various capitals from Belarus to Uzbekistan resist surrendering the most important elements of their sovereignty to Russia.

Second, NATO and the EU have not created spheres of influence orbiting around one power center but voluntary alliances operating on a consensual basis and in the case of the EU pooling elements of their sovereignty. By contrast, Russia has developed a post-Soviet version of the Brezhnev doctrine, whereby countries within Russian-sponsored institutions have serious limitations on their sovereignty, particularly in their foreign policy and security orientations.

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Third, while the US promotes cordial relations between its own allies and Russia, Moscow remains fixated on its own primacy or exclusivity. For instance, Washington supports closer bilateral relations between Poland or other Central-East European countries and Russia as it believes this generates regional stability and lessens the need for US security guarantees. In stark contrast, the Kremlin does not support closer relations between Ukraine or the CIS states and the U.S., calculating that this deprives Moscow of its political leverage, undermines its privileged interests, and could be the harbinger of a political and military alliance.

Fourth, the Kremlin actually promotes conflicts between its allies and the US to weaken America’s influence or seeks to capitalize on disputes between Washington and third parties. For example, Moscow has endeavored to buttress the Hugo

RUSSIA’S DRIVE FOR ITS OWN SPHERE IN A “MULTIPOLAR” WORLD CONTRIBUTES TO RETARDING THE FORMATION OF STABLE DEMOCRATIC STATES ALONG ITS BORDERS

tached to the Russian foreign ministry and answerable directly to the President, began its operations. It was designed to project Russia’s soft security tools toward former satellites and to assist Russian citizens in neighboring countries, thereby indicating more systematic intervention by Moscow. Other organizations, such as the Institute of CIS Countries, have been created to channel funds to Moscow-friendly political parties and NGOs in the region. Russian media supportive of the Kremlin is also beamed throughout the CIS or has established joint ventures with local media.

In Putin’s estimation, Moscow must expand Russia’s educational and cultural presence in the world, especially in those countries where a substantial part of the population understands Russian. Support for compatriots and Russian culture abroad involves expanding the rights of co-ethnics and co-linguists in all nearby states so they

Chavez government in Venezuela into a more assertive regional player in Latin America that can create security headaches for the US. By contrast, Washington actively discourages disputes between Moscow and its former satellites. Moreover, it is not obsessed with alleged Russian encirclement when Moscow sends military vessels to Cuba or Venezuela. However, when a U.S. ship sails into the Black Sea or Washington sells military equipment to Georgia, the Kremlin claims that Washington is launching a new Cold War.

For Russian officials, alliances and partnerships are in themselves zero sum calculations in a constant struggle for influence and advantage with the United States. “Soft power” is thereby understood by Moscow as an arm of Russian state influence and a valuable tactical tool employed to achieve specific geostrategic ambitions. ■

Three in a Boat

PACE's failure to recognize Azerbaijani political prisoners creates problems for their counterparts in Ukraine

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Countries and people depend on each other more than anyone would like to admit. Here is a fresh example: a failed report on political prisoners in Azerbaijan at the most recent PACE session is likely to also hurt Ukraine. More precisely, it hurts those Ukrainian members of the opposition and their supporters who had hoped that there would at least be a discussion on granting the status of political prisoner to Yulia Tymoshenko and Yuriy Lutsenko at the April session.

The report on political prisoners in Azerbaijan was pivotal for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In October 2012, PACE was the first international organization in the world to legally define the term political prisoner. It took lawyers three long years to accomplish that. The plan was that a report by German socialist Christoph Strässer would allow the terminology to be put to practical use. And then, once the precedent was established, similar issues would be considered with regard to Ukraine and Russia.

However, this was not to be. "Who could imagine several years ago that the Council of Europe would fail to agree on a resolution on political prisoners?" one permanent employee of the organization wondered aloud as she spoke to *The Ukrainian Week*. "We must admit that lobbying on the part of Baku and, no doubt, Moscow has proved principles exist which are more powerful to those who support universal justice than fidelity. The question is not how authoritarian regimes cooperate. The question really is: Out of 224 PACE delegates present in the session hall, why were a mere 79 willing to stop political repression in Europe?"

According to information obtained by *The Ukrainian Week*, representatives of the Azerbaijani authorities personally called dele-

gates from other countries. They also contacted the Ukrainian delegation, at least some of its members. The arguments were of two kinds: first, there were alleged "terrorists and killers" on the proposed list of prisoners, and second, Kyiv needs Azerbaijani oil and gas.

"In fact, the list of potential political prisoners was ironclad," Emin, an activist in one of the four Azerbaijani NGOs involved in drawing up the list, counters. "Each one of us came up with a list, and then we all met in Berlin: human rights advocates and the office of Christoph Strässer. About 90% of the names were the same. We removed the rest from the list. We collectively put together an 'ironclad' dossier on each prisoner. We worked together for several days, comparing information and making it more precise."

Counting on what they thought was an invincible democratic majority in the Council of Europe, advocates of Azerbaijani prisoners, unlike their opponents, did not actively contact delegates prior to the vote. Perhaps, if they had called, argued and circulated documents, the vote would have involved at least 50 more informed and concerned politicians. But that never happened.

What are the effects of this failed report for Ukraine? There are several. The first, purely procedural, is that if an attempt to recognize and identify by name the Azerbaijani political prisoners failed at the official level, it is hard to imagine a kamikaze who would, after the defeat of rapporteur Christoph Strässer, put his reputation as a successful politician on the line for the sake of Ukrainians.

The procedure of recognizing political prisoners is as follows. Members of the national delegation of a country in which people are imprisoned for political motives must send an official request to the PACE Committee on Legal



Affairs and Human Rights. According to the decision passed last October, the committee reviews the request and, if it finds it valid, appoints a special rapporteur on the country in question. Several missions and meetings follow, all leading to the final report which a PACE session discusses and approves.

The initial plan was to discuss Ukrainian political prisoners in April. This possibility was tentatively mentioned, for example, by Secretary-General of the Council of Europe Thornbjorn Jagland. Yet it is important to note that this meeting took place several hours before the "Azerbaijani" vote. Now Jagland's office is skeptical that the Ukrainian initiatives stand a chance.

The second consequence of the prisoner vote failure has to do with scheduling. Apart from possible new special reports, the Council of Europe already has several multiyear political investigations involving official Kyiv. One of them is a report being prepared by Dutch Christian Democrat Pieter Omtzigt which concerns the separation of political and criminal responsibility.

"The rapporteur has already been to Iceland where a prime minister was convicted (but not



A FAILED ATTEMPT. The report by German socialist Christoph Strässer on political prisoners in Azerbaijan failed to garner the support of PACE delegates

that means that the country's top leadership is involved in a number of crimes against public justice – holding a patently innocent person criminally liable, coercing into testimony, passing deliberately unlawful court decisions, interfering with the operation of an automated document flow system, etc. In Ukraine, these offences fall under Articles 371-376 of the Criminal Code. It is hard to imagine a scenario under which a prosecutor general or his deputy would allow a case to be opened against himself, or to imagine a judge who fulfilled orders from the top leadership would not complain when he himself is charged. This is when intervention from the outside is needed. This is when the Council of Europe needs to step in.”

A mere 79 PACE delegates voted in favour of the decision to recognize political prisoners in Azerbaijan. These included Ukrainian delegates – Svoboda member Oleksandr Shevchenko and UDAR member Petro Riabykin. But even if all three delegates from Batkivshchyna (Fatherland) had also

THE OPPOSITION SHOULD FORGE NEW EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH PACE DELEGATES TO HAVE THE STATUS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN UKRAINE RECOGNIZED

imprisoned – Ed.) precisely for a political decision,” a source in the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights has told *The Ukrainian Week*. “But he hasn’t been able to travel to Ukraine. Mr. Omtzigt has applied multiple times, but Kyiv is in no hurry with dates.” Without coming to Ukraine, he will not be able to complete the report. As time goes by and people are unable to read the final document, the prospects of a discussion on Ukraine in the PACE session hall grow ever more dim.

“If the very term political prisoner became operational, Ukraine would find it psychologically more difficult to continue denying Omtzigt the opportunity to work on its territory,” the PACE Secretariat believes. “However, the Azerbaijanis have not granted rapporteur Christoph Strässer an opportunity to come on a visit, which made it possible to claim that he had not been to the country and did not know what was happening there.” This trick has worked and why would the Ukrainian authorities reject a method that has been proved and tested?

In addition to the report on separating political and criminal responsibility, PACE will hear one on fulfilling Council of Europe resolutions and recommendations by

Ukraine, France and Russia. The document is being prepared by German liberal Marieluise Beck. In the case of Ukraine, the report will look at the cases of Georgiy Gongadze and Yuriy Lutsenko. Beck faced no obstacles to working in Ukraine, but Russia has refused to invite her. It is the same old story: the investigation is not complete, and it is anyone’s guess when it will reach the session hall.

Ukraine, Russia and Azerbaijan have managed to quietly sabotage the activities of the Council of Europe aimed at recognizing political prisoners. And it must be admitted that the authorities of each of these three countries have been very good at cooperating together. Will opposition forces in Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and other countries be able to cooperate the same way, at least tactically?

“I am convinced that if the situation fails to improve in Ukraine, Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and some other Council of Europe members, the Council of Europe will return to the topic of political prisoners,” says Valentyna Telychenko, a lawyer, attorney and specialist in the workings of the European Court of Human Rights. “If opposition leaders are being imprisoned in a country,

cast yes votes, it would not have remedied the situation, as 125 delegates were opposed. One of them, Pedro Agramunt, a rapporteur on Azerbaijan, recently seems to be less exacting regarding violations of democratic standards than he was before.

If we imagine for a minute that the issue of Ukrainian political prisoners is put to a vote in Strasbourg, we must realize that the opposition needs to think about forging new effective partnerships, seek common strategies on the level of delegates and tackle the most difficult thing: finding a potential Western terminator rapporteur who would, despite objective circumstances, throw caution to the wind and put his faith in the nearly hopeless Ukrainian case. ■

Aspirations to Control the Gas Market

The main groups of influence within the conglomerate in power are trying to use the gas confrontation with Russia to achieve their own ends



THANK YOU ALL! Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich, Energy and Coal Industry Minister Eduard Stavitsky, Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte and Royal Dutch Shell CEO Peter Voser after signing the gas deal in Davos

Author:
Oleksandr
Kramar

Since the recent escalation in the gas confrontation between Ukraine and Russia, the Russian media has started buzzing about a looming gas war, while the EU has expressed the hope that this would not hamper the gas supply to European consumers as it did in 2009. After the construction of South Stream was formally launched in December 2012, in January Gazprom decided to build the subsequent branches of Nord Stream. On January 14, the GAZELLE pipeline began to operate, going from Northern to Southern Czech Republic and binding the German OPAL (Nord Stream branch) with MEGAL, the pipeline used to transit Russian gas through Ukraine and Austria to Southern Germany and France. Its potential capacity is now up to 30bn cu m of gas annually. In response to Gazprom's

strategy to bypass Ukraine in transiting gas to Europe and keep gas prices high, Ukraine's Nadra Yuzivska signed a deal with Shell Exploration and Production Ukraine Investment BV in Davos on 24 January regarding the distribution of the shale gas extracted at the Yuzivka field in Kharkiv and Donetsk Oblasts. Shortly thereafter, Gazprom billed Naftogaz of Ukraine for the gas it had not used under previously signed contracts.

The stance of the Russian side is clear: Moscow is playing with Yanukovich, pressuring him into capitulation - handing over Ukraine's gas transit system or entering the Customs Union. Obviously, Ukrainian authorities are not guided by the intent to decrease Ukraine's energy dependence on Russia. On the contrary, government officials say openly that they are willing to see Ukraine's energy and economic de-

pendence on Russia grow, providing it offers benefits for the businesses that are close to them. Meanwhile, Gazprom's future looks more bleak. Russia is implementing a long-term plan to raise domestic gas prices annually until they meet world levels. According to earlier predictions, this should have happened by 2015-2016, yet much will not change if the plan is completed a few years later. Moreover, gas prices have been changing on both sides lately, those in the US already lower than domestic gas prices in Russia, while the growing NLG imports push gas prices in Europe down as well. The continuation of the so-called shale revolution could drive the domestic price of Russian gas to match that on the European market much earlier than expected. This could completely wipe out any discounts for Ukraine within two or three years, even if Ukraine joins

the Customs Union or sets up a joint Russian-Ukrainian venture to run the Ukrainian gas transit system.

FAMILY BUSINESS

Given the latest developments, the interests of the key players in the conglomerate in power, particularly the Family, are ever more related to expanding their own profitable projects, rather than knocking down the price of Russian gas.

The Family is counting on domestic gas extraction, as signaled by the contract with Shell and the scandal with NaftoGazVydobuvannia, the Oil and Gas Extraction Company owned by Nestor Shufrych and Mykola Rudkovsky, which until recently, controlled nearly a third of all gas extraction by private-owned companies in Ukraine. According to information that surfaced in the media thanks to MP Oleksandr Bryhynets, the company should have transferred nearly 30% of its shares to entities linked to the Family as a reward for the extension of its extraction license. Given its total control over the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Energy, supervised by the loyal Eduard Stavitsky, the Family has extensive opportunities to increase its share in other gas extraction-related projects. Rumour has it that the Family even has a share in the joint project with Shell. It is supposedly represented by the little-known SPK GeoService which already owns 10% of Nadra Yuzivska but there is no guarantee that its share will not increase to a controlling stake at any time.

It is therefore not surprising that the joint venture for shale gas extraction has ended up with a privileged environment in which to operate (see **Overprotected**). The important aspect of the deal is that Shell is supposed to make large purchases from Ukrainian suppliers, so entities close to the government that have previously been involved in many public procurement scams, will try to take advantage of the opportunities that open doors to investments which are initially worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and tens of billions if the industrial extraction of shale gas is confirmed and launched.

THE OLIGARCHS' STRATEGY

Both the Family and Rinat Akhmetov's DTEK have expressed interest

in coal extraction and processing, while expensive gas makes the business ever more profitable and opens new prospects for coal bed gas extraction. DTEK is not only concentrating its coal mining assets in Ukraine, but is also increasing coal extraction in Eastern (Russian) Donbas in the Rostov Oblast. In 2013 alone, DTEK is supposed to extract 1.8mn t which is 4.6 times more than in 2012. After all, the myth about the problems that high gas prices cause to Akhmetov's steelworks is also exaggerated. Before the 2008-2009 crisis, Ukrainian steelworks consumed 9-10bn cu m of gas annually. In 2011, consumption fell to 5.5bn cu m and below 3.9bn cu m in 2012. The companies that are part of Akhmetov's SCM holding consume almost half of this amount, while the scheduled – and slowly implemented by Met-Invest – technology that uses pulverized coal fuel should ultimately decrease gas consumption by his steelworks to 1bn cu m per year. This is an amount that he can easily extract in Ukraine. And it is only for the better, if his competitors have troubles with gas supply or are forced to buy overpriced fuel.

Meanwhile, Akhmetov's entities are showing interest in the extraction of gas on the Black Sea shelf (Vanco Prykerchenska) as well as of unconventional gas that could bring maximum profits in view of existing expensive imported fuels. Thus, DTEK and Linc Energy, an Australian company that has been involved in underground coal gasification (UCG) in Australia for 12 years, signed a memorandum of understanding and a contract to draft a feasibility study on syngas production through UCG in Ukraine. DTEK's CEO, Maksym Tymchenko, stated that the company expects to launch syngas extraction in 2014, its estimated original cost lower than that of shale gas and close to that of domestically extracted natural gas.

The biggest industrial consumer of natural gas in Ukraine is still Dmytro Firtash's Ostchem Holding. However, having the opportunity to import gas directly from abroad, bypassing Naftogaz (and at spot prices) for the third year now, the oligarch can not only to provide his companies with gas at affordable prices, but also take advantage of Russia's high gas price for Naftogaz to increase his

OVERPROTECTED
Under the contract between Shell and Nadra Yuzivska, the two companies are exempted from most taxes and fees applicable in oil and gas extraction. They will only pay income tax, VAT and taxes for subsoil use. Regardless of changes in Ukrainian legislation, the income tax rate for project investors will only be 16% as of 2014. The government could be fined for late VAT reimbursement. Project investors are not subject to any Ukrainian central or local authority laws if they limit the rights of the investors. The Shell and Nadra Yuzivska operation is going to be inspected by only one authority, no more than once every three years, and each inspection should take no more than 10 days.

own share on the market as a supplier of fuel for industrial consumers. It is Firtash's entities that could become key players in various schemes to purchase gas from the EU market.

The media has already reported that a new company called Ostchem Gas Trading AG was registered in Switzerland in December 2012. It is headed by the CEO of RosUkrEnergo AG, which is also one of Firtash's companies. A week later, Yevhen Bakulin, the Chairman of the Board at Naftogaz, who is close to Firtash's group, said that industrial consumers should buy gas from alternative traders because it is cheaper. According to Bakulin, it makes sense to leave Naftogaz to supply gas to individual consumers and utility companies.

In 2013, Ostchem Gas Trading plans to import over 8bn cu m of gas, and sell nearly 25% of it to industrial consumers that are not linked to Firtash. In the near future, the oligarch is prepared to increase gas supplies to Ukraine by at least 150%. Eventually, in addition to importing gas from "alternative sources", Firtash may also take part in the privatization of gas extraction facilities in Ukraine, since he has long shown interest in

EXPENSIVE GAS PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THE FAMILY, AKHMETOV AND FIRTASH AND THEIR ENERGY PROJECTS

UkrGasVydobuvannia, a gas extraction company that is currently part of Naftogaz.

In this context, expensive Russian gas plays into the hands of the major groups of influence in the Ukrainian conglomerate in power, while the burden of overpriced gas remains a useful argument in lobbying various privileges for oligarch-controlled companies, overpricing the original cost of their production, and using various tax optimization schemes. Therefore, their real interest is to cut the extra gas imports provided for by the 2009 deals and subsequent addenda thereto, rather than persuade Russia to reduce its gas price, while cheap fuel can only be of interest if it allows them to arrange schemes to resell it for their own benefit. ■

In December 2012, *Ukrayinsky Tyzhden/The Ukrainian Week* initiated a series of panel discussions focusing on priority socio-political and economic issues with opposition MPs and independent experts. Our goal is to draw public and political attention to the problems that are critical for the nation's future and find possible solutions. At the first discussion on 19 December, representatives from UDAR, Batkivshchyna and Svoboda talked of the extent to which the oligarch-controlled economy is obstructing the creation of a successful state project (read more in *The Ukrainian Week* No 1-2/Jan. 2013). At the latest discussion, politicians and independent analysts tried to answer *Ukrayinsky Tyzhden/The Ukrainian Week's* questions concerning Ukraine's monetary security and forecasts for 2013.



PHOTO: ANDRIY LOMAKIN

"Foreign currency deficit is a serious threat to Ukraine's independence"

Volodymyr Lanovyi, President of the Centre for Market Reforms

This year, Ukraine is experiencing a shortage of foreign currency to meet its foreign currency liabilities and repay foreign debt on a timely basis. BoP deficit in 2013 is not likely to be less than that of 2012. The shortage of foreign currency makes Ukraine vulnerable to pressure from Russia which is demanding its membership in the Customs Union. This is commonly understood as a serious threat to Ukraine's independence, and potentially to its sovereign rights to participate in international relations.

Another component of Ukraine's vulnerability is the continued insolvency of Naftogaz of Ukraine. The only way to keep it afloat is by increasing its authorized capital with newly-issued government bonds. Apparently, some lenders are interested in it: should Naftogaz go bankrupt – and this is getting inexorably closer – its assets may fall into the hands of those who hold the bonds. Russian banks are known

to be actively working in this direction.

Moreover, if Ukraine's gas transit system ends up in Gazprom's hands, Ukraine will have no opportunity to negotiate discounts for gas and fees for transiting Russian gas through Ukraine with Gazprom.

The NBU's FX reserves are being depleted at an alarming rate. At the end of 2012, they amounted to nearly USD 25bn compared to USD 38.5bn in April 2011 – an all-time peak, according to the proud Mykola Azarov, who forgot to mention, though, that this was due to new borrowings. Moreover, the structure of FX reserves is unknown. When the NBU disclosed the data for the last time in 2008, liquid FX reserves were a mere USD 0.5bn, plus USD 15bn more in other freely convertible currencies, while the rest was in bonds. Since the NBU has mostly been selling US dollars, not bonds, since 2008, there are few reasons to claim that the structure of Ukraine's FX reserves has improved. The assumption is that half of all reserves are now in freely convertible currencies.

"If the government turns to Russia or China for loans, Ukraine is at risk of becoming a source of raw materials for another source of raw materials"

It is my understanding that there are two basic problems in Ukraine. First of all, monopolism, which is convenient for the regime. Financial and industrial groups worked for many years on its creation. It is this kind of monopolism that shaped the existing political situation within Ukraine. It ensures the control of 10 oligarchic clans over 80% of the national economy. The monopolism problem in Ukraine has specific names: Firtash (100% control of fertilizer production), Akhmetov (100% of electricity exports, 70% of metal-lurgy or 60% of coal extraction).

Andriy Pyshnyi, MP, All-Ukrainian Union Batkivshchyna (Fatherland)

Two oligarchic families control 70% of air transportation in Ukraine. Such an economy is very convenient from the point of view of manual administration.

The strategic purpose of necessary transformations is to change the structure of the economy. And this is right, but it means that those who have devised it will be deprived of income. At the same time, the income of the main oligarchic groups is currently increasing rapidly, in spite of the problems in the Ukrainian economy. For example, Dmytro Firtash's income increased by 560% last year.

So the key issue for today's agenda is change in the political regime. I'm not talking about this as a politician, but as a citizen, since I well remember the first budget that Mykola Azarov prepared in 1994. He himself admitted that he was the direct or indirect author of 18 Ukrainian budgets (!). Yanukovich has governed Ukraine for one third of its independence: twice as premier and now almost three years as president with extensive powers and total control over the administrative, economic and judicial hierarchy, not to mention the information policy. What stood in the way of their

Even so, Ukraine's total FX reserves amount to just 90% of its foreign debt. The comparison of the NBU's liquid FX reserves, estimated at USD 12-13bn, with payments under foreign debt due in 2014, plus nearly USD 10bn bought annually by the population, shows that Ukraine does not have adequate liquid FX reserves to cover even these needs. Three months ago, international rating agencies downgraded Ukraine to a pre-default level.

There are a number of key reasons behind depleting FX reserves. The first is the current account deficit that skyrocketed from USD 1.75bn in 2009 to USD 14bn in 2012, exceeding the level of the 2008 crisis year. The second is the

*Charts compiled by economics expert, Liubomyr Shavaliuk

Chart 2* Ukraine exports anything it can, i.e. raw materials, to maintain its foreign currency supplies

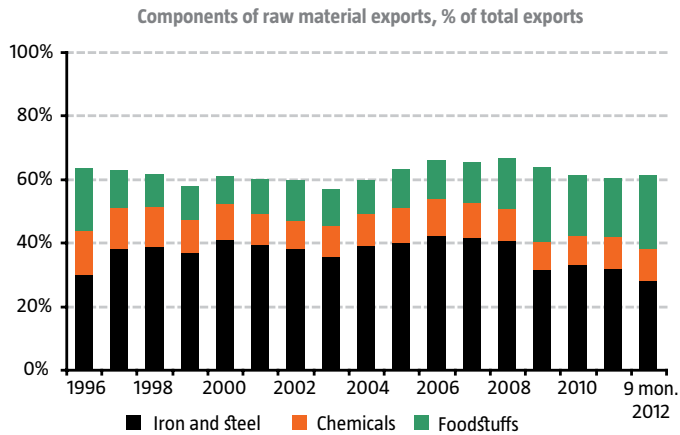
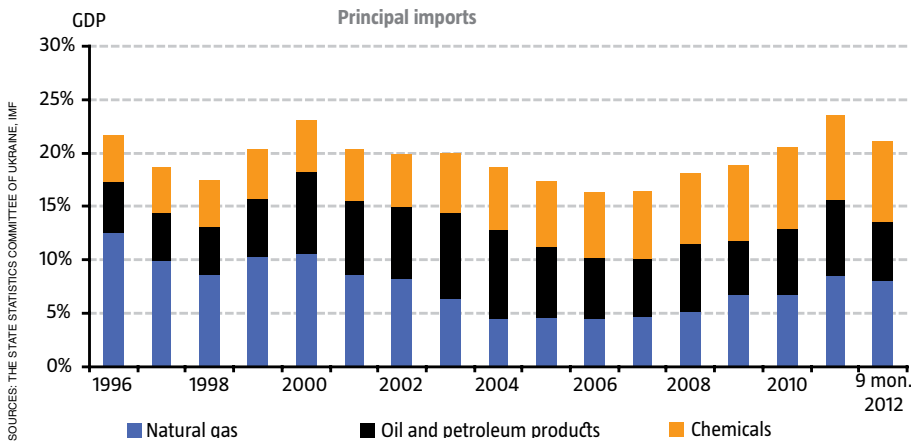


Chart 1* In order to keep going, Ukraine's economy imports huge amounts of raw materials. Devaluation increases its dependence on such imports rather than reduces it



repayment of foreign loans by Ukrainian banks borrowed in the turbulent 2005-2007 period. At this time, huge amount of funds entered Ukraine. Even large international financial institutions thought that they could operate here on a serious scale and rushed to buy overpriced local banks. They have since realized their mistake and begun to return the money they invested into the Ukrainian market to parent banks. USD 2-3bn flows out of the country annually. Since 2008, they have withdrawn USD 13bn, and this signals trouble. The NBU says that Ukraine is growing less dependent on the dollar, using the USD 13bn-reduction of Ukrainian banks' debt as an example. However, banks ex-

changing the economic structure? When he came to power in 2010, the share of raw material industries in exports constituted 67%, and grew to 70% in 2012. As a result, Ukraine has grown dependent on external market trends and vulnerable in the face of challenges.

For me, the issue of sovereignty, together with that of foreign currency and debt security are bound into a single system. In 2013, Ukraine has to repay USD 9bn of external and UAH 45bn of internal debt. What is the source? Economic growth or new debts to repay the old ones. Economic growth is virtually non-existent. So, we are incurring indebtedness to repay debts (see **Chart 3 – Ed.**).

There is a basic index, which determines monetary and debt security, and the stability of state finances – the state budget deficit. In 2013, it was planned at a level of al-

most UAH 50bn, while in 2012 – it was at a level of UAH 8bn, although in actual fact, the year ended with a deficit of UAH 40bn. I feel that the actual deficit for the 2013 state budget will be at least UAH 100bn. Add to this subsidies for Naftogaz and



PHOTO: ANDRIY LOMAKIN

the Pension Fund, government bonds to draw funds for the authorized capital of Oschadbank (government-owned Savings Bank), Agrarian Fund, state guarantees, etc. This raises the question: how will the budget be balanced? At the expense of further borrowing, apparently.

Another question: who do we go to for money? This is an issue of both monetary, and debt security – the IMF and the World Bank? It's cheap there and they can give long-term loans. But they demand an extensive list of substantiated economic demands, beginning with increasing gas prices for the population, the restructuring of Naftogaz and privatization. These are all objective demands. But they also have a political demand. I remember how, in the summer of 2012, the Deputy US Secretary of State said that in order to renew cooperation between the

ist to have debts rather than repay them: they have to expand their loan portfolios, operations and investment rather than to reduce them. This shows how negative trends are traditionally presented as positive accomplishments in Ukraine.

Another reason is the lack of the trust of Ukrainians in their national currency. They buy over USD 10bn of foreign currency annually, thus signaling mistrust for the banking system and the hryvnia. This will only change when there are no restrictions for people to freely convert hryvnias into dollars, and back; or for banks to issue loans in dollars. Any restrictions regarding the dollar in Ukraine fuel the lack of trust in the hryvnia. As long as the restrictions are in place, trust in the national currency will plummet and

Ukrainians will continue to buy up foreign currencies.

The solution is to change norms, methods and policies in its various aspects. The government should not ban lending in dollars. Instead, it should transfer FX risks to banks and introduce insurance for their FX transactions, rather than have the NBU manually craft and support currency exchange rate. It is equally important to reduce the import of Russian gas (see **Chart 1 – Ed.**) and improve Naftogaz's financial standing. The government should stop subsidizing gas for industrial consumers. As long as it does, thus boosting excessive gas imports, it will force taxpayers to support the current chemical industry, for instance, with its 2-3,000 employees. This only hampers the economy. Instead, Ukraine needs a

favourable investment climate that will draw foreign business to the country rather than scare it away; encourage foreign companies to open branches in Ukraine to produce items that are currently imported, thus boosting demand for foreign currency. Moreover, only a favourable business climate can facilitate the exports of products other than raw materials (see **Chart 2 – Ed.**) and items of high added value, which will in turn increase the inflow of foreign currency.

What will happen this year? I tend to think that the government will choose the path of default as it will not be able to draw resources from the foreign or domestic market. Moreover, it will not be able to get these funds by May or June – the peak months for due payments under its foreign debt. ■

Ukrainian government and international financial institutions, it is necessary to resolve issues of political persecution and the status of democracy in Ukraine. This means that today's government is forced to either resolve these issues, or it will not receive funds and will apply to other financial sources. But they are more short-term, expensive and have relevant political motivation.

We are talking about the Russian Federation and China. As a result, Ukraine is at risk of becoming the raw material source of another raw material source, which is an issue of economic sovereignty. After all, the issue of entry into the Customs Union in exchange for obtaining loans from banks that are controlled by Russia, is unequivocally waved in Ukraine's face. And what follows entry into the Customs Union, is vividly illustrated by the experience of Kazakhstan where production facilities close and investment activities fold. What efficiency can there be in the RF, if, having 30% of world mineral resources, it has 2% of the world's population and 2% of global GDP. Where is its efficiency and where is its modernization?

The structural problems in the economy, monopolism and corruption – this is all a consequence of the fact that Ukraine is actually governed by the same clans throughout the entire period of its independence. It is not the national debt amount that poses a threat, but the behavior of the leaders of the coun-

try, who have accumulated funds, spent them ineffectively and now don't know how to resolve the problem.

Under Yanukovich's presidency, Ukraine has actually doubled its government and guaranteed national debt. But have we experienced at least one structural reform, which would lead to the changes that Ukraine so desperately needs? Not one. And we won't see one, since the resources accumulating in the state budget, are not directed towards the resolution of structural issues. UAH 400-500bn passes through the public procurement system each year. This is more than the state budget amount. At the same time, the volume of the corruption component in the state procurement system constitutes almost 50%. Euro-2012 became the most corrupt shady business since independence.

As far as devaluation is concerned, I don't even have cautious optimism. It will happen. The only question is the extent and how tangible it will be for Ukrainian citizens. If we should succeed in getting a loan from the IMF, devaluation will be more or less controlled, but if not, we could be getting up to UAH 12 per US dollar by the end of the year.

How is our political force planning to react? Last week, I submitted a draft law On Ensuring Debt Security. It entails the return of parliamentary control functions to the Verkhovna Rada and demands quarterly reports from the government to parliament should the bud-

get deficit or national debt reach threshold levels and prohibits the exceeding of threshold levels without a parliamentary decision. I am willing to discuss proposals and take them into consideration.

However, I am convinced that the role of this parliament does not even lie in what we can do, but in what we have to prevent: the loss of sovereignty, using all possible means (communicating with society, participating in protests, organizing resistance in parliament, etc.). We must ensure Ukraine's European integration-oriented development as the only possible course. Because there is no point in waiting for a different, more adequate reform plan, than the one determined in the Association Agreement and all-encompassing Free Trade Zone Agreement with the EU. ■

Chart 3* Due to the lack of foreign currency sources, Ukraine is forced to borrow funds, which are either eaten away or used to repay previous debts, thus creating a debt pyramid

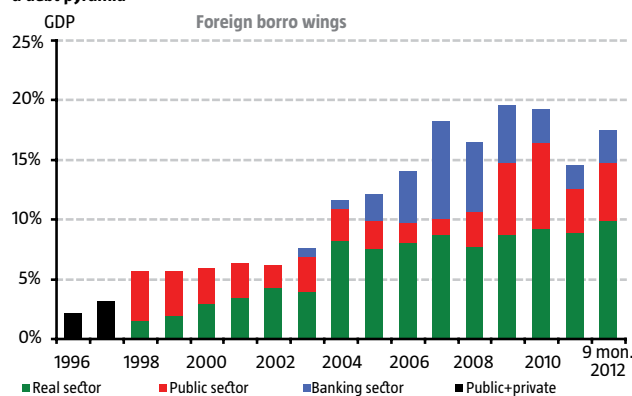




PHOTO: ANDRIY LOMAKIN

“When people begin to be afraid of what is going on, they begin to switch to foreign currency”

There is one more aspect: is big capital interested in the devaluation of the hryvnia? Of course it is. After all, each person in Ukraine with assets of more than USD 1mn, earns this money either from exports, or from distributing the budget among themselves, but definitely not from the domestic market. I don't see a single Ukrainian billionaire, who would earn a lot of money on the domestic market. The only exception is the agrarian sector, but the money there is very specific – the only people in the agrarian sphere who have become billionaires are those, who have unlimited access to budget funds.

Ukraine has a very poorly developed domestic market. Devaluation was noted in 2012. What does this mean? That there is a catastrophic decline in people's purchasing power; that this year, people cannot afford to buy more than last year. Accordingly, even with the meager production volume that Ukraine has, it's becoming clear that there are more goods than the market can consume. Therefore, the price of goods is falling. What are the consequences of this? A decrease in jobs and salaries, followed by people saving on everything possible. A vicious circle. What happens when people begin to be afraid of what is going on – they buy up foreign currency (see **Chart 4 – Ed.**). Under such conditions, it is necessary to do something, so that this money, that is in people's hands and according to some estimates, is at a level of USD 100–200bn, is returned to the banking system and begins to work for the economy. But when Arbutov initiates a 15% tax on the sale of foreign currency, this is a signal that there is a critical situation in the country, and that this is only done for people to exchange their money in banks out of fear. In other words, people understand that they are spoken to

from the position of power? Some are afraid, while others try to scare them even more.

Therefore, if we, as the opposition, want to change the rules of the game in Ukraine, there is only one way that they can be changed: this government must be replaced by a completely different one. Otherwise, absolute incompetence, the aggressive behavior of the government towards the population, the reluctance to listen to society, the inability to communicate with it and the rejection of the right ideas, simply because they are initiated by the opposition, will take place over and over again.

I have already mentioned the draft law on the cancellation of artificial monopolies that we have submitted. We have also sponsored a law on the cancellation of so-called pension reform and that the minimal and maximum pension cannot differ more than five times over. But these are not reforms. It's an attempt to stop that, which has been done, while we have to clearly show society where we are leading it. For example, we have to find a way to encourage the right way to invest in Ukraine. After all, if we have a developed domestic market, we give people the opportunity to accumulate and use the foreign currency that they have saved for a rainy day. But, by not attracting foreign investments, we do not receive the foreign currency that we need so urgently. This can be ensured with laws. For example, all importers of agricultural machinery can be informed that we will close our market in five years, but will create favourable conditions for its production in Ukraine.

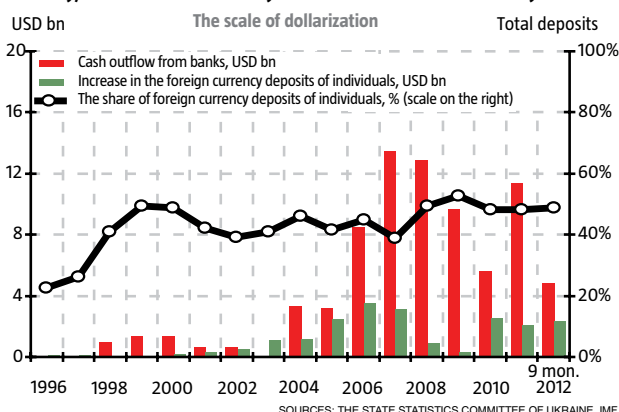
If all we do is criticize, ultimately there will be no change. And society should see the difference between us and those who govern. Otherwise we, as the opposition, will not have the right to call for changes, we will be no different than the existing government. ■

There are two problems: external and internal. We really don't have any foreign investments. Foreigners have no faith in either Ukraine, or its society. We cannot currently convince foreign partners that they can have any dealings with us. And accordingly, we cannot attract significant financial resources from the West.

Svoboda has registered a draft law in parliament regarding the liquidation of artificial monopolies. But there is also another problem – corruption. Money in the form of bribes is not invested in the economy. It is converted into foreign currency and efforts are made to take it out of the country. The system that produces corruption is not interested in a working economy or transparent rules of the game.

**Oleksandr Myrnyi, MP,
All-Ukrainian Union
Svoboda (Freedom)**

Chart 4* The lack of confidence in the hryvnia results in the dollarization of the economy; the US dollar has actually become Ukraine's second currency



Online Protests

Internet movements are helping Ukrainians to overcome intimidation, disseminate accurate information and coordinate activism, yet they should not be viewed as an alternative to street protests



Author: Valeria Burlakova

While the government controls the traditional mass media, it is failing bitterly in the battle with online activists. "Heroism is for difficult times, my boy," Erich Maria Remarque wrote in *The Three Comrades*, "but we live in times of despair. Here, the only decent response

is humour." Several popular Ukrainian websites have apparently heeded this call; their subscribers and contributors maintain a long-standing resistance against the government with a pinch of humour. One such website is durdum.in.ua, translating roughly as "madhouse.in.ua". Its objective is to "treat" politicians and those addicted to politics. Here Ukrainians can read the latest news about the web-

"HUMOUR IS ETERNAL. It's a universal tool of struggle," says Sviatoslav, the man behind the Church of Improvement Witnesses page

site's "patients"—including Viktor Yanukovich, Mykola Azarov and Vladimir Putin.

A PLACE OF FREEDOM

The website's founder Roman Shrayk believes that public opinion will soon be shaped mostly online, encouraged primarily by the freedoms that the Internet offers. "The benefit of it is that nobody really regulates it," Roman says. "Ever since the emer-

gence of social networks, the most interesting and creative things have been spreading like viruses, and you can't stop them. The government may persecute one activist but it cannot shut down a thousand of them. All of these jokes and memes reflect a highly concentrated opinion - they are more than just funny pictures."

Public opinion of the Party of Regions' campaign slogan, "An improved life today" was the driving force behind the creation of the "Church of Improvement Witnesses" (Церква свідків покращення), a Facebook community. "In the beginning was the hat, and the hat was on a man, and the hat was of mink fur. Viktor saw that the hat was good and stole it," the witnesses enlighten the uninitiated. "Then the forces of good sent Viktor to Earth to improve life immediately. He passed through fire and water, jail and car fleet to become famous..."

In addition to primitive jokes and memes about stolen hats,

the Church updates visitors about attacks on press freedom, car accidents involving officials and many more serious developments. Still, the project started out as a joke, and it maintains its popularity through humour.

"Humour is eternal. It's a universal tool of struggle," says Sviatoslav, the man behind the Church of Improvement Witnesses page. "Surely it shapes public opinion because people who are mocked so often receive little respect unless they're willing to laugh at themselves. Then humour can act as an element of self-promotion."

The Witnesses are often advised to create a public platform or a political force, called to decisive action or criticized for inactivity. Yet, Sviatoslav believes that the Church is already fulfilling its mission: "I always say that humour helps people to not be afraid of those they mock. Today, every official in Ukraine acts as if he were a lord or a nobleman, not an employee. This intimidates people, and that's what we're struggling against."

Sviatoslav insists that one meme that takes five minutes and costs nothing to create can steal more votes from a politician than 100 minutes of expensive advertising on TV can win. "The simpler the idea or joke, the easier it is to comprehend

and disseminate," he explains. "All it takes is for a popular user to come up with a slogan and post it online, and you have a meme. It hits the web and people begin to connect a politician to that online brand instead of the perfect image on TV. Just look at how the word 'improvement' has become a symbol of what's going on in Ukraine - of all the bad things happening in the country."

The community's contributors realize that not everything is fit to be presented as a joke. Thus, the Church offers analytical coverage of the latest episodes of "improvement", includ-

WHILE THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLS THE TRADITIONAL MASS MEDIA, IT IS FAILING BITTERLY IN THE BATTLE WITH ONLINE ACTIVISTS

ing corruption, police misconduct and impunity, and more.

The Church movement is gaining ground: "By January 14, the community's potential audience was 1.3 million. This includes subscribers and their friends. The actual audience over the past week hit 141,000 Facebook users alone, and that doesn't count other social networks and websites that repost



our news,” Sviatoslav says. Online activists believe that the social impact of websites and social network communities will soon equal that of television in Ukraine.

WHERE THE GOVERNMENT FAILED...

Though smaller than that of the conventional media, the audience for online communities and blogs finds Internet sources more reliable thanks to the human factor and the fact that popular media outlets are often involved in scandals. Unlike the opposition in the parliament, protest-oriented bloggers not only declare ideas, but take efforts to back them with real action. For instance, Olena Bilozerska is a freelance journalist and activist. Thousands of users read her Livejournal blog every day. Perhaps this is why the police keep an eye on her. Last January, the police searched her apartment in Kyiv and confiscated all of her equipment as part of an investigation into the arson of a downtown Party of Regions office. The only official reason for the arrest was a link to the arson video posted by unknown YouTube users that Olena had reposted on her personal blog.

Dmytro Riznychenko, another popular blogger and activist involved in the July 2012 protest against the Kolesnichenko-Kivalov bill on regional languages has also received police attention. His attack on a Berkut special-purpose police unit during the protest resulted in a two-year prison sentence, but he was later released on one year of probation. In Dmytro's opinion, the Ukrainian government has hopelessly lost the web. "Its entire apparatus is useless on the Internet," he says. "As soon as the authorities shut down some file sharing site with pirated movies, the user community kills the official sites of the president, the government and the Interior Ministry. And no special services can prevent this, nor can the authorities put someone in jail for it. Opposition politicians are the winners of all the online political surveys, and those in power will have to eat spoonfuls of public frustration and discontent if they dare join



AKHMETOV, WE'RE WAITING FOR YOU!—KEEP WAITING!

On Jan. 10, 2013, the Independent Miners Trade Union occupied the office of the Red Partisan coal mine in Sverdlovsk, Luhansk Oblast, that is part of a company controlled by oligarch Rinat Akhmetov. The miners demand that the administration cancel its call for massive layoffs, stop forcing employees to sign layoff warnings, increase salaries and recognize the Union's rights.

the Internet community and play by its rules."

On the other hand, the frustration often does not go beyond virtual reality, and opinions on the impact of social network-fueled campaigns vary greatly: they facilitate the development of civil society on the one hand, yet hamper it on the other, acting as sort of a vent that releases public discontent and diminishes initiative to take action. Riznychenko disagrees with the latter: "The Internet is an electronic noosphere where words and ideas live. There is always a huge gap between ideas and actions, whether in an individual mind or throughout the country. Still, whenever someone dares to leave the couch and take to the streets with others to make the world a little better, his inspiration surely comes from the Internet, not TV."

A VIRTUAL AMPLIFIER

The web helps mobilize people provided that the target audience

is properly selected. "Of course, this depends on the communities and the way they were established," says Olha, an activist for the campaign to release Dmytro Pavlychenko and his son, who were convicted of murdering judge Serhiy Zubkov¹. "Over the past month, I've involved people from the "Free the Pavlychenkos!" community to help us out with various initiatives, from posting stickers to monitoring the media. That's how we got cameras and a power generator for our rallies," Olha explains.

Unlike Western European countries, Ukraine cannot yet boast a noticeable political platform born from the web – and it hardly needs its own political pirates right now. What it does need is a chance to overcome intimidation through laughter, access to reliable information and an opportunity to coordinate activist efforts. To a greater or lesser extent, the Internet provides all of these. ■

¹On Oct. 2, 2012, Holosiyevo District Court in Kyiv sentenced Dmytro Pavlychenko to life imprisonment and his son Serhiy to 13 years in prison for the March 21, 2011 murder of judge Zubkov. Citing discrepancies in evidence, many claim that the men were wrongly convicted. Witnesses claim that they saw two men at the scene of the crime. A few days later, the police announced the arrest of Dmytro and Serhiy as suspects. The motivation announced by the police was revenge for the judge's decision to evict the Pavlychenko family from their apartment in downtown Kyiv and demolish an addition to the apartment. Football fans (Serhiy is a member of the Dynamo FC fan club) have been rallying in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv and other cities all over Ukraine to have them released.

The Voice of Moscow

I have sinned. I confess. For a brief moment, I thought Ukrainian television was heading towards democracy. While the owners are busy with disputes, journalists have the chance to expand the freedom platform, I thought. They stick to the concept of adjustment inherited from Soviet times: you take advantage of us, and we'll try to take advantage of you. It works sometimes, albeit briefly. But I was wrong.

Rumours that Inter, one of Ukraine's top TV channels in terms of coverage, is preparing to change its editorial policy have been circulating since fall, fueled by predictions that the owner might switch to the provisional opposition. The rebranding of the TV channel under button 1 on the remote control began after the widely-advertised appointment of a public board, made up of respected people, followed by a change in the tone of the news and the replacement of a host on a prime-time political talk show. This look like progress, doesn't it?

Shortly after the media community and the public processed the novelty, the news about Valeriy Khoroshkovsky selling Inter to Dmytro Firtash came like a thunderbolt from the clear blue sky. Reasonable explanations for what was happening were few. Experts mostly discussed the enormous price of the deal: USD 2.5bn! Wait, are we talking about the same things here?

The price is so huge that it silences all other questions. Okay, let's start with the price. Khoroshkovsky sold only the controlling stake of 61%. So, the whole channel must be worth around USD 4bn? There are no such prices in Ukraine – nor can there be. Of course, Inter Media Group owns additional assets, such as NTN, K1, Piksel, MTV and others, with a total share of viewers of about 10%.

However, all these numbers would make sense if Ukrainian television was a business. But it's not – and will not be for the foreseeable future.

Next: the connection between Firtash and Khoroshkovsky, overall and particularly in terms of Inter, is well-known. Dmytro Firtash has had an option to purchase 50% of Inter Media Group Ltd. since around 2007 – and this has been said many times in public. In 2010, Ihor Kolomoyskyi acquired 1+1, another leading TV channel with an audience and coverage almost equal to that of Inter, and a package that went with it, for all of USD 300mn. So, why would anyone pay so much more for Inter? But, who's going to check these fantastic billions, since one group of foreign companies bought another group of foreign companies? If you want to – clarify it in Vienna, Nicosia or Road Town.

So, why make the deal public? It is common knowledge that Inter, just like any other TV channel in Ukraine, survives on subsidies: it earns nearly USD 100mn a year, and spends USD 170mn. If it's not business, what is it? *Tertium non datur*: it's either business, or propaganda (I do not use this as a negative word but there should be clear criteria for defining this phenomenon). Thus, a high-quality propaganda resource with a controlled and predictable target audience is attractive from the propaganda rather than the commercial perspective. So, it makes sense that the figures that prefer silence are trumpeted on the first page. Apparently, this is a message. For whom? Perhaps, for those who should realize the scale of the new owner's sacrifice for the sake of the Family's peace, and his own growing significance?

The value of Inter is in its symbolic role rather than in its automatically-counted rating. Button 1 on the remote control is always first, no matter where. The audience has this phantom muscle memory, although today, hardly anyone – including marketing experts – remembers that many years ago, Inter's frequency was used by Channel 1 of the USSR's Central Television, and later – the First Ostankino Channel. This was once the territory of the everlasting newscast *Vremia* (Time), a television version of the *Pravda* (Truth) newspaper; followed by the daring shows that exceeded what was permissible, such as *The View*, *Press-Club*, *Before and After Midnight*... All the same, they all come from Moscow. Add to this the ostentatious hosting of Inter's

trademark shows in Russian. All this smells of stale "doctor's" sausage, Buratino lemonade and the fragrance of a grandmother's perfume. In this context, Inter's official slogan that says "The country's main channel" requires an explanation

INTER'S OFFICIAL SLOGAN "THE COUNTRY'S MAIN CHANNEL" REQUIRES CLARIFICATION: WHICH COUNTRY?

as to *which* country.

There is no sense in pretending that someone knows more about the details of the deal than the people directly involved in it. Still, the background is pretty clear. A charming metrosexual thought that he would no longer run errands for primitive guys from the provinces with poor taste and made it clear that he was ready to continue to play his game for the long-term (at least three more years). He was soon put in his place. Perhaps, he was allowed to save face as a reward for his role in the previous purging of the Ukrainian media environment. This reminds me of an old-old Soviet joke: the foreman of a lumber brigade, Petrov, calls in to the radio, asking for Hindemith's concerto for viola and orchestra to be played. "Stop f...ing showing off, comrade Petrov. Listen to the Amur Waves waltz," the host replies. ■



Author:
Yuriy
Makarov

Everything is Connected

Can Internet activism turn into a real political movement?

When dozens of countries refused to sign a new global treaty on Internet governance in late 2012, a wide range of activists rejoiced. They saw the treaty, crafted under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as giving governments pernicious powers to meddle with and censor the Internet. For months groups with names like Access Now and Fight for the Future had campaigned against the treaty. Their lobbying was sometimes hyperbolic. But it was also part of the reason the treaty was rejected by many countries, including America, and thus in effect rendered void.

The success at the ITU conference in Dubai capped a big year for online activists. In January they helped defeat Hollywood-sponsored anti-piracy legislation, best known by the acronym SOPA, in America's Congress. A month later, in Europe, they took on ACTA, an obscure international treaty which, in seeking to enforce intellectual-property rights, paid little heed to free speech and privacy. In Brazil they got closer than many would have believed possible to securing a ground-breaking Internet bill of rights, the "Marco Civil da Internet". In Pakistan they helped to delay, perhaps permanently, plans for a national firewall, and in the Philippines they campaigned against a cyber-crime law the Supreme Court later put on hold.

"It feels like when 'Silent Spring' was published," says James Boyle, an intellectual-property expert at Duke University, North Carolina. The publication of Rachel Carson's jeremiad on the effects of pesticides in 1962 is widely seen as marking the appearance of modern environmental awareness, and of the politics that goes along with it. Fifty years on, might the world really be witnessing another such moment, and the creation of another such

movement—this one built around the potential for new information technology to foster free speech and innovation, and the threats that governments and companies pose to it?

THE NEW GREEN

Debate and dissent over the issues raised by the spread of information technology are not new. In the 1990s civil-liberties groups, including the pioneering Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), campaigned against the Communications Decency Act, part of which was eventually overturned by America's Supreme Court. Today every corner of the digital universe has its own interest group: consumer groups defend online privacy; hackers reject far-reaching software patents; researchers push for open access to scientific journals online; defenders of transparency

movement that went on to wield real power.

The Internet is nothing if not an exercise in interconnection. Its politics thus seems to call out for a similar convergence, and connections between the disparate interest groups that make up the net movement are indeed getting stronger. Beyond specific links, they also share what Manuel Castells, a Spanish sociologist, calls the "culture of the Internet", a contemporary equivalent of the 1960s counter-culture (in which much of the environmental movement grew up). Its members believe in technological progress, the free flow of information, virtual communities and entrepreneurialism. They meet at "unconferences" (where delegates make up their own agenda) and "hackerspaces" (originally opportunities to tinker with electronics); their online forum of choice will typically be something such as a wiki that all can contribute to and help to shape.

In some countries the nascent net movement has spawned "pirate parties" that focus on net-policy issues; the first, in Sweden, was descended from the Pirate Bay, a site created to aid file sharing after Napster, a successful music-sharing scofflaw, was shut down. Pirate Party International, an umbrella group, already counts 28 national organisations as members. Most are small, but Germany's Piratenpartei, founded in 2006, has captured seats in four regional parliaments.

The green movement had intellectual leadership from within academia, such as that of Commoner and his sometime sparring partner, Paul Ehrlich. So does the net movement. One leading light is Lawrence Lessig, whose most influential book, "Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace", argues that computer code is just as important in regulating behaviour as legal code. Another is Yochai Benkler, whose "The Wealth of Net-



THE INTERNET-MOVEMENT IS BUILT AROUND THE POTENTIAL FOR NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER FREE SPEECH AND INNOVATION

call on governments to open their data vaults—or take the opening into their own hands.

As Mr. Boyle's analogy suggests, there was a similar diversity in early 1960s environmentalism. Some sought to clean the Hudson river, some to stop logging in Tasmania, some to ban nuclear tests. But as the late American environmentalist Barry Commoner put it: "The first law of ecology is that everything is connected to everything else." As it was with the environment, so it became with environmentalism. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s disparate concerns were tied together into a single, if far from seamless,



works” extols the virtues of “commons-based peer production” like that seen in open-source software communities, where volunteers write and debug code as a gift to the community at large.

And as the environmental movement had a radical wing in organisations such as Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Army, its digital successor has also developed a direct-action arm. In early October Anonymous, a “hacktivist” collective, took down a bunch of websites in Sweden as a protest against efforts to extradite Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, from Britain.

It is hard to imagine people getting as worked up about a leak of personal data or a tightening of copyright laws as they would over a nuclear disaster or global warming. The ITU does not seem to matter in the same way as the health of the planet. “Most [Internet issues] have the electoral sex appeal of a transport-infrastructure plan,” jokes Stephan Klecha, who studies pirate parties at Göttingen University.

But it is plausible that people who spend much of their lives online may come to feel strongly about the technological and ideological infrastructure that they depend on. “If they see it threatened, they will fight back,” insists Tiffiny Cheng of Fight for the Future, one of the advocacy groups that organised the anti-SOPA campaign. According to a study by the Boston Consulting Group, which surveyed consumers in 13 countries, on average 75% would give up alcohol, 27% sex and 22% daily showers to secure Internet access for a year if forced to choose (see chart).

Like environmental issues, the issues that this new movement cares about can be cast as economic ones; and when put that way they look somewhat similar. Since Garrett Hardin’s 1968 essay “The Tragedy of the Commons”, environmental issues have increasingly come to be seen in terms of “negative externalities”. Hardin argued that common properties would be overexploited because the benefits of the exploi-

ELECTIONS RULE!
After it was elected into four regional parliaments in Germany in 2011, the Pirate Party is going to run in the federal election in September

tation would be appropriated by the people doing the exploiting, whereas the costs fall on all equally.

COMMON CAUSES

In part because of this economic logic, the principle of making polluters pay—of internalising the externalities, as the economists put it—is fundamental to the carbon taxes and cap-and-trade regimes for pollutants pushed by pragmatic environmentalists (for all that their more radical brethren seethe at reducing everything to calculable financial costs and benefits).

Network politics are also often concerned with the issues raised by commons. The Internet—means and motive for much activism—is a clear example of such a digital resource: anyone can access it under the same conditions and all traffic can, at least theoretically, be treated equally (a state which is known as “network neutrality”, and a great rallying cry). But here the externalities not captured by the market ■

are more positive than negative. Often, the more people share and use such a commons, the more they all benefit.

When externalities do harm, internalising them makes a lot of sense. When they do good, things are a bit more complex. Some level of internalising may be needed: this is, indeed, the basic argument for intellectual-property rights. Without them, innovators may not benefit enough from sharing their creations, reducing the incentive to create. But a system set to maximise private returns will not necessarily maximise total returns.

Brett Frischmann, a professor at the Cardozo School of Law in New York, provides a thorough look at the issues in his book “Infrastructure: The Social Value of Shared Resources”. Infrastructure—both digital and otherwise—is used by many for all kinds of activities, and is often to some extent “non-rival”, meaning one person’s use does not forestall another’s. Limiting their use, for instance by pricing them depending on who uses them and for what, can limit their value and slow innovation.

To get the most benefit, Mr. Frischmann argues, “We should share infrastructure resources in an open, non-discriminatory manner when it is feasible to do so.” This does not necessarily rule out property rights; but it does mean avoiding the temptation to treat everything as if it were a physical bauble in which only a single owner had an interest. History shows that custom and practice, social norms and other non-market mechanisms can keep commons from becoming tragic under a wide range of circumstances.

Mr. Boyle makes similar points when he writes, in his book “The Public Domain” that societies need to strike “a balance between open and closed, owned and free.” It is his contention, and that of the rest of the net movement, that governments are systematically getting this balance wrong. They are stuck in the physical world where most goods are rival and cannot be easily shared, he argues. Their critics contend that the activists make the same mistake in reverse, thinking everything can be

shared and ownership need not matter at all.

Such thinking explains what drives many net activists: they prize an ideal of net neutrality because they fear turning the Internet into a toll road that limits both expression and experimentation; they fear overbroad patents will hamper research; they think making government data freely available stimulates new uses. This insight helps explain the seeming grab-bag of issues that passes for a political programme in Germany’s Pirate Party—including demands for free public transport, the right to vote for foreigners living in Germany and a state-funded basic income for all. These proposals apply the idea of an information commons to what the Pirates see as “platforms” of all sorts: public transport, elections and society as a whole.

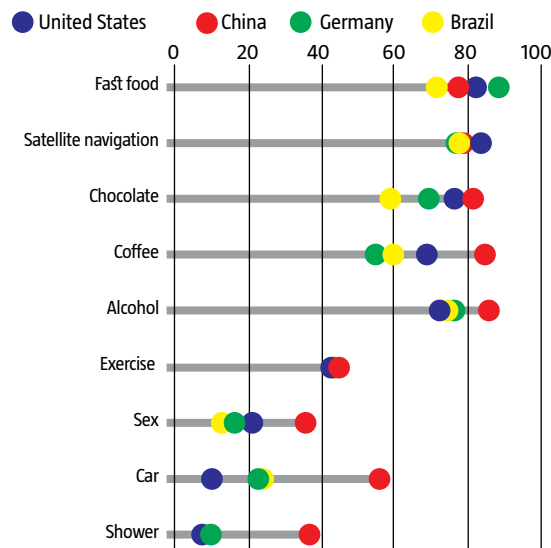
The degree to which the Internet is new and different is also reflected in the net movement’s practicalities. “The Internet fundamentally lowers the barriers to organisation,” says Kevin Werbach, who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. Like-minded souls no longer need painstakingly to build an organisational structure; a mailing-list is often enough to band together online.

DISSOLVING DEMOCRACY

The anti-SOPA protest started with discussions on blogs and elsewhere, according to Harvard’s Mr. Benkler, whose research team has analysed the content of online publications and links between activist websites. Techdirt, a blog, and other specialised online publications wrote about the new legislation. As people got interested, the more established advocacy groups such as the EFF and Public Knowledge came to serve as clearing-houses for information. Groups such as Avaaz, Fight For The Future and Demand Progress, whose aim is to mobilise netizens, started offering tools to help people signal their displeasure, including by writing to members of Congress: millions ended up using them. Internet firms such as Reddit and Tumblr provided organisational support, and larger companies were part of the lobbying effort:

A key part of life

Percentage of respondents willing to give up a lifestyle habit for a year instead of the Internet



Source: Boston Consulting Group

net-activists are less likely than Greens to shun corporate interests that coincide with their own. After fierce debate among its peer-producers, Wikipedia joined the campaign, greatly increasing its impact.

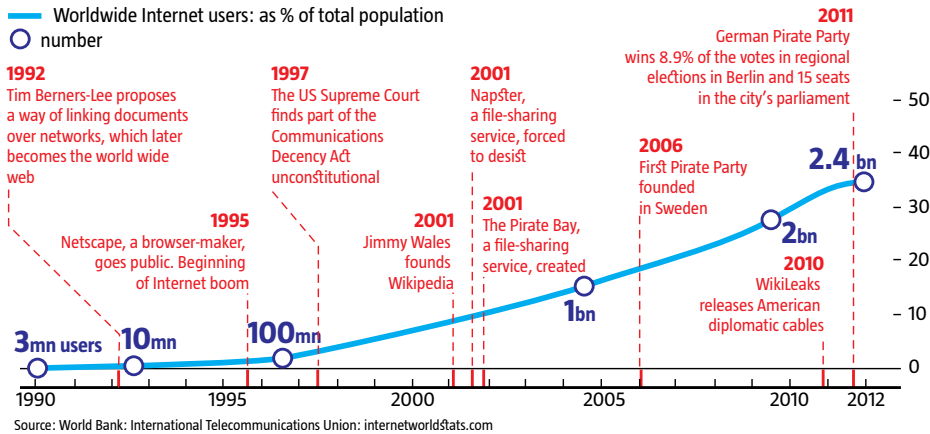
Germany’s Pirate Party flashed into existence with similar speed. A few weeks before the 2011 elections in Berlin pollsters gave it only a few percentage points. But with a minimum of re-

IN SOME COUNTRIES THE NASCENT NET MOVEMENT HAS SPAWNED “PIRATE PARTIES” THAT FOCUS ON NET-POLICY ISSUES

sources, it managed to mount an efficient campaign using social media to mobilise voters and crowdsourcing to come up with slogans. With 8.9% of the vote, it won 15 seats on the regional assembly.

Getting it together quickly, though, is no proof of long-term commitment. Some have criticised the anti-SOPA and other online campaigns as mere “clicktivism”, requiring no more commitment than the twitch of a gamer’s finger. The anti-SOPA coalition is trying to show its staying power by becoming the Internet Defense

Political progress



League, essentially an online phone tree. People sign up by giving their e-mail address; websites can add a logo that signals their membership. If the league's leaders see a threat to their conception of the internet, they send out an alert.

More intriguingly, technology may come to have a role in formulating policy, as well as disseminating calls for action. Germany's Pirate Party runs a perpetual party conference on an online platform, called "Liquid Feedback", designed to dissolve the distinction between direct and representative democracy. Rather than voting on an issue directly or electing representatives, party members can delegate their votes on given issues to another member whose opinion they trust—and take them back if they do not agree with the delegate's decisions. Delegates can in turn pass the votes they collect to another member, thus putting together long and fluid "delegation chains".

The system does not create a democratic paradise: most of the Pirates don't use it. But it allows for very transparent decision making, argues Martin Haase, perhaps the most influential member of Germany's Pirate Party, judging by the fact that 237 of the nearly 5000 registered users active on Liquid Feedback have delegated their votes to him. "There's no dealing in smoky back rooms," he explains, "you can always tell who has supported what."

Interesting internal infrastructure, though, is no guarantee of further political gains.

Germany's political system makes creating a new party relatively easy, one reason why the Greens succeeded there in the 1980s. Yet the Pirates lack the political nous and broad appeal of the Greens. Almost two-thirds of Pirate supporters are men. Although the ideals of the net movement are often egalitarian its practice can be macho and elitist. The thousands of new members attracted by the Pirates' Berlin success included a fair share of blowhards, troublemakers and worse.

On the party's e-mail lists, discussions of whether users of Liquid Feedback should be allowed to remain anonymous or how much Pirates in parliaments should be allowed to earn routinely blow up into bad-tempered "shitstorms". Some of its leaders have resigned in disgust and exhaustion. In national polls the party has dropped from over 13% of the vote in May 2012 to around 3% now, below the threshold needed to enter state or national parliaments in this year's elections.

A HACK OR AN OPERATING SYSTEM?

New parties are not the only way to political success. In most of the world the green movement's victories came from applying pressure to established parties, and spurring the creation of new institutions—ministries of the environment, environmental protection agencies, international treaty organisations and the like. It is still early days, but such institution building is hard to imagine for the net movement.

Net politics is about freeing people to experiment rather than controlling their effluents. Although the state can guarantee freedoms, policy by policy it tends to do better, these days, on the shackling front.

Moreover net activists, many of whom are libertarian, are unlikely to call for the creation of "net ministries". Many want to hack politics—to find a way to get the system to an outcome they desire through cleverness and force majeure applied from outside—much more than they want to play politics.

It is possible that the lasting influence of the net movement will be in providing new tools and tactics for people with other political aims. All political protest and novelty now has a social-media face, whether it be that of the tea party, the Occupy movement or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; all seek the fast-multiplying effect that the internet can add to activism and uprisings. Experiments in "delegative democracy" like Liquid Feedback may rewrite the way politics works from the inside, as well as speed things up. In Germany other parties are experimenting with such systems; something similar powers Italy's populist Five Star Movement.

When asked about why her or-

ALL POLITICAL PROTEST AND NOVELTY NOW HAS A SOCIAL-MEDIA FACE

ganisation does not have a fully fledged political platform, Marina Weisband, one of the leaders of Germany's Pirate Party, once replied: "We don't offer a ready-made programme, but an entire operating system." The true potential of internet politics, in other words, is to reshape what people can do, rather than to campaign for particular benefits.

It is not obvious that the sort of people who think of the world in terms of operating systems will prove to be the best at using that new potential, or find in it the power to protect the freedom and openness of all the infrastructure that they care about. But many of them are increasingly serious about trying. ■

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Freedom Without Liberation

For a large part of the Ukrainian population, Stalin's "liberation from the Germans" was a mirror image of Hitler's "liberation of Ukraine from the Bolsheviks" in 1941

Author:
Vladyslav
Hrynevych

There are two distinct ways to create myths: suppressing an inconvenient truth and imposing a patent untruth or half-truth on society by dictating how something should be remembered. Both methods have been employed in creating the myth of the "Great Patriotic War". For starters, Stalin's ideologues completely excised the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact and the tragic year of 1941 from the living memory of society. Soviet myth-makers later spared no expense on bronze and glitter in adding them to the real and pyrrhic victories of the Red Army.

As far as Ukraine's "liberation" from the German occupation is concerned, there were, from the viewpoint of the Soviet authorities, weighty reasons to "revise" this utterly complicated and controversial historical episode. The return of the Red Army was accompanied by "purges of collaborationists" and an overall mobilization of the local population, which Soviet generals used as veritable "cannon fodder". Another problem for Stalin's regime was the fight against the national liberation struggle in Western Ukraine, which peaked precisely during this period and continued until the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Therefore, for a large part of the Ukrainian population, Stalin's "liberation from the Germans" was a mirror image of Hitler's "liberation of Ukraine from the Bolsheviks" – providing freedom without liberation.

THE REVENGE OF THE LIBERATORS

The Nazi occupation instilled terror and hatred in nearly all strata of the Ukrainian population. Still, despite the overall negative attitude towards the Germans, the return of Stalinism was perceived quite ambiguously in Ukraine. To residents of eastern Ukrainian cities, who had suffered more than others during the occupation and whom the Nazi policy essentially doomed to slow extinction, the return of the Soviet authorities spelled a revived hope for life. Even the role of a "cog" in Stalin's totalitarian system was much more appealing than the prospect of forever being a German slave and Untermensch—a member of a "lower race". The arrival of the communist authorities extended the hope of stable employment and pay, a certain, peculiarly Soviet kind of welfare (rations, aid to the families of war veterans, healthcare, etc.) and thus the restoration of the ordinary Soviet way of life, which had



СЛАВА ОСВОБОДИ
СМЕРТЬ НЕМЕЦКИ

1. Glory to the liberators of Ukraine! Death to German usurpers!

2. Let's give more bread to the front and the country!

almost been forgotten during the time of occupation.

On the other hand, a large part of the population was apprehensive of revenge on the part of Stalin's regime. There were a number of Ukrainians who had actively or passively cooperated with the Germans. Apart from those who served in the German police and Wehrmacht, the Soviet authorities targeted various local chiefs (primarily, village heads) and even street sweepers who had made lists of communists and Jews for the Germans. At the time, hundreds of thousands of men who had deserted from the Red Army in 1941 and women who had had sexual contact with Germans were awaiting their hour of reckoning. Also suspect were Communist Party members who had remained in the occupied territory but had not joined



ІНТЕЛІТАМ УКРАЇНИ!
М ЗАХВАТЧИКАМ!

partisan units, as well as entire ethnic groups and even peoples, such as the Crimean Tatars. In fact, everyone who had not actively fought against the Germans could be viewed as “guilty” by Stalin’s regime.

At the same time, in order to survive in occupied Ukraine people had to contact or cooperate with the enemy in one way or another. Everyone did it in his own fashion. The methods of “cooperation” were numerous – from service in German administrative or economic institutions, the police, or Wehrmacht, to employment in factories or agriculture, paying taxes to the Germans, and so on. It should be noted that over 90% of Ukraine’s population remained in the occupied territory, including a high proportion of intellectuals, primarily in technical fields, such as engineers who

helped the Germans put factories back into operation after the Red Army retreated in panic in 1941. With their help, the Germans were able to restore functionality to the Donbas coalmines, many of which the Bolsheviks had blown up during their retreat. The Germans, of course, made full use of Ukraine’s agricultural sector and its abundant output.

Therefore, it is no surprise that after nearly two years of German occupation, Stalin’s authorities considered the entire Ukrainian population guilty of having “connections” with the enemy. On 7 February 1944, at the 9th Plenum of Soviet Writers in Moscow, writer Petro Panch put it into words, stating: “The entire population that is now found in the liberated regions cannot, in essence, openly look in the eyes of our liberators, because it has become entangled in connections with the Germans to some extent. ... Some plundered flats and offices, others helped the Germans in looting and shooting, still others profited and engaged in commerce, while some girls, having lost a sense of patriotism, cohabited with the Germans.”

Later on, everyone who had remained in the occupied territory was declared suspicious. This was officially manifested in the infamous query on the typical Soviet questionnaire: “Have you or your relatives been in the occupied territory?” According to some recently declassified information, more than 320,000 Soviet citizens were arrested in the USSR in 1943-53 on charges of cooperation with the Germans. In Ukraine, this number was 93,690 for the period of 1943-57. More than half of these people were from Western Ukraine and were often punished primarily for nationalist activities (“Ukrainian-German bourgeois nationalism”), which the communist authorities invariably associated with “collaboration”.

The residents of Sloboda Ukraine (Slobozhanshchyna) and the Donbas were the first to experience the fury and hatred of the “liberators” towards those “who had served the Germans”. A report by a Müller, representative of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, said, among other things, that the

Over
90%
of Ukraine’s population remained in the occupied territory
A quarter of the Communist Party of Ukraine,
142,134
members, remained in the occupied territory, and
113,890
of these survived the occupation unharmed

NKVD carried out mass arrests in the Sloviansk-Barvinkove-Kramatorsk-Kostiantynivka sector the day after the Red Army entered the area in spring 1943. The repressive blow targeted those who had served in the police, worked in German administration or economic services, as well as girls who had been translators or had some other contacts with German soldiers. Women who had had sexual contact with Germans (were pregnant or had children from Germans) were immediately killed together with their children. A total of some 4,000 people were shot.

In some places, women were among the first targets of revenge by the returning Red Army. Oleksandr Dovzhenko wrote in his diaries about fairly frequent cases when women were shot for “treason”, a common occurrence in the period of “liberation”. Whether

AFTER “LIBERATION” A LARGE PART OF THE POPULATION WAS FEARFUL OF RETRIBUTION BY STALIN’S REGIME

the greatest motivation for this was sadism on sexual grounds or the “noble” patriotic indignation of slighted men remains a matter of contention. Otherwise it would be hard to understand the motivation of a Soviet general who personally shot teenage girls in cold blood, deeming them “traitors to the Fatherland”, right after interrogating them about their intimate affairs. A number of women were shot near Melitopol »



in autumn 1943. These events prompted Dovzhenko to include in his famous film *Ukraina v ohni* (Ukraine in Flames) an image of a woman who “slept with an Italian officer” and was later killed by partisans for doing so.

Kyiv resident Hanna Dziubenkivna testified about searches and repressions that swept across Kyiv after the Red Army returned. Special boxes were hung on walls in which citizens were supposed to deposit their denunciations of those who had “served the Germans”. NKVD men came to her place to search it. The woman had washed dishes in a German cafeteria, so she was accused of cooperation with the Fascists. They found copies of Adler, a German magazine, in her home and arrested her, even though she could not read in German.

A CRISIS OF LOYALTY

However, the main problem for the returning regime was not so much to exact revenge on “traitors” as to restore the operation of the Soviet administration, because neither local councils nor party bodies were functioning. This soon proved to be quite a challenge, primarily due to the lack of a loyal and faithful cadre. British military correspondent Alexander Werth was surprised that upon “liberating” Ukrainian cities the Red Army would appoint Russians, rather than Ukrainians



as heads of local city councils. “Does the army want to see ‘sincere Russians’ rather than Ukrainians in high administrative positions in Ukrainian cities soon after they are liberated, because

UKRAINIAN LOSSES DURING THE “LIBERATION” PERIOD WERE DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGHER THAN DURING THE NAZI INVASION OF 1941



ethnic Ukrainians could be more tolerant towards the local population? Was it an accident that Russians were to become mayors in Uman, as previously in Kharkiv and later in Odesa?”

Local communists who had endured the hardships of partisan and underground struggle against the enemy were supposed to comprise the core of the restored communist authorities. However, it turned out that a majority of Ukrainians had not only failed to fight the Germans but also collaborated with them in some areas. A total of 142,134 communists—over 25% of the Communist Party of Ukraine—had remained in the occupied part of Ukraine of which 113,890 survived the occupation unharmed. Many communists and Komsomol members registered with the Gestapo for checks. For

example, an NKVD report says that a large number of members and candidate members of the Communist Party as well as Komsomol members legally resided in the temporarily occupied territory of Voroshylivgrad Oblast (present-day Luhansk Oblast). In Voroshylivgrad alone, 750 such communists and 350 Komsomol members were registered as of 15 April 1943.

Therefore, just like other segments of the Ukrainian population, most communists found themselves in the “suspicious” category and for a long time were scrutinized by the party and other bodies. The Communist Party of Ukraine periodically underwent purges, and its revival took many years – until freshly initiated communists returned home from the army and the flow of party and administrative cadre from Russia resumed.

“MAY THIS THING PASS AND THAT THING NEVER RETURN”

Ukrainian peasants were also concerned about the restoration of Stalin’s regime, primarily because the old collective farm system could be reinstated. Such attitudes were, to an extent, expressed in a saying that was popular in rural areas in early 1943. It said of the Germans and the Bolsheviks: “May this thing pass and that thing never return.”

The Ukrainian farmer viewed the return of the Red Army with reservation. “It was impossible to conceal the passive attitude of Ukrainians to the war and Soviet victories,” Milovan Dilas recalled. “The population made an impression of gloomy concealment and paid no attention to us. Even though officers – the only people we had contact with – were silent or spoke in exaggeratedly optimistic tones about the attitudes of Ukrainians, the Russian driver lambasted them, using obscene language, for having fought so poorly that the Russians had to liberate them now.” The Yugoslav communist also mentioned that the secretary of the Uman district party committee was annoyed by the passivity of the locals during the occupation because the partisan unit he had led had so few people that it could not even handle the pro-German Ukrainian police.

That the comeback of the Soviets, or the “Reds”, did not arouse much enthusiasm in Uman in spring 1944 was also noted by Werth: “The locals seemed to be quite indifferent to what was happening.” Major Kampov (the real name of writer Boris Polevoy) tried to explain to the foreigner why the peasants were so indifferent towards the Soviet authorities by appealing to the consequences of the German occupation that had “demoralized many people in this part of the country”. “And even though they hate the Germans, they have largely lost the sense of socialist consciousness and have become narrow in their worldview,” he said. On hearing this, the British correspondent ironically said to himself: “They will have to work hard to instil the right sense of Soviet consciousness in these people.”

Their conversation also touched upon collective farms and the attitude of Ukrainian peasants to them. “They had a pretty good life here during the occupation because the cunning Ukrainian peasant is the world’s best specialist in concealing foodstuffs,” Polevoy said, relating an opinion that was popular among the Soviet party elite. “They had always hidden food from us, and you can imagine what a great job they did under the Germans. Now that the Germans have disappointed them by promising them land and not making good on their promise, they probably hope that we will scrap collective farms, but we won’t.”

MOBILIZATION AS AN ACT OF REVENGE

Another important factor that made the Ukrainian population pessimistic about being liberated from the Germans was the Soviet military mobilization. The ways in which it was administered turned out to be utterly strict, if not cruel. The reason was that it involved the active army, which had been given carte blanche to use local human resources to meet its needs, with virtually no restrictions.

Indeed, frontline military enlistment offices made the drafting process much faster, but the quality of selection and the training of the mobilized were substandard.



Age-related, medical and other restrictions were violated in the process. The biggest problem was the short duration of military training. In the long run, it reflected negatively on the combat capacity of Soviet troops. Following the Red Army’s return to Ukraine, it became more a rule than an exception to send poorly armed soldiers with little or no military training into battle. Thus, while the Soviets claimed to be giving Ukrainians a chance to avenge themselves against the Germans, this looked more like revenge exacted on those who had been under enemy occupation. In fact, even the Germans could not understand why the Ukrainian population was treated this way. After studying captive Red Army men at the time, the Germans reached a paradoxical conclusion: the Soviet Union had completely exhausted its human resources – they found a number of local teenagers and elderly people who had been mobilized several months before their capture.

Ukrainian émigré writer Mykhailo Doroshenko described in his memoirs how the Red Army had driven people without weapons into action in his native Kirovohrad Oblast. They were ordered to obtain weapons for themselves

as they engaged in battle with the enemy. Political instructors and commanders would tell them: “Through these efforts and through your blood you must wash away your sin before the Fatherland and its great chief Stalin.”

Oleksandr Dovzhenko’s diaries also bear witness to the concerns Soviet Ukrainian intellectuals had about mobilization. For example, in spring 1943, he wrote down a story told by writer Viktor Shklovsky that great numbers of men mobilized in Ukraine were dying in action. They were called chornosvytky for having no military uniform and wearing their civilian clothes. They had no military training and were treated as offenders. One general watched them in action and wept... “Everyone is tormented by the thought of the inhuman, unheard-of sufferings of these people,” Dovzhenko wrote after meeting several of his acquaintances. “They say that [the Reds] start preparing 16-year-olds for mobilization, that poorly trained men are being sent into battle as offenders and that no-one feels sorry for them. How horrible it is to think that Ukraine may be left without any people after this – 19-year-old girls are already being enlisted, and many more have been destroyed or driven to damned Germany by Hitler.”

UKRAINIAN PEASANTS WERE TROUBLED BY THE RETURN OF STALIN’S REGIME, FEARING THE RESTORATION OF THE COLLECTIVE FARM SYSTEM

3. An injured Red Army soldier will find a mother and a sister in every Soviet woman.

4. Soldier, Ukraine is waiting for you!

5. Forward, Bohdan’s courageous descendants!

In general, 2.7-3 million people were mobilized to the Red Army in Ukraine, i.e., about 10% of the population. This points to general mobilization. In some oblasts of Western Ukraine where over 15% of the population were drafted, it was a matter of total mobilization.

All of these circumstances were significant factors that led to a situation in which Ukrainian losses during the “liberation” period were disproportionately higher than during the Nazi invasion of 1941. ■

A photograph of Philippe de Lara, a French philosopher, speaking. He is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a striped tie. His right hand is raised with fingers spread, as if gesturing during a speech. The background is slightly blurred, showing an indoor setting.

Bitter Legacy

Philippe de Lara:
“Totalitarian regimes
are dead, but they
continue to exert
a strong influence
on many countries
and their cultures”

Interviewer:
Hanna
Trehub

In these difficult times of economic crisis, we are witnessing the return of political slogans that sometimes smack of the half-forgotten totalitarian past. We should remember that in the mid-20th century, Europe was the cradle of three totalitarian systems – Nazism, Soviet communism and fascism. European states such as Italy and the countries of the former Soviet Union are currently struggling with problems that are rooted in their totalitarian past. In the case of Ukraine, this post-totalitarian legacy is deeply engrained in both socio-political realities and the mentality of most citizens. In the two decades of its independence, Ukraine has failed to overcome its Soviet totalitarian legacy. Noted French philosopher Philippe de Lara spoke with *The Ukrainian Week* about totalitarianism, its ideological legacy in Europe and the post-totalitarian syndrome.

U.W.: The temptation of totalitarianism has remained potent even after the fall of Nazism and Soviet communism — the two most powerful totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century. Do you think we can now say that totalitarianism as such has disappeared?

We cannot speak now about either a modification or disappearance of totalitarianism as such. In my opinion, we are dealing with a totalitarian legacy. It is quite obvious that there was a period in the past that we can call a totalitarian era. It started from the Bolshevik revolution and ended with the Second World War. A certain kind of mobilization and a combination of cruelty and ideology were characteristic of this era. Even the Russian Communist Party was largely transformed 10 years after the war – there was no more mass terror or personality cult of the leader. These are the key features of totalitarianism—a vision of the “bright future” personified by Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Even Brezhnev was already a “soft” or “small” version of Stalin. Perhaps something changed or even ended. The publication of Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago* was a symbolic finale to the totalitarian era.

The moment when the leaders of Eastern European communist countries began to send their children to the US to get MBAs marked the spiritual death of totalitarianism. The same processes took place in China but with a different chronology. There is a paradox, however: full-blooded totalitarianism

triggered by the First World War came to an end between the collapse of Nazism and the early 1970s, but some of its elements persist even today. It would be wrong to think that fascism has disappeared. The time of intensive totalitarian cruelty and dogma is in the past. However, the colossal consequences, imprints and signs of this past persist in contemporary Europe, above all in former communist countries.

U.W.: The mindset and discourse today are quite different from fifty years ago; what do totalitarian practices look like now?

French sociologist and anthropologist Louis Dumont studied totalitarianism as a crisis of modernization that spread throughout the world and advanced step by step in sync with globalization. When we speak about modernization here, we mean not a complete transformation but an adjustment of universal values, institutions, practices and the free market in a given country and its participation in a certain local culture. It is always a painful process. In all cases, there is simultaneously a sense of acquiring something but also losing something very valuable. In some countries, this painful process has

followed an apocalyptic path and triggered severe reactions from society in the form of aggression against modernization. At the same time, totalitarian revolutions are typically pro-modern, focusing on new people and a bright future that must be completely different from the present reality. Paradoxically, these revolutions are also directed against modern advances, because certain things were considered better in the past. Totalitarian revolutions are conservative revolutions.

In a number of countries, the modernization story became malicious, leading to catastrophes and unpredictable consequences. But this is, to an extent, the history of modernization in many parts of the world, part of the process in which traditional societies accept modernization trends. Why totalitarianism emerged in Germany, Italy and Russia rather than in other countries remains an open question, especially for anthropology. For example, fascism existed in many countries, including France. Fascist movements were active in all European countries from Finland to Portugal. However, there were no totalitarian revolutions in either Czechoslovakia or Poland. In the case of Germany, Italy and Russia, it had to do, above all, with the incomplete process of nation building and difficulties handling the legacy of imperialism. Why did these nations find themselves captive to the imperial model? Russia had always been an empire, and it was only in the early 20th century that it began to turn into a modern nation. It vacillated between its imperial tradition and the possibility of building a modern nation, which left a significant imprint on this country.

Totalitarian regimes are dead, but they continue to exert a strong influence on many countries and their cultures.

U.W.: Take Soviet communism and Nazism—how would you compare these two totalitarian systems of the modern era?

Some may say that these two regimes cannot be compared because Nazism is absolute evil, while communism, which in fact perpetrated countless crimes, was in some respects a benign undertaking. It is important now to better understand the interaction and communication between Nazism and Soviet com-

munist. Bloodlands is a typical tragic example of the worst things that took place in Central and Eastern European countries not because of the Nazis or Russian communists individually but because of both regimes simultaneously. These could be concurrent campaigns or actions that followed, imitated or reacted to one another. The best example here is the occupation of Poland and Ukraine. It is important today to reveal what the combination of various European totalitarian regimes produces.

U.W.: How comparable are the two biggest mass crimes of Soviet communism and Nazism – the 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine and the Holocaust during the Second World War?

Clearly, there are commonalities between them, and not only because both were mass killings. The famine in Ukraine and the Holocaust were the first cases of mass retributions of this kind in the history of mankind. Humanity had never before experienced anything like the 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine before it occurred. Famine had been a means towards political ends in the past—for example, when an army would besiege an enemy city—but there had never been mass actions against an entire nation. This global character was a key aspect of the extermination of Ukrainians and Jews by totalitarian regimes. Jewish pogroms had occurred even before the Nazis came to power, but the Holocaust was the first time when all the Jews in Europe – and, according to future plans, in the entire world – were targeted for destruction.

There is another similarity between these two tragedies: the fact that their existence was denied on a large scale by historians, former communists and Nazis. The Holocaust was recognized worldwide earlier than the Holodomor. Scholars began to study and collect eyewitness testimonies because the Ukrainian tragedy was successfully denied and hushed up until recently. Noone heard about the Ukrainian Holodomor in France 20 years ago. It is a great achievement that most people no longer deny this horrible fact and now see Soviet totalitarianism for what it was. However, as with the Holocaust, part of the incriminating discourse

BIO

Philippe de Lara graduated from ENS de Fontenay/St Cloud. He is now Professor at the Pantheon-As-sas University (Paris II) lecturing in philosophy and political studies. Prof. de Lara is the co-author of *Charles Taylor Et L'interprétation De L'identité Moderne* (Charles Taylor and Interpretation of Modern Identity) written with Guy Laforest and published in 1998; *L'expérience du langage: Wittgenstein philosophe de la subjectivité* (The Experience of Language: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Subjectivity); and *La rite et la raison: Wittgenstein ethnologue* (The Ritual and Mind: Wittgenstein's Anthropology) published in 2005. Prof. de Lara researches anthropology of totalitarianism and modernization and writes criticism for non-fiction.fr, a popular online publication in France.

will consist of denials or attempts to downplay the scale of the tragedy.

Speaking about the differences between the Holodomor and the Holocaust, the former came suddenly to an end, while the Holocaust was supposed to continue until the last Jew on earth was killed. It came to an end only because Nazism was defeated in the Second World War. When people begin to destroy others like themselves on a massive scale – think about the Rwanda genocide – they cannot stop. One crime leads to another, and it becomes a habit. Think about this situation: Germany lies in ruins; the war is lost, but the last remaining SS units continue to transport Jews to concentration camps to be killed.

U.W.: What are your views on so-called Homo Sovieticus that is mentally still present in most post-Soviet countries?

I believe that Homo Sovieticus does not exist as such. I know that it may sound quite provocative coming from me. I love Aleksandr Zinoviev's novels, which best illustrate the character of Homo Sovieticus (he published a novel under this title in 1982 – Ed.). His works are an important source of information about Soviet society and culture. The author offers a detailed sociological portrayal of the mechanisms that led to the emergence of this phenomenon. However, Zinoviev's discourse leaves much to be explained because one gets the impression that the Sovietization of the masses was a permanent and irreversible phenomenon. To say that the Soviet regime has fundamentally transformed people and that everyone in the post-Soviet territory is now Homo Sovieticus is a dangerous and oversimplified view of the problem.

Homo Sovieticus is a kind of behaviour borrowed from the totalitarian past and continued to this day, when the totalitarian environment is no longer there. People no longer believe that they have to, for example, kill all "traitors" of the regime, etc., but they still conduct themselves as Soviet people. I am afraid that the use of this expression, which was a daring discovery by Zinoviev, in the form of a systematized conception may lead to the division of the public into two types of people: liberals and Homo Sovieticus. ■

A Gallery of Inspiration

Pavlo Hudimov talks about popular artists, the change in the cultural vector and why Ukrainians don't understand contemporary art



Interviewer:
Bohdan
Butkevych

Photos:
Oleksandr
Chekmeniov

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, his name was a symbol of avant-garde music, even if often used with a “pop” prefix, as one of Okean Elzy’s cornerstones. Since the mid-2000s, his name has been associated with avant-garde art as he became one of the best-known art and gallery curators in Ukraine. Pavlo Hudimov is a type of a kulturtrager who keeps working on his initiative with impressive enthusiasm despite the lack of any government support, poorly developed art patronage and the total vulgarization of public space.

The distance between art and people should gradually close. This is my function as a curator and the function of every artist. Why are we afraid of art? Because we don’t understand it. And we aggressively try to push away that which we don’t understand. This is actually the homo sovieticus syndrome that still runs through our veins. It has pushed, and continues to push people away from art, but

this does not mean that it’s impossible to close the distance.

There are two formulas for cooperation between the government and art. The first is the American one, where the government simply does not interfere. The most it can do is to support art funds, while most museums and galleries are privately-owned. Of course, there is a certain national inventory of artwork but it’s not overwhelming. The second formula is French where almost everything related to culture is funded by the government. Ukraine is currently using a pseudo-American model where all major art pieces are from private collections, while the government is supposed to be in charge of storing these treasures in museums. In fact, though, it’s time to admit that art cannot exist without government support, despite longstanding stereotypes. The government has to use the cultural factor to persuade the world that Ukraine is not a third-world country with an

obscure past and an even more obscure future.

Ukrainian artists have learned to create significant art happenings on their own. This is the model of how a culture-oriented civil society begins to act. There were several events last year that confirm this and give hope. For instance, the Independent project at Art Arsenal, dedicated to Independence Day. It’s cool that they did it all without embroidered shirts and boasting about agricultural achievements. Another example is GogolFest that took place in 2012 without the involvement of sponsors, let alone the government. And the Louvre exhibited sculptures by the Lviv sculptor Johann George Pinsel. Remember the Ukrainian Baroque Myth exhibit at the National Museum of Arts? Yes, we are very different from other countries in terms of art, but that doesn’t mean that we are lagging behind, no matter what the stereotypes are. Moreover, the young generation of Ukrainian artists is very inspiring. They

are now 20 to 30 years old, proactive, professional, ambitious and bold – in a good way.

I try to assess Ukrainian art and artists based on international criteria. I've traveled the world a lot and talked to professionals in order to be able to do so. This experience helps me a lot in my work. That's why the artists who end up at the Ya Gallery are globally-oriented, so to speak.

The art-oriented part of society constitutes only 3-5%, even in super-developed countries. These are people who regularly go to art exhibitions and museums. Of course, there should also be respected average people who come home every day, sit down and eat what they are given – both in terms of food, and in terms of culture. But they are not the proactive and biting intelligentsia capable of changing society. Ukraine does not even have half a percent of such people. Whoever wants to get out of this mass does not have to be a millionaire or an oligarch. It is necessary to stop being an inert object of manipulation and start all over again, in a different way, to live consciously, move and communicate.

INTO THE FUTURE – FREE OF CHARGE

A pool of art promoters and curators cannot be created artificially. On the one hand, you have to take people and train them whenever there is a deficit of professionals on the market. But the question is – who should do this? The government? On the other hand, why do we need some Arts Academy to produce 200 curators annually who will then stand in lines to get a job as a PR manager in a company that has nothing to do with art? I would like to say that if someone wants to be an art curator, he/she has to begin by becoming fully integrated in this sphere. It is impossible to train a curator – he/she can only be cultivated. Again, I think the entire focus must be on the younger generation. They should not be forced to follow a preliminary schedule. They should develop their own language that will definitely be different from mine, for instance.

Art is not a market product. I remember the idea of art banking that was popular among the wealthy

before the 2008 crisis. They wanted to set up sort of trusts to buy up artwork and resell it at prices that are ten times higher. I told them that art will take vengeance for this. Such a system is unreliable and fake. Since we're talking about artists whose future will only be clear in 20-30 years, results cannot be predicted. This means that you have to incorporate yourself in this environment. And you will inevitably lose if you buy up artwork to simply sell it. A business-oriented mind cannot grasp the purpose of making art. This is why we don't charge an entrance fee at Ya Gallery. In my opinion, even a minimum charge would discourage people who cannot afford to pay. Actually, you have to give something before you get something back.

An artist should not be a promoter. You don't necessarily need to graduate from an arts academy to become an artist. Artists live with their art even if they have no food or home at a specific time. Most artists I work with are still artists, meaning creative people who do not work to earn an immediate profit or transform their art into money. They want to do something edgy and independent. They appreciate the cultural rather than the commercial component of art. Modern Ukrainian artists do not have a guaranteed income, exhibits, auctions, and so on. This is why Ukrainian modern art will be studied in great detail by art critics in many years, because the commercial factor did not play a part in its creation – neither in the past, nor today. In other words, it's real.

It takes 100 years to achieve real art. Okay, time is denser now, so let's say 20 years. Time puts many things in their places. Ukrainian society is not yet educated enough to accept contemporary art. Look how pieces from the 1990s are now reaching the public, which is finally beginning to partly understand and accept them. But at the time of their creation, no-one understood the artwork, although it is the same now as it was then.

THE ART OF INNUENDO

Art is a spice added to life. Without art, you can't really experience existence in full. This is why it cannot be for everybody, or it will turn into a fast food. When art "for everyone" emerges, it immediately turns into social realism or some other totali-

tarian form. But art, albeit on the level of innuendos, is a true portrait of the essence of a country, rather than some abstract notion or a dream of a lonely intellectual.

It is more likely that the grandchildren of an avant-garde artist will get his dividends, rather than the artist him-/herself. Somehow, artists who were outsiders in their time, such as Goya, Bosch or van Gogh, have become major players, the symbols of their epochs. The fact that the artist's generation does not understand his/her art does not mean anything. Meanwhile, fashionable "art artisans" – of which there are plenty in any epoch – are quickly forgotten. Those who remain in history were largely unsuccessful during their lifetime.

Art has the right to speculate. An artist using the language of the body, explicitness, provocation, kitsch and even pornography, cannot be judged as immoral and deleted from art history. The West and Europe are going through difficult times in terms of finding a moral standard – the process often turns into a trivial witch-hunt. The widespread tendency today is to simply attack the art that people don't understand. In this sense, the situation in Ukraine is much better as compared to that in Russia, where art curators are simply imprisoned.

At the turn of the millennium, the vector of cultural development changed. The 20th century seemed to have had it all, from puritan burnings to sexual revolution and degenerative art. That's why everything seems sort of undefined today. And there is no empire to take over as a cultural leader, such as Austria did in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and France in the 1920s. The UK is using its art legacy extremely effectively to increase public revenues – only they know how to sell their artwork, books, movies and music so efficiently. But there is nothing new about it, and effective development is impossible without this spark of innovation. Much has been expected of China, which is once again developing its grand empire, but its artwork is not good enough to become a global leader. Therefore today, the contemporary art vector is best represented as a question mark. ■

BIO

Pavlo Hudimov

is a musician, the curator of Ukrainian and international art projects, as well as a gallery owner. Born on 12 October 1973 in Lviv, Pavlo started playing music in 1991. His first band was called Klan Tyshi (the Clan of Silence). In 1994-2005, he was a guitarist in Okean Elzy. In 1998, Pavlo moved to Kyiv with the band. After he left Okean Elzy in 2005, Pavlo established his own band called Hudimov. In April 2007 he started the Hudimov Art Project, a cultural holding that includes ArtBook publishing house, Akt-sent creative group, Ya Design architectural bureau, and Ya Gallery art centre.

The Earth's

Impact events have greatly changed our planet, including the territory of contemporary Ukraine

Author:
Leonid
Zalizniak

"For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," Ecclesiastes says. This biblical truth best captures the woeful essence of some of the scientific discoveries of recent decades. Among these, we have become aware of numerous dangers originating from space that threaten our planet and its living organisms. Many scientists now believe that life on Earth and human civilization emerged and have persisted only due to a miraculous coincidence of fortunate circumstances.

"INVISIBLE SCARS"

Jest decades ago, debates raged about the origins of hundreds of craters on the surface of the Moon that are visible to the naked eye. Today there is no doubt that most of them were caused by meteorites, not volcanoes. Scientists call these craters impact structures or astroblemes, meaning "star wounds". If the many craters on the Moon's surface are "scars" caused by meteorites, asteroids and comets, the Earth must have experienced even more impact events due to its larger size. However, erosion and weathering have largely "healed" them, and many

of these "star scars" were only recently identified.

The Earth's most famous astrobleme is the relatively "young" Barringer crater in Arizona (USA) which has the form of a bowl 1,200 metres in diameter and 175 metres deep (**Photo 1**). It was created about 40,000-50,000 years ago under the impact of a nickel-iron meteorite 50 metres across. Fragments of the meteorite have been found in and around the crater. The meteorite struck the surface of the Earth at a speed of 12-15 kilometres per second, releasing energy 1,000 times greater than the power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Researchers studying the crater in 1902 were the first to suggest that objects of this kind were caused by meteorite impact.

American scientists first launched scientific research into astroblemes in the 1960s. Similar research began in the USSR in 1969 with the examination of the "Popigai" meteorite crater in northwestern Yakutia. Formed 36 million years ago under the impact of an asteroid 5-8 kilometres across, it is around 100 kilometres in diameter and 2 kilometres deep. The colossal force from its impact transformed graphite in the ground into valuable materials. Unique industrial black diamond

deposits were harvested there by GULAG prisoners under Stalin in the postwar years.

When Soviet scientists established that Popigai was a meteor impact crater and analysed the effects of the impact, it triggered a search for diamond-rich craters across the USSR, including Ukraine. The majority of the eight astroblemes identified in Ukraine were discovered as a result of this search activity. In particular, the Illyinets impact crater measuring 7,000 metres in diameter and 700 metres deep was discovered near Vinnytsia (**Photo 2**). The crater was created by an asteroid measuring

Apophis, a large near-Earth asteroid, was projected to strike the Earth in 2036. However, recent NASA data suggests that it will miss our planet by

30,000km

and will thus not pose a threat

Scientists have calculated that an average of four asteroids measuring one kilometre across strike the Earth every one million years



"Star Scars"

1

around 250 metres across. Small impact diamonds were discovered at the bottom of the crater but not enough for industrial extraction. The Boltysh crater, which is 24 kilometres across and up to 900 metres deep, is located near Oleksandriia (Kirovohrad Oblast) and is believed to be Ukraine's biggest crater. Scientists claim that the impact was caused by a cosmic object 1,000 metres in diameter which struck the Earth around 65 million years ago.

There are about 200 known "star scars" on the surface of the Earth. Large craters have been found in Germany, Finland, Aus-

tralia and Africa. In Russia, 15 "scars" measuring 10-110 kilometres in diameter have been discovered. Scientists also studied a depression 300 kilometres in diameter in South Africa and a smaller one, 250 kilometres across, in Canada. The biggest astrobleme on Earth, around 500 kilometres across, was discovered near Wilkes Land in Antarctica under a kilometre-thick ice sheet. This immense crater spans an area greater than the distance from Kyiv to Odesa. According to one hypothesis, it was excavated 250 million years ago by a gigantic asteroid measuring 48 kilometres across. According to some researchers, this cataclysm was the cause of the greatest annihilation of living organisms in the history of our planet – the Permian-Triassic extinction event that killed nearly 80 per cent of all biological species. A colossal astrobleme (600 by 400 kilometres) named Shiva was recently discovered at the bottom of the Indian Ocean.

However, the greatest impact event occurred in the early days of the Earth when it came in contact with a somewhat smaller plant roughly the mass of Mars. The collision released a tremendous amount of energy, the Earth melted, and a great mass of mate-

rials was released into its orbit where it stayed for a long time. Later, gravitation forces formed the Moon out of this debris.

UNINVITED GUESTS FROM SPACE

The catastrophic consequences of asteroids crashing into a planet are due to their high velocity (11-76 kilometres per second), which triggers the release of colossal amounts of destructive energy. It

AROUND 200 METEORITE IMPACT CRATERS OF VARIOUS SIZES HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED

Humankind as a whole can only be threatened by space objects over

10

kilometres in diameter. Humanity, which has been around for about three million years, has never experienced a cataclysm of this scale

is believed that only cosmic objects over 100 metres across pose significant threat to mankind. Their sheer size enables them to penetrate the Earth's atmosphere without significant loss of velocity, while smaller objects lose speed, disintegrate or explode in the air. Such an air burst was the likely cause of the Tunguska event of 1908 when a cosmic body (probably a comet) measuring 50-100 metres in diameter exploded over the Tunguska River in Siberia. The impact gave rise to numerous legends. The explosion was so powerful that it knocked down trees »





The Kaali meteorite crater on the Estonian island of Saaremaa is 110 metres in diameter. It was created 4,000 years ago by an impact event when a fragment of a meteorite disintegrated in the atmosphere. Eight smaller craters (15-40 metres in diameter) are located nearby.

within dozens of kilometres. Scientists estimate the power of the explosion at 10-50 megatonnes, which is close to that of a hydrogen bomb. If this meteorite had exploded over London or Moscow, it would have destroyed the entire megalopolis.

Impact craters on the Earth's surface are proof of numerous encounters with uninvited guests from space. The main source of these is the asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. It contains more than 400,000 asteroids constituting 98 per cent of all small bodies orbiting the Sun (**Photo 3**). These sometimes leave their orbits when pulled by larger bodies (such as Jupiter) or as a result of collisions and can then cross the trajectory of the Earth with a possibility of contact.

The problem of catastrophic asteroid impacts rose to prominence in the early 1980s when scientists established that a gigantic meteorite crashed into the Earth's surface 65 million years ago, putting an end to the predominance of reptiles and destroying 60-70 per cent of living organisms on our planet.

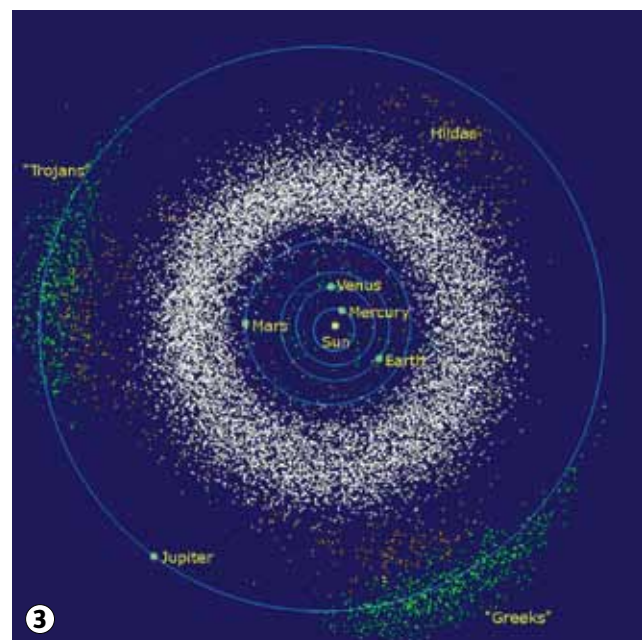
THE KILLER OF DINOSAURS

In 1977, American geologist Walter Alvarez noticed that one particular geological layer of clay 1-2 centimetres thick, located to the

northwest of Rome was blue in colour. It occurred at the boundary between Mesozoic deposits containing the remains of dinosaurs and Cenozoic-era deposits. The strange colour was explained by high levels of the rare-earth element iridium. It is found on the Earth in very small quantities but abunds in space objects. In 1980, a hypothesis was put forward that this geological layer, 65 million years old, received its iridium content due to an asteroid impact event. Melted quartz and glass (tektites) and even microscopic diamonds that could only be a result of a powerful explosion were also found at the site. Such iridium-rich deposits with tektites were discovered in various countries, suggesting the planetary scale of the disaster. A tremendously powerful explosion (equal to 10 million hydrogen bombs) that occurred 65 million years ago when an asteroid 10 kilometres in diameter struck the Earth destroyed every living organism within 1,000 kilometres. The impact triggered an unprecedented earthquake (13.0 magnitude), which caused volcanoes to erupt in different parts of the world. A 300-metre-high tsunami swept across the oceans, killing all living creatures many kilometres inland. The explosion ejected a huge mass of melted and evapo-

rated earth materials that fell as a fiery meteorite rain on the surface causing global fires. The velocity of fragments was so high that they exploded like atomic bombs on contact with the atmosphere. Within the first couple of hours after the collision, the temperature of the earth's atmosphere shot up to 200°C, according to some estimates. All creatures on land that did not hide under the ground or in the water died. The bigger the animal was, the smaller its chances of survival were. According to palaeontologists, all land creatures weighing over 10 kilogrammes died in the event.

The release of tremendous amounts of sulphur compounds into the atmosphere caused ubiquitous acid rains. The abundance of dust in the stratosphere and atmosphere brought out a planetary night that lasted an entire year. The dust from the explosion eclipsed the Sun for several years, preventing its rays from reaching the planet's surface and causing it to cool. A planetary winter set in and lasted for several years. Temperatures plummeted, causing many living organisms to freeze to death. Even worse, much lower levels of solar radiation slowed down photosynthesis. Plants were scorched, covered with dust and deprived of sunlight. They eventually died, resulting in the death of herbivorous animals, which decimated the population of pred-



ators. Within a short period, nearly 75 per cent of all living organisms vanished from the face of the Earth. Ocean creatures suffered less because of a slower temperature decline. That is the reason why there are so many relic species in the ocean.

Reptiles, especially the largest ones—dinosaurs—dominated the Earth prior to this event. The heat shock and subsequent temperature drop proved to be fatal to cold-blooded reptiles as they were unable to control their body temperature. The only reptiles that survived were the ones that buried themselves in the ground (lizards and snakes) or inhabited bodies of water (turtles and crocodiles).

The asteroid impact put an end to the Mesozoic era of reptiles and began a new, Cenozoic era ruled by mammals. The latter had emerged even in the Mesozoic era but had been nocturnal creatures similar to rats. Unlike reptiles, mammals can regulate their body temperature. This helped them survive the asteroid winter, and they came to rule the world after the extinction of dinosaurs. The Cenozoic era was characterized by an incredible diversity of mammal species and the arrival of primates.

Thus, asteroid impacts and their consequences were powerful factors in the development of life on Earth. Although most contemporary scholars link the great extinction 65 million years ago precisely to an impact event that left behind the Chicxulub crater in Mexico, there is now an alternative conception under which the disaster was caused by multiple impact events.

One such event could be the cause of the Manson impact crater 35 kilometres in diameter that was found near Iowa City (USA), 2,500 kilometres north of the Yucatán Peninsula. The crater was created by an asteroid about the same age as the one in Mexico. A joint Ukrainian-British mission that studied the Boltysh crater in Ukraine suggests that it was formed around the same time.

There is some evidence that the Kara crater (110 kilometres in diameter) in Siberia also belongs to this group. The Shiva asteroid struck the Indian Ocean not long afterwards, triggering mass expulsion of magma into the ocean. All this suggests that the “star scars” were caused by fragments of one mammoth space object

that disintegrated in the Earth’s atmosphere.

Close to the end of the dinosaur era, our planet may have found itself under an asteroid rain that once again killed a large number of living creatures. Scientists suggest that new craters dating back to the same time of impact will be discovered in the future.

WHEN’S THE NEXT ONE?

Scientists have calculated that an average of four asteroids one kilometre across strike the Earth every million years. Their impact poses a threat to individual countries or parts of continents. A cosmic object at least ten times larger would threaten all of humankind. It is believed that over the past 570 million years, four or five such monstrous objects struck the Earth, approximately one per 100-150 million years. These include the asteroids that excavated the Chicxulub, Shiva and Land Wilkes craters. Humanity, which has existed for around three million years, has never experienced a cataclysm of this scale.

Asteroids and comets are not the only dangers to the Earth that originate in outer space. In particular, scientists believe that the great extinction of the late Ordovician period 450 million years ago was caused by the explosion of a supernova that exposed the Earth to powerful gamma rays. The ozone layer was destroyed, and ultraviolet rays killed nearly 60 per cent of all living creatures. Space has always been a source of potential threat to life on Earth. Humans have yet to reach a technological level that would permit us to protect our planet against new impacts by large cosmic objects. At the same time, not only did the bombardment of Earth by space objects destroy all living things, it was also a great factor in its formation and the emergence of life. For example, one hypothesis states that water was brought to the Earth by numerous asteroids that bombarded its surface in its earliest days. Other scientists have suggested that life on Earth is also of cosmic origin, allegedly delivered here by an asteroid.

An asteroid impact 65 million years ago killed billions of living creatures and put an end to the era of reptiles. However, the global extinction of dinosaurs paved the way for new life and the domination of mammals, eventually laying the foundation for humanity. ■

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TOP 10 tourist attractions in

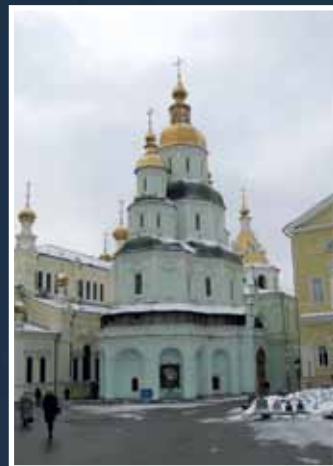
worth seeing, regardless of the season

Pokrovsky Cathedral

The Pokrovsky or Holy Protection Cathedral, one of the oldest churches in Eastern Ukraine, was built in 1689. Its style is a fusion of Ukrainian baroque and traditional local wooden architecture. The Holy Protection Cathedral is the only remaining part of the original Kharkiv Fortress. It is on these hills, encircled by the current Ploshcha Konstytutsiyi (Constitution Square), Ploshcha Rosy Luxemburg (Rosa Luxemburg Square) and Bursatsky Uzviz, that refugees from Central and Western Ukraine, escaping from The Ruin, founded the future Kharkiv in the mid-17th century. Initially a village with a small fort,

thanks to its trade-convenient location, and later the founding of a university and its industrial progress, eventually grew into a city with a population of 1.5-million.

In the 18th century, the Holy Protection Monastery and Kharkiv College were founded on the basis of the Holy Protection Cathedral. The college's staff included Ukrainian philosopher and writer Hryhoriy Skovoroda and composer Artemy Vedel. Soviet authorities closed down the cathedral, and left it balanced between restoration attempts and ultimate destruction. At one point, its dungeons and empty rooms on the upper floors were an attraction for urban explorers. Today, the cathedral has been restored and handed over to the Moscow Patriarchate.



The Synagogue

It is often called one of the biggest synagogues in Europe. You may have gathered by now that the locals really like the “-est” suffix. Even though the local Jewish community was never as numerous or powerful as in Central, Western and Eastern Ukraine, the local choral synagogue is a monumental building. It was built in 1913, based on Yakov Gevitz's design in the specific Mauritanian-Gothic style.

During the Soviet era, it played host to various institutions, including the Jewish Workers' Club of the Third International, a children's movie theatre, and Spartak, a vol-

untary athletic community. The latter stayed there until 1990 when the synagogue was returned to the Jewish community. It took years to restore the gyms back into a prayer hall.

Reform and Hasidic Jews fought over the Kharkiv choral synagogue for several years, the former led by Eduard Khodos, a controversial figure known for burning the US flag and stigmatizing the “Jewish mafia” in his books.

Kharkiv Oblast

Season or the weather

Article and photos by
Oleh Kotsarev

A keen tourist should not wait for a special season or weather to travel to Kharkiv Oblast. The climate hardly makes a difference here, so why not visit it during the winter-spring midseason? It's possible to get to the largest city of Slobozhanshchyna, a historical region of Ukraine, from anywhere in the country. **The Ukrainian Week** steps away from stereotypes and looks at this land from a different perspective. ■



Art Nouveau in Kharkiv

The architectural image of Kharkiv is often thought of as being composed of soviet box and cube-like apartment blocks, plus factories. But you will see a whole lot of cute pre-revolutionary buildings as you walk along the downtown streets, such as Sum'ska, Pushkinska and others. Most are in the Modern style, one more commonly known in the West as Art Nouveau or Secession; lavishly decorated with slender floral lines, surprising proportions and mystical elements. The Kharkiv version of Art Nouveau is somewhat different than that found elsewhere in Ukraine. On the one hand, it sports a clear trace of North and West European influence, but on the other, it offers several interesting examples of the style's local "ethnographic variations". One is the former College of Arts, which has since been transformed into the Design and Arts Academy, built in 1913 in the classical Ukrainian Art Nouveau style by Kostiantyn Zhukov. Another architect, Oleksandr Ginsburg built more than 20 buildings in Kharkiv, including the magnificent multi-family residential building on the corner of Pushkinska Street and Ploshcha Poezii (Poetry Square). The pre-revolutionary advertisement boards there have also been restored.

The House of State Industry

Soviet heritage is an integral component of Kharkiv's modern image. The House of State Industry at Ploshcha Svobody (Liberty Square, considered to be the largest in Europe) is a perfect model of 1920s Constructivism. At that time, Kharkiv was the capital of Soviet Ukraine and the authorities had to put trusts, banks and other institutions somewhere. They announced a tender and the winner was The Intruder, a project by Leningrad architects Sergei Serafimov, Samuil Kravets and Mark Felger. When building the foundations, the builders unexpectedly dug up mammoth bones.

We will not compare the State Industry House with Chicago and New York as Soviet propaganda did, but the building really is interesting and original, massive yet lofty. Rumour has it that the intervals between the heights of its different towers reflect the melody of "International", the Soviet anthem. Apart from trusts and banks, the State Industry House hosted the then government, known as the Council of People's Commissars. Mykola Skrypnyk, a Ukrainian Bolshevik leader who supported the Ukrainization campaign in Soviet Ukraine, shot himself in one of the building's cabinets on 7 July 1933. During WWII, it sheltered monkeys from the abandoned local zoo. To this day, some of its authentic elevators, installed in the 1920s, still work. Each one has a female elevator operator. She sits on a small stool in the elevator, talking on the plastic telephone located above her head for hours on end.



PHOTO FROM WEBSITE [HTTP://PHOTOZEN.NET](http://photozen.net)

The Shot Renaissance

The abovementioned 1920s were arguably the most fruitful years in terms of Kharkiv's contribution to Ukrainian culture. It was then that many artists from all over the country lived and created their art in Kharkiv. The Berezhil theatre, the crossing of Serhii Vasylykivsky's realistic school with the avant-garde explorations of Anatoliy Petrytsky, Vasyly Yermilov and others, the Shot Renaissance of writers

– the memory of all this is preserved in the narrow circles of the intellectual elite. The average visitor walking the city's streets will hardly notice it. Still, some traces of this legacy remain.

The Lyrics building on Kultury Street near the Naukova metro station had been home to hundreds of writers from the Shot Renaissance generation, including

Mykola Khvylovy, Mykola Kulish, Mykhailo Semenko and Valeriy Polishchuk. They were all arrested here, and this was where Khvylovy shot himself. Its current dwellers have nothing to do with literature. The only reminder is the memorial plate that lists writer Mykhailo Yalovy twice: under his own name and his pen name, Yulian Shpol.

Another controversial site is the monument to Taras Shevchenko built by Matviy Manizer in 1935. Ironically, the dynamic sculptural ensemble includes the statue of Kateryna posed for by Berezhil actress, Natalia Uzhviy and her son, she being the wife of poet Mykhailo Semenko who often tarnished Shevchenko's iconic status in his poems. Legend has it that your secret wish will come true if you happen to see a tractor wheel behind one of the monument's figures.

The local Literature Museum will tell you more about the present and the past of the writers' scene in Kharkiv. In addition, you can see the extensive collection of the Art Museum, modern art at the City Museum and Yermilov Centre, a concert at the philharmonic or a play at the Taras Shevchenko Theatre – the former Berezhil (modern theatre director Andriy Zholdak tried to restore the old name with no success); the Arabesques theatre, or Theatre 19. The city also has the Bommer, an art-house movie theatre.



The Assumption Cathedral

The Assumption Cathedral is the highest building in downtown Kharkiv. It was supposedly built in the Baroque style in 1771-1778 to resemble the St. Clement's Church in Moscow, although the result is far from identical. The iconostasis was painted based on sketches made by Francesco Raftrelli but it did not survive. The 89-metre high bell tower was built in 1821-1844 as a dedication to the victory of the Russian Empire over Napoleon. Built entirely in the Classicism style, it is crowned with an onion dome that does not quite fit into the style.

After the revolution, the cathedral was shut down. Used as a radio station, it gradually lost its frescoes and other decorations. After the war, it played host to a sewing and painting workshops. The restoration began in the 1970s followed by the installation of an organ in 1984. The cathedral is still used as a philharmonic hall for organ concerts but will be designated for purely religious purposes once the local authorities set up an alternative hall.



Skovorodynivka

This village in the Zolochiv County was previously called Pan-Ivanivka. The local landlord, Andriy Kovalevsky, had the prominent Ukrainian philosopher, Hryhoriy Skovoroda, as his house

guest at different times during 1790-1794. According to some sources, it was here that Skovoroda wrote his "Snake Deluge" dialogue and "The Prayer to God for Kharkiv City", a poem in Latin in which he described Kharkiv as "God's seventh eye". This is also where the philosopher died and a museum dedicated to him was established in 1972.

The Hryhoriy Skovoroda National Literature Memorial Museum is open all week. Although small, the exhibit is interesting and well-compiled, especially the part dedicated to Skovoroda's biography. The collection includes some of his personal things. Make sure that you see the landlord's rooms furnished in the 18th century, the park with ponds and eye-catching hills, Skovoroda's oak tree and the well. Nearby is Skovoroda's grave, which he dug for himself. The inscription on it, requested by the philosopher, says "The world tried to catch me, but never did".

Sharivka

A nice mansion is located in the village of Sharivka in the Bohodukhiv County. You can get there by bus from the bus station at Kharkiv Central Market, but ideally, a car would be best.

The village was founded by the Cossack Shariy. It later belonged to military commander Petro Olkhovsky. He began to build a palace but lost it in a card game. The mansion's most glorious time was under Baron Leopold Kenig, who owned distilleries and sugar plants. Under the Soviet regime, it was used as a sanatorium for those suffering from tuberculosis.

Sharivka palace and park are not in the best shape today, but they still offer glimpses of the pearl of Slobozhanshchyna that they used to be. This is just another incentive for visiting them soon, before everything falls apart or becomes the victim of a poorly-executed restoration project. The romantic neo-Gothic mansion with its towers, the accounting house built in the German style, the Medieval-looking entrance building, a hunters' lodge, ponds, wooded slopes and linden alleys... There is also a legendary stone on the territory. Rumour has it that it came from Crimea. Apparently, Leopold Kenig's wife cheated on him on this stone. When he found out about the adultery, he didn't say a word to his wife but ordered for the stone to be delivered to Sharivka and placed in the middle of her favourite alley.



Izium

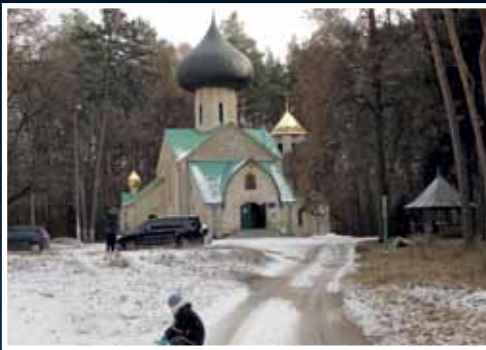
Referred to as the "southern capital", Izium is the second largest city in Kharkiv Oblast, founded in the mid-17th century just like virtually all the other settlements in Slobozhanshchyna. Some historians, as well as local legends, claim that the Cossack fortress of Izium emerged on the Kremianets hill, where there used to be Tartar fortifications and a settlement called Uzun-Kermen. Finding out more about Izium's distant past is a challenge, as the local ethnographic museum reveals little. Currently, the Kremianets hill is home to a group of stone figures and a large monument dedicated to WWII battles. It also offers panoramic views of the Siversky Donets valley and the beginning of the Donetsk Ridge.

The Cossack Transfiguration Cathedral, built in the 17th century, is also located in Izium. Its style resembles that of the Holy Protection Cathedral in Kharkiv, yet the one in Izium looks "lighter" and more compact. In the 19th century, it was remodeled to suit the architectural preferences of that time, but was later restored to its original form. Another attractive site is the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross built in the Classicism style.

Other interesting spots include the old local private sector, and a weird-looking monument to political instructor Mikhailov, who was killed "by a bandit" in 1923. Designed in the typical style of those years, the monument is further proof of the difficulties faced by Bolshevik experiments, even in Eastern Ukraine.

Natalivka

Next to Sharivka is a village called Volodymyrivka with yet another beautiful mansion and park. It was built in the late 19th century by sugar mogul Pavlo Kharytonenko. Natalivka is named after his daughter Natalia. The local climate cured the girl from tuberculosis. To



celebrate this, her father built the Church of Transfiguration in 1911-1913 using a project by architect Alexei Shchusev who designed the Lenin Mausoleum. Its architectural style is quite rare in Ukraine as it combines Art Nouveau with ancient Rus church architecture. The proportions, decorations and forms of the church are impressive and unusual, while the bell tower looks like a rocket. The church was previously adorned with antique icons from the mogul's collection.

In addition to the church, the village boasts a beautiful entrance gate, an annex, household buildings, and stables. There is also a nice, but neglected park.



Unique location in picturesque Podil

This hotel's unique location in the heart of Kyiv's historic Podil district offers guests convenient access to this picturesque and ancient Ukrainian city. Podil's tree-lined streets with their enticing boutiques and quaint cafes are wonder to take a stroll around, and the pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood is a great place to discover on foot. The hotel's location also offers excellent access to the city's extensive public transport system.

Nearby transport options:

Kyiv Funicular - 800 m
Kontraktova Ploshcha metro station - 650 m
Poshtova Ploshcha metro station - 800 m
Kyiv Central Railway Station - 5.2 km
Central bus station - 10.6 km
Kyiv Zhuliany International Airport - 15.8 km
Kyiv Boryspil International Airport (KBP) - 37 km

ROOMS

The hotel boasts 164 comfortable rooms & suites, including 138 Standard Rooms, 2 Rooms for disabled guests, 15 Business Class Rooms, 4 Junior Suites Rooms, 4 Suites and one Presidential Suite. With first class amenities and sumptuously comfortable bed linen, both business and leisure guests can be assured of a quiet and relaxing evening followed by a good night's sleep in preparation for the next day.

All rooms feature:

Climate control
24-hour room service
Free high-speed Internet access
(Wi-Fi and cable one)
Flat-screen LCD television
Coffee and tea facilities
Hair dryer
Iron and ironing board
Private safe
Mini bar
Complimentary bottle of mineral water

Book from
UAH 1.500
per night



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