

AN OVERVIEW OF PARTIES AND CANDIDATES
RUNNING FOR SEATS IN PARLIAMENT

WILL KHARKIV BECOME
THE NEXT SEPARATIST HOTSPOT

STORY OF A MAN WHO SPENT
A MONTH IN CAPTIVITY IN DONBAS

i n t e r n a t i o n a l e d i t i o n

The Ukrainian Week

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THE 3RD SCREENING OF THE NEWEST POLISH FILMS UNDER THE HIGH CASTLE LVIV

The General Consulate of Poland in Lviv invites Leopolitans and guests of the city to the Under the High Castle Polish Film Festival – featuring over 30 screenings of Polish film with Ukrainian subtitles – to be held across Lviv over 10 days in October. Festival-goers will be treated to modern Polish cinema games like: drama **„Pod Mocnym Aniołem”**; political thriller **„Jack Strong”**; and biographical drama **„Papusza”**. Other films, like **„Ida”** and **„Mój Biegun”**, are also set to be featured. The festival has a strong lineup outside of the film screenings. Polish cinema superstars such as **Sonia Bohosiewicz, Krzysztof Pieczyński, Danuta Szaflarska, Katarzyna Dąbrowska** and **Dorota Kędzierzawska** will be in attendance and fans will also have the opportunity to meet the prominent Polish film director, Lviv-born **Janusz Majewski**. Other special events include the entertaining quest „Kino Lviv”, a cinema history lesson for school students, and a special concert by the **Apertus Quartet** together with the Ivano-Frankivsk Philharmonic Orchestra. Tickets cost 15 UAH. For more information, please visit www.filmlwow.eu.



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Тиждень

TRENDS & TALK

Hryvnia plunges to UAH 14.97 per 1 US dollar, a historic low. Subsequent pressure from President and Government push bankers to return the exchange rate to UAH 12.95 per 1 US dollar



Education Ministry decides to relocate Donetsk University to Vinnytsia, Central Ukraine, after plea from its students and professors

Mass rallies for peace take place in Moscow and other Russian cities. Participants call for end of war in Ukraine. Russian government does not launch wide-scale repressions but supporters of "Novorossiya" arrange numerous provocations



A New World Order

Nearly everything was predictable at the latest PACE session. Everything except confusion. It was felt not only in the speeches of adequate participants in the debates on Ukraine but virtually in everything. Strasbourg's usual calm betrayed anxiety and unmistakable perplexity over what to do next – with the war, with Ukraine and Russia and with the entire world

"They are trying to think of something, but they don't know, they simply don't know what to do," a diplomat with many years of experience in the Council of Europe told me as he pensively sipped cappuccino which a barmaid had brought him by mistake.

"You see, the world has not seen a situation of this kind. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are still formally considered parts of Georgia. Nagorno-Karabakh is an object of contention between two neighbouring states. Transnistria is marked as part of Moldova on all maps of the world. But the Crimea is simply an annexed and appropriated land. No mechanisms are envisaged for leading international organizations to address such problems!" my acquaintance said in an effort to justify his colleagues in the Council of Europe.

Indeed, let the Council of Europe address exclusively human rights and democratic standards. Let us take a look at other, more powerful structures – the OSCE and the United Nations. The OSCE cannot take radical action against Russia, because a supranational political decision can be adopted there exclusively by consensus, and Russia will itself block it. A similar situation is with the United Nations where Russia is a permanent member of the Security Council. That leaves us NATO, which is in no hurry to enter open confrontation with Moscow. There are also hypo-

Author:
Alla Lazareva,
Strasbourg



thetical anti-Kremlin coalitions – that is, if there was political will to form them. What remains then? Thinking, seeking fundamentally new decisions and inventing a new kind of diplomacy for information (or perhaps post-democratic?) society. The Council of Europe could become a laboratory for these kinds of ideas. It could if it were not weighed down by significant Rus-

THE NEW RULES IMPOSED ON THE WORLD BY THE RUSSIAN DICTATOR CREATE A CRUEL NO-HOLDS-BARRED GAME. WHEN IT IS IN FULL SWING, THE SOFT COMFORT OF WESTERN LIFE MAY EASILY DISAPPEAR FOREVER

sian influence, which is felt even when members of the Russian delegation are not in attendance.

As many as 60 delegates expressed a desire to participate in the discussion of the Ukrainian crisis at this autumn session. About half of them are either active proponents of "dialogue with Russia" or politicians who sometimes agree to act as temporary Moscow's allies. "I believe that this is a mistake and deeply regret that the Russian delegation is not with us in the session hall," Mike Hancock expectedly said. He came into the limelight when a scandal erupted over his aide Katia



Zatuliveter whom the British special services accused of espionage in favour of Russia. In every session, Hancock acts as an advocate of the Kremlin. This time around, he again tried to convince the audience that "we shouldn't accuse Putin of everything" and that "we need to acknowledge the presence of Russian interests in Ukraine".

Proposals to "hear Russia", "understand Russia" and "take Russia into account" came from Andrej Hunko of Germany, a representative of the Unified European Left Group, and British socialist Donald Anderson, a member of the Euro-

Separatists continue to break cease-fire. 30 Ukrainian military were killed during the "truce"

Activists demolish the monument to Vladimir Lenin in Kharkiv, a key city in Eastern Ukraine

Assets of former officials arrested in Latvian banks: USD 49.3mn for ex-NBU Chair Serhiy Arbutov and USD 32mn for ex-Party of Regions MP Yuriy Ivaniushchenko

pean Democrat Group, which includes representatives of the Party of Regions and United Russia, as well as from Edward Leigh, German socialist Ute Finckh-Krämer and others. There were many more who spoke in the same vein: Ukraine should not be promised NATO membership; it should not work directly with the EU, because what Putin wants is a desire of – not God but some invincible substance, more powerful than anything else.

Grigor Petrenko of Moldova went as far as saying that "Sieg

cannot prevent any delegate from calling a press conference. But Ukraine must not only deny untruthful accusations. Ukraine needs to have its own active communication strategy. And not only that strategy."

The carefree autumnal sun was playing with its rays outside the window. A neat Strasbourg lived its neat provincial life. Delegates who took part in the debates flatly refused to believe that even on that day the world was changed forever. The integrity of state borders has



Heil!" salutes can be heard in Kyiv and that the "Nazi government in Kyiv" is destroying communists and placing bans on the use of Russian. No-one objected to him, and no-one prevented him from organizing a press conference where he sent out similar messages. No surprise there – pluralism is pluralism, even if someone is exploiting freedom of expression as freedom of deception.

"Indeed, it is a pity that no-one from the Ukrainian delegation thought of gathering a press conference", a member of the PACE press service said nearly in tears. "We at the level of ordinary administrators

been de facto placed outside international law. The UN Security Council has turned into a malicious umbrella which, in essence, protects the right of a predator to conquer the territories of a neighbouring state with impunity and kill people on a daily basis. The new rules imposed on the world by the Russian dictator create a cruel no-holds-barred game. When it is in full swing, the soft comfort of Western life may easily disappear forever. Meanwhile, the consumers of this comfort do not seem to be in the least willing to come forward to protect it. ■

New Non Fiction from the EU





Back to Black?

The parliamentary election may bring only few “new faces” to parliament

Author:
Oles
Oleksiyenko

On September 14-15, all political parties that stand a chance to pass the 5% threshold and get into parliament held their party meetings. The parties that promote themselves as the continuation of the Maidan cause have nominated popular activists and commanders of volunteer battalions in their top 10 or 20 lists. Alongside, they nominate controversial, even utterly discredited people. The restored fragments of the Party of Regions swarm with functionaries who helped Viktor Yanukovich usurp power and preserve dictatorship. The reasonable choice of Ukrainians in

the October 26 general elections will undoubtedly help clean up the Verkhovna Rada, but not to the extent the Maidan strived for several months ago.

DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS

According to the poll conducted by KMIS, a sociological group, on August 23-September 2, 25.5% would vote for the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko, 8.9% for Oleh Liashko's Radical Party, 6.8% for Anatoliy Hrytsenko's Hromadianska Pozytsia (Civic Position) and the Democratic Alliance that run together, 5.3% for Serhiy Tihipko's Sylna Ukrayina (Strong Ukraine), 4.4% for Narodnyi

Front (People's Front) led by Premier Yatseniuk and Speaker Turchynov, 4.2% for Yulia Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna (Fatherland), 3.2% for the Communist Party, 3% for Svoboda (Freedom), and 2.0% for Samopomich, the party of Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi. Since the Party of Regions will not run, its 2.7% will probably go to Strong Ukraine and the Opposition Bloc newly created on the basis of the Party of Development headed by ex-Chief of Staff for Yanukovich, Serhiy Liovochkin, and Natalia Korolevska's Ukrayina – Vpered! (Ukraine – Forward!) backed by Rinat Akhmetov.

Poroshenko's Bloc is likely to lose a fair share of patriotic voters after notorious failures in the anti-terrorist operation in August and September and further concessions to Moscow. Another discouraging factor is the voting of September 16 when the law on the special status for the Donbas was pushed through parliament with the help of the pro-Russian wing: the Party of Regions and its

breakaways (gathered in new groups, such as For Peace and Stability! whose funding is often linked to the Yanukovych Family), and the Communist Party. This fact creates somewhat of a déjà vu (bringing back the memories of the fatal deal Viktor Yushchenko made with the Party of Regions in spring 2005) and will hardly be ignored by the opponents of the President's party in the rivalry for voters. The lost votes will probably go to the less popular parties that spoke publicly against this vote and law (see poll results).

Therefore, the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko can expect to get 65-70 seats out of 225 elected through party list voting. Oleh Liashko's Radical Party may end up with 23-24, Civic Position and Strong Ukraine – 21-22 each. Yatseniuk's Narodnyi Front (People's Front) and Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna could end up with 17-18 each, followed by 12-13 for Svoboda and the Communist Party. Samopomich and the Opposition Bloc are unlikely to beat the 5% threshold. If they do, each can get 11-12 seats.

Another 225 MPs are elected through first-past-the-post voting. This is what Petro Poroshenko, former Party of Regions members, oligarchs and big business owners have the highest expectations of.

SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT MAJORITY

Poroshenko's Bloc wants to be a dominating party in parliament, and ideally create a single-party majority without critical need of alliances with other parties. Therefore, it is extremely diverse in its choice of members. It was formed based on quotas distributed to different political forces and groups. It includes many ex-Party of Regions' members who served in Yanukovych's government. Quite a few members of the President's personal quota will primarily remain loyal to him, then to the bloc. Finally, the Bloc includes many civic leaders, journalists and activists, to make it more attractive.

Its top candidates are Vitaliy Klitschko (his participation is purely formal: he has said that he will not switch his Kyiv Mayor office for a parliament seat); Yuriy

Lutsenko, ex-Interior Minister and political prisoner under Yanukovych who acts as the formal leader of the Bloc, and Vice Premier Volodymyr Hroysman. If the President fails to gain a self-sufficient majority, Hroysman will most likely become a technical premier. The Maidan leaders are represented in Poroshenko's Bloc by doctor Olha Bohomolets and Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, journalists Mustafa Nayem and Serhiy Leshchenko.

After top 20, the list looks less encouraging. Candidate 24 is Artur Palatnyi, Vitaliy Klitschko's obscure friend surrounded by rumours of murky past which, however, remain unproven. No46 is Serhiy Trehubenko. According to earlier media reports, he was known in Mykola Azarov's Cabinet as a proactive supporter of Yanukovych's Family. This nomination has already stirred a lot of negative feedback from voters. People of the richest oligarchs, Ihor Kolomoyskiy, Viktor Pinchuk and Dmytro Firtash, are on the list as well. No93 is Lev Partskhaladze, a notorious Kyiv developer who had switched to Leonid Chernovetsky's team behind Vitaliy Klitschko's back after getting into Kyiv Council with UDAR.

The notorious Baloha clan (including Viktor Baloha, ex-Chief of Staff for Viktor Yushchenko and Emergencies Minister in Mykola Azarov's Cabinet, along with his two brothers and a cousin) runs in Transcarpathia as part of Poroshenko's Bloc. Davyd Zhvania is running in Poroshenko's Bloc in Odesa Oblast: thanks to his intermediation in 2010, Yushchenko's Nasha Ukrayina (Our Ukraine) faction broke up, the crossovers switched to the Yanukovych-oriented majority in parliament, and added their votes to the appointment of the Cabinet of Mykola Azarov. Eventually, this all led to the bloodbath on the Maidan in winter 2013-2014. Another notorious crossover, Vitaliy Nemilostyviy, is running with Poroshenko's Bloc in Kharkiv Oblast.

This is a typical pro-presidential conglomerate. Meanwhile, it is headless. Its nominated leader Petro Poroshenko, and Vitaliy Klitschko as probably formal No1 on the list, will not be in parlia-

ment. If the Bloc's rating falls, its MPs will switch to more successful players.

First-past-the-post candidates leave even more doubts, yet Poroshenko's Bloc counts on them to add far more seats to their faction in parliament. They will have virtually no commitments to the President and his party, and will leave it whenever they see fit. Therefore, Poroshenko's attempts to convert his current popularity into the number of seats in parliament before his rating drops will hardly have a long-lasting effect. As soon as his popularity begins to fall, they will quickly leave him. Unless Poroshenko conducts another constitutional coup (like Yanukovych did) and gains more powers compared to the scope he got when elected President in spring, or unless he has "solid arguments" to convince

THE STRUCTURE OF THE RULING COALITION IN THE FUTURE PARLIAMENT WILL BE PRIMARILY DETERMINED BY THE VOTING IN FIRST-PAST-THE-POST DISTRICTS

MPs to stay loyal (like his predecessor), his parliamentary majority will spin out of control shortly after the October elections. Plus, the appetites of separate groups that will compete against each other will keep growing.

MINORITY GROUPS

The other part of the current government is running separately in Narodnyi Front (People's Front) headed by Arseniy Yatseniuk and Oleksandr Turchynov. Its top 10 candidates include Yatseniuk and Turchynov, National Security and Defence Council Chief and Maidan commander Andriy Parubiy, Interior Minister Arsen Avakov, journalists and activists Tetyana Chornovol and Viktoriya Simumar, and commanders of volunteer battalions Andriy Teteruk and Yuriy Bereza, among others. No13 is Dmytro Tymchuk, coordinator of the Information Resistance NGO that has gained popularity in the months of war thanks to fairly reliable daily updates on the frontline.

The rest of the list is full of hidden turncoats who were »

ected to the current parliament with Tymoshenko's Batkivshchyna, then betrayed their voters and voted alongside pro-presidential majority in times of Yanukovich, even though they did not quit their party. Among other things, they supported Mykola Azarov's Cabinet when the opposition tried a motion of no-confidence against it in spring 2013. These include No14 Mykola Martynenko, No24 Denys Dzendzerskyi, and No29 Serhiy Fayermark. What can make these people act differently, should they get through to the new parliament?

Yulia Tymoshenko has modified her party list, leaving in only the most loyal members of the old guard (Hryhoriy Nemyria, Ivan Kyrylenko, Andriy Kozhemiakin and Serhiy Vlasenko), and adding a few popular Maidan or anti-terrorist operation activists.

THE ILL-LUSTRATED WING

The Opposition Bloc is openly running as the alliance of Chief of Staff under Yanukovich, Serhiy Liovochkin, and oligarch Rinat Akhmetov. The founding forum of the Opposition Bloc featured Serhiy Larin, ex-Deputy Chief of Staff for Liovochkin at the Yanukovich Administration; Yuriy Miroshnychenko, ex-representative of Yanukovich in parliament who kept protecting his master in the media until the very last moment, and more. The top 5 includes ex-Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko (accused of large-scale corruption), ex-Social Policy Minister Natalia Korolevska – both serving under Yanukovich; and several mayors of Eastern Ukrainian towns and cities.

Another group of ex-Party of Regions MPs linked to Yanukovich is being led to parliament by Serhiy Tihipko, Vice Premier in Azarov's Cabinet, in the Strong Ukraine party. Valeriy Khoroshkovskyi, ex-Vice Premier in Azarov's Cabinet and the first SBU Chief under Yanukovich with close ties to Liovochkin, is running as No2. With Khoroshkovskyi as its chief, the SBU is remembered for terrorizing civil activists and scientists, and crushing the freedom of speech and press in Ukraine. The Strong Ukraine's top 20 has many loyal men of the Yanukovich's machine, such as Oleksandr Volkov, Tariel Vasadze,



HOSTILE FRIENDSHIP: The Opposition Bloc is a mix of ex-Party of Regions MPs. Some are close to ex-Chief of Staff for Yanukovich, Serhiy Liovochkin, while others are oligarch Rinat Akhmetov's people

and Mykola Dzhycha. Vasyl Poliakov, business partner and close friend of Dmytro Sviatash, a notorious MP who called on the Yanukovich regime to crush the Maidan, is running as No17. No31 is Volodymyr Makeyenko who, as Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, was personally blocking all attempts of the then opposition to stop Yanukovich using parliament tools up until the mass murders of protesters on the Maidan in February.

It is clear today is that the structure of the ruling coalition in the future parliament will be pri-

marily determined by the voting in first-past-the-post districts. If President Poroshenko convenes a majority of FPTP MPs who tend to lean towards the epicenter of power at a given time, he could well avoid cumbersome allies with other leading parties who will have ambitions to run the Government. Meanwhile, the lists of FPTP candidates from the top parties remain unknown to the public although they will probably hide most of those who must be lustrated. **The Ukrainian Week** will soon offer a closer look at those. ■



Valeriy Khoroshkovskyi, the first SBU Chief under Yanukovich, was known for attack on freedom of speech and human rights. Now, he is running as No2 in Serhiy Tihipko's Strong Ukraine party

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The Next People's Republic?

Without “tourists” from Russia, the separatist movement in Kharkiv has quickly marginalised. If not for pro-Russian sympathies of the local authorities, it would hardly pose any threat at all

Author:
Denys
Kazansky

Alarming news has been coming from Kharkiv, a key city in Eastern Ukraine. Whoever follows reports in the media alone might think that it is on the verge of a separatist revolt. Reports come of occasional explosions here and there. Rumours of the flags of a “Kharkiv People's Republic” sewn in underground workshops are spreading. Videos with appeals of “guerrillas” promising an end to the “junta” appear online. Is there really a threat? And will Kharkiv follow in the footsteps of Donetsk and Luhansk?

It is hard to feel any threat as I roam around the city. At first glance, life here is calm here. Traffic is dense on central roads; a happy throng of students hangs out on Ploshcha Svobody, the Freedom Square; and a tent collecting donations for the army stands before the building of the Oblast Council. Still, this quiet routine does not guarantee that the situation is actually completely under control. Just a few months ago, Donetsk too was hardly bothered by a handful of people occupying the Oblast State Administration (ODA) and lived its quiet parallel life. Very soon, it saw missiles raining over the city.

KEEP CALM AND CLOSE THE BORDER

Kharkiv differs from Donetsk, like a worker from an old influential bureaucrat. The former is used to acting directly, on impulse, with force. The latter weighs things up and uses reasoning. One swears loudly, the other doesn't, but remembers everything and chooses the appropriate time for manoeuvres. Kharkiv's former status of a capital, grandiose architecture, cosmopolitan youth and the glory of an academic city obligate it to behave accordingly.

When an uncontrolled pro-Russian crowd raged in downtown Kharkiv in March, it did not attract mass support and compassion of the locals, unlike in Donetsk. Kharkiv does not stand in the middle of mining villages with poor population that could have risen for a revolt.

“Actually, there were only Russians and Oplot (a pro-Russian Kharkiv-based fight club led by Yevhen Zhylin who fled Ukraine. Oplot reportedly participated in March attacks on Kharkiv EuroMaidan activists and journalists. It was when Serhiy Zhadan, a well-known modern writer from Kharkiv, was seriously injured – **Ed.**), everything was well organised, this was not a spontaneous popular revolt,” said Olena Levytska, a local EuroMaidan activist. “The muscular men who fought in front of the ODA and seized it, were brought here in minivans. The ‘assault force’ of the crowd that stormed the Oblast Administration building and kicked out Ukrainian activists that were inside, were athletes and professional fighters. The police did not get in their way.”

March and early April were uneasy in Kharkiv. During this period, separatists seized the building of the Oblast State Administration several times, but withdrew each time. After the Ukrainian-Russian border was almost closed, movement, anti-government rallies attracted fewer participants and became far less aggressive. The decisive battle for the Oblast Administration building took place on April 8. On this day, the police were able to regain the seized building and arrest about 70 pro-Russian fighters who for the most part, it later emerged, were members of Oplot. After this, street fights came to an end and calm reigned in the city.

“The Russian border is just 38 kilometres away from Kharkiv. It's about 80 km to Belgorod (the closest big city in Russia – **Ed.**). The presence of our eastern neighbour has always been very noticeable here. Kharkiv is actually a border city. There were lots of Russians here earlier – plenty of cars with Belgorod license plates on the roads. They bought food, clothes and other things at our Baraban (the Barabashovo Market), because shopping was always far cheaper in Ukraine. Many Russians have always worked in Kharkiv because Belgorod Oblast has high unemployment, so they would come to work here. The Russians also took part in (pro-Russian – **Ed.**) protests here, which is why they initially seemed so big. Even today, the Russians who live and work here, are clearly waiting for some commotion,” Levytska says.

Once the border between Ukraine and Russia was closed, it became calmer in Kharkiv. You won't really see any cars with Russian licence plates on the streets and local separatists have become illegal and gone underground. But most of the patriots here feel that it's not so underground, because the separatist movement is directly supported by the city Mayor, Hennady Kernes. Anti-Ukrainian sentiments are very wide-spread among people working at budget institutions, the prosecution office, the police as well as the local authority.

“I work at a medical university. In our department, all the employees of the older generation advocated Russia – aggressively so, but they have calmed down now. Perhaps something started to get through to them, I don't know ... There used to be propaganda in favour of the “Kharkiv People's Re-



PHOTO BY UNIAN

public” at the market, but people started to complain about these campaigners and they disappeared,” said Iryna Lytvynenko, a Kharkiv resident.

According to the locals, all panic-filled rumours are generally spread on the vast Barabashovo Market, but it is hard to say whether this is done deliberately, or whether people are just gossiping. Quite recently, someone said that “Kharkiv People’s Republic” flags were being sewn in underground workshops. This information spread like wildfire through the city, but it was impossible to find any confirmation.

Many of the traders on the market are sympathetic towards Russia and Putin, but at the same time, business owners do not need war. Kharkiv is more dependent on small business, which is very sensitive to turmoil, than Donetsk and Luhansk. No one wants the Donbas scenario there. The fact that the separatist uprising did not gain mass support in Kharkiv is possibly because it is largely a city of traders, not workers. But the movement has not been entirely crushed, it is simply in hiding, and no one can say when and how it will manifest itself again. The Ukrainian government have become stronger now and there are no longer any questions about its legitimacy, so the

separatists have to wait for the next excuse for activity.

“The company where I work monitored sentiments in Kharkiv during and after the Maidan. The actual share of the pro-Russian crowd was 30%. This figure did not change from one opinion poll to another. Another 15% are active Ukrainian patriots. The rest are a very passive mass with limited interests and indifference about everything,” says Kharkiv resident Anton Vasilenko.

UNDERGROUND SEPARATISM

There is actually a confrontation in Kharkiv between separatist and patriotic-minded citizens. But it has not been really noticeable so far, taking place in gateways and in the courtyards of residential areas. Almost every night, the slogans “For Novorossiya”, “Novorossiya – is peace” and “Kharkiv is Russia” appear on the walls of buildings. Someone regularly paints over them, but they reappear. Walls have transformed into a kind of chat, where patriots and separatists leave messages for one another. The former draw the Ukrainian flag, while the latter slap red paint on them, symbolising the blood of the Donbas residents that Ukraine has shed in the East. To many, though, this blood-stained flag means quite the opposite:

Separatist revolts in Kharkiv grew to a massive scale in spring because many Russian citizens took part

Ukraine bleeding to death as a result of the Kremlin’s aggression and terrorist attacks.

Even if the underground anti-Ukrainian movement exists, it is just that, not open massive separatist movement similar to that which unfolded in the Donbas this spring. The separatists in Kharkiv are small illegal groups, which do not really have any power or mass support from the locals. On the one hand, this is a troubling red flag: the Donbas, too, had separatism in the form of small marginal organisations before it finally exploded. On the other hand, such elements cannot succeed without the support of the local authority and silent sabotage of law enforcement. The main thing that differentiates Kharkiv from the

THE SEPARATISTS IN KHARKIV ARE SMALL ILLEGAL GROUPS WITH NO REAL FORCE OR MASS SUPPORT FROM THE LOCALS

Donbas is the loyalty of the local authority to Kyiv. The revolt in Kharkiv came to an immediate halt after the oblast and city councils refused to support the separatists, and the police cleaned out the seized ODA just once.

However, Kharkiv supporters of the EuroMaidan feel that such loyalty is temporary and opportunistic. Therefore, they are convinced that a relapse may occur unless the central government conducts lustration in the city and punishes those guilty of the organisation and support of anti-Ukrainian riots.

"The revolution has changed the colours of posters: in January and February they had "Kharkiv stands for stability" on a blue background, and now, they say "For peace and order" on a yellow-and-blue background (the colours of Ukrainian flag – Ed.). Meanwhile, former Oblast Administration Chairman Dobkin (at the end of January, Mykhailo Dobkin and Kharkiv Oblast Administration deputies wore T-shirts saying "Berkut" to show support of the notorious special-purpose police that shot at Maidan protesters in February – Ed.) is not regarded as separatist, and the mayor cannot be punished because he has health problems (Hennadiy Kernes survived an assassination attempt in April, leaving him partly paralyzed – Ed.). That's it for the changes," says Kharkiv resident Oleksiy Stepiuk pessimistically.

This situation concerns many others. The local patriotic community believes that Hennadiy Kernes is secretly behind the separatists' actions and is merely waiting for the opportunity to declare Kharkiv a republic, with himself at the helm. "I shall not allow fighting in Kharkiv, we are taking a different path," he once said reportedly. What path he has in mind, remains a mystery.

"I can assure you that nothing happens in Kharkiv without Kernes' participation. Remember this when you see something unfolding here. He has some well-fed EuroMaidan activists, as well as Communists under his control, all those conflicts here that were aired on TV, are largely a staged show. The Mayor wants to create the impression that Kharkiv is not calm, that the battle continues. Why is he doing this? Possibly to show Kyiv that he is the only one capable of maintaining order here – that he is useful. He is always playing some game of his own. But no one knows exactly what kind of game it is," said Denys Tkachenko, a local publisher.

On September 18, there really was a minor scuffle between local Communists and football ultras in



The Lenin monument in downtown Kharkiv was long one of the biggest irritants around

the city centre, which seemed much bigger on TV than it was in reality. About 30 mostly elderly people came out onto Ploshcha Svobody with Soviet flags and were attacked by a group of masked young men. At first, the police allowed the attackers to take and tear up several placards, before stepping in to end the conflict.

Mykola Pakhnin, Adviser to Ihor Baluta, current Chairman of the Kharkiv Oblast Administration, says that "Before the assassination attempt on Kernes, there were constantly disturbances and provocations in the city. They usually occurred on Saturdays and Sundays. The tactic was to besiege the Oblast Administration, just as in Donetsk. After the assassination attempt on the Mayor, protests came down to a minimum. This was very noticeable. While everyone expected disturbances on May 1, 9, and 11 (May 1 was celebrated as Labour Day in So-

"Can the Donetsk scenario be repeated here? I am convinced that it can't. Why didn't the police act in spring, in the wake of it all? Everyone was very demoralised. At that time, Kharkiv's Berkut had only just returned from the Maidan; many local police officers were lying wounded in hospital, forgotten by everyone. Baluta took over the oblast in chaos. Chief of the Kharkiv police, Anatoliy Dmytriev, had difficult work ahead of him. More than 300 participants of mass conflict were arrested. The leaders were detained. The entire movement in Kharkiv was left completely without leaders. The "Kharkiv People's Republic" project ended as a fiasco. As far as the last explosions (at least two occurred on September 26. Earlier in September, a few groups of diversionists acting upon instruction of the Russian secret services were detained in Kharkiv, the SBU reported. They were preparing to destabilize peaceful cities with explosions in administrative buildings – Ed.) and terrorist acts are concerned, I'm sure that they were organised by external forces and diversionist groups that are coming to us from the area of the anti-terrorist operation," Pakhnin stated.

Of course, Kharkiv Oblast is not at all like Donetsk Oblast. The difference is the most striking in small towns. There are hardly any huge plants here, the architecture is different, as well as the language and people. But it appears that neither Putin nor Kernes intend to care about the locals' opinion. So, whether Kharkiv remains part of Ukraine depends, first and foremost, on the Ukrainian government and its ability to protect territorial integrity and state sovereignty. ■

KHARKIV DIFFERS FROM DONETSK, LIKE A WORKER FROM AN OLD INFLUENTIAL BUREAUCRAT

viet times, while May 9 is Victory Day – Ed.), the month passed very peacefully, we were surprised. But as soon as Hennadiy Kernes reappeared in Kharkiv in June, disorder reigned once more. There was a fight on May 22. In each case, the provocateurs were strange unknown people in masks."

At the same time, Pakhnin is convinced that the Donetsk scenario is no longer an option for Kharkiv because the separatist movement in the city was crushed by the police.

Separatism From Top Offices of Kyiv

Separatism in Ukraine is predominantly instigated from the outside: otherwise, it has no powerful domestic grounds despite the mass propaganda of the East-West divide



PHOTO: UNIAN

Author:
Ihor Losev

Ukraine does not have its own version of Scotland with its unique ethnicity and a long history of statehood, perhaps apart from the Crimean Tatar people, but they know full well that being part of Ukraine as a national and territorial autonomy is their best chance to realize their right for self determination. Therefore, as an artificial phenomenon, any separatism in Ukraine is weak, unless there is powerful influence from the outside. This sets the situation in Ukraine apart from the likes of Abkhazia with its own ethnicity, Transnistria formed out of Bessarabian and Ukrainian lands and added to the Moldavian SSR in 1940 or Karabakh which is part of Azerbaijan yet has predominantly Armenian population and a tragic history full of ethnic cleansing.

Separatist projects in Ukraine are destined to fail without outside intervention. And even with one they are also doomed, provided there's a consistent policy by Kyiv as the capital of the Ukrainian state and not the headquarters for plutocratic clans. However, such policy by Kyiv is nowhere to be seen. In fact there were many instances when the capital acted in a way that only fueled the rise of separatist moods and groups in the regions artificially provoking such processes.

IMPORTED LAWS

The Ukrainian public is now eagerly discussing the "Putin's laws" that were successfully peddled through the Verkhovna Rada by Petro Poroshenko after some extremely dubious talks with separatists and terrorists of the "DNR" and the "LNR"

in Minsk (the Russian-controlled and funded terrorist organizations that call themselves Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and are centered in the two respective cities of Ukraine – Ed.). The media refers to them as the documents on "special status" of Donbas, that de-facto legitimize the separatist groups on 30% of the region's overall territory, and thus recognizes Kremlin's military and political enclaves on the Ukrainian land.

Among other things this act of Kyiv's capitulation to the terrorists will have rather ugly consequences for Ukraine as a unitary state, as we are talking about recognizing a territory with a fundamentally different status and rights, as compared to the rest of the country's regions. This includes the right for own armed formations, i.e. "people's mi- ➤

litia", appointing prosecutors and judges independently from the central authorities etc. Therefore Kyiv has effectively approved the creation of a state within a state, a "sovereign pro-Moscow terrorist Bantustan", if you will.

Addressing the congressmen in Washington Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko talked about his readiness to give the Donbas the kind of rights that no other part of the country has. Such an exclusive approach is in violation of the Constitution of Ukraine and a disruption of the country's unitarity (which again violates the Constitution). Thus a political inequality of regions has been introduced, which will inevitably result in other territories willing to change their status as well, and therefore provoke a federalization movement. What has been signed by Ukrainian representatives in Minsk allows Kremlin's criminal/terrorist creations known as the "DNR" and the "LNR" to "legally" function for three years, and, perhaps, even much longer than that.

The legalization of the Donbas separatists spells tragedy for all pro-Ukrainian residents of those areas, as they are now left at the mercy of anti-Ukrainian forces that will no doubt make the most of their given rights to appoint their own judges, prosecutors, investigators, etc., who will do their utmost to exterminate patriotic citizens on seemingly legal grounds. They will have the pleasure of telling their victims: 'It was Ukraine that abandoned you'...

ABANDON YOUR OWN

In this country the propensity to surrender, to abandon, is unfortunately characteristic not only of the ruling authorities but of a large part of the educated folk. Back when Yanukovich was still in power a renowned writer and Ivano-Frankivsk native Yuriy Andrukhovych made public calls about giving the Donbas and Crimea the "opportunity for self-determination". Today this highbrow dream is being realized by the Russian General Staff, while the dreamers have gone quiet. Perhaps they are now hoping to be "accepted to the Europe" at last...

The authority of any state both internally and internationally to a large extent depends on how it stands by its citizens and allies. The might of the United States, among other things, is held together by the

solidarity of the people and states. Any American knows: his country, whatever happens to him, will do everything possible and a little bit more to save its citizen.

When the USA decided to leave South Vietnam, along it took hundreds of thousands of its proponents; when France pulled out of Algeria, it brought to its territory not only the French, but also Algerian Arabs and Berbers that cooperated with Paris. Respected countries do not abandon their own...

In these parts, however, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, the Ukrainian-speaking, the Ukrainian-oriented citizens on the Ukrainian territory are being "left at the mercy".

As a member of Ukrainian Parliament and Crimean native Andriy Senchenko put it, "In the Donbas people gripe that after passing these laws (on the special status of the Donbas – Ed.) Ukraine has abandoned them and left them with no choice but to flee their own land".

Such a move by central authorities will only inspire separatists, while demoralizing and discouraging pro-Ukrainian forces. Many potential patriots in the East are opting to keep quiet, they don't trust Kyiv authorities, they suspect (alas, not unreasonably) they may be betrayed. And this kind of policy has been prevalent for over 20 years. Yours truly saw it in action in Crimea, where not pro-Ukrainian, but pro-Moscow forces were the favored ones, as the latter were powerful and influential, while the former were weak and marginalized. But the power of the local pro-Kremlin fifth column has always lied not within itself (it always tended to be rather inept, uncreative and primitive), but in comprehensive support from Moscow. By the way, the "green men" popped up all over the peninsula precisely because Kremlin had no illusions as to the capabilities of their minions, of all those criminal "goblins" ["Goblin" is the old criminal nickname ascribed to Sergei Aksionov, the current so-called Head of the Republic of Crimea – Ed.]. Moscow knew full well that without boots on the ground, solely through the efforts of Aksionov, Konstantinov, Tsekov et al, occupation of the peninsula would never be accomplished.

Meanwhile the weakness of pro-Ukrainian forces always was in their total neglect by the capital. Take the

powerful pro-Ukrainian movement of Crimean Tatars for example. If anything, it frightened the central authorities. They saw a threat to the integrity of the country not in pro-Russian forces, but in the activity of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People.

Kyiv saw the pro-Ukrainian forces of the South and the East as a bargaining chip for political games that could always be sacrificed. Patriotic forces in Crimea often had to stand on their own against Moscow's aggression and the betrayal of Kyiv.

This rule of liberal Kuchmists (officials nurtured under the president Leonid Kuchma – Ed.), who are now busy carrying out visual remodeling of the nepotistic and plutocratic system (a great number of appointments attest to this), to avoid responsibility for surrendering Crimea (while in the process of surrendering Donbas, albeit in a somewhat different manner), are actively peddling the myth about mass treason by the Crimean population: all Crimeans are pro-Russian traitors, and so are the Ukrainian military servicemen in Crimea, trai-



HAD KYIV SUPPORTED PRO-UKRAINIAN FORCES IN CRIMEA AND THE DONBAS ALL THESE YEARS, IT WOULD HAVE STRONGER POSITIONS THERE

tors everywhere. Everywhere, except the high offices in Kyiv apparently...

But as one war reporter noted, "after the Perevalne coastal forces brigade and the navy battalion of Feodosiya were captured a number of soldiers stayed in Crimea to become Russian servicemen. Some labeled them traitors. Ukrainian journalists later wrote about these "traitors", after spending three weeks with these soldiers, eating together and sleeping under one roof with them. The soldiers never let go of their rifles. "Until the very end they kept waiting for the order to use force," the journalists wrote. The order never came. The then incumbent Verkhovna Rada did not perform its function. Such a behavior by the top leadership persuaded the Donbas separatists that in their region things would also go according to the Crimean scenario, i.e.,



PHOTO BY UKRAINSKE PHOTO

smoothly. Kyiv officials effectively inspired them and their puppeteers in Moscow to undertake this armed mutiny. It was a display of victimity that Kyiv still has propensity for.

Later tens of thousands of Crimean residents, that were left unprotected by Ukrainian authorities, had to flee the peninsula into the mainland Ukraine. It's worth pointing out that the motivation of these people dramatically differs from that of the IDPs fleeing Donetsk and Luhansk regions. There is actual war in Donbas, so everyone ran, including the supporters of the "DNR" and the "LNR", because missiles and bombs do not pick their victims based on political beliefs. Whereas in Crimea no fighting took place so the citizens moving to Ukraine were driven purely by political rationale. It was those that couldn't bear living under the Russian occupation that left their homes on the peninsula.

In effect, by passing the "Putin-Poroshenko" laws on the Donbas Kyiv planted a time bomb under itself and Ukraine as a state. It may take awhile to go off, its effect may even be gradual, but the long-term devastating force should not be underestimated: the central authorities will be losing the vote of confidence in the regions, and thus inevitably centrifugal forces will emerge. The "Munich" path followed by President Poroshenko, Speaker Turchynov and Premier Yatseniuk does nothing to reassure the residents of Ukraine's South

Virtually all separatism in Ukraine lives thanks to support from Moscow

and East. Ukrainian patriots in places like Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Mykolayiv and Odesa are beginning to wonder whether the president's next bargain with Putin may involve them.

Kyiv's ever-compromising course, all this haggling around national interests only stimulates separatism in the regions and undermines the integrity of Ukraine.

ACQUIRED SEPARATISM SYNDROME

How did this phenomenon even emerge in Ukrainian politics? For more than 20 years political elites have been growing more and more entangled with the criminal business circles (undeniably criminal by most civilized standards: corruption, bribery etc.). This brought to power a great number of politicians with purely entrepreneurial thinking, which in Ukrainian reality is the direct opposite of the state-building mindset.

For a typical Ukrainian oligarch the state is not a form of existence for the nation, not a value in itself, but an asset to be bought and sold. Therefore this industrialist (even if he happens to work as the country's president it doesn't really change a thing) always remains adamant that any "issues" can be "settled" through under-the-table agreements and "arrangements", price cuts, lucrative proposals. He is adamant that the fate of millions of Ukrainians can be put on the negotiation table along with the prospects for the language and the

culture, the future of the country, anything at all, as long as own business interests taken care of. And this is why Petro Poroshenko, while doing a decent job in the diplomatic domain, didn't fare brilliantly when it came to being the Commander in Chief. Military problems, however, cannot be resolved at a negotiation table. After the capitulation in Minsk the proponents of the unitary Ukraine residing in areas adjacent to the Donbas have every reason to think hard: 'Will we be surrendered too?'

Separatism in Ukraine is pretty much entirely held together by Moscow's support. While the likes of Abkhazia and Karabakh having the grassroots separatist movement on their own would still maintain their course directed at splitting from Georgia and Azerbaijan respectively, Crimea, just like the Donbas, would still be Ukrainian in its entirety if it wasn't for the Russian intervention. Thus any courting with anti-Ukrainian movements in Ukraine is an utterly ludicrous affair, because those resorting to it are dealing with puppets, whose master is elsewhere, behind the Kremlin walls, to be precise.

And therefore Petro Poroshenko's promises to the Donbas to increase, enhance and broaden whatever are equally ludicrous. In reality this region is in need of Ukrainian nationwide social and economic reforms, not some obscure "special status" that will only serve Moscow and the local criminal gangs.

Central authorities never did anything of note to support pro-Ukrainian population in Crimea and Donbas, opting instead to cooperate with the local pro-Moscow post-communist nomenclature, perhaps due to the latter being easier to relate to... Practically throughout the entire history of Ukraine's independence the dominating tendency was a pro-Soviet one.

But when the central government fails to protect its natural allies in the regions, it inevitably loses them along with the territories.

Had Kyiv supported pro-Ukrainian forces in Crimea and the Donbas all these years, it would have stronger positions there. But that would require a different kind of central authorities, the ones made up by someone other than criminal oligarchs. ■

The Communist Party May Be on Its Last Legs, But Social Populism is Still Alive

The electoral fiasco of the Communist Party in Ukraine does not mean less demand for social populism. It only brings to the political arena new players that are better fits for the new structure of Ukrainian society

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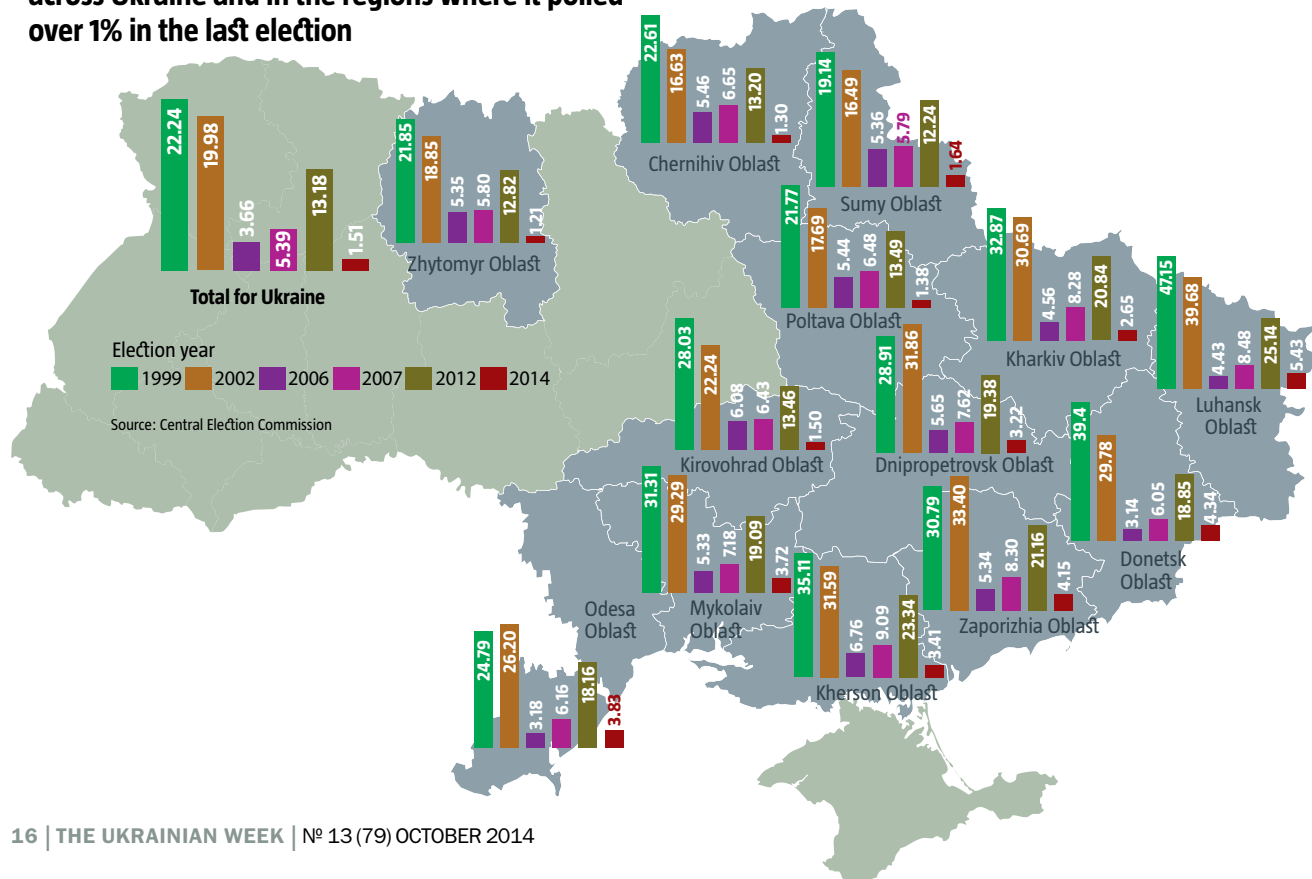
According to a recent survey carried out by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation jointly with the Kyiv International Institute for Sociology on 12-21 September 2014, 3% of potential participants in the parliamentary election would vote for the Communist Party, which is 4.6% of those who have formed a clear electoral preference by now. Thus, the communists risk failing to cross the five-per cent thresh-

old and not making it to parliament. To many, this is a definitive argument in favour of abandoning any active efforts to achieve a court ban on the Communist Party. Let them take away some votes from other pro-Russian projects; they won't make it to the Verkhovna Rada anyway, these people seem to be thinking.

However, the Communist Party has gone through several such swings in the past 15 years –

it was said to be close to demise but then rose as a phoenix from the ashes. In the late 1990s, it was the main apparent alternative to the Leonid Kuchma regime, until Nasha Ukraina (Our Ukraine), a national democratic alliance, came onto the stage to take the number one place from the communists in the 2002 parliamentary election. Their popular support dropped from 22% in the first round of the 1999 presiden-

Electoral support for the Communist Party in the past 15 years across Ukraine and in the regions where it polled over 1% in the last election



tial election to less than 4% in the 2006 parliamentary election, the first one held after the Orange Revolution. The communist ship began to sink, it seemed, but it re-emerged with new strength, collecting over 5% in the 2007 parliamentary election and more than 13% in 2012.

After the Revolution of Dignity, Petro Symonenko, the leader of Ukrainian communists, barely garnered 1.5%. The communists did not receive many votes from their supporters who are traditionally concentrated in the Crimea and Sevastopol, now annexed by Russia, and in the Donbas territories currently controlled by terrorists. On 25 May, a mere 168,000 voters cast their ballots in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, which is a mere 5% of voter turnout in the past years. The communist nominee traditionally enjoyed the highest support level there in comparison to other regions, but this did little to improve his overall result. Moreover, there was another reason – by closely cooperating with the Viktor Yanukovich regime until the last minute and openly playing into the hands of Russian aggression after Yanukovich's ouster, the Communist Party lost a good portion of its supporters in most regions of the country, ending up with virtually no followers in central and western Ukraine.

HEADING INTO THE LAST BATTLE?

The party's chances have risen somewhat now that a number of traditionally pro-communist industrial cities in the Donbas have been freed of terrorists. Moreover, southern and eastern Ukraine is becoming increasingly de-communized as evidenced by the recent demolition of what was Ukraine's biggest Lenin monument (in Kharkiv). This may be an additional rallying factor for those consumed by nostalgia for Soviet times as it prompts them to vote for the communists, rather than the Opposition Bloc, on 26 October (see p.6). Finally, the survey mentioned above shows that the communists have the most loyal support group of all the political forces elected to the Verkhovna Rada in 2012: 37% of communist sympathizers are going to vote for the Communist Party again,

nearly 20% are still undecided and a little over 20% will not come to polling stations. This means that the communists may actually obtain twice the number of votes that opinion surveys give them.

Their programme and rhetoric continue to include a typical array of social populist slogans, which, however, are highlighted to a much lesser degree than in previous campaigns: legal nationalization of strategic sectors; a ban on agricultural land sale; "abolition of the pension and medical reform imposed by the IMF and the EU"; repayment of savings; creating a network of state-owned and communal retailers, service providers and drugstores; providing free-of-charge housing to the underprivileged; limiting utilities to no more than 10% of family income, etc. Instead, priority is now given to slogans like "a secure shield against pro-NATO intentions", "making a pathway for restoring good neighbourly and brotherly relations with the CIS members, above all Russia" and "preserving the unity of the Slavic peoples". Moreover, "atheist communists" specifically emphasize their "support for traditional denominations" by which they, naturally, mean only one religious group – the Russian Orthodox Church, the religious hand of Russia's FSB.

The Communist Party is heading into "the last battle" as a typical party appealing to the USSR-nostalgic pensioners. This is reflected in the composition of its list of nominees. Of the top 15 candidates, 10 are aged 61-76 and only three are under 50. The youngest candidate in the top five is the party's leader Petro Symonenko, 62. Close to the top of the list are such odious fomenters of separatist attitudes as Alla Aleksandrovska (she recently said in Kharkiv that "Ukraine is not a state"), Spiridon Kilinkarov (a leader of Luhansk communists who has actively supported separatists), Yevhen Tsarkov (a Ukrainophobe from Odesa) and others.

POLITICAL NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM

In the 23 years of Ukraine's independence, political forces which aspired to left-wing status but, in



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fact, had no constructive social programmes and advocated a return to the Soviet past or preserving its rudiments in the social and economic spheres have been subject to gradual erosion. Ukraine has not been blessed with a normal centre-right political party all this while, but the situation in the left wing has been simply catastrophic. As the social structure of Ukrainian society evolved and nostalgia for Soviet times naturally abated, the communists and the socialists began to yield their spot in the political sun to social-populist political projects sponsored – often with little effort at disguise – by oligarchs.

To use Marxist criteria, modern Ukrainian society is largely “petty bourgeois” or “declassed”. Its social structure is conducive to social populism but not to classic left-wing ideology. In 2013, a lion’s share of voters depended on centralized distribution of the national product through the state budget, pension or other social funds rather than on money earned through employment by private capitalists. The majority of small entrepreneurs are barely making a living and would gladly take a well-paid job instead. 30% of the 10 million “self-employed” citizens are peasants who are, in fact, jobless and survive with the help of subsistence farming and irregular, seasonal employment as internal or external migrant workers. They are focused on surviving and take little interest in the traditional conflict over the distribution of added value between hired workers and employers – if only because this added value is simply not generated.

Since the Orange Revolution, the traditional left-right electoral division has been increasingly supplanted by a civilizational choice between Russia as a continuation of the USSR and Europe. In these conditions, the choice first made by the communists and then by the socialists has alienated voters in western and central regions that lean towards social populism. In 2006, Natalia Vitrenko’s Progressive Social Party, once popular in central Ukraine, failed to be elected. Symonenko supported Yanukovych during the Orange Revolution, and socialist leader Oleksandr Moroz followed in his footsteps in

2006, which turned both left-wing political parties into junior partners of oligarchic capital in the pro-government coalition.

On 4 August 2007, speaking at a pre-election congress of the Party of Regions, attended by Ukraine’s biggest oligarch Rinat Akhmetov, Symonenko said: “Strange as it may sound, I urge all of us to protect national capital”. It would have made classic communist thinkers turn in their graves. As the Communist Party became more intimately involved with large capital, its programme was increasingly dominated by foreign-policy, rather than social and class, issues. This is no surprise, considering that it shared responsibility for the policies of the “anti-popular government” for more than five years within the span of less than eight



THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS HEADING INTO “THE LAST BATTLE” AS A TYPICAL PARTY APPEALING TO THE USSR-NOSTALGIC PENSIONERS

years (2006-2014). Without its votes, the Yanukovych government of 2006-2007 and the Mykola Azarov government of 2010-2014 would not have been able to operate.

In these conditions, constituents in central, western and later southern Ukraine, where the existing social structure is more conducive to social populism, have not changed their preferences. The niche which belonged to the communists and the socialists was first occupied by the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (even though it tried to formally position itself as a centre-right force) and, after ensuing disillusionment, was penetrated by Svoboda (Freedom) and later Oleh Liashko’s Radical Party. This latter party started to gradually win over Freedom’s voters. At least 9% of those who supported Freedom in 2012 now prefer the Radical Party, according to the survey mentioned above.

Closer inspection reveals that Freedom’s socioeconomic programme and the rhetoric of its spokespersons are patently social-populist. Land to peasants and

factories to workers – these familiar slogans are clearly discernible in its agenda. Freedom insists that the local state administrations be dissolved and their authority transferred to the executive committees of the local councils. Further, it wants to ban strategic enterprises from privatization and restore state ownership of the already privatized ones, including cases when their owners have failed to meet their social and investment obligations. Freedom is opposed to agricultural land becoming a commodity, wants to reduce the prices of basic goods by taxing luxury goods, legislatively limit interest rates on bank loans, etc.

Liashko’s party programme is even more populist: 10-year loans at a five-per cent interest rate, lower salary taxes and bigger taxes on products manufactured by oligarchs, a crisis tax on oligarchs to fill budget holes and stop the inflation, forcing oligarchs to shell out more for companies they privatized on the cheap, a ban on agricultural land sale and eliminating the illegal land market, a tenfold increase in budget spending on health, setting up primary health centres in every village, etc.

Thus, even as the old left-wing political parties are falling into oblivion, a new generation of politicians is coming on the scene. They are aptly exploiting the fact that a large proportion of Ukrainians lean towards primitive social populism, while still viewing the world through the Soviet lens despite embracing “nationalism” or adopting a “pro-European stance”. If continued, this trend will further erode assets that can still be redistributed to offer an easy solution to citizens’ problems at the expense of “that guy”. Moreover, this is happening precisely at the moment when the country badly needs the bitter truth and an ideology for generating the national wealth rather than dividing its dwindling assets. The positive aspect of the situation is that the programmes and rhetoric of Batkivshchyna (Fatherland), Narodny Front (People’s Front), Hromadianska Pozyttsiia (Civic Position) and Samopomich (Self-Assistance) are, by and large, free of social populist elements. ■

How We Got Rid of Communism

The towering scholars in the area of Eastern and Central European studies have analyzed Communism as the failed modernization of Russia. Although operating as a secular ideocracy – to recall a brilliant term employed by Raymond Aron and then reinterpreted by Ernest Gellner – and as a messianic promise of collective salvation, Soviet Communism was always reminiscent of the nearly Byzantine sacrosanct structure of symbolic authority, and the fusion of the sacral and secular elements of power. Modern in intent, yet archaic in symbolic organization, Soviet Communism is likely to continue puzzling and striking, for a long time, many Western scholars as a false promise of modernity with a human face. Therefore, an apt comparison of Communism and Protestantism initiated by Max Weber sheds new light on Communism as a failed civilization-shaping movement.

Analyzing the reasons of the Western misconceptions of the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian émigré political scientist Aleksandras Shtromas subscribed to the point of view of the French philosopher and political scientist Alain Besançon: “failure to understand the Soviet regime is the principal cause of its successes.” Shtromas was starting his harsh criticism of the Western misconceptions of the nature and logic of the Soviet regime from a valuable remark that the Soviet Union by no means represents a continuation of the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire. To think otherwise, according to Shtromas, is a self-deception, “for the Soviet Union is first and foremost an ideological state whose very substance is Communism and whose rulers have at heart only one interest, that of Communist domination, not only over Russia and its vicinities, but over the entire world.”

Interestingly, the distinction that Shtromas makes between the *ancien régime* of pre-revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union stands in contrast not only to the aforementioned identification of the two concepts widespread in the West, but also to a theory worked out, after 1990, by some politicians in the Baltic countries, according to which the Soviet Union was nothing other than the same old Russian Empire masquerading as a Communist state.

The former Chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament, Vytautas Landsbergis, whose name had long been and continues to be raised as the banner of the independence movement in Lithuania, made it clear that Communism was nothing more than a perfect disguise for Russian imperialism. Like his friend Aleksandras Shtromas, the Lithuanian poet Tomas Venclova has never accepted the political and moral equivalency between Communism and Russian imperialism. In the light of the resurgence of imperialism and the resulting rise of fascism in Russia that it projects onto Ukraine so cynically and shamelessly, this question seems far from trivial and easy, though.

A high-profile Soviet dissident irreconcilable with the Soviet regime that spoke and acted in its name, Shtromas dismissed all considerations about the alleged fanaticism and ideological single-mindedness of the Soviet people as ill-founded political propaganda. Instead of searching for the special qualities of *homo sovieticus* or depicting the allegedly ever-present fanaticism and ideological zeal of Russians or the “Soviet people,” he focused on the analysis of the Communist Party and Marxist-Leninist ideology as the sword and the shield of the Soviet regime.

According to Shtromas, the Communist Party is the sole political party-based and oligarchic regime, or partocracy, which wages the never-ending war against its own society, while pretending to be constantly surrounded and plotted against by external and internal enemies.

Ernest Gellner aptly described the fall of Communism in 1989-1990 as sudden death of a rival civilization which proudly asserted its legitimacy as heir to the Enlightenment. In fact, it fell in the most banal way leaving the entire generations of Eastern European societies in a political and moral void. It was as if the Pope has declared one day that the whole world of Roman Catholicism was just a huge historic mistake and fiction. People in Eastern and Central Europe were confronted by a cruel question as to whether

they were fools or cowards or cynics, and if their lives were wasted and lost.

Lithuania has abandoned Communism in a rather decisive manner. The most important aspect of that story was a strong rejection of the KGB in all its incarnations, whether in administration, new

entrepreneurship, or political class. Needless to say, some of high-ranking party officials played a role in Lithuanian politics after 1990, yet nobody had even the slightest doubts about the legitimacy and validity of the independent Lithuania. Latvia and Estonia had long regarded their respective Communist Parties as dominated by ethnic Russians both from within and from without, and rightly so, Lithuanian Communists prized their unquestionable domination in their party.

I remember how some of my Estonian colleagues were poking fun on Lithuania in 1992 after the then stunning victory of the former Communist Party in the parliamentary elections. However, ever since that party closed ranks with their archrivals and had no gaps concerning Lithuania's top priorities in foreign policies, such as accession to NATO and the EU. Although the country is still divided when it comes to assess the role of Antanas Sniečkus, the former head of the Communist Party who is said to have been an ardent Stalinist with an oddly sentimental attachment to Lithuanian culture, nobody has ever put into question the fact that the country was united in its dedication to get rid of the legacy of Communism and join the family of European nations. ■



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**SOVIET COMMUNISM WAS
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Some of high-ranking party officials played a role in Lithuanian politics after 1990, yet nobody had even the slightest doubts about the legitimacy and validity of the independent state of Lithuania

The Red Thaw in Eastern Europe

After 1989, East European Communists transformed into social-democrats. Those who survived lustration remained in politics at home through the 1990s and early 2000s

Author: Olha Vorozhbyt

Gregor Gysi's speeches in the Bundestag regarding Ukraine are always a well-selected set of theses in defence of Vladimir Putin and the current position of Russia. This German politician is a lawyer by profession. Close your eyes for an instant when listening to him, and you will feel as if you are in court hearing the counsel for the defence. With equal fervour, Gysi, the last leader of the GDR's leading Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), stood for the existence of his political force, and this is probably one of the reasons why he succeeded in transforming it into the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) first, then The Left party, as we know it in the current German parliament.

However, both today, when his party members only won 11.9% support in the last election, and after the fall of the Berlin wall and the first free democratic election in East Germany, former Communists immediately ended up in the caste of parties with little influence. An important factor that contributed to this was the significant involvement of West Germany in the political process of that time, which helped to quickly establish a new party system where the centre-right gained a majority under the careful but important support of the "father" of German unity, Helmut Kohl.

As Daniel Ziblatt, a professor at Harvard University, noted in one of his studies, a significant role in the marginalisation of Communists was also played by the West German media: they watched the

newly-created party of the former regime representatives very closely, with a grain of suspicion. This differentiated German Communists, for example, from the Polish ones, who found a way to fill the Social Democratic niche. German Communists found it difficult to accomplish the same thing at home because the West Germany centre-left held solid and influential positions there. After the 1994 election, when questioned about whether he viewed Gysi's party in his coalition with Social Democrats, Co-Chairman of the Green Party, Joschka Fischer, stated that he saw his political force either with the Social Democrats or in the opposition, but did not intend to depend on Gysi's party. The centre-right Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, called East German Communists "fascists painted red", and in publications in the early 1990s, there were discussions on whether it was at all possible to trust the newly-established PDS as the successor of East German Communism.

Many politicians, who were members of the Communist Parties of the former Soviet Bloc, such as Gysi, remain in the politics at home, but not as actively. Elsewhere, such as in Poland and Hungary, their forces were not marginalised, but transformed into powerful social democratic movements, which after the disillusionment in the first elections following 1989, often played a leading role in the country. Their representatives became presidents or prime ministers. However, there is another distinctive sign, which differentiates the successors of the Communist Parties in Poland, Hungary or the Czech Re-



public from their German colleagues: in spite of everything, national interest was of paramount importance to them.

"Communism was a kind of freezer... The defrosting process was conducted gradually: first of all, we saw wonderful flowers; then – mud and nasty scum," wrote Polish publicist Adam Michnik, clearly referring to the early 1990s. It is this second layer of "defrosting" that brought to the surface new unexpected results and social movements, and at the same time, rein-

stated some former politicians to the position of statesmen.

“Polish leftists on the background of leftist parties in West European countries, for example, France, are significantly more rightist. If you compare the Communist Party of France to the Polish Democratic Left Alliance, the direct successor of the Polish United Workers' Party, the latter is ideologically more rightist,” – says Pawel Fleischer, a Polish researcher.

The history of Polish Communists after 1989 is a great example of how the party transferred to the social democratic wing, as well as

The gravitation of Polish leftist parties and former Communists to the right (in spite of their traditional rhetoric, the maintenance of national interests) helped leftists with ideas to avoid such discrediting, as seen in Ukraine.

In Hungary, just as in Poland, there was a transformation of what was the leading party prior to 1989. However, if in Poland and Germany it seemed quite harsh, Hungary had it gradually, although party members themselves played an important role in it. Politicians Károly Grósz and Imre Pozsgay strived to rid the party of its “Goulash Communist center”, which

the horrors of Communism. It is important, that the Czech Republic became the first East Bloc country in which the Communist Party played a dominant role prior to 1989 but was recognised as being a criminal organisation and the regime itself - illegal. In the latest general elections, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia created in 1989 landed third, and this is extremely painful for country of Havel. Although party members asked forgiveness for the actions of their predecessors and do not consider themselves to be their successors, it is the nostalgia for the Communist past, clearly, that brought it this result.

Today, the successors of the Communist Party in the parliaments of Eastern Europe hold positions that are not particularly influential (with the possible exception of the Czech Republic). The politicians that were members of these political forces one way or another prior to 1989 are gradually leaving the political arena because of their age and demand of society. It is important for lustration to eliminate those who are guilty of Communist crimes. In most countries, Communists transferred to the social democratic field, a more familiar policy for Europe. This is evidence that by taking on the ideology imposed on them by the USSR, they still stuck to the national interests of

THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE. During a meeting with Petro Symonenko, the leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, in August, Gregor Gysi stated that the German Left will provide their lawyer to the Ukrainian Communist Party



THE CURRENT WAR IN UKRAINE HAS REVEALED ISSUES THAT ARE COMMON FOR MANY FORMER COMMUNISTS FROM EASTERN EUROPE: FEAR AND AT THE SAME TIME LOVE FOR RUSSIA AND ITS LEADER

of a “pendulum effect” – when the main official positions have long been in the hands of former party officials. For instance, President Lech Walesa was succeeded by Aleksander Kwasniewski, the Minister for Youth Affairs in the Polish People's Republic. The need for qualified statesmen was the factor partly responsible for this. West Germany provided such personnel to East Germany, but in the case of Poland the involvement of ex-Communist officials was not unjustified.

brought along liberalisation. Just as in other East European countries, the first democratic election was won by the Hungarian Democratic Forum, which was not tainted with Communism. However, the subsequent disillusion brought reformed Communists to power in the Hungarian Socialist Party.

In 2009, the Czech Václav Havel confirmed that it would take decades to overcome the deep wounds suffered by the European society that had already survived

their countries. However, the current war in Ukraine has revealed issues that are common for many former Communists from Eastern Europe: fear and at the same time love for Russia and its leader. German Gregor Gysi talks about Fascists in the Ukrainian government. Czech Vojtěch Filip of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia reportedly says that “Ukraine is a Neo-Nazi country” now. This syndrome will continue for many years to come and no one knows how to cure it. ■



Toomas Hendrik Ilves:

"We are clearly at the beginning of a period where Russia is a very different partner"

"Ukraine chooses its own path and for this it has become a victim of aggression," Mr. Ilves said at the opening of the YES summit in Kyiv. "The EU as a whole must stand with Ukraine in its support to the country." Ukraine's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin later wrote on Twitter that Estonia would take Ukrainian troops injured in Eastern Ukraine for treatment in recovery centers, and offer Ukrainian civil servants training in e-elections, a segment where Estonia is a leader. In his interview for *The Ukrainian Week*, Mr. Ilves draws parallels between transformations of the international order caused by Russia's actions today and circumstances that encouraged the establishment of NATO and EU over 60 years ago, and between the presence of Russian troops on Ukrainian soil today and Soviet occupation of Estonia.

U.W.: What has happened to the Estonian security service officer detained recently by the Russians? Where is he now? What signal does this send?

He has been charged. Clearly, he was on our side of the border doing a criminal investigation. He was abducted in the process of that criminal investigation. That criminal case involves smuggling into Estonia.

He works for the internal security service of Estonia; its staff does not go abroad to work. They only work inside Estonia. That is a very clear line that we have in our country. It is based on the rule of law. Why this was done – I can't figure it out.

U.W.: Do you expect any real threat from Russia to Estonia?

I do not expect it. However, what we have seen in Ukraine in the past six months is all unexpected. We are witnessing the complete abandonment of all the rules followed since WWII. Borders cannot



PHOTO BY ANDREY LOMAKIN

**Interviewed by
Anna Korbut**

"We have all kinds of events, rallies in support of Ukraine. Estonians support Ukraine. It's not just the president or prime-minister, it's a common feeling"

be changed through the use of force or violent force. That has been the underlying fundamental truth of European security – even during the Soviet period. Now, the things that we have always believed in are no longer true.

U.W.: Barack Obama has recently visited Estonia to reassure you of support from NATO and the US. Do you feel reassured?

We got everything that Estonia had worked for in the years leading up to the summit without any compromise. More specifically, the staff, the permanent NATO presence – our NATO base. It is now augmented with significant presence of allied troops, more officers. Politically, he reiterated that there is no difference between Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius and Paris, Berlin or London from NATO perspective.

U.W.: The Baltic States, Poland and Ukraine seem to form a sort of a buffer belt between the ever more aggressive Russia and Western Europe. Do you think this could somehow change their security

strategy, or their security allies, in the future?

The only historical analogy I know of is the period between 1945 to 1947-48. In that period, the British, Americans, the French and the Soviets were allies fighting the Nazi Germany. When the Germans were defeated, we started to see that the Soviets began to move on the countries that were in between. Everyone was confused then, in 1946-47. The common thought was that they had been allies in defeating the Nazi Germany together, and now they were doing to us what the Nazis had been doing. This shouldn't have been too surprising. Today, everyone talks of September 1 being the beginning of WWII. But we should keep in mind that 75 years back from now, on September 17, 1939, the Soviets, as allies with the Nazis, invaded Poland. It took a while to understand what was going on in 1946-47 because it wasn't making sense, just like what Russia is doing today is not making sense. Back then, it was what led to the creation of NATO in 1949. It also resulted in the Marshall Plan which was aimed at assisting Europe, while Stalin did not allow that in any of the Eastern European countries. It also led to the Coal and Steel Community in 1950-1951 which later became the European Economic Community, and the European Union eventually. So, two of the most fundamental institutions we have today – the EU and NATO – started in response to Soviet behavior which no one could understand but realized that we need to do something. The response was NATO as the security element, and the EU as the economic element, to prevent the disruption of countries economically and to boost the economies of Europe. That took pretty much five years, beginning in 1945 and ending in 1949-1950 when the institutions were in place.

I don't know how many years it will take to move beyond the current institutions and to create something

new, but we are clearly at the beginning of a period where Russia is a very different partner, or rather no longer a partner. This stage will take a while.

As to the allies, we have 28 NATO allies who have pledged to defend us and whom we have pledged to defend. In terms of countries that we get closely along with, Ukraine has been one. I came here in 2004 and froze on the Maidan 1.0. as Vice President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, I went along with German MEP Elmar Brok and some other leading MEPs, to see Leonid Kuchma. We told him "You have to stop doing this". And he did. It never got to the point to which it got under Yanukovich where he did not listen to the Europeans. Kuchma did listen. We are all people who are very supportive of Ukraine, and we shall continue to be.

Estonians feel very strong solidarity for Ukraine. We have all kinds of events, rallies in support of Ukraine. Estonians support Ukraine. It's not just the president or prime-minister, it's a common feeling.

U.W.: In one of your earlier interviews, you said that Europe would need a new rulebook for Russia now. Is this happening now? What do you expect the new rulebook to be like?

We are in the beginning of what I think will be a longer process. But smart people are thinking about how to proceed. Not every country in Europe is convinced of the need for a new set of rules. We see that there are EU member-states that do not like sanctions. One of the problems is that they used to have this attitude towards Ukraine, Estonia or Poland, that "those East Europeans are always afraid of the Russians but they don't understand things". That is now changing significantly. In fact, there is a completely new understanding of the fact that Eastern Europeans were not paranoid at all.

U.W.: How have European and Russian sanctions been affecting Estonia so far?

European sanctions against Russia do not affect us. Russian sanctions against European countries are slightly affecting us. The goods Russia has banned from Europe were banned for Estonia already in January. So, it's nothing new for us. The new thing is, given the fact that the

Russian market is now closed, a lot of goods from European farmers that are not going to Russia but staying within the EU, so we now have huge amounts of milk. The prices of agricultural goods have gone down. This is enough to bother farmers.

U.W.: Russia is waging a powerful information war. Estonia is one of the targets, and you have a Russian-speaking part of the population. Do you feel threatened by it, and how does Estonia resist it?

The average salary of a miner in the Donbas is EUR 200 a month. The average salary of a Russian-speaking miner in Estonia is EUR 2,000 a month. Why would they want to give up that? Every permanent resident of Estonia, whatever their citizenship, has the right to free movement in Europe with no visas, to free movement of labour. If they want to go work in London or Paris, they just do it. Why would they want to secede? Would they want free movement of labour to Tambov Oblast? I don't think so. We also have euro, and the rouble is plummeting. So, that is not really bothering us. We know from opinion polls that there is no sentiment about joining Russia among people who are citizens and residents of the EU.

We have noticed, however, that there are two separate issues. Many Russians in Estonia who watch Russian television support the annexation of Crimea. We don't. On the other hand, when asked whether they would want to join Russia, they say 'no'.

U.W.: The widespread opinion has been that, if Ukraine resists Russian aggression decisively, the international community will be more prepared to act tougher to support it against Russia. How do you assess Ukraine's response to Russian aggression, both in the military sphere, and in terms of reforms in the country?

There is a general rule in international security policy: a country that believes in itself will defend itself. If you say "we are going to defend our country", people understand that. If you say "we won't defend our country", no one will force Ukraine to do that. That is Ukraine's choice.

The main thing I see right now is, with the Russian troops and equipment in your country, that they have to leave. We have just cel-

"We have just celebrated the 20-years anniversary since the last Russian soldier left Estonia. That lasted from August 31, 1991, till August 31, 1994. All that time we had Russian troops, Russian tanks and Russian planes on our soil. It took a long time to get them out but we did. That was when our true sovereignty began"

ebrated the 20-years anniversary since the last Russian soldier left Estonia. That lasted from August 31, 1991, till August 31, 1994. All that time we had Russian troops, Russian tanks and Russian planes on our soil. It took a long time to get them out but we did. That was when our true sovereignty began.

Another important issue now is Crimea. I am a very strong supporter of the policy of absolute non-recognition of the occupation and annexation. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied in 1940. NATO countries all maintained the policy of non-recognition till the very end – for 50 years. This meant that simple Estonian citizens could visit the US or Germany. But no one who said "I'm the official of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic" would ever get in in that status. It was a little different for Ukraine. It had the so-called "foreign ministry" and a seat at the UN; Belarus did too.

In terms of reforms, the Ukrainian President says "we could do reforms while we are fighting". There was a new wave punk rock band called Talking Heads. They had the song "Life During Wartime" that

"WE ARE WITNESSING THE COMPLETE ABANDONMENT OF ALL THE RULES FOLLOWED SINCE WWII"

said "this ain't no disco, this ain't no Mudd Club, this ain't no CBGB" (Mudd Club and CBGB were well-known New York nightclubs for underground and alternative music and culture in the 1970-1980s – Ed.). It's basically war. Trying to do reforms in the middle of people dying in a war is very difficult. I have respect for the idea that people try to implement reforms at this time. But the first step is to stop the fighting, get the troops out. Then, do the reforms. ■

BIO

Toomas Hendrik Ilves is the fourth President of Estonia, in office since 2006. Born in 1953 in Stockholm into a family of Estonian refugees, he grew up in the US and studied psychology there. Before he started his diplomatic career as Estonia's Ambassador to the US in 1993, Mr. Ilves had worked as research assistant at the Department of Psychology at Columbia University, as the teacher of English, and as a journalist for Radio Free Europe. In 1996, Mr. Ilves became Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, then resigned in 1998 to join the Peasants' Party, a small opposition force which he soon chaired. In his second term as Foreign Minister, he launched the talks that resulted in Estonia's joining the EU in 2004. In 2004, he was elected MEP from Estonia. In 2006, he was elected President of Estonia

The (E)U-Turn on Ukraine: Pragmatism or Surrender?

**Authors: Rilka Dragneva
and Kataryna Wolczuk**

Few bilateral agreements have had such a turbulent history and implications as the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. First, the refusal to sign the agreement by then president Yanukovich triggered massive protests in Ukraine resulting in his overthrow in February 2014. And then this provoked Russia's response: annexing Crimea and fuelling separatism in Eastern Ukraine, including direct military incursion in August 2014.

Importantly, the Agreement envisages a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which entails tariff changes but also provides for Ukraine's integration into the EU single market. Russia has objected to both, alleging potential damage to its economy. Clearly, an important aspect of this 'damage' lies in the fact that the DCFTA precludes Ukraine's membership into the Eurasian integration bloc, something which Russia has actively sought and presented as a viable (and indeed preferable) alternative to integration with the EU.

Asserting its independence, Ukraine signed the Agreement in June 2014. Russia's opposition to it intensified over the summer leading to its delayed ratification. Trilateral EU-Ukraine-Russia negotiations continued against the backdrop of military intervention and threats of a trade war against Ukraine. Indeed, Russia's demands have been far-reaching including a revision of the already signed agreement. The Russian government has in fact drafted amendments to substantive terms in somebody else's agreement.



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The tri-lateral negotiations resulted in compromise: the Agreement was ratified by the Ukrainian and European parliaments, but implementation of the key trade-related part (the DCFTA), was suspended until the end of 2015 due to 'Russia's concerns'. This middle ground is already proving to be unstable, with Russia reinforcing its demands for legal revisions and the exclusion of 2,000 commodities from the free trade regime. To assert its position, it has imposed tariffs with suspended application to mirror the EU's approach. Furthermore, in a spectacular U-turn, it seems that at least the outgoing Commission President Barroso is not averse to the thought of revising an agreement that has been signed and ceremoniously ratified.

Who favoured this 'compromise' and why it was adopted still needs to be fully clarified. EU officials indicate that it was requested by the Ukrainian side concerned about the economic and social implications of Russia's trade sanctions. Similarly, there was pressure from EU member states putting a premium on 'appeasement', or the 'normalisation' of relations with Russia and an end to the costly spiral of reciprocal economic sanctions. Despite what is undoubtedly a complex background story, the postponement of the agreement was labelled 'business as usual'. If anything, the EU's response to Russia's pressure for a say on EU-Ukraine's relations was presented as a success, on the grounds that ratification had taken place without 'a single word having been changed'. As Elmar Brok, a veteran member of the European Parliament put it: "... this process [i.e. negotiations] has been concluded. And the Russians are part of it. They were there

for the negotiations. It's all coming into force. It's just being implemented incrementally, as is often the case with contracts. From the legal point of view, the whole contract will be enforced in all its details. It's just that there are often transitional arrangements. That's normal in business."

No doubt, the EU has found itself in a particularly difficult position where it has tried to balance principles, economic interests and complex constraints. Yet, in opting for this latest compromise, Brussels has performed a U-turn with potentially high and diverse costs without securing a lasting resolution of the core issues in the post-Soviet region. Certainly many – the present authors included – have pointed out the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the EU's Eastern Partnership policy so as to address a range of serious concerns.

However, a last-minute decision announced three days before the Association Agreement's ratification and taking many top EU officials by surprise hardly constitutes such a review. Allowing Russia to dictate EU-Ukraine relations does not indicate the application of a comprehensive, sustainable strategy. Whether it is born out of a pragmatic trade-off or a tactical retreat, it is a short-term fix based on a set of shaky assumptions. Its far-reaching implications, however, will still need to be confronted.

First, allowing Russia to participate in the EU's negotiations on a bilateral agreement with another country sets a dangerous precedent. It is a blatant reversal of the EU's earlier position. It opens a minefield for international lawyers. Even more importantly, it undermines the principle of dealing with Ukraine as an independent country: regardless of its 'semantic framing', the EU has accepted Russia's right to determine the essential terms and the limits of its post-Soviet neighbours' integration choices. The potential application of this precedent to other neigh-

hours is obvious, but also has implications for relations further afield involving Turkey or China. Importantly, the EU likewise concedes to Russia's double-standards in international relations: while Putin complains that nobody talked to Russia about the potential consequences of the DCFTA, he conveniently forgets that the Eurasian Customs Union was launched in 2010 with no consultation with the EU and no adequate transitional arrangements resulting in significant damage to EU businesses.

Second, it is not only the inclusion of a third party as such, but also the mode and the professed reasons for accommodating its preferences that are questionable. Russia's justifications for its 'trade concerns', have been highly spurious and are, as Michael Emerson put it, 'a non-story'. For example the problem of Russia being 'swamped by EU goods' can be addressed by the proper application of rules of origin. The EU has been involved in consultations with Russia on the subject for many months now making a strong case as to why the DCFTA need not disrupt existing trade arrangements. It is unclear how fifteen more months of discussions will help resolve a problem that in its essence is neither legal nor technical. Above all, Russia's concern is a thinly veiled contestation as to who the rule-setter in the post-Soviet space is. Russia principally objects to the EU expanding its regulatory framework – via the Association Agreements – to Russia's perceived exclusive backyard, the post-Soviet space. This is especially so given the clash of EU policy with the expansion of Russia's own economic integration project. Faced with a complex bundle of economic and geopolitical concerns, the EU conceded to pressure rather than sound argument.

Third, EU statements on the deal refer to the peace process in Eastern Ukraine, implying that it amounts to a necessary sacrifice for the sake of ensuring a peaceful resolution between the separatists and the Ukrainian government. Its political acceptability is justified against the backdrop of a military conflict in which Russia has been a party. However, Moscow has adamantly refused to acknowledge its involvement, endeavouring to present the conflict as a local, bottom-up rebellion. Securing peace

and saving human lives is an objective one certainly cannot disagree with; however, as it stands, the deal offers few guarantees and carries considerable costs. While Russia refuses to acknowledge its role in the conflict, the deal legitimises and validates Russia's 'hybrid war' strategy: by instigating conflict, Russia is able to extract concessions from the EU for the sake of a 'contribution to peace'.

Fourth, the EU's actions rest on the assumption of a 'fixed and stable agreement', one that reflects and accommodates Russia's preferences. It assumes that agreements and rules will be implemented. The source of this optimism – given Russia's track record of behaviour – is unclear. Indeed, it has already been revealed that Russia is not satisfied by the mere delay of the Agreement's implementation. Furthermore, the consensus on what constitutes 'implementation' might be overestimated given Putin's reference to 'any legislative implementing acts under the Association Agreement'. There is no reason to assume that Russia's decision to trigger sanctions will be based more on law and shared understanding than in previous instances. The EU's longing for 'business as usual' obscures the fact that this is the last thing it is and that Russia's claims are derived not from legal agreements but from claims to a sphere of influence.

Fifth, while the need to ensure the compatibility of the DCFTA with interregional linkages is understandable, the EU has shown a sudden ready acceptance of post-Soviet integration structures. After many years during which the EU had raised valid concerns: for example, about the degree to which the Eurasian Customs Union acts as an economic rather than a Russia-steered, political entity with an unclear division of competences, or the degree to which it contributes to trade liberalisation and WTO commitments implementation. We, amongst others, have criticised the EU's lack of strategic engagement with the Eurasian project, yet the show of caution has not been entirely unjustified.

If anything, Russia's policies towards Ukraine amplify these concerns: the Kremlin has in effect (and with its partners' consent), destroyed the Eurasian Customs Union by imposing unilateral trade measures on

By instigating conflict, Russia is able to extract concessions from the EU for the sake of a 'contribution to peace'

Ukraine. Recent statements of Commissioner Füle, however, reveal the EU 'warming up' to Eurasian structures, based on a presumed functional and rule-based equivalence of both regimes. While the Eurasian structures certainly contain promise, its actual delivery is circumscribed by a range of problems of institutional design and implementation.

The EU continues to state that regional economic integration frameworks need to contribute to trade liberalisation and WTO compliance. Yet, ironically, Russia's threats to Ukraine – rather than the success of the Eurasian project itself – might end up earning it external recognition just as these very same threats undermine it internally. Furthermore, while the EU might be willing to enter into a comprehensive free trade area 'from Lisbon to Vladivostok', there is actually no certainty that free trade is what Russia wants and pursues.

On balance, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that by agreeing to this pragmatic, 'principles-lite' deal, the EU accepts and legiti-

ALLOWING RUSSIA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EU'S NEGOTIATIONS ON A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH ANOTHER COUNTRY SETS A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

mises a particular way of conducting international relations favoured by Russia. Acquiescence to this pattern of behaviour comes at the very time when Moscow's actions vis-à-vis Ukraine amount to a shake-up of the international order. The EU's pragmatism has not been lost on the people of Ukraine, with the prevailing interpretation on social media being one of 'having been abandoned'. For an outgoing team of the European Commissioners to present this as 'business as usual' while leaving a series of 'landmines' for future interactions between the EU and Russia should be a source of deep concern. Yielding to Russian anxieties rather than comprehensively addressing existing questions, opens a raft of new issues. They need to be confronted rather than obfuscated behind the rhetoric of normality. ■

The EU's pragmatism has not been lost on the people of Ukraine, with the prevailing interpretation on social media being one of 'having been abandoned'

French Companies Resist Sanctions Against Russia

Big businesses in France have significant investments in Russia. EU restrictions are causing losses. Yet, they are not planning to leave the Russian market

There are currently 1,200 French enterprises operating on Russian territory, making France Russia's third largest investor. Some of them had truly ambitious goals, such as Renault, together with its Japanese partner, Nissan AvtoVAZ. The sale of 200,000 vehicles a year guarantees it the status of the largest foreign investor in Russia, owning an 8% share of the Russian automobile market. With the sales of Nissan and AvtoVAZ added up, the alliance makes every third car currently bought in Russia. And Russia is the third largest consumer of the French car-building giant in the world.

Other French companies have made massive investments, too. For example, Auchan, an international retailer, has opened 80 supermarkets in Russia, employing 38,000 workers. Danone, a dairy company, gets 11% of its annual turnover from Russia: this is the company's most important foreign market. Russian assets significantly impact the operations of the French bank, Société Générale, which bought out the ninth largest Russian bank, Rosbank. The producer of railway technology, Alstom, which acquired 25% of the leader of Russian locomotive manufacturer, Transmashholding, is also dependent on the Russian market.

All of these enterprises believed in the potential of Russia. Many have already felt the consequences of political decisions and are afraid of what the future holds. Société Générale has just announced positive results at a level of EUR 16mn in the second quarter of 2014. But this is 30% less than in the previous

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year. The sales of Renault cars have fallen by 9%, the Russian domestic automobile market is collapsing. The oil concern Total is probably the one that is troubled the most. It joined the project for the development of oil deposits in Yamal, together with Novatek (which holds



When Sergey Naryshkin, the Chairman of the State Duma, who has been prohibited from entering the EU, visited Paris on September 1, quite a few managers of the French companies operating in Russia, hurried to meet him

18% of shares) and the Chinese CNPC, investing USD 27bn. This project was to have made Russia Total's first production zone in 2020. However, this initiative is now under threat, because the sanctions could prohibit Western banks from financing it.

The situation is also influenced by the general slowdown of the Russian market which sanctions will aggravate further. French enterprises are afraid of a chain reaction in different sectors, because it is as yet unclear how far Moscow is prepared to go in the confrontation with the West. It is well-known that above all else, business hates the unexpected and risks.

When talking about Russia, the French constantly waver between two lines of behaviour. The first is fed by memories of "Russian imperial debts" (the money that was lent to it before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917). The Communists confiscated all funds, and for a long

time, the country was known as being high-risk from the financial viewpoint.

The second line emerged in the 1990s, when the "strategic partnership" project came into being. The EU supported this concept, which was promoted the most by Germany. It entailed the creation of privileged relations with the Kremlin under the "oil for technology" principle. Russia sold its raw material to rich European clients, and the latter invested in the modernisation of the country. The scheme lasted 10 years. The current crisis reflects that it has outlived its usefulness.

Federica Mogherin, the EU's new foreign policy chief, has already delivered a verdict: "Russia is no longer a partner of the European Union" she announced in recent days.

In spite of numerous risks, France's big business is trying to move contra to decisions approved in the EU, not wishing to give up its long-term presence in Russia. Some succeed in their active resistance to the sanctions. When Sergey Naryshkin, the Chairman of the State Duma who is on the EU visa ban list, visited Paris on September 1, quite a few managers of French companies operating in Russia hurried to meet him, including the executives of Auchan, Total, GDF Suez (a large client of Gazprom and an investor in the Nord Stream pipeline). Emmanuel Quidet, President of the French-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a Frenchman, who has long lived in Moscow, continuously protests against the sanctions, which "are holding enterprises hostage".

Official Paris is extremely sensitive to the issue of employment and is also resisting the sanctions, because they will inevitably increase France's unemployment. The issue of jobs is the principal counterargument in favour of the sale of Mistral helicopter carriers to Russia. Even so, the reality of war in Ukraine has forced at least a temporary suspension of the contract. Other sanctions are faced with similar situations. France is forcing itself to implement them, without enthusiasm, agreeing to them at the last moment, when there really is no other option. Let's be realistic: this behaviour will not change in the coming months, in spite of all its brutality and egocentrism. ■

Where Are Estonia's Friends?

NATO does not know how to deal with small, confusing challenges, so Russia unleashes them. If they go unpunished, they set a precedent

The safest way to attack someone's credibility is to nibble at it. This is what Russia is doing to NATO with its abduction of an Estonian security official.

The kidnapping exemplifies the way the Kremlin works. Gangsterdom, intelligence, propaganda, a sense of history and diplomacy all overlap. The timing is excellent and so is the targeting: hitting the West in its weakest spot, in the zone between what frontline states find intolerable, and what their allies are ready to notice.

The result is the slow collapse of NATO. The alliance does not know how to deal with small, confusing challenges. So Russia unleashes them. If they do provoke a reaction, the Kremlin has not risked much (Kohver could have been bundled back across the border within hours). But if they go unpunished, they set a precedent. Future breaches makes bigger ones seem more likely. Small countries, who depend on the rules being enforced always and everywhere, become demoralised.

Eston Kohver is a decorated Estonian crime-buster. Presumably he was on some kind of surveillance mission, or possibly meeting with an informer in a Russian crime gang. Whether he was kidnapped by criminals and then handed over to the FSB, or whether the mobsters were working alongside the notoriously corrupt Russian internal security agency is unclear. Estonian media say the kidnappers used smoke grenades and jammed electronic communications. That doesn't sound like run-of-the-mill gangsters.

What we do know is that kidnapping is an old Soviet habit. Bohumil Laušman, a notable Czecho-

Author:
Edward Lucas,
UK

slovak Social Democrat, was snatched from Vienna in 1953 and died after being given psychotropic drugs. Abduction of defectors and dissidents (and sometimes of Western soldiers) was endemic in West Berlin at the height of the cold war.

Kohver ended up in a Moscow prison, facing a possible 20-year sentence for spying. Russia has launched a textbook disinformation campaign, saying that he was caught inside Russian territory, and with espionage equipment.

ingly, most media are reporting the case as if both sides' claims were of equal weight.

The abduction comes just after Barack Obama came to Tallinn and sent spirits soaring in a country rattled by the war in Ukraine. NATO would defend Tallinn just as it would Berlin, London or Paris, he said, invoking "a solemn duty to each other". The alliance's Article 5 is "crystal clear": an attack on one is an attack on all.

Russian ambassadors should



Eston Kohver is a decorated Estonian crime-buster. Presumably he was on some kind of surveillance mission, or possibly meeting with an informer in a Russian crime gang

The historical echoes are chilling: In 1938 the Soviet Union seized and executed three Estonian border guards, Artur Pungas, Volde-mar Kāo and Vassili Eva. Two years later, it invaded.

Russia has left no room to back down. It will be hard to admit now that the evidence was planted, or that Kohver was abducted by criminals. It may try to trade him for a real Russian spy held in Estonia, such as Herman Simm. That would twist the screw neatly.

Estonia has a stellar record of truthfulness even in the notoriously murky world of intelligence. Russia is a habitual liar. Annoy-

be summoned in all NATO and European Union capitals, to be told that if Kohver is not released at once, they can pack their bags. Our ambassadors in Moscow will be withdrawn. No Western visas for any official of any state agencies involved in the abduction—including family members. An emergency session of the UN Security Council.

That might show Russia that Obama was not joking when he declared that an "attack on one is an attack on all".

Kohver is that one. All Estonia feels under attack. But where are Estonia's friends? ■



Nuclear Whimper

Author: Edward Lucas, UK

Collective security depends on a mixture of trust and fear: trust that your allies will make sacrifices for you, and fear that you will suffer if you challenge or break the rules.

Both of those are fraying in Europe. It is hard to see how the new European Commission will be able to impose its will on Russia's South Stream gas pipeline, now that Italy and Austria, as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia are all signed up for it. It looks as though the EU's ambitious bid to be the rule-setting body for the continent's energy market has been derailed. Russia was simply too strong.

That opens a new era, in which countries stop thinking about the wider interest, abandon the now-toothless rules, and find the best terms they can with Russia. It reopens the prospect of long-term bilateral gas deals, struck by politicians not businessmen, with plenty of room for murky intermediary companies, convenient side payments, sinecures and the like.

Such arrangements will put Russia back at the heart of national politics and decision-making in a slew of countries in the eastern half of the continent (already, troublingly, the case in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Croatia). Countries with frosty political relations with the Kremlin will find that their voters and businesses pay a lot more for gas. Those prepared to hum a different tune will get a better deal.

The same is happening in hard security. Western credibility is ebbing. Ukraine has been abandoned. Policymakers are distracted (again) by the Middle East. Russia has launched a series of provocations to test NATO, and has noted the unimpressive results. The alliance does what it can, but not what it must.

The most likely outcome, to paraphrase Thomas Eliot, is that the West ends not with a bang but with

a whimper. NATO and the EU become steadily more dilute. We will have to get used to a world in which Russia is centre-stage in regional and European security arrangements.

It is not inevitable, yet. Perhaps the West will get its act together. We could see a serious row with Russia over energy, in which the EU tries to bring Gazprom to heel, and the Kremlin responds by cutting one or more of the four east-west transit pipelines. In the long run, Europe could survive without Russian gas: it is a lot bigger and richer than Russia, and can find alternative energy elsewhere. True, it would mean recession, unemployment and hardship for a few years; voters and politicians have little appetite for that. But you never know

In security, NATO could yet get serious in the defence of Baltic States. But that too requires a willingness to accept risk. Suppose Russia terms the deployment of a rapid reaction force to the Baltic 'provocative' and Western governments politely tell Vladimir Putin to mind his own business. The Kremlin then puts its forces on alert. The West does the same.

Here a nasty hole appears in Western credibility. Russia relies heavily on nuclear weapons at an early stage in any potential conflict, and regularly rehearses their use. The West hates thinking about this. In a crisis would Barack Obama, the apostle of the nuclear 'global zero' in nuclear weapons, really agree to deploy his country's Europe-based tactical nuclear warheads from their bunkers in the Dutch countryside? Probably not.

If the increasingly reckless Putin rattles his nuclear sabre, the most likely response is that the West loses its nerve and backs down. That would mean no bangs, but a humiliating collapse of confidence in NATO – call it a nuclear whimper. ■

**EUROPE'S REACTION TO
RUSSIA'S RECENT ACTIONS
OPENS A NEW ERA, IN WHICH
COUNTRIES STOP THINKING
ABOUT THE WIDER INTEREST,
ABANDON THE NOW-TOOTHLESS
RULES, AND FIND THE BEST
TERMS THEY CAN WITH RUSSIA**

On the Edge of Recession

Signs of Russia's economic problems appeared long before the annexation of Crimea or the war in the Donbas region in Ukraine. The country's previous growth model, in which profits from oil and gas sales were funnelled into the consumer economy, petered out around the time Vladimir Putin returned to the presidency in 2012. But Mr. Putin in effect rejected a new model, based on innovation and investment, because of its troublesome political implications.

This state-imposed stagnation is made much worse by the combined effect of the West's sanctions, a lack of access to financing, capital flight and a climate of uncertainty, which is locking Russia into a sustained period of near-zero growth. The economic spillover of the Ukraine crisis reveals "the downside of state capitalism", says Alexander Kliment of Eurasia Group, a think-tank. When things are going well, he says, the power of the market helps strengthen the state. But when the state starts to have problems with the outside world, the economy suffers—dramatically.

Foreign firms such as Blackstone, a private-equity group, and Adobe, a software maker, are leaving Russia. The rouble continues to depreciate. On September 30th reports of possible controls on capital outflows pushed it to 39.7 against the dollar, a record low.

Alexei Kudrin, a former finance minister, warns that growth may be one percentage point lower in each of the next three years. "We will be balancing on the edge of recession all the time," he said at a gathering of investors. Mr. Putin is betting that he can do enough to shield his core electorate—state workers and inhabitants of provincial cities—from the effects of economic slowdown, while raising the costs for the elite of turning against the system, says Mr. Kliment. The Kremlin will blame the West for its hardship and prioritise spending on salaries, defence and other parts of the state sector. Military spending alone will reach 4% of GDP in 2015, an increase of more than USD 80 billion from this year.

Gor Sechin (right) is calling in a favour



Last month the Russian government unveiled a new budget for 2015-17 based on a number of assumptions that seem unrealistically optimistic: inflation of 6% (several analysts put it closer to 8%), GDP growth at 1.2% (the World Bank's most optimistic scenario puts growth next year at 0.3%) and a global oil price of USD 100 a barrel (prices fell below USD 95 a barrel this month and further decreases are all too plausible). Studies by the Economic Expert Group, a Russian consultancy, show that a USD 1 drop in the oil price per barrel leads to a loss of USD 2.3 billion in budget revenue. Because oil and gas make up around half of government income, the Kremlin's ability to buy itself social and political stability is at stake.

The risk is of a cycle of low or zero growth, high inflation and rouble devaluation. All told, sanctions "dramatically accelerated the worst-case scenario," says Natalia Orlova of Alfa Bank. With less money to go around, a geopolitical standoff with the West gives momentum to those voices surrounding Mr. Putin who favour state-led consolidation. The country's political and business elite is finding itself in a position of "more demand for less money", says Ms. Orlova. The impulse to control resources, she adds, is not based on the desire to "allocate this money more efficiently, but to make sure it goes to a certain circle of companies and banks".

The demands of national security are a convenient excuse for sidelining critical voices. A new law limiting foreign ownership of media companies will in effect see the dismantlement of the Russian edition of *Forbes*, an American weekly, and *Vedomosti*, a daily part-owned by foreigners. National security has become "a universal way to push through all sorts of stupidity", says Tatiana Lysova, *Vedomosti's* editor.

Greed masquerading as patriotic duty may also explain the troubles of Vladimir Yevtushenkov, the billionaire boss of Sistema, a holding company, who now finds himself under house arrest. Igor Sechin, a longtime Putin confidant, who is in charge of Rosneft, a state-owned oil giant, is said to covet Mr. Yevtushenkov's oil company, Bashneft, as a way of shoring up declining production at Rosneft.

Western sanctions are making it difficult for Rosneft to pay off its looming debts and finance new investment, and export controls have largely cut it off from the technology it needs to drill in the Arctic. With prosecutors calling for Bashneft to be handed back to the state, the prospect of a campaign for nationalisation is perhaps not far off. Russia may finally settle on a new economic model—but not one that would offer much prospect for revived growth in the foreseeable future. ■

A Plea for Change

Transition from oligarch economy to EU membership for Ukraine

The economic system in Ukraine today is very fragile. It faces several challenges and threats. This is very much the results of more than 20 years of bad economic policies and inadequate institutions introduced in the country during what we call “the first transition” which was supposed to bring about a market economy and liberal democracy, but moved Ukraine from a planned economy to an oligarch type of economy instead.

This was caused by a number of factors: the lack of a strategy in the 1990s and 2000s, which would give Ukraine the prospect of EU membership along with other Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC); strong connection with Russia, which dominated the economy and politics of the country with advantages for Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs only; uncontrolled and ideologically biased implementation of a transition strategy from planned economy towards market economy, which was wildly ruled by a handful of people in dominant position from former nomenclature and business; and the lack of social cohesion which would boost unity among all people in the country.

THE FIRST TRANSITION: FROM PLANNED ECONOMY TO THE OLIGARCH SYSTEM

The social cost of this “first transition” in the past 20 years was huge in terms of poverty, inequality, life expectancy migration and reduction of living standards. One of the most telling variables that reflect it well is the demographic trend. Ukrainian population has declined dramatically from over 51 to less than 46 million people in two decades, a phenomenon never observed in a country in time of peace.

The most important economic changes and institutional transformations which characterized the 1990s in Ukraine were privatization of state assets and distribution of property rights (a key institutional

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change that occurs in general in transition to market economy). Privatization in Ukraine turned political groups into clans with opposite economic interests, fighting for accumulation of assets rather than for ideal models of privatization and ideas for political and economic change.

The practice of market rules was not known in most of Former Soviet Republics (FSR), including Ukraine. Therefore, the benefits of privatization went only to people and agents who had more information and strategic positions. These included former nomenclature, oligarchs, those involved in the oil business, the mafia etc. Property rights were not simply acquired through legal and normal procedures. Clans, organizations, families and oligarchs fought with each other for more individual rights and specific benefits. Eventually, mass privatization failed to serve the idea of distribution of property rights to everyone in pursuit of economic democracy.

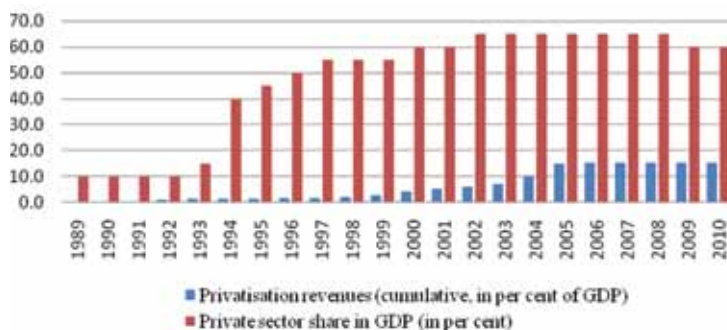
The vacuum of power was lethal in terms of the miss-distribution of property rights. The lack of fair, efficient and transparent bureaucracy was one of the major problems. It failed to ensure a fair privatization process, but allowed it to slip into chaos and, given the lack of anti-trust organizations, to result in the concentration of power in the hands of few officials inherited from the Soviet regime.

Private sector accounts for around 60% of GDP in Ukraine today (compared to the average of 75% in EU member-states and 70% in NMSs). According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Ukraine received just a small fraction of the worth of assets actually privatized in revenues from privatization. In Poland, this share accounted for about 30-50% of GDP in the 1990s, the years of privatization the years of privatization in the 1990s (see **Ukraine: privatization and private sector, % of GDP**).

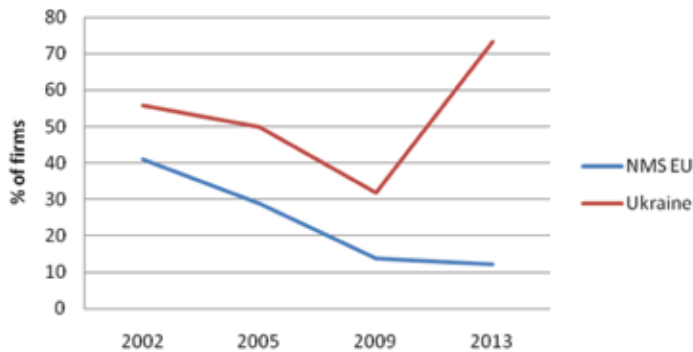
The chaos and the vacuum created during the “first transition” in Ukraine were deeper than in other CEECs, and it lasted through all the three phases of transition and of privatization listed above. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, Ukraine not only was giving up the planned system, but it was obtaining its national independence for the first time. Secondly, a handful of people concentrated political power and monopolized national assets in their hands. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, EU membership option was not considered viable at the beginning at all. Instead, Russian influence was still predominant and economic strategy that was put in place was a typical “post-soviet” political-economy strategy where political elites become oligarchs and rule the country directly or indirectly.

In 1989, Russia counted for **33%** of Polish imports and **28%** of exports. Today, Germany has replaced it, counting for **38%** of Polish exports and **27%** of imports. In 2007, a few years after Poland joined the EU in 2004, only **5%** of Polish imports came from Russia, and **2.6%** of Polish exports headed there. This pattern is similar to other CEECs

Ukraine: privatization and private sector, % of GDP



Informal payments to public officials (% of firms)



THE RISE OF TYCOON CLANS

The oligarchic system in Ukraine began to be formed immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it was finally established firmly in the second half of the 1990s, during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma. The three main oligarch clans that emerged to dominate the Kuchma's presidency represented the main regional clans of Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk. They had also dominated and ruled Ukraine in the Soviet time. In a country with weak financial and economic institutions, these clans easily took control over many former state-owned enterprises, buying and privatizing national assets at the low prices. Subsequently, the new institutional framework in Ukraine was shaped to fit their preferences and interests. A situation where prices were not set by the market but were subject to the interests of dominant groups soon became a reality. As a result, the whole economy is reckless, production is inefficient and obsolete, markets are monopolized and jeopardized. Markets are controlled by few people, and are far from being competitive or fair. So, Ukraine's private sector today has a lot of obstacles and has limited impact on abstract mechanisms of market economy, such as regulation of the demand/supply balance. Inequality has increased dramatically, while social mechanisms of income distribution are completely absent. This has aggravated regional differences and political fragmentation, further weakening social cohesion of the country and creating threats to its unity.

The lack of an efficient legal and institutional framework that could prevent this distorted informal behaviour, resulted in corruption that emerged furiously in the 1990s and accompanied Ukraine in the past

two decades. It is a necessary component of the oligarch system. This level of corruption also underscores a very low level of civiness and social capital (as described by Robert Putnam, an American political scientist), i.e. low participation of civil society in the political and economic system.

In 2010, Ukraine ranked 134 out of 177 countries measured. In 2013, it dropped to 144 out of 177. Increasing perception of corruption was not the only issue. Resources wasted by companies in some former Communist economies (NMSs and Ukraine) on bribes to public officials for getting "things done" were another problem (see **Informal payments to public officials**). In Ukraine, corruption increased dramatically after 2009, while in NMS, affected by EU conditionality and the need to get EU funds, corruption decreased constantly, before and after enlargement in 2004/2007. The reasons why corruption is still growing in Ukraine after 2009 may be due to three factors: the return of ex-President Viktor Yanukovich and his clan to power, in 2010, with a consolidated system of informal payment and the vicious circle between business and politics, oligarchs and politicians; the crisis which made business more difficult, and economic relations more reliant on informal payments rather than the rule of law; and the weakening of Ukraine's EU membership prospect during the rule of the Yanukovich regime, which contributed to loosened conditionality and reduced transparency.

FDI AND TRADE: NEW HOPES FOR A "SECOND TRANSITION" TOWARDS THE EU

The Ukrainian "first transition", or better to say, the abandonment of the planned system, did not follow a

stable transformation path from the planned economy as the defined point A to the market economy as an undefined point B. On the contrary, it had been unstable from the very beginning: institutional reforms were delayed, although the market was introduced suddenly and prices were liberalized immediately, and privatization was launched. It should be also clear that the transition in Ukraine was a complete failure for the economy, although several economists have argued for the opposite.

From the very beginning, the Ukrainian transition had been char-

UKRAINE NOW NEEDS A RADICAL CHANGE BASED ON THREE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: THE GOAL OF EU MEMBERSHIP, THE REMOVAL OF OLIGARCHS FROM POLITICS, AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE FROM RUSSIA

acterized by two important criteria which made transformation unstable and uncertain: the choice of possible EU membership on the one hand, and strong relations with Russia which influenced and de facto limited Ukrainian independence from the very beginning. By contrast to Ukraine, all CEECs had from the very beginning chosen to be part of the EU, and advanced their candidacy to the EU immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It took Ukraine much longer, not until the Orange Revolution of 2004-2005 at least, to make its steps towards EU accession. However, even after the Orange Revolution the Ukrainian government and parliament failed to bring about real steps for Ukraine's EU integration because of "internal feuds" and clan conflicts. When Viktor Yanukovich and his clan won presidential election in 2010, the country's vector of partnership was in favor of Russia.

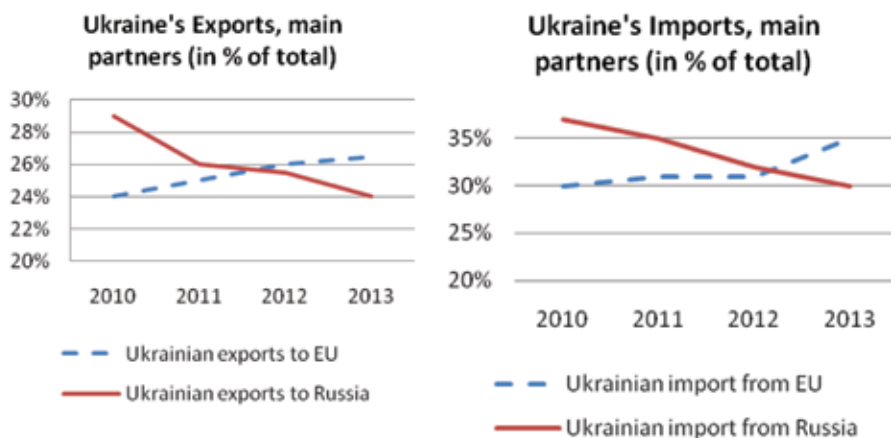
BENEFITS OF EU MEMBERSHIP

Economically, EU membership would have been a guarantee for foreign entrepreneurs encouraging them to move their capitals and start businesses in Ukraine. As it happened in other CEECs, in particular during the process of accession preceding actual mem-

In 1990, Poland and Ukraine had similar initial conditions, measured as GDP both per capita and in absolute terms. After the 1989-1992 recession, Poland saw growth that allowed it to outrun Ukraine.

20 years later,

Poland saw its GDP in absolute terms and purchasing power of income grow while Ukraine lagged behind in both aspects



bership in the 1990s and 2000s, huge flow of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) could have come to Ukraine. Without it, Ukraine lacks new capitals and technological assistance which would be useful to restructure its 1970s obsolete production chain. With the prospect of EU membership, Ukraine would have gotten advantages not only in terms of capital and innovation, but also in terms of political stabilization, freedom from oppressive and monopolistic oligarch capitals, safer economical environment, fair contractual guarantee for investors, lower country risk, and secure economic relations.

In the 1990s and 2000s, many multinationals invested heavily in CEECs, helping them build competitive advantage based on lower labor costs, skilled labor force and marketing positioning. All this can be perfectly replicated in Ukraine. FDI inflow to Ukraine could increase its trade flow with the EU. These two factors, FDI and international trade, could be the key factors to spur further development of the Ukrainian economy. Still, opinions vary on this. Some economists argue that FDI boost commercial deficit because foreign investors import capital goods, technology and other services from their own country in massive amounts. Moreover, FDI and trade could increase inequality within the country since new investments would use skilled labor and pay differentials would increase. However, despite these potential threats, in this particular case of Ukraine with its oligarch-dominated economy, strong connections to distorted trade with Russia, domination of obsolete in-

dustrial goods and natural resources, integration into the European economic system (followed by the inflow of FDI and intensification of international trade) would be a better choice for the country.

In the past years, FDI from the EU to Ukraine have increased, exceeding those from Russia or any other country. This is a good signal for future relations between the EU and Ukraine (**see Volume of FDI in Ukraine**). Paradoxically, about 30% of total FDI come to Ukraine from Cyprus. This is due to the particularly easy tax policy applied to foreign capitals in the Cyprus jurisdiction. Most of the Cyprus FDI in Ukraine are investments from oligarchs

THE KEY TO CHANGING POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE COUNTRY STRONGLY DEPENDS ON THE PROSPECT OF POLITICIANS AND OLIGARCHS FEELING WATCHED, CONTROLLED AND DISMISSED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY IF NECESSARY

who first go to Cyprus to avoid taxes and to be "cleaned" from dirty business, and then return part of this capital to Ukraine as FDI with the possibility to gain further profits there. However, despite this "fake" FDI from Cyprus, the investment position of Europe is still ahead the Russian one.

Similarly to CEECs, Ukraine would see its trade pattern change as a result of integration with the EU system. Today, it is mainly ori-

ented at Russia. Poland, now the biggest economy in Central and Eastern Europe, offers a good example of a similar pattern changed.

Therefore, the main challenge Ukraine is facing today, on the verge of its "second transition" as far as trade and changes in production are concerned, will once again involve the role of oligarchs. It is twice more difficult than what CEECs had to go through for two reasons: it requires political change, and politics, as said above, is controlled by oligarchs. Moreover, the big companies that need to change the structures of their production and orientation are owned by these same oligarchs who dominate politics and who would thus be the ones in charge of changing the rules. This vicious circle could only break under strong pressure of civil society that should influence both further changes in the upcoming parliamentary elections, and the political agenda of the current President who was elected thanks to the support of EuroMaidan protesters.

Economically, the new Ukrainian model will involve the possibility to export products that have higher technological component and added value during its "second transition" towards the EU. Moreover, EU membership requires continuous investments in innovation and organization to ensure the ability to compete with old European firms. For Ukraine, this also means the restructuring of the agricultural sector which has high employment (around 18-20% of the workforce) but lower productivity (the agricultural sector generates a mere 8-9% of GDP). In addition to that, big former state-owned enterprises will have to go through restructuring and attract foreign capital by forming joint ventures to innovate and foster productivity.

The EU will play the main role in the import-export flow with Ukraine, and the trade pattern is slowly changing already (**see Ukrainian exports and imports: main partners**). So far, the EU has removed most of its tariffs for Ukraine exports, in order to favour Ukrainian business during the shock which is been caused by the military and trade conflicts with Russia in the frame-

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article

work of the Eastern Partnership programme between the EU and Ukraine. At the same time Ukraine found new commercial partners in China, Turkey and Egypt (according to Ukraine's State Statistics Committee, Ukrainian exports to these countries has grown from 11% in 2011 to 17% today).

POLICY SUGGESTIONS

This analysis is rooted in political economy and draws conclusion and lessons which are based on the three factors that caused the failure of the Ukrainian economy in the period of the first transition. In order to boost its economic development, Ukraine now needs a radical change based on three strategic objectives: the goal of EU membership, the removal of oligarchs from politics, and economic independence from Russia.

The EU membership should be a priority mostly for strategic reasons, not purely economic. Such a prospect would break the interdependent "strategic policy triangle" so far followed by the Ukrainian ruling class and composed of the three pillars: non-EU membership, dependence on Russia, and rules of the oligarchy. It would serve as an important conditionality against oligarch interests and corruption, help restructure the economy, particularly that of Eastern Ukraine dominated by obsolete heavy industry where the interest of oligarchs are intertwined with those of Russia; and integrate Ukraine's economy into the European space, rather than into Russia's, introducing innovation and technological progress, and pushing the country towards a higher technological frontier and a demand-driven growth.

Russia used to be Ukraine's main commercial partner, both in imports and in exports. The "second transition" should change this: trade with the EU will bring higher added value and boost Ukrainian productivity since the European market is more dynamic and more advanced than that of Russia. However, this means that Ukraine will have to restructure most of its firms, especially those located in the East. The latter will have to switch their production towards cleaner and more sustainable forms, and become more technologically advanced. The change will require new skills, and

will bring about higher productivity gains, since new production would be more capital intensive and equipped with more advanced technology. As seen in Poland, this is difficult but not impossible to do.

However, policy makers need to be careful and take into account international constraints: trade deficit should be kept under control in order to avoid further devaluation of the hryvnia. It is a priority to use national resources to import capitals and machinery rather than consumption goods. Moreover, a devaluated hryvnia could benefit Ukrainian exports and could protect, for a while, a new infant industry within a framework of an import substitution strategy similar to the ones used in many East Asian countries during their development stages.

Top 50 oligarchs in Ukraine own almost

46%

of its wealth worth USD

62.7bn.

Russia follows with 16% of its GDP worth USD 251.3bn. In the USA, the wealth in the hands of the richest 50 people is much higher in absolute terms, worth

USD

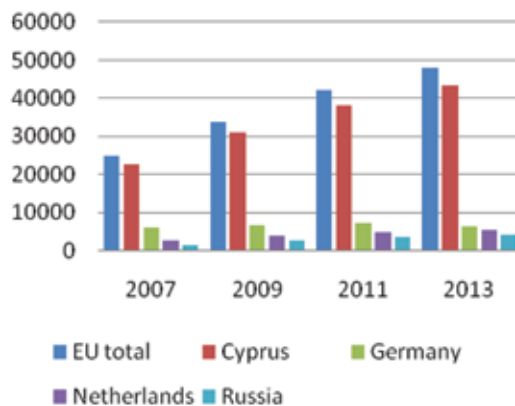
666.3bn.

However, it constitutes only

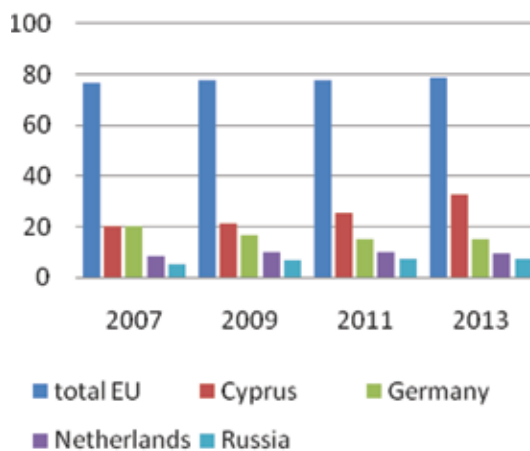
4%

of America's GDP

Volume of FDI in Ukraine (mln.USD)



Volume of FDI in Ukraine (in % of total)



Possible negative effects of stronger EU competition and more efficient EU firms on inequality and unemployment (resulting from closing down and bankruptcies of inefficient Ukrainian companies) caused by the entrance of EU firms in Ukraine could be coped with through social institutions that guarantee minimum wages for unskilled workers and subsidies for big yet obsolete Ukrainian enterprises. Even if less efficient compared to their European competitors, these enterprises could still value added and absorb large part of employment, hence they could deserve temporary protection. Europe would easily accept a transition phase for Ukraine where these subsidies in the forms of state aid still persist.

Another crucial element in Ukraine's new "second transition" will be the role of FDI, mostly from the EU. It could contribute to the breaking of the oligarch-dominated system, and guarantee the distribution of growth and social benefits of development that would boost social cohesion and political unity.

Meanwhile, remaining distant from the EU and delaying the beginning of the membership process indefinitely would result in a Ukraine that stays closer to Russia and is subject to the oligarch economy and rules. Today, the approach of the new Ukrainian government and President seems to have changed towards EU membership.

However, the crucial role in this "second transition" should be played by the civil society which strongly emerged during the protests between November 2013 and February 2014. The radical change, key to changing political economy of the country, strongly depends on the prospect of politicians and oligarchs feeling watched, controlled and dismissed by the civil society if necessary. This political game, in turn, will depend very much on the level of social capital and trust that it is possible to find in society, as many economists have already argued. Social capital is weak in Ukraine, as in other former Soviet countries. However, it is not unchangeable, but can be reproduced and increased. This occurred in Ukraine during the mass protests which may have helped "glue the society together", at least in most of the country. ■

Roger Myerson:

"Many arguments against decentralisation are based on a misconception of what it means"

The Ukrainian Week speaks to Roger Myerson, an Economics Nobel laureate, about the essence and consequences of decentralisation and other important reforms that Ukraine needs

Interviewed
by Lyubomyr
Shavalyuk

U.W: Americans often see Ukraine as a third world country. What made you interested in Ukraine, why did you start to study its socio-economic problems?

First of all, Ukraine is a country of the former Soviet world, located between Europe and Russia. We appreciate its importance.

I learned about the problems of the Ukrainian Constitution seven years ago. As an economist and a theorist, I'm interested in understanding questions such as what makes a good society – that's the big question and the value of democracy for a good society is important. When a country becomes more democratic but still suffers frustration because democracy does not seem to perform well, is it possible that the structure of democracy matters?

After all, democracy is saying that the rules by which we choose our leaders are important. As a game theorist, I study rules, so I know a few countries, where the rules seem as terribly badly designed as in Ukraine. So I talked a bit about the unique problems of the Constitution of Ukraine. If I'm right, then it is a chance to do something to help people and if I'm wrong, people will tell me I'm wrong and then I'll learn better the question of what makes a difference in a democracy, how democracy can succeed. So that is my intellectual reasoning.

Can I say one other thing; my ancestors are not from Ukraine, but from other areas: Lithuania, Romania, Poland. The end of the Polish Republic in the 1790s was

very important in the life of my ancestors. Perhaps my family would still be in Europe if that had not happened, and would not have moved to America if they had not been absorbed into the Russian Empire. The fall of the Polish Republic was ultimately a question of constitutionalism – it was a constitution that was too decentralised. This is not exactly the same, but I would argue, as one who studies these things, that a constitution can be too centralised or too decentralised; either way, a nation can become weak from too much centralisation or too much decentralisation.

A country has to find the right balance. Today, 220 years later, a great country in Europe is again being threatened by the possibility of a partition by Russia, because of the constitutional questions that are at the centre. I am not a citizen of Ukraine, but I feel deeply, emotionally involved and I do care. So I do want to raise the question.

U.W: What do you propose? What is the essence of decentralization?

When the President of Russia, who was sponsoring subversive separatists in Ukraine, announced that he felt that Ukraine should decentralise (there is no difference between federalisation and decentralisation in the West – Ed.), obviously, this could, in people's minds, become a reason not to decentralise. So Tymofiy Mylovanov and I felt it was important that foreigners and academics who are responsible, including some in Russia, but also in Europe,



Ukraine and America, should testify to the people of Ukraine, that just because the President of Russia says that Ukraine should decentralise, that doesn't mean that some form of decentralisation would not be a good idea.

Many people said that with decentralisation, we will have all these problems, but that results from bad ways of designing decentralisation. One way to decentralize it is to simply allow raion and oblast councils to choose their own head of executive and give them a budget between the municipalities, raions and oblasts; they should have a combined budget that adds up to somewhere less than half, but more than a third of total public spending (20% in 2013 – Ed.). So, the national government still has the majority of the finance flow. But it should have no power to veto projects initiated by local governments. These should of course act under national law: if they violate the law, they can be prosecuted in the court, then found guilty, and so on.

Our initiative was to try to help raise the question of decentralisation in Ukraine. And it has been raised in Ukraine, today. I don't know whether we helped at all, but the media and others, like your publication, probably did most of the work in Ukraine. If we have



PHOTO BY UKRINFORM

contributed in any way, and the fact that respectable, respected professors of economics and political science in Europe, America, Russia and Ukraine were all willing to say that there are good reasons for well-designed decentralisation of power to be considered by Ukraine now, it was worth every effort I put in.

For a broader support for discussion about reform, Tymofiy is organising VoxUkraine. I think that is also going to be part of a general attempt to bring trained scholarly analysis to questions of reform, including decentralisation. VoxUkraine is really continuing the work on important issues that Tymofiy and I started with our initiative.

U.W: Opponents of decentralisation feel that it is necessary to focus funds in the centre, in order to implement projects of national importance. For example, Ukraine has very bad roads, even though its geographic position justifies the construction of a net of highways. Are such projects possible without centralized finance?

That's ridiculous. Long-distance roads should be coordinated from the national level. Local roads are often much better

BIO **Roger Bruce Myerson** is an American economist, professor at the University of Chicago, laureate of the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2007 for "having laid the foundations of mechanism design theory". He was born in 1951 in Boston. He studied at Harvard University, where he received his Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and PhD. Myerson was a professor of economics at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Illinois, for an extended period of time, where he conducted much of his Nobel-winning research

run by local authorities responsive to the voters who know where they actually want to travel. In the United States, there is an interstate highway system that is managed by the national government, but all other roads are handled by state or local governments. Tax money from gasoline is shared. The national government distributes some money to the states for these purposes, but the actual administration, construction and repair of the roads, is typically done by the towns. If you have a hole in the middle of the road, you want to phone your mayor's office to get the road filled, not the President in Kyiv.

Many arguments against decentralisation are based on a misconception of what decentralisation means. If someone thinks that it means all public spending is administered by the municipalities, then of course, that's a terrible idea. Good decentralisation would involve probably about 60% of the public spending being done by the national government on the military, long-distance highways, social welfare programmes, the regulation of banks, and so on. Primary schools, however, could be funded by the municipalities or raion authorities.

When parents do not like what the school is doing, they might want to be able to call a local government, not the national one, and know that their votes count a lot more in local voting. This is a question of balance.

In Poland, the national government is the most important one. Then come the municipalities and the oblast levels in the hierarchy of importance of spending. Austria may have it the other way round, with the national government coming first, followed by the province or oblast level, and the municipality being the last one with about 10% of public spending left to it to manage. Ukraine can choose a different option, but it is not going to be all local.

U.W: Can decentralisation serve as an effective anti-corruption tool?

No one really knows the answer to the question of whether it is easier for a foreign head of state who wants to corrupt your politics to do it in a centralized or decentralized state. I would argue that centralization makes it easier because he just has to corrupt one leader. And Ukraine has some experience of this. But it could be even worse, when he can go round and bribe every mayor and every governor. I think it is harder to bribe every mayor and every governor. But do I have any proof? No, it's just logic.

U.W: You have been in Kyiv for several days. Do you have the impression that the current Ukrainian authorities are ready to make reforms, including decentralisation?

At the YES (Yalta European Strategy) Ukraine Conference, I heard many speeches and when talking about reform, every politician I heard, spoke very persuasive, articulated and good arguments for reform, and seemed to understand the urgency and importance of it. On the other hand, since they all said this, why hasn't the reform happened? At least some of them are good at talking it, but not necessarily doing it. I'm hopeful, but I know we must watch.

As far as civil society is concerned, I sense a deep patriotism, deep optimism about the future of this country. I was very struck by this. ■

Mykhailo Koval: “Thank the army”

Ex-Minister of Defence shares his views on the recent developments in Eastern Ukraine with *The Ukrainian Week*



PHOTO BY ANDRIY LOMAKA

Interviewed
by Bohdan
Butkevych

U.W.: How efficient are the strategy and tactics of the Ukrainian army in this conflict?

What troubles me the most is that people who have not served a single day in the army are now trying to answer this question in TV programmes. We are indeed facing a war of a new generation which started with a powerful special operation planned by Russia's Chief Intelligence Directorate and carried out by the 45th airborne *spetsnaz* regiment in Crimea and later in the Donbas. All of this was supported by the fifth column, likewise created in advance. Moreover, the situation in Ukraine has been persistently destabilized by Russia since late 2013. Moscow's main efficient step at the first stage of the conflict was not so much the deployment of Russian military units in Ukraine, but arming local separatists whom Russia reinforced using fitting contingents, such as prisoners who were

promised an amnesty for participation in the military conflict in Ukraine. In general, a thorough analysis of the situation should involve a discussion of the state of Ukraine's Armed Forces in the past years. Look at who was in charge – direct agents of Russia's Chief Intelligence Directorate or simply bribe-takers who are now being investigated by the Prosecutor's Office.

I state with confidence that Ukraine's Armed Forces were being purposefully destroyed in the past years. The best proof of this is the situation in Eastern Ukraine, or rather the nearly complete absence of Ukrainians troops there at the beginning of military action. We had one light-armoured brigade, one airborne brigade, one tank brigade and an artillery rocket regiment in Sumy. That was all. A powerful motorized rifle division in Artemivsk and the 90th light-armoured regiment in Al-

chevsk had been dissolved; the best weapons had been sold, etc. Importantly, not only was there no task force of the Ukrainian Armed Forces there ready to fulfil military tasks, but the locals had simply become accustomed to the absence of any troops in the region. There were no military trainings or any other activities, for that matter, where people would see the Ukrainian military.

I vividly remember how Colonel Momot of the Border Guard Service, who is sadly no longer with us (Ihor Momot was killed in Luhansk Oblast in July in the shelling of Ukrainian border guards from GRAD missile launchers – Ed.), and I led Border Guard units into the territory of Luhansk Oblast in early March. We were met as enemies – people shouted that we were fascists and Banderites and tried to tear off our shoulder straps. It took us a long time to explain that we were simply Ukrainian and had come to defend our own state. I say this as a military professional: the army was like a corpse when the conflict erupted. Ihor Teniukh (Acting Defence Minister from 27 February through 25 March, 2014, the period when the “little green men” appeared in Crimea and it was subsequently annexed by Russia – Ed.) was right in estimating the size of Ukraine's battleworthy troops at around 6,000, even though he perhaps should not have gone public with this statement. Remember how Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, a Russian buffoon through whom Russia leaks its views, said back on 25 April that Russia was going to send in its troops? It did not do so only because we had managed to deploy battle-ready forces at virtually all points of possible intervention, protect Kyiv and other large cities with air defence troops, carry out training to repel the Russian aggressions, etc. In general, a big thank you is due to company and brigade commanders, as well as to ordinary soldiers who are bearing all the hardships of war. However, most of them have not received even the simple words of gratitude, not to mention awards or decorations.

U.W.: Could you tell specifically about the strategy of battle action? Was it right to use elite

paratroopers as ordinary infantry? How come the command of Ukraine's Armed Forces had no adequate reserves near Ilovaysk? Why were territorial defence battalions used as regular army units on the frontline despite the fact that they are not equipped for this?

It is hard for me to answer this question, because I am an active military man. As far as territorial defence and volunteer battalions are concerned, I have great respect for these units. However, they had to be turned into regular army units before being sent into action. They had to be given normal commanders, armoured groups, artillery, etc. The ones that exist now should be used exclusively in the rear to guard security road blocks. Volunteer battalions should be used as the basis for forming *spetsnaz* units in the army, police and the National Guard. With a sensible approach, these could be unique units – motivated, patriotic and brave.

Unfortunately, the situation in our military leadership now is such that an ignoramus teaches an ignoramus and both believe they are great experts. We need to simply follow the laws of the military science to have a battalion operate in a military way rather than stretch along the entire frontline, as was the case with our troops. We also need to have a reserve echelon of troops and so on. How can an army fight for three months without having evacuation paths and collection stations for damaged vehicles? That is why we are abandoning equipment. The truth is that we suffered colossal human losses and even bigger losses in terms of equipment. The military command lacks a strategic vision of the conflict.

U.W.: A lot is now being said about the large-scale infiltration of Ukraine's military command by direct and indirect Russian agents. The army has never carried out a purge, so the situation is still the same?

I do not have this information. I am not a counterintelligence officer. Moreover, let me repeat that I am an active serviceman and do not have the right to publicly criticize the General Staff. I can say that during the three months when the Ministry of Defence was

under my command, the General Staff was working overtime. I do not have specific data on anyone, but there are, of course, spies. However, we should not forget that Ukrainians are like scorpions – they keep stinging themselves. We are criticizing everyone left and right, failing to understand that sometimes it does more harm than good, especially now, in wartime.

Whether the top command is scared, I don't know about that, but I can tell you frankly: now, in the office of deputy Chairman of the National Defence and Security Council, I am busy doing completely meaningless stuff instead of leading at least a company on the front. But they won't let me go.

On personnel issues: Ihor Teniukh came and tackled them before doing anything else, and I am sorry to say he simply let Crimea slip into Russia's hands. Meanwhile, I had no choice whatsoever. The mobilization process did not allow me to dismiss military men, but I did fire corrupt civilians. You know, I still regret I had not entered the minister's office earlier, before Teniukh. I believe our troops had a chance to stand their ground in Crimea. We would have sunk several ferries in the Kerch Strait, installed Rapira anti-tank cannons and fired at helicopters and planes. Some would have burned; some others would not have even taken off. I believe there were enough men there prepared to execute a normal order.

I am, in general, against carrying out lustration in wartime, even though this is an unpopular notion. During a war, the military expect gratitude and should not be thinking about checks and inspections. But the counterintelligence service and the Military Prosecutor's Office should be working actively. However, I believe that in order to achieve efficiency, it would have been enough to avoid placing gendarmes at the top of the Ministry of Defence as is the case now. You cannot run these kinds of experiments – any experiments, for that matter – in the army during wartime. We have a burning need for experienced professionals who can get down to work immediately. Bring them back from the reserve if the current ones are failing. However, our military elite is, for the most part,

like the political elite – in a bad sense of the word. The same people who embezzled the army's property continue to command it.

U.W.: But you would not deny that the Armed Forces need to be fundamentally reformed, both in terms of their personnel and strategy?

A reform is indeed necessary. I conveyed my vision several times personally to the president: a small (some 150,000 men) mobile army that would be able to immediately react to any threat and allow time for mobilization if necessary. It would be based on a system of normal territorial defence, which has to be the Armed Forces' reserve, while the National Guard has to be charged with more serious tasks. Meanwhile, we should stay away from a massive rush when everyone suddenly needs the army, everyone is a great expert in army-related issues and people propose Semen Semenchenko (commander

THE SITUATION IN OUR MILITARY LEADERSHIP NOW IS SUCH THAT AN IGNORAMUS TEACHES AN IGNORAMUS AND BOTH BELIEVE THEY ARE GREAT EXPERTS

of the Donbas volunteer battalion – Ed.) for Chief of the General Staff. When things settle down a bit and there is no longer need for PR, the issue will again be forgotten. And then they will again cut to the quick, sell weapons, etc. The process must be constant: an army that is not modernized on a daily basis becomes outdated overnight. ■

BIO

Mykhailo Koval is a professional military man in the rank of colonel general. He was born in 1956 in Iziaslav, Khmelnytsky Oblast. He graduated from the Kamianets-Podilsky Higher Military Engineering Command Academy in 1979, from the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow in 1990 and from the Academy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 1997. While in combatant forces, he rose from platoon commander to chief of staff to army corps commander. In 2001-2002, he was chief of staff and the first deputy head of the Chief Directorate of the Internal Troops of Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 2002, Koval moved to the State Border Guard Service where he served as the first deputy head and director of the Personnel Department. On 25 March 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine appointed him acting Minister of Defence. Koval was dismissed from this office and instead appointed deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council on 3 July 2014. He has numerous orders and decorations.

Oleksandr Skipalsky:

"The SBU's biggest problem – a leaky top story"

Interviewed by
Bohdan Butkevych

Oleksandr Skipalsky is the man behind two extremely important elements in the Ukrainian system of state security: military counterintelligence service and intelligence. Educated in the KGB, he then worked in the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) for many years and is a professional counterintelligence officer. Skipalsky witnessed both the emergence of modern Ukraine and its special services, and their recent decay. *The Ukrainian Week* talks to Oleksandr Skipalsky about the need to purge the SBU and possible instruments for this.

U.W.: How do you assess the SBU's activities in the past six months? Efficiency and purging – are they there?

There have been no fundamental changes. We need to understand that a facelift, which is now being undertaken to create an appearance of reform, will not be enough. The special service has been formed based on the principle of personal devotion, rather than patriotism and professionalism, for way too long. Starting from 1993-94, SBU officers have not been educated in the spirit of allegiance to the Ukrainian state. Patriotism has been perceived simply as an empty word. As a result, we have a structure permeated with non-professionalism and corruption, and anti-Ukrainian, pro-Russian, thievish and amoral people. Our state has been left unattended and underdeveloped while the wealth has been flowing to oligarchic clans. No president has paid due attention to the development of special services. The result is now easy to see. The SBU has been flooded with haughty mediocrity which



PHOTO BY ANDRIY LOMAKIN

can only generate more mediocrity. The reform of it must be profound.

U.W.: Do you mean something like they did in the Czech Republic, where everyone was dismissed and then absolutely new people were hired?

The Czech did it in a less painful way, because they had the great Václav Havel for president and peace at the beginning of the reform. We irrevocably wasted time suitable for this method 20 years ago. Most importantly, the Czech success is impossible to replicate at the time of war and with the leadership of the special services, including the Security Service of Ukraine, that we have now.

U.W.: Many people say that you personally dislike Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, the current SBU chief. Some claim that the Russians hate him for allegedly allowing Americans access to classified documents of Ukraine's Security Service in 2008. What can you say about public detentions and deportations of Russian agents in 2009, declassifying documents on the activities of Soviet special services, etc.?

This will be my personal opinion – and please take it for what it is. The only thing I disagree about is “personal dislike”. I have never had and, I am sure, will never have personal relationships with Mr. Nalyvaichenko. We have different categories and criteria for evaluating events and people. If the lives of citizens and the future of Ukraine did not depend on the office he is now holding for the second time, you would never hear my assessment and commentaries.

We met on the day when I was appointed SBU chief in Donetsk Oblast in 2006. Unfortunately, our acquaintance began with Nalyvaichenko trying to manipulate the choice of transport for my presentation. He has good training in intelligence matters; he graduated from the Russian Academy of the Foreign Intelligence Service. On the recommendation and at the request of the commanders of the Russian special service, he was admitted to the consular department of Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and posted to Finland and the USA. There, he made an illus-

trious career, rapidly rising from a regular consul to deputy Foreign Affairs Minister. When the seasoned Foreign Affairs Minister Borys Tarasiuk sorted out the situation, he dispatched Nalyvaichenko as an ambassador to Belarus, but the latter exploited his familial connections to [ex-president of Ukraine] Viktor Yushchenko and became First Deputy Chief of Ukraine's Security Service. When he just entered his SBU office, I liked his patriotic rhetoric about “us Ukrainians”, his training in the intelligence academy and his natural talent for apt reporting and self-promotion. However, when it got to deep serious processes, he showed a totally different style. I am talking here primarily about personnel decisions: selection, checking and training of people. Nalyvaichenko's criteria in hiring people were based on personal loyalty and interests, and Ukraine was losing its security potential in every segment. Remember Andriy Kyslinsky and Valeriy Khoroshkovsky, facilitating a split between Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko, for instance. Most importantly, why did Mr. Nalyvaichenko as SBU Chief never make a statement about the threat of the Donetsk clan coming to power in 2009-2010? Also, remember the recent scandal in Dnipropetrovsk involving Heorhiy Yaroshenko, the SBU's “supervisor” and Nalyvaichenko's man (In June 2014, Sviatoslav Oliynyk, Deputy Head of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Administration, told the media that Kyiv Council deputy Hryhoriy Yaroshenko arrived at Dnipropetrovsk, convened local businessmen and told them that he would be the new “supervisor” from the SBU from Southern Ukraine, meaning that he would now collect kickbacks from them. SBU Chief Valentyn Nalyvaichenko and Vitaliy Klitschko, head of the UDAR party of which Yaroshenko is a member, denied allegations of their connection to this. A criminal case was reportedly opened for fraud but no results are yet known – Ed.)? There are many more cases of this kind – security specialists discuss many more informally.

U.W.: How come the SBU, of all agencies, was the main locomotive of separatism in the Donbas?

BIO
Oleksandr Skipalsky was born in 1945 in Vyzhiv, a village in Volyn Oblast. He graduated from the Moscow Higher Border Guard Academy in 1968 and the Department for Counterintelligence in the Higher School of the KGB in 1975. Skipalsky served in the Far East, including the Kuril Islands. He has lived in Ukraine since 1987. In 1991, Skipalsky headed the Directorate of Military Counterintelligence in the SBU, later the Chief Intelligence Directorate in the Ministry of Defence. He was an MP in 1994-98, deputy chief of the SBU in 1997, Deputy Minister for Emergency, chief of the security service for Viktor Yushchenko as candidate for presidency in 2004 and deputy chief of the SBU in May-October 2007

The reason is that former KGB officers who stayed in Ukraine and kept their jobs did not counteract but, on the contrary, fostered anti-Ukrainian sentiments and the activities of Russian special services. Look at the trio that fanned the flames of anti-Ukrainian hysteria in Eastern Ukraine after Viktor Yanukovich's flight from the country – MPs Oleksandr Yefremov and Valeriy Holenko, and Oleksandr Tretiak, ex-chief of the SBU Directorate in Luhansk Oblast. Tretiak personally supervised the transportation of weapons to the local SBU office in April and later the seizure of the building. It was a sort of revenge to Kyiv for his dismissal from office on March 13. After his dismissal, he worked as counsellor to Donetsk Oblast Governor Serhiy Taruta (according to the sources of *The Ukrainian Week*, Taruta is in fairly friendly relationships with Nalyvaichenko – Ed.)

U.W.: Have there been any positive changes recently?

The only changes that I notice are in the Counterintelligence Department which is starting to stand on its own feet. You need to understand that natural transformations are taking place in the country and the level of patriotism is rising. The same applies, in spite of everything, to the SBU. You can't stop a train moving in full speed. Similarly, no one, including agents, will be able to stop changes because the personnel has a lot more freedom now in making their choice – whether to go down the path of corruption or not. Under Yanukovich, they simply did not have this choice. Im-

“THE SBU HAS TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO A TOOL TO PROTECT LAW AND SECURITY. IT IS NOT IMPORTANT WHOM IT CATCHES RED-HANDED – EVEN IF IT IS A PRESIDENT”

portantly, the leadership of the country has finally listened to us, even though we have been screaming about this since March. It has finally begun to restore military counterintelligence. Essentially, this is like SMERSH (Special Methods of Spy Detection, an um- »

brella name for three independent counterintelligence services in the Soviet Red Army established in 1942. The services fulfilled a number of tasks, including counterintelligence and counterterrorism, protection of the frontline from the penetration of the enemy and anti-Soviet elements, investigation of traitors and deserters, and checking of the military personnel returning from captivity – **Ed.**). Naturally, they immediately experienced a huge lack of personnel, but they are still making progress, and this is comforting. I believe that we laid a good foundation for the security system back in the 1990s. In the years when all sorts of “dealers” and “businessmen” came to power, they ruined many things – this is a fact. But the biggest problem facing both the country and the SBU is a leaky top story – inadequate leadership. The foundation is, no doubt, still there and will stand. It was for a reason that, back in Soviet times, many professional officers were from Ukraine. I believe we have huge potential and the only thing that is lacking is the political will. The SBU has to be transformed into a vehicle for the protection of law and security. And it is not important who will be caught red-handed – even if it is a president, he will have to be held responsible. In general, our special services have not looked beyond their noses in the past 10 years and have done nothing to steal the initiative from Russia on all fronts. We need to start using our internal resource correctly. For example, some say that Ihor Kolomois-kiy is simply cashing in on the war. But even if this is true, the main thing is to keep the Russian tanks away from both Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk.

U.W.: How badly is the infiltration of the SBU by enemy agents?

Here is a small fact for you. Under Yanukovich, nearly all heads of departments of the Interior and Defence Ministry (these include the police, special forces and the Army – **Ed.**) were members of Russia’s Union of Paratroopers which is headed by one of the deputies of Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu. Most of these people still hold their offices. The role the SBU played in forming the anti-Maidan, bringing the

paid thugs to Kyiv, paying cash for wrecking cars, etc. has not been exposed yet. There is no condemnation, not even moral, to say nothing of any disciplinary actions against the personnel.

Using this opportunity, I would like to appeal directly to Petro Poroshenko as the Commander in Chief. I hope he understood at the example of ex-Deputy Chief of Staff Yuriy Kosiuk that a billionaire, or anyone except professionals for that matter, cannot be in charge of a law enforcement division. It is also impossible to have an ignoramus coming up with a statement about secret arms supply deals (Yuriy Lutsenko, ex-Interior Minister and №2 of the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko, claimed shortly after the NATO summit in Wales that five NATO members agreed to supply weapons to Ukraine. None of the countries he mentioned confirmed this – **Ed.**). We have no time for games and behind-the-scenes intrigue – the country is at war. We need to urgently purge this system: this must include across-the-board attestation, filtration cen-



WE NEED TO EXAMINE EACH INDIVIDUAL BASED ON THE CRITERIA OF PROFESSIONALISM, MORAL QUALITIES, MANAGEMENT ABILITY AND EXPERIENCE

tres and commissions, reinforcement of our strongholds in Eastern Ukraine, and much more. Never mind that human rights activists are going to lament: let him raise his hand who believes we can overcome such a powerful enemy as Russia – an enemy who has become even stronger, while we have grown weaker – without these measures. Moreover, Russia is apt at dealing through indirect agents. For instance, a person may not exactly be sending encrypted messages to the Russian Chief Intelligence Directorate, but is simply led, through financial means, into actions that are beneficial to Moscow without even realizing the fact.

U.W.: So we cannot fire everyone and hire new people because of the war. But we cannot continue

operating like that, either. What do we do then? What is your recipe for purging the SBU?

First, we need to bring back from the reserve all former officers who have not stained their reputation through cooperation with the Yanukovich regime, contacts with Moscow and persecutions of democratic forces. They need to be given specific operational tasks, primarily in Eastern Ukraine. Second, we need to drastically improve the quality of personnel selection and training. Third, an independent public attestation commission must be set up and given sufficient power. It should consist of civil activists, journalists and independent specialists who will painstakingly check every professional, starting from chief commanders. You can call it “lustration”, if you will, but I personally do not like this word. What I like instead is “fundamental overhaul of special services”. This commission must include experienced people who do not do mindless sabre rattling as was the case with Viktor Yushchenko who fired 18,000 civil servants based exclusively on formal criteria. I would completely discard the idea of exhaustive lustration of former Soviet agents. It has been 23 years since the breakup of the USSR, which is an entire epoch, and much more harm is now being done by turncoats with false rhetoric who have never been KGB agents. Moreover, all respective documents were moved to Moscow a long time ago and can now only be purchased provided that Moscow agrees to sell them.

I personally know many former secret KGB agents but reveal this information only when a person starts working against Ukraine. We need to examine each individual based on the criteria of professionalism, moral qualities, management ability and experience. Plus, we should clearly define what qualifies as discrediting factors. We need to make sure we know the person’s sources of income. If a person is a law-abiding citizen, he will have all the documents in his briefcase, like I do, for example. If he does not, it changes the whole situation. We need to also use assistance from foreign special services. The world respects only the smart and the strong. Time has come for us to become precisely that. ■

A month in captivity in the “Donetsk People’s Republic”

Ruslan Petrenko (not his real name) from a small town near Donetsk was a pro-Ukrainian activist. This got him in trouble: he was taken hostage by the “DNR” terrorists and spent more than a month in captivity

What he had been through could make a thick book. Ruslan says jokingly that his story could be a script for a film. In summer, however, joking was the last thing he would do. His survival was a miracle.

“I took part in all the pro-Ukrainian rallies in Donetsk from the very start. I remember the first fights in Donetsk very well. When Dima Cherniavsky (the 22-year old activist and member of Svoboda. He was stabbed by the fighters at a pro-Ukrainian rally in March and did not survive – Ed.) was killed, we were near. Frankly speaking, when the fight began, we just managed to get away, so we were not injured. What shocked me was the fierce aggression. I could not explain where it comes from in those people. It takes something to amass so much spite.

“We arranged a motor rally for the unity of Ukraine. A few dozen cars was quite a number for our small town. No one reacted aggressively to it, and no tried to fight us even though we had Ukrainian flags. Later, an office of the “DNR” (Donetsk People’s Republic – Ed.) appeared, and fighting in Sloviansk and Mariupol began. Then I realized what was coming. I moved my family and some stuff out of the town, and then came back.

“I was captured the day before I was to leave the town. They grabbed me right in the street. I think someone from the municipal executive committee saw me and called the militants. Armed men got out of two cars, pushed me to the ground, kicked me in the kidneys. I offered no resistance.

“Then they brought me to the local police department and handcuffed me. There was the militants’ base. They did not even try to con-

Interview by
**Denys
Kazansky**

ceal that they had come from Sloviansk. Our cops cooperated with them, some 30% defected to the ‘DNR.’ Some of them had known me for a long time, since my school years, and it was weird and unthinkable to see people I knew suddenly turn into enemies and tormentors. I was accused of spying and allegedly making a video of them with my phone, which of course was a lie.

“Then they began an interrogation. They said that I was known to be a pravosec (member of Pravy Sektor, the Right Sector. This is the most widespread, mostly ungrounded, accusation, and often a cause of violent torturing – Ed.) and was working to build an underground movement in the town. I don’t know what gave them the

inside. There was another guy in it. We arrived late in the afternoon. I was locked up in an isolation ward. Pitch-dark, not a beam of light anywhere. Two boys were already there, and I realized that they had been beaten cruelly. One kept moaning, he was feeling very bad. He was a firefighter but would not tell why they had arrested him. He had spent almost a week there without food.

“At night we heard voices in the corridor, and the boys began to worry. They thought it was the change of guards, and that the ordeal would start again. Indeed, the door opened, and some schmuck walked in, ugly as sin. Short, deformed, cross-eyed, with crooked teeth. His nickname was Butcher. He called some names and asked me if I knew them. I didn’t. He left, and the boys breathed out. They said I was very, very lucky, because normally hostages are taken for a ‘night talk.’

“Later I heard what they meant. All night long I heard inhuman screams echoing. Someone was dragged along the corridor. For some reason, they always beat people at night. Either because the higher-ups were not around, or because they were told to do so.

“This Butcher enjoys torturing people. He has been beating everyone, practicing his punches. Rumour had it that he once trashed some poor guy for looting for an hour, till he died.

“One day, there was another incident: some captured, blindfolded men were brought in. A ‘militant’ fired his AK at one man’s foot, just for fun. They stood there roaring with laughter, looking at him bleeding.

“The next day it was my turn to be interrogated. There were two interrogators, who played the classical

TWO PEOPLE WERE BROUGHT IN, A WOMAN AND A MAN FROM BATKIVSHCHYNA PARTY. THEY WERE TAKEN TO AN INTERROGATION AND TORTURED. WE COULD HEAR THEM SCREAM. ACTUALLY, SOMEONE SCREAMED THERE EVERY NIGHT

idea. Of course I had pro-Ukrainian views, I rallied with a flag, but that’s all there was to it.

“They promised me that if I named my commander and what orders I got, they would let me go. But I had nothing to confess. Then they said they would send me to the SBU in Donetsk, where I would surely start talking: ‘If you don’t talk, bastard, you’ll meet the Butcher.’

“They got me into a paddy wagon lined with tin sheets from the

game of the good and bad cop, trying to loosen my tongue. They asked me who my curator was. Then they told me about the ferocities of the Ukrainian army: how they crucified a little boy in Sloviansk, how they tied a woman to a tank and dragged her around, how an armoured refrigerator rides along the front line collecting body organs from wounded men.

"Afterwards I was transferred to an ordinary cell, and it was a little easier. There were 15 inmates in my cell. We slept on sheets of carton. We had lights, but had to use jars to go to the toilet. Depending on the wardens, there were shifts when you could go to the toilet, or when you were beaten up if you asked for anything.

"Women and men shared cells together. Remarkably, there were four persons from the 'DNR,' who ended up in prison because someone had reported them. One woman from Sloviansk used to work at the city council. She was accused of spying and arrested for having told someone on the phone that she thought Donetsk would be attacked soon. The woman spent seven days in the cell without interrogation. I asked them how this could be happening, these weren't Stalin's times after all. But they said Mr. Girkin (Igor Girkin, aka Strelkov, a Russian-born terrorist leader – **Ed.**) is a very competent and intelligent man and that he would put things right.

"There were businessmen with us. They were hardly interrogated or beaten. They just were closed down there for some time, so later they were happy to pay and leave immediately upon release. There was one such man who had been delivering food and cigarettes to the 'DNR' checkpoints. Once he was driving after a heavy drinking bout. They smelled alcohol and took away his car, even though he had been bringing them grub for two months. When he began to protest, they threw him in a cell. Now he had sat there for nine days. Another 'DNR' fan came to a checkpoint and inquired the men there if they planned an offensive against Kyiv. He was arrested as a spy. Another guy just had a bad luck. He was mowing grass in the evening and saw someone walking in his yard. He confronted the stranger who turned out to be a 'DNR' militant. The poor guy was thrown in gaol for assaulting a soldier! He was beaten mercilessly,

a half of his body was blue, one leg was black.

"There were also Ukrainian patriots. One boy was grabbed for comments on the internet. He had spent a week in an isolation ward, and then in our cell. He had been locked up for 15 days. Later two people were brought in, a woman and a man from Batkivshchyna (Yulia Tymoshenko's party – **Ed.**). They were taken to an interrogation and tortured. We could hear them scream. Actually, someone screamed there every night.

"One woman ended up there because of her pro-Ukrainian views, she was reported by a man whom she had turned down. A neat business-lady. They came to her office with a search, confiscated cash and

talked them out of defecting to Russia when the occupation began. Indeed, an acquaintance of mine served there, we talked on the phone when all that began. As it turned out, someone reported on me: another friend wrote to the 'DNR' that I was an enemy of Russia.

"I said I just wanted to support my friend. Then the interrogator called a ward and ordered him to shoot me. The ward swore at me and said that at last I was a dead man. I asked him to take my handcuffs off, so I could make a sign of cross. He would not. He told me to walk down the corridor. I heard the breechblock click. At that moment I felt so sorry for my children, who would never see me again. But the ward did not fire. He waited a little,



PHOTO: UNIAN

computers. A check of the browser history on one of the laptops revealed that she had been reading news about the Donbass Battalion and its commander Semen Semenchenko. That was enough to accuse her of being a nationalist. They promised they would shoot her. I felt very sorry for the woman. She just could not believe that something like this could be happening in Donetsk.

"The food was disgusting, porridge with carrots and bread, but no one felt like eating, we only drank water. The ventilation was good for nothing, we suffered from a lack of oxygen.

"And then the worst began. I was called to an interrogation and told that they knew that I had supported the Ukrainian military in Crimea and

and then swore and brought me back to the cell. After that I could not speak for a long while. My cell-mates were scared.

"Then I wrote my address and my wife's phone number for each of them. Should someone be released, they could tell her where I was in captivity and what happened to me. I wrote a farewell note asking her to raise the children and tell them about me. I did not believe I would be able to get away.

"Afterwards I and another guy were taken away. We were told again that we would be executed, but instead we were led outside. There was a bus and around 15-20 hostages next to it. We were announced the sentence: 30 days of digging entrenchments. Then we were taken to Snizhne.

"In Snizhne we were dumped in a sort of enclosure next to their headquarters. There already were some 25 persons there, so together we were almost 50. We took turns to sleep on the floor, there was not enough room. The food was quite bearable. Locals fared a little better, their relatives brought them food. We were all slaves who had to dig trenches. It was then that I could take a good look at the armed groups. I saw that they had loads of weapons, all of them brand-new, and their vehicles were in a very good condition. Russian Ural trucks came back and forth all the time.

"In our enclosure the atmosphere was very bad, with lots of hoodlums, tramps, and criminals. There was one real schizophrenic, a village idiot. They bullied and beat him and wouldn't give him anything to eat. I said to the guards: why do you keep him here, he is mentally ill, they will kill him. But they only answered that he was going to plant mines. After all, I had to share food with him, because otherwise he would get none.

"There was also one old man who coughed all the time. Everyone decided that he had tuberculosis and ordered him to stay away, in the corner, yelled at him if he tried to walk around, and didn't give him any food. I asked him if he was sick indeed. He said, 'Yes, and do you think the others aren't? They are just as sick as I am!'

"At night it was terribly cold. This is the steppe, so it's normal. Everyone wore shorts and T-shirts and cuddled all together for warmth at night. Then suddenly one of the guys, who came with me from Donetsk all beaten up, got a fit. We called for a medic. At first the guards would not send anyone and yelled at us to shut up. The poor guy had foam around his mouth. At last a doctor appeared. He gave him an injection, and he was carried away. Next day we heard that he had been taken to a hospital but there was little hope because his liver was ruptured.

"Next day I and a couple of other men were taken to the mortuary, to load the corpses of the 'militias.' It was a horrible sight. There were loads of bodies, and they had lain there without refrigerators. We picked out 12 corpses, which were recognised by the family and had to be buried. The bodies were disfigured after explosions, burnt, with

limbs torn off. I was sick at once, I couldn't help it. The stench was unbearable. A woman who worked there said that on an average day a few dozens would come in, but on some days there would be a hundred or more.

"Then a so-called buyer came and we were picked out for jobs. I was 'lucky' to go to Stepanivka. This is a village at the border where later everything was totally swept away during violent fighting.

"On the way there I saw the war for the first time. The burnt vehicles, the shell-holes, the flattened checkpoints, the charred ruins, someone's belongings on the road. We could hear the cannonade nearby, the battle at Savur-Mohyla was going. We were referred to as 'robocops' (from Russian *rab*, a slave and *kopat*, to dig – **Ed.**) because we were slaves and had to dig. Each company took a few prisoners for digging. I was lucky to get a more or less humane treatment. The militants gave us an emergency safety instruction: how we should hide from mines, how to survive under shelling, where to take shelter.

WHAT AMAZED ME WAS THE MILITANTS' CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WERE FIGHTING AGAINST FASCISTS. IT WAS A SORT OF FANATIC FAITH

They said, if you heard a shot, wait 10 seconds, and if you then hear a whistle, it's flying your way, drop to the ground, or take shelter in any crack or nook you can find. We were shelled a lot, so we constantly had to hide from shrapnel. Normally death toll among 'robocops' was around 30%, but we suffered no losses.

"In comparison with Donetsk we had quite a humane treatment there. Later I understood why. When we were handed out to the 'buyer' from Stepanivka, no one said why we had been arrested, and no one knew that I was a pro-Ukrainian activist. I said I had been caught drunk in the street, just as most of the prisoners. So we were considered almost equal. There was no more torture or beating. We could have a rest.

"Our living conditions were not worse than those of the 'DNR' fighters. In a house we found some blankets and stuff to sleep on. We found clothes to change into. The village

was absolutely deserted. Cows roamed in the streets. All the inhabitants ran away, only two old women stayed behind.

"In Stepanivka fighters from Sloviansk were stationed, who had retreated from there together with Strelak (Igor Girkin, aka Strelkov – **Ed.**). Among them was one deserter from the Ukrainian army from Mykolaiv, as well as men from Donetsk and Yenakieve. As I observed them I understood that some 60% of them were low-skilled workers, Lumpenproletariat, up to 25% were thugs, and another 15% more or less educated, intelligent people.

"Then I had another stroke of luck. The fighters needed a cook. They asked who could cook, and I said I could. As a cook, I didn't have to dig trenches at the front line. I kept pondering over getting away, over to our troops, they were close by, but it was very dangerous. There were mine fields everywhere.

"Of course, the fighters would not let 'robocops' go. I talked to other prisoners, and they told how they were sentenced to 15 days of hard work, which eventually turned into 40. They only let those go whose relatives could pay a ransom. The fighters kept persuading me to take arms and fight. They said I must think about it because I must defend my land from the 'junta.' They promised to pay 20,000 roubles per month.

"I remember how they went to 'hunt for Ukies.' They were missing all day long, and came back very angry, swore at their command, and were about to thrash the company commander. Later I learned that one company was completely eliminated. Our troops pretended they retreated, leaving the high grounds to the enemy. They (the fighters – **Ed.**) ceased it, only to find trenches a foot deep, and bunkers covered with twigs. All dummy stuff. Meanwhile, the spot was under sound fire. And then artillery came down. Three shells killed more than 60 fighters in a matter of seconds.

"I did my best as a cook, and they treated me well, even in a friendly way I would say. So when my time was out, I just went to the commander and asked to be released. They drove me to Snizhne and just dropped me out in the street, no papers, no money. How I got out of the city is another long story. But after a few days I finally managed to leave the town." ■

What Makes Kharkiv Ukrainian

Russia insists that Kharkiv does not belong to Ukraine. Meanwhile, even several waves of Russification failed to make it truly Russian

A fragment of the Kharkiv Fortress diorama, Kharkiv Historical Museum



Author:
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In May 1917, the delegation of the Ukrainian Central Council (Centralna Rada), the then parliament, negotiated with representatives of the Russian Provisional Government in Petrograd. The Provisional Government was brushing off any attempts to include Kharkiv and the oblast into the jurisdiction of the Central Council. Volodymyr Vynnychenko, its authorized representative in negotiations, later recalled: “As they measured the territory of the future autonomous Ukraine, they mentioned the Black Sea, Odesa, Donetsk region, Katerynoslav region (today Dnipropetrovsk – Ed.), Kherson and Kharkiv regions. The mere thought of the Donetsk and Kherson coal, Katerynoslav iron and Kharkiv industry taken away from them made them so concerned that they forgot their professorial status, their academism and their high Founding

Assembly, and started fidgeting, fell into disarray, and showed all the essence of Russian fat, greedy nationalism.”

Russian appetites have barely changed over the past century. This article reminds us who founded Kharkiv, why *Baiky kharkivski* (Kharkiv Stories) by Hryhoriy Skovoroda, one of the best-known Ukrainian philosophers, are the gem in the crown of the Ukrainian baroque literature, and how the Kharkiv University became one of the earliest centers for Ukrainian studies.

DATING BACK TO COSSACKS

1645 is considered to be the official year when Kharkiv was founded. A group of migrants from the Dnieper Ukraine (also known as Great Ukraine) settled down along the banks of the Lohan, a river that flows through Kharkiv. Shortly after, they built a fortress while the

local Cossack garrison along with the Cossacks from the villages around it (**see Sloboda Ukraine**) formed the Kharkiv Cossack Regiment that existed from 1660 till 1765.

According to Kharkiv censuses conducted in 1655, 1660, 1667, and 1669, the migrants brought to the terrain social structure similar to that later seen in the early modern Ukraine in 1917-1920, the years of the national liberation campaign. The locals were Cossacks, bourgeoisie and peasants, most of them with typical Ukrainian surnames ending with -enko: Kondratenko, Fedorenko, Ivanenko, Panchenko. The census of 16 regiments of the Hetmanate held in 1649 reflects this homogeneity: 56% out of 40,475 people recorded had -enko surnames.

The founding of Kharkiv by the Cossacks is well-remembered in the oral tradition of Sloboda

Ukraine, the historic region covering parts of Sumy, Kharkiv and Luhansk oblasts, as well as southern parts of Voronezh, Kursk and Belgorod oblasts in today's Russia. One of the stories recalls Cossack Kharko as the founder of Kharkiv. In 2004, Kharkiv's 350th anniversary, the city got a new monument for this mythical Cossack. Another rumoured founder is a legendary Cossack leader, Ivan Karkach. According to archive documents, the leader of the group of migrants that arrived to the unsettled spot in 1654 was *otaman* Ivan Kryvoshlyk. He is to be considered the founder of Kharkiv.

The Cossack Kharkiv thrived from the 1650s through the mid-18th century. It was the center of the Kharkiv Cossack Regiment, close to other four regiments from Izium, Okhtyrka, Sumy, and Ostrohozsk (now in Russia). They were not formally subject to the Hetman's rule but were closely tied to the early modern Ukrainian state, the Hetmanate, primarily through their leaders and commanders.

The spine of the Cossack elders (*starshyna*, the ruling class of in the Cossack state – **Ed.**) was comprised of Ukrainian noble families who took over leadership in Ukrainian society after the turbulent and dramatic Khmelnytsky Uprising in the 1640-50s. It was further reinforced with descendants of non-aristocratic social groups, the townspeople and peasants. Intertwined through marital and family ties, the *starshyna* class accumulated power and wealth, primarily land, and created – or, rather, modified – its own noble identity.

The Donets-Zakharzhevskis were one such family. It started from Kharkiv colonel Hryhoriy Yerofiyovych (?-1691) known for his participation in many battles against the Tatars, expansion of the territory of his garrison, and the construction of the magnificent Porkova (Protection of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos) Cathedral in Kharkiv, one of the earliest buildings in Cossack Ukrainian baroque style. The Cossack elders regarded support of the Orthodox Church and donations to the construction and decoration of churches an honorary cause.

Coats of arms were another element that helped the Cossack elites identify themselves as no-



bles. Just like the Ukrainian Cossack nobles in general, those in Sloboda Ukraine used coats of arms that demonstrated their ancestry in elites of the earlier epochs. The Donets-Zakharzhevski family's coat of arms was a combination of Rose (Poraj or Róza), Column (Kolumna), Kytavrus (Centaur) and Ursin – the symbols used in the coats of arms of old Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Czech noble and royal families dating back to the 10th century and later. The Kivtys, another aristocratic Cossack family, used six elements in their coat of arms (see **Coats of arms**).

The Cossack-dominated Kharkiv is unthinkable without the Kharkiv Collegium (1722-1817), the center of education and academics in Sloboda Ukraine. Founded by Yepifaniy Tykhorsky, a graduate of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (founded in 1659, it remains one of the top universities in Ukraine till present days – **Ed.**) and Belgorod bishop, it was the most popular school among the children of the Cossack elite. It offered the European-style seven liberal arts education, placing the main accent on profound study of Latin, the rules of poetry and oratory skills, and Ancient Greek literature. Philosophy and theology were the highest levels of education. In the 1760s, French and German were included in the curriculum, in addition to music, mathematics, geometry, history and geography.

In 1759-1794, Hryhoriy Skovoroda, son of a Cossack from the

Lubny Regiment, student of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, philosopher of the European tradition and poet whose works were the peak of Ukrainian baroque literature, taught poetry, syntax, Ancient Greek and ethics at the Kharkiv Collegium. He stayed in touch with his students even after he left the Collegium, wandering around Sloboda Ukraine and staying at their houses for long periods. In his philosophical *Kharkiv Stories* Skovoroda described his wandering around the “forests, fields, orchards, villages, hamlets and apiaries surrounding Kharkiv”.

The verge of the 18th and 19th centuries is seen by historians as a tectonic shift in the history of Europe that drew a clear line between pre-modern and modern epochs, with different worldviews, social

SLOBODA UKRAINE COSSACK REGIMENTS WERE NOT FORMALLY SUBJECT TO THE HETMAN'S RULE BUT WERE CLOSELY TIED TO THE EARLY MODERN UKRAINIAN STATE, THE HETMANATE, PRIMARILY THROUGH THEIR LEADERS AND COMMANDERS



The Donets-Zakharzhevski family coat of arms from the panegyric *Bogaty wirydarz Zacharzewskich* (The Rich Orchard of the Zakharzhevskis) written by Jan Ornowski in 1705

structure of societies, and economic systems. In Kharkiv, just like in Ukraine overall, this was a line between the Cossack and the tsarist periods. In 1764, Russia's Catherine the Great abolished the position of the Hetman, the head of the Cossack state. In 1765, Sloboda Cossack regiments were disrupted. In 1775, she ordered violent demolition of the Zaporizhzhian Sich, the Cossack island stronghold in what is today Zaporizhia Oblast. In 1783, Cossack regiments of the Hetmanate seized to exist. Ukrainian territory ended up redrawn in accordance with the imperial administrative system, and the local social order was crushed.

Eventually, Kharkiv became the capital of Sloboda-Ukrainian *gubernia* (administrative unit in the Russian Empire – **Ed.**), and of Kharkiv viceroyalty in 1780. From 1835 to 1856, it was part of the



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Malorosiya (Little Russian) General-Governorate along with Chernihiv and Poltava oblasts. Kharkiv was the administrative center.

UNIVERSITY VERSUS MILITARY COLLEGE

The beginning of the 19th century was a landmark for Kharkiv: its university opened there in 1805. The most proactive, and somewhat adventurous role in this belonged to Vasyl Karazin (1773-1842), a small local nobleman of Serbian origin and descendant of Ukrainian Cossack elite family on his mother's side. In fact, the local elite wanted to have a military college in the city. They even began to collect donations to build it. Karazin managed to persuade the central Russian government that the local nobility were actually collecting financial support to start a university. It was opened eventually, leaving the noblemen disappointed.

The founding of the university was an important event. It launched transformations of the entire city as foreign professors came visiting, the local intellectual community emerged and civil servants mushroomed. Apart from traditional wooden buildings, the city saw new stone houses and cobbled roads built. Kharkiv was turning into a modern city.

Meanwhile, the government of the Russian Empire then located in St. Petersburg had another goal in mind: in addition to being the center of education and science, the university was expected to serve as a tool of Russification. It also acted as the supervisor over junior and middle school education in the region. The records of evidence from eye-

Coats of arms

1. Rogala
2. Strzemie
3. Radwan
4. Bończa
5. Pahonia

witnesses suggest that the local teachers were forced to speak Russian to the students, and Russian teachers were generally preferred.

This policy was only partly successful. Descending from the local Cossack nobility, the Sloboda elite spoke Ukrainian and cherished memories of the military glory of their forefathers. Hryhoriy Kvitka-Osnovianenko (1778-1843), the father of the new Ukrainian prose and a prominent figure in Ukrainian culture of the early 19th century, emerged from that environment.

A descendant of a Cossack elite family himself, he used Osnovianenko as his penname (Kvitka was his real family name). His great-grandfather was Hryhoriy Kvitka, a Kharkiv colonel who supported the construction of John the Baptist Church in the family's village, Osnovy, in 1713. The writer's ancestors on his mother's side were too a family of Cossack colonels, the Shydlovskys. The Kvitkas kept detailed family chronicles, some fragments have survived till present days.

Unsurprisingly, Hryhoriy often mentioned historical episodes, true stories of Tatar attacks on Sloboda villages, and the census of the Sloboda Ukraine residents conducted by the Russian military in 1732. In his letters to Taras Shevchenko, one of the greatest Ukrainian poets, Hryhoriy kept encouraging the young poet to write in Ukrainian. Taras appreciated this preaching in one of his poems:

*...Our thought and our song
Will not die. It will not perish
There, people, is our glory
Glory of Ukraine!*

Another key figure in the new Ukrainian literature was the Cherkasy-born Petro Hulak-Artemovsky (1790-1865), a graduate and later president of the Kharkiv University. Just like Hryhoriy Kvitka-Osnovianenko, he is regarded as a "Kharkiv romanticist". These were intellectuals who wrote about or researched Ukraine (Izmail Sreznevsky, Levko Borovkovsky, Amvrosiy Metlinskyi, Opanas Shpyhotskyi).

This environment shaped Mykola Kostomarov, a prominent historian and civil activist. His work had a huge impact on the socio-political life in the 19th-century Ukraine. He was mostly interested in the National Liberation Struggle of the mid-17th century and the history of the early modern Ukrainian State. He also researched historical paths of Eastern European peoples, primarily Ukrainians and Russians, pointing at stark differences in their worldview and mentality. *His Books of Genesis of the Ukrainian People* was used as a foundation document by the Brotherhood of St. Cyril and Methodius (1845-1847). It manifested the concept of social and national liberation of Slavic peoples in which Ukrainians would play the central part.

The late 19th century brought about noticeable social and national transformations of Kharkiv. The changes were stirred by Alexander II's "Great Reforms", a set of liberal reforms that took place in Russia in the 1860-1870s and included abolition of serfdom as the pivotal change. This was when the economy was pushed to the capitalistic model, the transition to new manufacturing technologies was completed and industrialization started. Kharkiv was gradually



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becoming an important railroad junction, and a crucial economic and industrial center.

New plants required more and more workforce, boosting the city's populace. In 1912, it had 238,466 people making it the third biggest city in Ukraine after Kyiv and Odesa. The newcomers were mostly ethnic Russians from Kursk, Orel, Moscow and Kaluga gubernias. A special privilege policy encouraged them to move to Kharkiv. The share of local Ukrainians thus declined unstoppably. In the 1897 all-Russian census, 25.6% of Kharkiv residents listed Ukrainian as their mother tongue, while 63.2% listed Russian. Not all of the latter were ethnic Russians. This situation was partly the result of the Russification policy whereby speaking Russian guaranteed professional and social success. Outside of Kharkiv, however, the census found that the share of Ukrainian-speakers ranged from 98.6% to 70.5%.

TRAPPED IN THE FIRE OF WAR AND RUSSIFICATION

1900 was yet another landmark year in political history of both Kharkiv and the entire Ukraine: activists of student communities founded the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party (RUP), the first political party in the Dieper Ukraine. Headed by Dmytro Antonovych, it took *Samostiynna Ukrayina* (Independent Ukraine), a brochure by Mykola Mikhnovsky, as its political platform. Over the next years, RUP went through a slew of divides. Eventually, it ended up a social-democratic party known as the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers' Party in 1905.

After bans on publishing in the Ukrainian language were can-

celed, Kharkiv saw the first newspaper in Ukrainian in 1906, titled *Slobozhanshchyna* (the Ukrainian word for Sloboda Ukraine). In 1920, Mykola Mikhnovsky launched *Snip* (Sheaf), another newspaper. The Kvitka-Osnovianenko Ukrainian Literature, Art and Ethnographic Society emerged to conduct Ukrainian research and studies.

World War I and Ukrainian National-Democratic Revolution in 1917-1921 redrew the political map of Eastern Europe completely. Under the Third Universal of the Tsentralna Rada (Central Council), adopted as the declaration of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) in November 1917, Kharkiv Oblast along with most ethnic Ukrainian territory would become part of the UNR. The Fourth Universal signed in January 1918 declared independence of the UNR. The subsequent military aggression of the Soviet Russia launched in 1917, unfavourable international situation and internal political squabbles dealt a fatal blow to the Ukrainian People's Republic. It lost its struggle for the independent national state. The result was Soviet government announced by the illegitimate First All-Ukrainian Convention of Councils in Kharkiv in December 1917 with the support of the Russian military. It lasted for the next 70 years.



The monument to wandering philosopher Hryhoriy Skovoroda by Ivan Kavaleridze

Kharkiv remained the capital of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic until 1934. Initially, it had been reviving its Ukrainian face: Moscow was forced to conduct "Ukrainization" because it would not have managed to keep Kharkiv under control otherwise. In the process, it identified proactive Ukrainians whom it later killed in mass repressions of the 1930-1940s. The undesirable yet inevitable byproduct of "Ukrainization" was a temporarily more favourable environment for ethnic Ukrainian culture compared to the tsarist times. Many books and newspapers in Ukrainian were published, Ukrainian dominated in the local government authorities, and at schools and universities. Writing and artistic

THE GOVERNMENT IN ST. PETERSBURG INTENDED TO USE THE KHARKIV UNIVERSITY AS A TOOL OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND RUSSIFICATION

life flourished: writer Mykola Khvyliovyi and theater director and playwright Les Kurbas worked in Kharkiv.

The 1932-1933 Famine, collectivization and repressions killed a huge part of the population in Kharkiv Oblast, as well as all over Ukraine. "Ukrainization" stopped. Kyiv became the capital of the Ukrainian SSR.

In the years of World War II, Kharkiv Oblast alongside Chernihiv, Sumy, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, was the borderline zone, so it saw the most violent regime of the Nazi occupation. The tragic Barvinkove trap took place nearby in 1942 when the mistake of Soviet commanders left nearly 200,000 troops encircled by the Germans. Kharkiv celebrates August 23, 1943 as its liberation day but bloody battles in fact continued around it until August 29.

The post-war Kharkiv retained its status as a great education, industrial and commercial center. Meanwhile, Soviet policies continued to crush its Ukrainian character with creeping "internationalization". The consequences are still felt today. ■

The Tribal Instinct

The Tribe, a new film by Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy, silently speaks for the teenagers who cannot speak



Author:
Kateryna
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Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy was both lucky and unlucky. He was lucky, because his new film *The Tribe* embarked on its victorious path at the Cannes Festival, the dream of any filmmaker.

It was awarded the Cannes' Critics' Week Grand Prix (the Nespresso Prize). This programme is for films that did not make it to the main competition but are considered worth an award for reasons that only the festival jury knows. The downside of Slaboshpytskiy's film and its timing is the train of politics that will follow *The Tribe* for as long as it is watched and remembered.

The fact that the film made it to the Cannes and its subsequent victory there left few doubts that this was a political step, the jury's welcoming gesture towards Ukraine, a lightly veiled recognition of its rightness. However outstanding *The Tribe* may be, it is destined to be re-

membered as a runaway for the rising prestige of new Ukrainian cinema. No matter what, this is quite an accomplishment already.

Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy's name was not unknown before this breakthrough: his short film *Nuclear Waste* competed in many international festivals, standing out for its somewhat obscure rough aesthetics.

For his feature film debut, Slaboshpytskiy chose a subject that has virtually not been touched in either Ukrainian or world cinema: deaf-mute teenagers abandoned by their families to be raised by the state which, in turn, abandons them to be raised by life. They are the main heroes of Slaboshpytskiy's drama that evoked lively interest in international cinematography. The boarding school for deaf-mute teenagers that the main character, freshman Serhiy played by Hryhoriy Fesenko, arrives at has its own life, cut off from the rest of the world. A state

within a state. The life of the boarding school is not subject to the administration, teachers or even physical affliction of its residents: here, everything is subordinate to the group calling itself "the tribe". It decides the fate of the teens, takes female students to turn tricks with the truckers, and mugs passers-by. It has its own hierarchy and its own laws. Sooner or later, Serhiy, who is not used to such rules, will have to declare war against them. And this is a war to defeat. There will be no victors.

The film is not simply unusual – in a certain sense, it is unique. Some call it a silent movie, but that is something completely different where the characters do speak, but the director does not want the audience to hear them. *The Tribe* is a different matter altogether. In it, the viewer hears trees rustle, cars roar, things that fall rattle and a deaf-mute girl sobs out loud from the pain in an illegal abortion room.

There are a lot of sounds in this film but the main thing missing is human voice and spoken words.

The authors desperately want the audience to cry out at the unusual silence, and make every second of the film work for it. The very first scene – the silent last bell before summer vacation at the boarding school to which Serhiy comes, is

you have to the question: Why are the deaf-mute teenagers here?

When the euphoria of the new sensation, freshness and strangeness of the style fades, the affliction of the characters suddenly seems to be not important. It becomes clear that deafness and muteness helps the director create a beautiful film. But that's all. If all these teenagers

unusual and “touching”. But what is there that is unique about the deaf-mutes? The authors made *The Tribe* bold in form but bare in unique, original substance. This is probably more of artistic speculation that thrives on human curiosity.

No matter what, the film has received international acclaim. The

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savoury and detailed, possible too detailed. It seems that from the very first minutes, the film is trying to get us used to silence, the main character in this movie. This too, becomes understood from the start, from the moment when the headmaster begins a silent sign dialogue with one of the teachers. Actually, employees at deaf-mute institutions, particularly the management, generally can hear and speak.

Then, the audience follows the deaf-mute personnel of the boarding school into shabby teenagers' dorms and the school yard, where the boarding school's adult riffraff gather, into night-time adventures of the school's beauties with the truckers under the beady eyes of their classmate pimps, and into storerooms where love blossoms between Serhiy and one of these girls played by young Belarusian actress Yana Novikova. The further the characters take you into the labyrinth of the plot, the fewer answers

suddenly start to speak, nothing will probably change in the film. The shabby boarding school with abandoned children will still be there. The students will still be there – but they will thrash out their problems loudly and vociferously, not in sign language. There will be the same indifferent and lewd teachers – the only difference is that they will talk. Constant trips to the truck stops will continue – but the girls will also chatter in the breaks between their feigned groans. Just one scene will probably disappear – the one in which one student, a member of the “tribe”, is run over by a truck at night: the driver did not see him and run him over at the parking lot at night while the boy was standing with his back to the truck and could not hear it coming.

In every other aspect, this film is about teenagers. Simply teenagers. The authors wanted them to be deaf-mutes – so why not? That makes the film intense and stylish,

main reason of this is probably the curiosity that pushes people to peek in a small gap in the curtains as a veil between the familiar and the unknown: what is there, in terra in-

THERE ARE A LOT OF SOUNDS IN THE SILENT FILM, BUT THE MAIN THING MISSING IS HUMAN VOICE AND SPOKEN WORDS

See *The Tribe* trailer here



cognita? How do people live there? How do they speak with each other? Do they make love differently than I do? Moreover, the actors playing teenagers are all deaf-mute. Let's leave the political momentum behind. Let's assume that *The Tribe* has come out at a time when it is impossible to ignore a film from Ukraine. Neither Slaboshpytskiy, not his deaf-mute actors are to blame for this. ■

5 – 7 October, 7 p.m.

Valmedia
Kinopanorama Cinema
 (19, vul. Shota Rustaveli, Kyiv)

The International Cinema Forum celebrates the 120th birthday of Oleksandr Dovzhenko, Ukrainian film director and writer. It offers a retrospective of Dovzhenko's films and the Arsenal multimedia show. The audience will see six films: *Love's Berries*, *The Diplomatic Pouch*, *Zvenyhora*, *Ivan, Arsenal and Earth*, as well as *Dovzhenko Begins*, a biography of the genius Ukrainian film director by Vasyl Dombrovsky. The screening of *Arsenal* will be accompanied by live music and a light show. Maksym Shorenkov, an accomplished virtuoso pianist, will play his own music.

**Through 12 October**

Contrasts
Lviv Oblast Philharmonic
 (7, vul. Tchaikovsky, Lviv)

The 20th Anniversary International Contemporary Music Festival Contrasts will offer the widest possible range of contemporary music: from the classics of the 20th century to the latest creative experiments of Ukrainian and foreign composers. In addition to world famous Georgian composer Giya Kantscheli, visitors will hear musicians from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland and other countries. Celebrity guests include Nordic Saxophone Quartet from Switzerland, the Deutsche Oper Berlin String quartet, the Kyiv Chamber Choir and NeoQuartet from Poland.

**17 – 19 October**

7th National Chocolate Festival
City Centre (Lviv)

There is only one other thing that Lviv loves as much as coffee and doughnuts – chocolate. Chocolate is sold in just about every shop and tavern. The festival will leave a multitude of sweet memories, offering visitors the most diverse chocolate attractions: a sweet waterfall made of chocolate balls, a chocolate fountain, workshops in chocolate-making, the baking and tasting of the longest chocolate cake, the carving of chocolate sculptures and more fun. What can be better than a fun, richly-chocolate day!

**18 October, 6 p.m.**

SHEVCHENKO proROCK
Dynamo Stadium
 (3, vul. Hrushevskoho, Kyiv)

Music lovers and the fans of poet Taras Shevchenko will have a unique opportunity to hear their favourite musicians sing and recite the poems of the Great Kobzar to music. The festival's performers include TNMK, Tartak, Kozak System, Perkalaba, Mad Heads XL and many others. The massive festival will not only be a worthy conclusion of the poet's 200th birthday year. It will also support the Ukrainian army as all proceeds will be transferred to aid the Cherkasy battalion.

**21 October, 7 p.m.**

Dakh Daughters
Sentrum
 (16a, vul. Shota Rustaveli, Kyiv)

The women's theatrical-music band, comprised of seven talented actresses and singers, was born in the walls of Dakh, a contemporary theatre. Vladyslav Troyitsky, the theatre's director, plays an active part in



the ensemble's productions, an unbelievable mixture of styles and genres, music and texts, images and voices. Their viral debut video *Rozy/Donbas* is a fusion of Shakespeare's Sonnet 35, Ukrainian folk songs and deliberate theatrical pathos. This type of performance is now known as freak-cabaret, where songs and theatrical games are used to reflect the paradoxes of life.

Until 26 October

Paradiso Perduto
National Art Museum of Ukraine
 (6, vul. Hrushevskoho, Kyiv)

According to painter Pavlo Makov, his project began as a game with metaphors, which in time began to develop according to its own scenario. The *Lost Paradise* depicts the artist's own world, which hides many possibilities and hidden symbols. Containers, emptiness, targets – all of these spaces hide something that can reveal itself in time. Pavlo Makov is a member of the Royal Society of Painters-Printmakers (London), member of the Ukrainian Art Academy and holder of numerous Ukrainian and international awards.





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