

# The Ukrainian Week

International edition

#6 (112) June 2017

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with Russia has changed

New language bills  
and public opinion on the issue

Joseph McElroy on postmodernism  
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## THE THREE-YEAR ITCH



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## The Ukrainian Week

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ТИЖДЕНЬ





## BRIEFING

# Round and round

Andriy Holub

**O**n May 16, the Verkhovna Rada resumed work after a one-month recess. It is too early to judge whether this time off influenced the configuration of political forces. But we can confidently say that the working style of parliamentarians has remained unchanged.

When MPs were sent on holiday in mid-April (although supporters of such breaks insist on calling them "work in constituencies and committees"), the ability of Parliament to make any major decisions was non-existent. People's representatives consistently failed to make any progress on several important issues: the appointment of auditors to NABU, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, a new law on the Constitutional Court and amendments to the widely criticised Savchenko Law on amnesty for wide categories of convicted criminals.

The current sixth session of the Rada will end in mid-July. Then Parliament can break up again, this time until September. During the time that remains, there will only be four weeks of sessions for voting, the first of which is already underway.

The first days in the Rada showed that it is hardly worth expecting any changes in quality. This was evident even on Monday when the Coordination Board met. The rhetoric and content of statements from representatives of different factions have not changed. For example, Batkivshchyna MP Serhiy Vlasenko repeated his party's old talking points: the ban on land sale should not be lifted under any circumstances, nor should the pension reform requested by the IMF be implemented. Instead, it is necessary to repeal the recently adopted law on the electricity market, as it is leading to higher rates on this commodity. Oleh Liashko, now in opposition, was not too far behind in criticising those same things. Interestingly, even the resignation of National Bank head Valeria Hontareva, which his Radical Party demanded almost every day, did not affect his rhetoric, because "it will come to nothing without a change in monetary policy".

Samopomich, represented by faction leader Oleh Bereziuk, is trying to maintain a balance between sinking into populism like their former coalition colleagues and preserving their image as opposition to the government. Evidence of this is their position on the land market: they want to postpone the decision for a few years to first create the right conditions for farmers, who in the meantime will save money and start to compete with the oligarchs and international corporations.



**FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS MPs HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CHANGE THE COMPOSITION OF THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION WHOSE TERM HAS LONG EXPIRED. THE STATUS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES REMAINS UNRESOLVED**

Even Narodnyi Front, which is allied to the Presidential Administration, continued to play its "broken record" about the urgency of passing a bill on a Special Confiscation Regime (it would regulate the forced recovery of assets gained illegally by the representatives of the previous government). This saga has been going on for over a year. A third bill on the subject has now been submitted to the Rada for consideration, as the other two were withdrawn due to significant corruption risks they entailed. In December, NF even blackmailed the Petro Poroshenko Bloc by threatening to sabotage the budget vote if the said law did not pass. According to faction head Maksym Burbak, the best evidence that the law is needed is the recent seizure of over US \$1 billion of Viktor Yanukovich's funds. However, Burbak did not explain how this happened in the absence of the abovementioned law on special confiscation.

According to the new head of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, man of few words Artur Herasymov, over the past month no decisions have been made regarding candidates for the post of head of the National Bank or Parliamentary Human Rights Commissioner (the term of current ombudswoman Valeria Lutkovska expired on 27 April). These issues will be looked at "in the near future".

Despite these statements, MPs dealt with completely different matters on their first day back in the

chamber. In particular, they voted to remove Andriy Artemenko, a Radical Party MP known for submitting what he called a peace plan for Ukraine (it offered a lease of Crimea to Russia in exchange for lifting sanctions against it) to members of the Trump team, from his seat. Earlier, the President revoked his citizenship due to the fact that he has a Canadian passport, and he was expelled from the Radical Party.

Another topic that was discussed on the first day was the ban by law of the St. George Ribbon, as offered by NF MP and Advisor to Interior Minister Anton Herashchenko. Parliament managed to do this towards the evening of the first day at the VR. From now on, making and wearing the orange and black striped ribbons will be punished by a fine of 5,000 hryvnias (US \$190). Nevertheless, all interested parties found time to cause a stir before the law was passed. Nestor Shufrych, an Opposition Bloc MP and formerly member of the Party of Regions, appealed to the conscience and historical memory of his colleagues – in defense of those who fought in the ranks of the Russian Army during the First World War, Crimean War and others. He alleged that, by prohibiting the ribbon, Ukrainians are rejecting these ancestors.

However, discussions on these topics and the news of the sanctions against a number of Russian websites overshadow much more important matters that MPs have been putting off for months or even years. For example, for the past three years they have been unable to change the composition of the Central Election Commission. The term of the current members in office has long expired. The status of the occupied territories remains unresolved. Moreover, the fate of the current law "On the special procedure for local government in certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts", which was adopted for three years in 2014, is also unclear. Finally, there are no explanations on how exactly deputies plan to solve the problems regarding auditors for the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the laws needed to continue judicial reform.

Instead of answering all these questions, the MPs became embroiled in several scandals on their first days back at work. One of them is linked to bill No 6220, which proposes amending the provisions of the Unified Register of Pre-Trial Investigations on launching inquiries. Opponents of the document warn that if it is passed, the investigating authorities will not have the right to open new investigations if similar ones on the given individual have already been closed. In this way, the government would be able to cancel out the NABU's investigations by closing similar cases through the Prosecutor General's Office, which it seems to control. Another scandal is associated with revisions to the bill On Cybersecurity proposed by Vidrodzhennia (Renaissance) MP Viktor Bondar. The rules could block the operation of procurement system ProZorro. Bondar submitted identical amendments to another bill in February, but they did not pass.

In light of all this, the new parliamentary season will most likely be a continuation of the previous one, or the harbinger of the season that will follow after the summer break. As with walking in circles, this has no beginning or end. ■

# The three-year itch

Roman Malko

Three years after being elected, the president faces the same problems as his predecessors

All of Ukraine's presidents have one unpleasant thing in common: after three years in power, their personal ratings went into a catastrophic decline. Each of them had his own recipe for success, but three years were enough for voters to get to know them and, accordingly, to become disenchanted. In fact, voters tend to have unrealistic expectations of their presidents, while those running for the post tend to exaggerate their capacity and to promise too much in the hopes of winning. Partly because of this and partly because voters tend to want to see the country's leader as a kind of Golden Fish that will carry out their individual wishes first, and then everyone else's, the result is inevitable disappointment.

Not long ago, the latest elected President of Ukraine and Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Petro Poroshenko, closed the third chapter of his presidential biography. He turned the page as is typical for this genre: ratings way down and a bunch of unfulfilled promises, as well as a few satchels of reasonable achievements. The visa-free regime alone is worth something and theoretically all the setbacks can be written off because of the difficult times, but his predecessors did not have an easy time of it, either.

## KRAVCHUK THE FIRST

Leonid Kravchuk, the man who found an eternal place in the history of independent Ukraine as its first president, was defeated at the polls before he even made it to three years. Having won the top post in the land with the support of his one-time communist colleagues and democrats who were thankful for the country's independence for a solid 61.59% of the vote, Kravchuk probably never expected that fate would give him so little time to rebuild the state. Privatization was just in its early stages and real power was divided among the Verkhovna Rada, which was even able to veto presidential decrees, the president and the Cabinet. Despite the amazing opportunities and prospects that seemed just on the horizon, in less than two and a half years, the situation in the young country had become so much worse that when analysts at the Eastern European Institute in Munich looked closely at the Ukrainian economy in December 1993, they could not understand what was going on and how it was that Ukrainians hadn't already died of hunger.

As a way to calm down its citizens, who had become impoverished overnight—hardly surprising when prices rose 1,030% in the first year and the pitiful kupon-karbovanets slipped from 740 to the US dollar to 40,000. The Verkhovna Rada was unable to find a better way out of the crisis than to reset the entire government by calling snap elections

to the legislature and the presidency. Oddly enough, the situation was somehow stabilized before the vote took place. The Yushchenko Government had gained unbelievable powers and engaged in any number of cynical measures such as quarterly state budgets, by January 1994 had managed to rein in hyperinflation and by summer industrial output was up more than 4%, a pace that had not been seen prior to that in independent Ukraine—and was not going to be seen again until 2000. However, the miraculous revival had no impact at all on the country's desperate voters and during the snap election that spring, the Rada turned completely red, stuffed to the gills with communists and socialists.

Had Kravchuk not behaved like a coy young lady being asked to the dance but immediately declared his candidacy, he might well have been re-elected for a second term. But he himself had no idea what he really wanted and kept saying that he wasn't going to run because, he said, people were dissatisfied. In the end,

**THE THIRD YEAR OF OFFICE HAS BEEN A CRITICAL ONE FOR MOST OF UKRAINE'S LEADERS. THEIR FALLEN RATINGS REFLECT DISENCHANTMENT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF NOT-QUITE SKILLED EXECUTION OF THEIR DUTIES**

in order to prevent a situation where the only frontrunner in the campaign was former PM Leonid Kuchma, a symbol of the country's hyperinflation and a representative of the red directors and communists who was campaigning on pro-Russian slogans and promised official bilingualism, a heavyweight rival was necessary to support the pro-Ukrainian majority. There were several such candidates, the most promising among them being Speaker Ivan Plushch. Everything looked set, except that a few days before the deadline for registering nominees, communist-style assemblies of voters from across the country began to press Kravchuk to run, after all, and the old wolf's heart melted. "If the people want me to run, so be it."

Needless to say, this scattered the vote and opportunities to use administrative resources but Kravchuk managed to beat Kuchma in the first round, 38.36% to 31.17%. The second round looked like a shoo-in. According to eye-witnesses, however, the evening before Election Day according to estimates, predictions were almost 100% that Kravchuk was a shoo-in. However, a very unpleasant situation took place the next morning. Problems arose with ballot counting in Donbas and all of Donbas had to recount its votes. The result turned into an electoral win for Kuchma.



Leonid Kravchuk spent only two years and seven months as president

## KUCHMA THE BIG DADDY

Having become the new president, Leonid Kuchma quickly grasped the situation and, using the management style he had polished as director of Pivdenmash, the country's biggest aerospace plant, began to bring order to the country as he saw it. Positioning himself as a reformer, he presented his program. However, in order to carry out even minimal of reforms, he had to consolidate his relations with the legislature, which was run by the Speaker, Socialist Oleksandr Moroz.

This proved anything but easy. Kuchma wanted power and a strong executive branch that could "effectively work during a time of growing economic crisis," while the Verkhovna Rada, naturally, was not prepared to share power with him and began scaremongering about the threat of dictatorship. This confrontation made the resolution of top priority problems in the country a major challenge. Finally, "demonstrating political wisdom," Kuchma and Moroz signed a constitutional agreement on June 8, 1995, which de facto became a temporary Constitution, recognizing the president as the Head of State and of the executive branch, and granting him the authority to appoint the Cabinet of Ministers, including the Premier.

The first PM appointed by Kuchma was the then acting Premier and a career officer of the Security Services, Yevhen Marchuk. He lasted a year and was dismissed "for working on his own image." Marchuk was replaced by a strong business executive by the name of Pavlo Lazarenko, who also did not last long. Lazarenko managed to leave quite a mark on the country's history and on the lives of many later influential politicians, one that can still be seen today. He was a powerful figure, pro-Ukrainian in orientation, and, managing the still-young Yulia Tymoshenko and her company YES's gas flows from Russia, felt himself quite independent and self-sufficient. Kuchma could sense this and it angered him, but what bothered him most of all was the persistent thought that Lazarenko had ambitions to replace him in the top post. Becoming careless at some point, Lazarenko was declared the country's top corrupt politician and tossed into the jaws of American justice. This is the point when legendary saga of Ukraine's battle with corruption began—one that still has not reached a conclusion to this day.

This was not the only successful undertaking for Leonid Kuchma. In his first three years, he managed quite a bit. In January 1995, the Rada adopted the Law "On Financial-Industrial Groups (FIGs) in Ukraine," thanks to which the oligarchic system began to take shape whose fruits Ukrainians are reaping to this today. Kuchma was the key figure in this system and was soon dubbed "daddy." With the first wave of large-scale privatization in full swing at this time, the FIGs grew stronger and stronger, and Kuchma along with them. Of course, he had to strike a balance between his charges, whose interests did not always coincide, and the international arena, in accordance with his famous "multivectoral" approach. It was during Kuchma's first term that the matrix took shape under which the country would live for the next two decades—and be unable to get rid of, despite two insurrections and a war.



The second presidency of **Leonid Kuchma** was when the matrix of the country's life for the next two decades shaped

In fact, it's not entirely true to say that Kuchma's third year became a critical turning point for him. Yes, there were problems with the Black Sea Fleet and that was when the time-bomb that blew Crimea up in 2014 was first set. His ratings did fall noticeably, but in the absence of a really strong opposition or a comeback by the communists in the Rada, the ever-more statesmanlike Kuchma was sitting pretty. Even the 1998 financial crisis did not stop him from winning the 1999 election, using the formula "the best among a bad lot" by sidelining the more moderate and popular Moroz and leaving only hard-core communist Petro Symonenko to fend off in the second round.

The third year of Kuchma's second term proved to be the turning point and he entered it completely crushed. First came the cassette scandal connected to the disappearance and murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze, which grew into the "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign. Then came the sale of four Kolchuga ESMs, a passive aircraft radiolocation system with an 800 km line-of-sight reach, to Iraq, which was a terrible blow against the Ukrainian president and turned him into a pariah in the west. Even his efforts to warm up relations with NATO and the EU, and to be granted prospects for association and eventually proper membership could do little to turn the situation around. Finally, in 2004, after winning a stand-off with Russia over the island of Tusla in the Kerch Strait in the fall of 2003 that nearly turned into an armed conflict, Kuchma took the provisions on NATO and EU membership out of the country's Military Doctrine as the ultimate goal of the country's Euroatlantic and Eurointegration policies, declaring that the country was simply not ready for either at that stage.

But the most far-reaching event during this period, as time would tell, was the appointment of a Donetsk boss, Viktor Yanukovych, to the premiership in November 2002. After the Donetsk clans helped Kuchma become president the first time around, they were given *carte blanche* to act in their own region. "Do what you want over there, but don't mess with Kyiv and Kyiv won't mess with you." In time, the Donbas appetite inevitably grew and its clans began looking at the capital: we also want to be involved in state affairs. Oddly enough, this coincided with the period when Kuchma himself was ebbing, so when the Donetsk bosses proposed Yanukovych for premier, not without sponsorship from Russia, either, Kuchma agreed.

## YUSHCHENKO THE DEAR FRIEND

The third anniversary of the election of Viktor Yushchenko, who was swept into office on the back of the Orange Maidan, will probably always remain in the country's history as an example of the most bitter disenchantment with a leader who was the favorite of the entire nation. Perhaps not the entire nation, but no matter how one looks at it, the name Yushchenko was a symbol of hope for change in the country during the Orange Revolution. Whether these hopes were been ill-founded, or the person who was expected to fulfill them was a mere hologram or a political scam is hard to say. One thing that can be said is that the phenomenal prospects and opportunities that came with the victory of the Maidan were wasted by Yushchenko and his team.



**Leonid Kuchma** finished his second term as a virtually political bankrupt

By his third year in office, Yushchenko was completely lost: his party had lost the VR election to his rival's Party of the Regions and Yanukovich was once again premier. The return of Tymoshenko to lead the Government only revived all the tiresome squabbles. All that was left was disillusionment and crises. The worldwide economic crisis of 2008, the Russian attack on Georgia as a stern warning, gas wars with Russia. The 2010 presidential election had only two serious contenders, Tymoshenko and Yanukovich, and Yanukovich won.



**Viktor Yushchenko**  
is the symbol of the  
greatest political  
disenchantment

### YANUKOVYCH THE GILT-Y LOSER

Viktor Yanukovich survived his third year in office with enormous difficulty, and, in fact, that's where everything ended. Flushed with victory over the "schmucks" who were always in his way in the 2010 election, he enjoyed his presidential prerogatives with such relish that he failed to notice when he had sallied well beyond all acceptable limits.

In 2010, Yanukovich signed an agreement in Kharkiv that extended the term of Russia's Black Sea Fleet base on Ukrainian territory for another 25 years, to 2042. This and its scandal-ridden ratification later on were the opening chord of the Yanukovich swan song. He went on to use the Constitutional Court to restore the 1996 Constitution, which returned to the presidency the kind of power that Kuchma had enjoyed. Then he played at Eurointegration and being the Great Reformer. But when it came to actually signing the Association Agreement with the European Union, Yanukovich finally showed his true face and went into reverse, carrying out all the instructions coming from his Kremlin mentors. This, of course, led to an outburst of public anger and people went out on the Maidan once again.

Things might have ended at that, but an unprecedented attack by riot police on students hanging out on the Maidan late at night was the last straw and the country exploded. Once again, Yanukovich was the catalyst for a protest Maidan. This time, however, it was clear this would not be a song-and-dance Maidan, the way it was in 2004. Too much had changed in the intervening years. Unlike the political class, Ukrainian society had been transformed, matured and become braver—and properly learned the recipe for making a Molotov cocktail. Moreover, a new generation of Ukrainians had grown up that was ready to determine its own fate and not beg for small mercies. Every attempt to stop the process, to cut deals, to con people or scare them was doomed. No dictatorial January 16 laws could not stop "an idea whose time had come."

The end of the three-year presidential term of the twice-jailed Yanukovich, along with his political career, coincided with the start of his career as a migrant. And even then, nothing would have mattered if, having abandoned the country that was careless enough to elect him as president, he hadn't left behind hundreds of traumatized and killed fellow citizens, a divided society, a completely emptied-out treasury, massive loans, and a letter begging Putin to occupy Ukraine.

### POROSHENKO THE RESTORER

Three years into his presidency, Petro Poroshenko still retains his confidence, despite low ratings that hover around the 10% mark. He

does have a number of bonuses: the war and the visa-free regime with the EU. And even without these plusses, he is strong enough not to be afraid of anything and to plan his future. Poroshenko in 2017 even has echoes of Kuchma in 1997, when Big Daddy was doing very well. Of course, things are far from perfect with Ukraine's fifth president, and the third year of office has been a critical one for most of Ukraine's leaders. The fallen ratings reflect widespread disenchantment as a consequence of not-quite skilled or even inadequate execution of his duties and lost opportunities.

Initially, every incoming president blames his predecessor for leaving behind a poor situation and, for a time, this works. Then comes the phase when saying, "It's not so easy, things will change, but it takes time" works. Still, after three years in power, those kinds of excuses don't work, not even from the lips of Petro Poroshenko. Moreover, he lost his kamikaze PM, Arseniy Yatseniuk, behind whose back any number of "interesting" issues were resolved. Now his lightning rod is Volodymyr Groisman. He works pretty well as Prime Minister but not so effectively as the lightning rod given his background of close relations with the president.

Poroshenko is also having trust issues, not just with the Ukrainian voters (which matters less to him), but also with his western partners. It's becoming harder and harder to cover the feeble progress of reform with attractive gestures or to explain how it's being actively

### IT'S EARLY FOR POROSHENKO TO CONTEMPLATE A WELL-EARNED RETIREMENT. THE LACK OF A CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION EVEN IN THE PRESENCE OF A WELL-PRESERVED OLD POLITICAL GUARD ALLOWS HIM TO SERIOUSLY DREAM ABOUT A SECOND TERM

sabotaged. And this trust means support, money, and much more that he—and the country—needs.

It's still early, however, for Poroshenko to contemplate a well-earned retirement. The lack of a proper, constructive opposition even in the presence of a well-preserved old political guard allows him to seriously dream about a second term. Of course, provided he doesn't repeat the mistakes of his predecessors, such as Kuchma with his illusory stability in 2002 when Ukrainians were seriously dissatisfied. Or Viktor Yushchenko with his inability to distinguish between enemies and friends, his endless political flirtations, his efforts to cut deals, all of which ended in his defeat and his rival's comeback.

Stepping into the same puddle over and over again does not take any smarts. Only by considering his own mistakes and those of his predecessors, thoroughly assessing the situation in the country, and genuinely turning to the people who literally spilled their blood so that he might be president, Petro Poroshenko might actually win a second term. But if he relaxes, the risk is always there that he won't even complete the first one. The grounds for this—and the opportunities—are accumulating day by day. ■



In his third year  
as president,  
**Viktor Yanukovich** fled  
the country leaving  
a bloodbath behind

# Poroshenko vs the memes

Andriy Holub

How Ukrainian social media users react to the President

**"D**id you know that there's an entire army of bots set up on the internet to protect the president and your circle, and it actively attacks anyone who publishes critical information or even just opinions about the government?" was the question put to President Poroshenko during a recent press conference by journalist Mykhailo Tkach. There's no point to repeating the president's response word for word, because it lasted more than 4.5 minutes and consisted of nearly 400 words. Its content, however, is easy to evaluate: Poroshenko never once used the words "internet," "bot" or "social network." He talked about standards, the exceptionally high level of freedom, civil society, and even television. Nothing about the internet.

## GETTING ON THE INTERNET BANDWAGON

Still, the current leader of Ukraine belongs to the category of more "advanced" national leaders who pay considerable attention to their internet audience. In this, Poroshenko is different from his predecessors, Viktor Yushchenko and especially Viktor Yanukovich, who were both there when the internet was booming and social networks were becoming popular in Ukraine. The New York-based PR company Burson-Marsteller publishes a "Twiplomacy" report every year now, that assesses the use of social networks by world leaders. In 2016, it reported that Poroshenko was in the top 50 most popular world leaders in Twitter, ranking 48<sup>th</sup> with his 955,000 followers. In Facebook, however, he could do more to promote his page as he has less than 600,000 followers and did not make it into the top 50: he'll need at least 1 million of them to do that.

In Ukraine itself, however, Poroshenko is outmatched in Facebook only by media pages and by the absolute leader—Okean Elzy, Ukraine's most popular rock band. One recent development now offers the president a brilliant opportunity to increase his popularity in FB. Since the Russian-owned services *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki* are now under sanctions, work in the presidential "forcing pits" has gone down and they can concentrate entirely on FB, Twitter and Instagram. According to TNS monitoring in Ukraine, daily traffic in the Russian nets has fallen by 2-2.5 times, while Facebook traffic has risen nearly 33%.

So far, however, there isn't much precise data about the influence of social media on the changing political situation in a country. Some say that they played a key role during the Arab Spring and the Euromaidan Revolution, while others say that their influence is exaggerated. One way or the other, it was after these turbulent events that politicians began to really understand the need to work consistently with

internet users. Depending on the country and the political system, that meant changing their working style as well.

## THE MARCH OF THE POROKHOBOTS?

Plenty of efforts have been made to try to catch Poroshenko out on having "botfarms," similar to Russia's troll factories, on the internet. So far, however, no one has been able to irrefutably confirm their existence. Meanwhile, the term "porokhobot" has been circulating in Ukrainian for some time now.

The Myslovo online dictionary of new Ukrainian words gives a terse definition of "porokhobot" as "those



who write or say positive things about Poroshenko.” But the precision of these definitions seems questionable, as in that case, millions of Ukrainians who gave him their vote in the last election can be counted into the president’s “personal online army.” It’s hard to think that people did so without ever once criticizing their elected leader.

It’s also hard to determine who originated the term “porokhobot.” Open access analytics at Google Trends show that this term first began to be used in search engines in June 2015 and peaked in August of that year. The same happened in August 2016. If searches for this term across the world are considered, then the “birth” of “porokhobots” was in early 2015. Unfortunately, GT does not specify in which countries the term was first mentioned: the database is too small. It’s possible to assume that the reason for the discrepancy lies in the paradigms used by different search engines.

In fact, it’s not that easy to figure out what “porokhobots” really are. In Russia, bot networks operated under management from a single center and did not distinguish themselves in any way. That was how journalists were able to confirm their existence: by fol-

lowing one and the same tweet across thousands of accounts.

Nothing like that is going on in Ukraine, which suggests that there isn’t some centralized management. There are a number of reasons for that, but they mainly come down to the fact that the model used by Ukrainian politicians in social nets is different from the model used by Russian ones. In Ukraine, they don’t depend on networks of bots—accounts whose posts are written by a special piece of software known as a robot, not a human—so much as on buying opinion leaders: blog-

In 2016, Poroshenko was in the **top 50** most popular world leaders in Twitter, **ranking 48<sup>th</sup>** with his **955,000** followers

gers, experts, political scientists and so on. What they count on instead is on originality and the author’s own style. Once in a while, this leads to an embarrassing situation, when different loyal bloggers post identical texts, as though from a freshly-approved *temnyk*.

### TREASON VS PRESIDENT

There is the widespread belief that “porokhobots” either excessively emphasize Petro Poroshenko’s successes as president or try to relieve him of responsibility for failures and setbacks. For instance, they will say that the visa-free regime with the EU is the result of wise international policies on the part of Poroshenko for whom diplomacy is a natural element, whereas the endless unfulfilled promises that there would be visa-free travel in the past few years were the result of Russia’s deliberate troublemaking and not a reflection of internal problems in Ukraine. “Porokhobots” comment in a similar vein on other topics although this particular example is the most primitive variant. Theoretically, this provides the right accents in the information environment that the government needs. Some people also assume that “porokhobots” are being used to harass opponents, although there’s no hard and fast evidence of this, either.

That “porokhobots” are somewhat used only in the most important situations for the government to form the right interpretation of events can be seen in the statistics provided by Google Trends. The bubble of interest in the term itself in August two years in a row could be explained by the anniversary of the massacre at Il-ovaik, a terrible tragedy and Ukraine’s biggest defeat in war since Poroshenko came to office. So it’s unsurprising that during August, internet users see mythical or real “porokhobots” suddenly become more active.

On the other hand, there is a category of people in Ukraine for whom no real evidence of “porokhobots” is necessary. Everything is obvious to them without any evidence, and sometimes even in the face of all evidence. They, too, have a nickname: “zradofily,” meaning those who love to believe that there’s treason at every step. It’s a word you won’t find the word in any dictionary yet. In fact, Google Trends doesn’t actually allow you to look at the frequency of use of a particular word in a search and so far it seems that Ukrainians aren’t especially interested in this term. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions when you look at the use of the terms “victory” and “betrayal” in searches. Here, victory clearly wins over betrayal.



## CONTRADICTORY POSITIONS

“Zradofily” aren’t united by a political idea or values, but by the certainty that (a) everything is changing only for the worse in Ukraine today and (b) changing this situation is impossible because it would violate (a). It is possible to try to group the main complaints of the “zradofily” against Poroshenko into several sets.

At the top of the list is the fact that Ukraine did not declare a state of war after the occupation of Crimea, although Poroshenko wasn’t even president at the time. Over time, this argument morphed into complaints over the fact that “the war is not called the war”. From the early days of his election victory, Poroshenko was sharply criticized in social media for official Kyiv’s position towards Russia’s aggression, announcing an “anti-terrorist operation” or ATO rather than war against the Russian Federation. Critics of this decision say that it led to a situation where a good part of the population hasn’t felt the war at all and their lives have not seen any fundamental changes. This first accusation led to a series of others, from Poroshenko’s unfulfilled promise to end the ATO “in a matter of hours,” the continuing presence of Russian business in Ukraine and “trading with the enemy,” and the nearly daily losses of Ukrainian soldiers’ lives in Donbas—but especially the bitter routs at the disastrous operations near Ilovaïsk and Debaltsevo.



## THE MODEL USED BY UKRAINIAN POLITICIANS IN SOCIAL NETS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE MODEL USED BY RUSSIAN ONES. IN UKRAINE, THEY DON’T DEPEND ON NETWORKS OF BOTS SO MUCH AS ON BUYING OPINION LEADERS

Interestingly, the same individuals who initially were angry about the fact that a state of war hadn’t been announced were later equally upset about the fact that Russian social media were being blocked. This was the case with the administrators of a well-known Vkontakte group called “We Patriots of Ukraine,” which at one time published a video appeal to politicians on the subject of declaring a state of war, but later provided tips for how to get around the blocking of their social net and accused the government of censorship. Meanwhile, a state of war provides for curfews, mandatory labor, censorship and internet cutoffs, among other things.

The next widespread point is the Minsk Accords. The agreement signed in February 2015 in the capital of Belarus has been a point of contention with the president for many internet commentators. “Zradofily” tend to fall into one of two groups here: those who say this is a deliberate betrayal of Ukraine’s interests to those who are convinced there has been a secret agreement made with Vladimir Putin.

Poroshenko’s businesses are possibly the biggest complaint in social nets. So far, he has failed to make good on his promise to sell off his businesses and, based on the president’s most recent statements and actions on this topic, it’s going to stay that way. The best-known of his companies that remain in the hands of the Head of State to this day are Channel 5 and the Roshen brand. The “blind trust” to which Poroshenko handed over his lucrative candy business

has become the subject of many a meme. True, the infamous Roshen factory in Lipetsk, Russia, which Poroshenko no longer owns, has been removed from that list, but not that long ago. When this news came out, the internet community responded with a slew of jokes about “a black day for all *zradofily*.”

## PREJUDICES AND STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

But the most controversial topic, one that also illustrates both the level of education and the prejudice of many Ukrainians, is the president’s ethnicity. At this point, it’s no longer possible to figure out where the roots of the theory that the president’s real surname is Valtsman, a Jewish one, came from, but the most widely-disseminated version is that Poroshenko’s father Oleksiy was a Valtsman at birth and took on the Ukrainian surname when he married. According to the theory, he even did time in prison during soviet times under that name.

Yet there is absolutely no evidence to support the thesis about “Poroshenko-Valtsman”. Worse, those who believe this cannot even explain what is so bad about this, even if it were true. Even some politicians have been guilty of spreading the myth, including MPs Nadia Savchenko and Semen Semenchenko, who mentioned this on live television in March. The unseemly “tradition” of looking for Jewish roots among Ukrainian politicians was around long before Poroshenko became Ukraine’s fifth president. Such speculation has circulated about former PMs Arseniy Yatseniuk and Yulia Tymoshenko as well. The more interesting question is why some Ukrainians are so keen to look for Jewish roots among those in power. At a minimum, it suggests a certain level of xenophobia.

Last, but not least, among the themes circulating in social nets is about all those friends of President Poroshenko’s who are still walking free. This theme presumes that Poroshenko is establishing his personal clan. In contrast to the previous theory, this one seems to have at least a little confirmation. The specific roles of Ihor Kononenko and Oleksandr Hranovskiy, businessmen and top members of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, in relations with the president have been the subject of more than one journalistic investigation. However, the president himself has contributed considerably to this story from the very start and provided journalists with clues as to where to look. Poroshenko was not served well, either, by his admiration for the policies of the late Singaporean strongman Lee Kuan Yew, who ruled for three decades—an admiration may have been genuine but could also have been a whimsical note injected by his speechwriters. In June 2014, just after being elected president, Poroshenko introduced Prosecutor General Vitaliy Yarema in the Verkhovna Rada with the now-famous statement: “As a parting, symbolic wish, here’s my favorite quote from the man who created the Singaporean miracle, Lee Kuan Yew: ‘How do you start to fight corruption? First of all, you have to send three of your friends to jail. You know exactly what for, they know what for, and the people will believe in you.’”

In the three years since this event, “send three of your friends to jail” remains one of the main memes of the Poroshenko era, one that has turned out to be even harder to kill than the meme about the Lipetsk factory. ■

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# Vitaliy Kasko:

«The steps made under the pressure of civil society and foreign partners are not yet irreversible»

**T**he *Ukrainian Week* spoke to ex-Deputy Prosecutor General on the case of the diamond prosecutors, the threat to reforms, and why the establishment of an anti-corruption court will not heal Ukraine's judiciary.

Interviewed  
by **Roman  
Malko**

**Is it possible to reform an agency like the Prosecutor's Office? To clean up the soviet legacy from it and make it worked in line with international standards?**

Of course. Any structure can be reformed when there is desire and political will to do so. The Prosecutor's Office is a convenient instrument for those in power for accomplishing any short-term goals. What is called the political elite would not benefit from changing it because it will lose serious leverage. Leverage that helps it keep (or so it believes) an artificial parliamentary majority by using prosecution and other tools, for instance. Until there is desire to quit the practice of using the Prosecutor's Office for political purposes, no time for reform will come.

It's like in the Lord of the Rings: every next incoming prosecutor general first wants to get rid of that ring, throw it into the flames. But then he realizes what powers it gives and what system he gets into, and he changes his stance. Unfortunately, this will last until political will appears, and a person who will have the will to change everything. Believe me, this is very ungrateful cause. The system has been working in this way for years, most prosecutors have grown used to it. And it's not like everyone in the system is corrupt. It's just that many find its conditions comfortable. They are elements of one mechanism, receive their salaries, are used to coming to office and leaving at a certain hour, and feeling secure about tomorrow - or so they think.

**This brings to mind the case of the "diamond prosecutors". It has virtually dissolved in courts by now. Why did this happen and who was interested in this?**

I still believe that it was an extremely important case, a cause of mindset and principle. If I had to go through it again, I would do it. There is nobody from the old team left at the Prosecutor's Office. The last prosecutor who used to know the background of the case no longer supports the charges under it. A new team has been compiled. Before, the court would schedule hearings on it twice a month. Now, you barely hear of any. That makes it obvious: the goal is to bury this case. Why? Because it's a life-changer. The prosecutors viewed it as a litmus test. At that point, many of them were hesitating, contemplating quitting business

as usual and starting working anew, watching how it would end. Now they have realized that those who initiated the case were eventually squeezed out of the Prosecutor's Office. So the system has not changed and one has to adjust, to keep working as they did before.

**Still, people involved in all this have to show some results to the public. The scandalous processes kickstarting from time to time prove this...**

The people who have been caught or jailed in the past 25 years were either abandoned or allowed to be caught. Walking out of this paradigm is a change in the system's principles. If it stalls and the top prosecutors suspected of getting a bribe of US \$200,000 and illegal enrichment are truly held accountable, the system will find it hard to remain as it is. Anything else will mean staying within the matrix of what is allowed.

Under all prosecutors in Ukraine some have been caught and persecuted - a judge, a prosecutor, a tax official. These cases mostly did not end with a real term in jail. So this was an imitation of the fight against corruption. To break this system means to start the end of it, to open a Pandora box.

**What is the nature of the ongoing clash between the Prosecutor General's Office and NABU? How will it end?**

Obviously, the nature is in the competition for the championship in law enforcement. This is a phenomenon of the worldview - a competition between the old system and the new. I still see NABU as an island of freedom, a ray of hope for profound changes in our law enforcement system. The old system is resisting. And it's not only the prosecutor's office, but the Security Bureau of Ukraine, tax authorities and more. NABU is largely on its own. It has nowhere to look for friends. It can only rely on itself and the support from the civil society, our foreign partners. Who will be the winner of this competition will be extremely important.

**How much can our international partners influence Ukrainian authorities? On one hand, they spend a lot of money on various assistance programs. On the other hand, our officials are behaving as they see fit...**

I can say openly and confidently: the international partners that provide institutional support to the establishment of anti-corruption agencies give no instructions or recommendations on who their "clients" should be. This is out of the question. Of course, they would very much like to see a result. And, unlike Ukrainian



**Vitaliy Kasko**, born in 1976 in Lviv, graduated from the Lviv National Ivan Franko University in 1998. He worked as investigator, senior investigator, deputy head of the investigation department at the Lviv Oblast Prosecutor's Office, senior prosecutor at the General Prosecutor's Office Central Apparatus, and Director of the International Legal Department at the Prosecutor General's Office in 1998-2005 and 2007-2010. In 2005-2007 and 2010-2014, he worked as a private lawyer. From 2014-2016, he served as Deputy Prosecutor General of Ukraine, a member of the Prosecutor General's Office Collegium.

citizens who want it much sooner, our international partners understand the context and the fact that not everything can be done quickly in Ukraine. By the way, I side with the Ukrainian citizens in this because I share their concerns. Especially after the Revolution of Dignity, after the price we paid to get the government changed and to try to change fundamental approaches in Ukraine. Therefore, I am confident that there have been no recommendations on how to do it all. They (international partners - Ed.) cannot and do not want to dictate Ukraine's agenda. They can share best practices, experts and resources. But in the end it's about the country's sovereignty and its willingness to change. Unless there is such willingness, nobody will force us to change. Civil society and international partners have already done their best to encourage the top political will.

#### **Is this because we started reforms from the wrong end? Why didn't we start with reforming courts?**

This is to divert attention from the overarching problem. The way the current competition for seats at the Supreme Court is taking place (some of the recommended judges issued verdicts to ban assemblies during the Maidan) shows that the judiciary is not changing. That we are channeling our efforts to treat symptoms, not the disease. Eventually, those involved will shrug and say that the effort failed. The National Agency on Corruption Prevention is one example. It is a very important agency and we used to have hope in it, like we have hope in NABU now. Eventually, however, everything was done to virtually cancel out NACP's activity. Nobody hopes that it will start working normally again anymore.

Take the concept of anti-corruption courts. I believe that reforming just one section of the judiciary is dealing with symptoms, not causes. It means that the entire judicial system can stay as is, while we will set up this nice little poster child of anti-corruption? You can't make a clear stream in a swamp. The experience with the police proves it. The well-launched façade reform of the patrol police failed to grow into a fundamental reform of the police. As a result, people start questioning even the patrol police now. The same thing will happen with the court. We can happily channel all resources to set up an anti-corruption court today. Tomorrow, the commissions will select the same judges as in other segments of the judiciary for it.

This will be a wasted effort unless there is political will to fight against corruption and change the system. A different judicial system needs to be set up with judges that meet certain criteria, are hired from scratch and paid normal salaries. Well-known untainted lawyers should be allowed to do this, engaging international experts and civil society. This would allow us to reboot the system.

Meanwhile, the establishment of one section, even if very important, will bring nothing. In some countries

no anti-corruption courts have been set up but anti-corruption agencies have succeeded. A specialized court and anti-corruption agencies are not directly interdependent.

Look at the case of the diamond prosecutors: is anyone in the law enforcement system concerned about the fact that hearings on it take place once in two months? Why are the law enforcers not interested in this? Because they can blame the court for idling around till the end of time. It's a great excuse: hey, we've done everything but the court is stalling. I have not seen a single serious criminal proceeding that would get to a proper trial and get buried by the court, other than the case of the diamond prosecutors which is hampered through the court, not by it. This hampering is supervised by other people.

If the process is serious, it should be open to the public. That will make the quality of the evidence presented obvious at once.

Take the case of the diamond prosecutors for example: it featured a lot of witnesses who showed how the bribes were given, in what order and on what days. All circumstances were revealed. What is the outcome? No verdict till this day. It would be one thing if the courts were pardoning those charged in such cases. But there has been no precedent like this yet. I can't say now that the entire anti-corruption reform is suffering because no anti-corruption court has been set up. It is suffering because of the lack of political will.

#### **We hear more and more news about the unblocking of foreign accounts of the Yanukovich regime. Why is this happening?**

This is the result of corruption and lack of professionalism. But I would look at every case individually. I don't have any other explanations of why no results have been delivered after three years. Our international partners have put certain assets under temporary arrest which, as they believe, could have come from abuse by former Ukrainian officials. They then waited for the evidence of illegal sources of these assets from Ukrainian officials. Take the EUR 50mn arrested in Latvia: that money stayed on the accounts waiting for the Ukrainian side to prove that it was gained illegally. Eventually, Latvia wrote it off as no man's money. We now hear of talks to return it. I don't think anyone will return it unless Ukraine proves that this corruption crime was committed on its territory. If this happens, the Latvians will be willing to consider the redistribution of the confiscated assets.

#### **How much real progress has Ukraine made in its fight against corruption?**

Some things have been done. The NABU has been set up, it enjoys relative independence. We have seen some of its results. The National Agency on Corruption Prevention was established – it has not worked but we have the e-declaration database at the very least. The mere fact that it exists (even if it has not led to any consequences stipulated by law) is very important. So I can't say that nothing has been done.

Whatever has been done does not deliver an immediate effect but works in the long-term prospect instead under proper circumstances. But these accomplishments will fade quickly and we will return to the initial stage if reforms don't proceed. The steps made largely under the pressure of civil society and foreign partners are not yet irreversible. We see a setback in most sectors. We even »

see something as unprecedented as the requirement of e-declarations for anti-corruption NGOs which the EU, the IMF and other international organizations have been talking about for days. They don't merely hint, they scream that this is in violation of all European, international and other principles, as well as in defiance of logic. Yet, these amendments have not been changed, although even Russia has no such law.

I think that those in power have done this as revenge against civil activists who have put enough pressure on them to introduce e-declarations (and they don't hide it). I don't see how this can benefit them, other than bring a weird sense of revenge and satisfaction.

#### **What prospects do the cases against State Fiscal Service Head Roman Nasirov, Narodniy Front MP Mykola Martynenko, Viktor Yanukovich have?**

It is difficult to talk about prospects without examining the details of their cases. Nasirov's case has not been sent to court yet, so it's hard to assess how well-grounded the charges are and what the results of the proceedings will be. Martynenko's case is similar. We are waiting to see how it goes further: whether NABU will collect sufficient evidence to send the criminal proceedings to court. How solid will this case be? I think we will hear the answer about its prospects in court this year.

On the Yanukovich case, I haven't really looked at the facts. I think it's too late for it. These things were probably timely after Yanukovich fled Ukraine. But a case on state treason against Yanukovich after four years of no cases on economic and other crimes must look weird in the eyes of society. I don't think it's what the public expected.

#### **Is it possible that these cases will face the same fate as the case of the diamond prosecutors?**

That would very sad because these are the cases in NABU's weight class. As far as I know, NABU leaders take their promises seriously. If they said a, I think they will say b as well. What matters here is the harmonious work of NABU and specialized anti-corruption prosecutor, as well as continued media attention on these proceedings in courts.

If these cases follow in the footsteps of the diamond prosecutors, we will have to say that both the reform of the prosecutor's office and changes in the mindset of prosecutors have failed; the expectations of the anti-corruption reform have not been met. So we will either see these and other criminal proceedings in court, or reforms will fold down.

#### **What chances does Ukraine have in international courts against Russia?**

I have taken part in the preparation of these processes, in talks with the Russian delegation in Minsk, together with Olena Zerkal and people from the prosecutor's of-

fice. Among other things, we have provided evidence of Russia's neglect of its obligation to provide legal assistance in cases on the financing of terrorism. By the way, we have provided a lot of arguments to which the Russian side had no answer. This made it into our case at the International Court of Justice. I think it is a good try. And the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has worked creatively in this one. In fact, it is the first process that continues. For instance, the Georgian case ended very quickly. This one carries on and our arguments are heard. This is a very good sign. The team has good lawyers hired by the Ukrainian government. But don't expect the court to solve all our problems. Still, I think that this is an important step which, together with others, can help Ukraine in its fight with Russia.

#### **How our reforms are viewed by your colleagues at international institutions? Do you hear a lot of criticism? More generally, is Ukraine very far behind the legal discourse that prevails in the civilized world today?**

It's hard not to notice the disappointment of our international partners. Clearly, they will not do our reforms for us. They will not force us to do anything. But they also feel sorry for the efforts they have invested, sometimes with no result. Many are frustrated with the setbacks, the lack of reforms in law enforcement agencies, the lack of deeper reforms in the police. Because a lot of resources have been invested into the police – the training, the uniforms etc. These reforms are not delivering quick results, and sometimes they roll back.

Foreign partners have a fairly pragmatic approach: they have done all things possible, they have shown what shouldn't be done. But they won't do things for us. Clearly, we should not expect continued financial assistance from international partners on such a huge scale. They will not invest where they see no political will to change things. And this is not just one foreign partner. There are plenty of those who have halted funding in certain segments specifically because they didn't see successful use of the money.

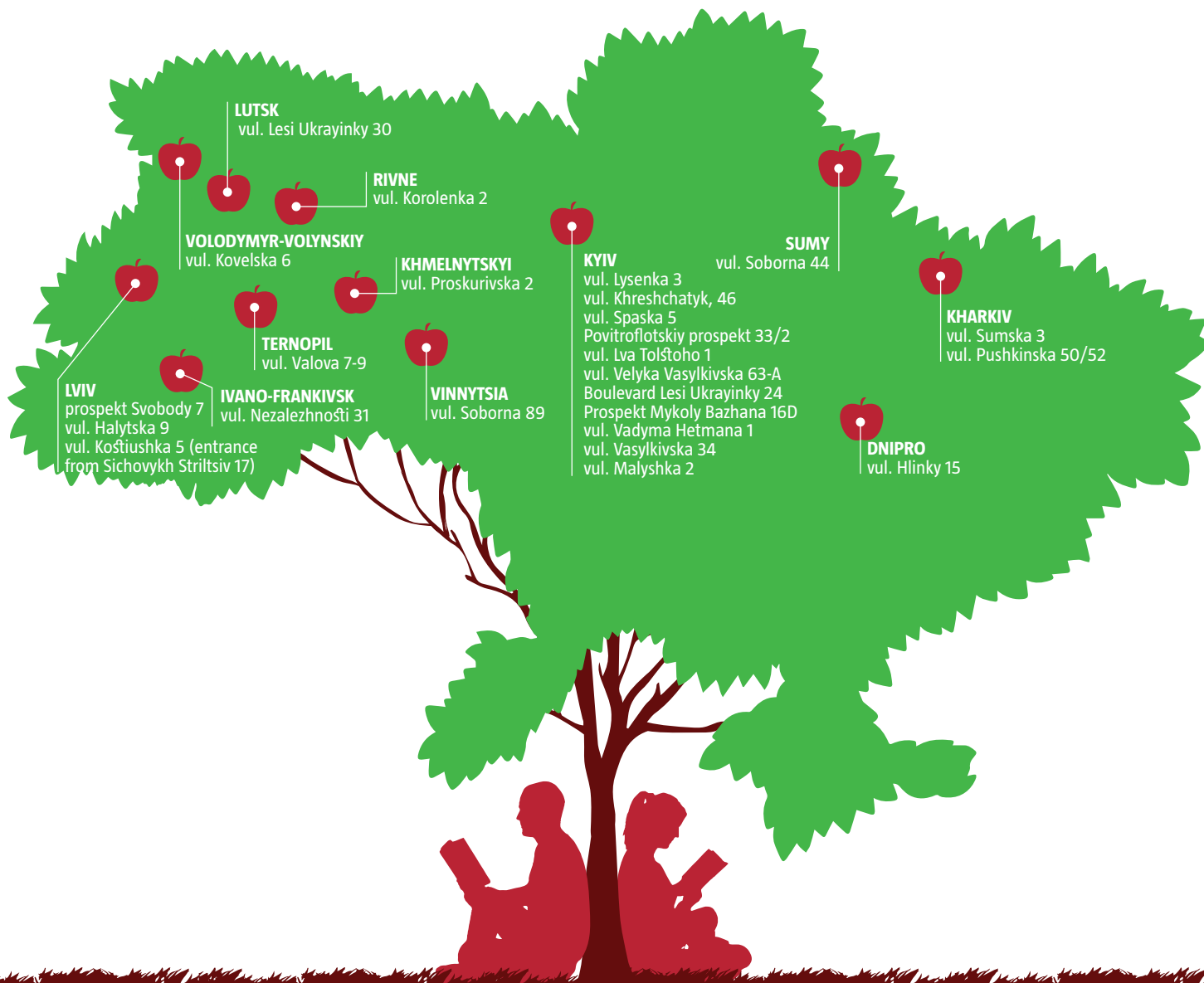
When I worked at the Prosecutor General's Office, our department involved the best international experts to help the investigators and did not pay them anything. The problem was that the investigators would not even show them case files under the pretext of secrecy of investigation.

Believe me, it is extremely difficult to provide expert assistance and advice on how to do a financial investigation in the best way possible when you have no access to the materials of the criminal proceedings. As a result, the Americans have said "Let us know if you need anything" and left. So have the Brits. Experts from the International Center for Asset Recovery of the Basel Institute of Governance stayed longer. They were staying at our International Department and working with requests for legal assistance. We provided draft requests to them and they were sending them out properly. By the way, they engaged an expert in financial investigation – a British Russian-speaking specialist hired at their expense. But he was not given the files of the respective criminal proceeding. So they gave us whatever help they could. The situation today is that no criminal proceeding on any former top official (on economic crimes or embezzlements investigated by journalists; I don't mention Yanukovich cases or state treason here) has got to the stage of hearing in court. ■

The case of the diamond prosecutors was a high-profile arrest of Main Investigative Bureau Director Volodymyr Shapakin and Kyiv Oblast Deputy Prosecutor Oleksandr Korniyets in July 2015. They were caught red-handed taking bribes. Hundreds of thousands of dollars cash, UAH 3 million, and a pile of diamonds were found in their office. The court released them on bail and the team of prosecutors that worked on the case was gradually squeezed out of the Prosecutor General's Office.



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# Narodniy Front redux

Roman Malko

Despite its currently low ratings, Arseniy Yatseniuk's Narodniy Front has managed to remain in the major league of Ukrainian politics

**R**enamed from its original *Front Zmin* or Front of Changes after the Euromaidan, *Narodniy Front* had the most support among Ukrainians in the 2014 VR election. At the time, the notion of a front was as current as it had never been as the war in the east escalated day by day, so who would not be prepared to vote for a newly revamped political party called "People's Front" that included many volunteer commanders and Maidan activists among its candidates. The fact that mixed in with them in the top positions on its lists were plenty of dubious personalities of the Old Guard did not seem to put voters off too much. Such is the Ukrainian "c'est la vie" attitude: let's elect the best of a bad lot and hope for the best. More than 22% of Ukrainians went to the polls with that in mind.

Still, NF had no chance of becoming the biggest faction and forming a majority in the Rada. By attracting a small army of FPTP candidates, its nearest rival, the Poroshenko Bloc, easily pushed its future coalition partner to the #2 position. Nevertheless, this also gave them a decent hold on power, which NF took full advantage of, filling the post of premier, a slew of ministries, and the position of NSC Secretary, among others. But power is not just a matter of taking up a seat: it means taking on responsibility—all the more so when the terrible events that had taken in the center of the capital were fresh in everyone's memories, which every day the dead and the wounded were being brought in from the front, and Ukrainian society was strained to the limit. Indeed, calling himself and his team "the Kamikaze Government" was probably the most reasonable step for NF leader Arseniy Yatseniuk to take. But even such an admission could not serve as an indulgence for unfulfilled expectations, as it turned out.

Indeed, those hopes had no chance of being fulfilled. First, the structure of NF was wrong from the very start, because it included unreliable and often even dangerous elements that, sooner or later, were guaranteed to bring it down. This continues to be NF's Achilles' heel. Secondly, the obligation to work closely with its "older brother" in the coalition was doomed to end badly. That's simply the way domestic politics works and seems to be the fate of Ukraine's ruling elite.

Some may deny that the ruling coalition is something nobler and entirely different than a clutch of oligarchic clans, but they will be disenchanted. Today, that's precisely what it's like: tycoons, representatives of FIGs, minor and major shysters. And that's who's establishing policy and running the ball. The difference is only in the level of arrogance and access to resources. One way or another, they are all orbiting around the same axis—the president—and to think they are somehow outsiders is simply naive. Of course, there is also an opposition—in the good sense of the word—and the fifth column, but that's another story. But NF itself has "infiltrated" the government no less successfully as "junior partner" to the Poroshenko Bloc, and in any

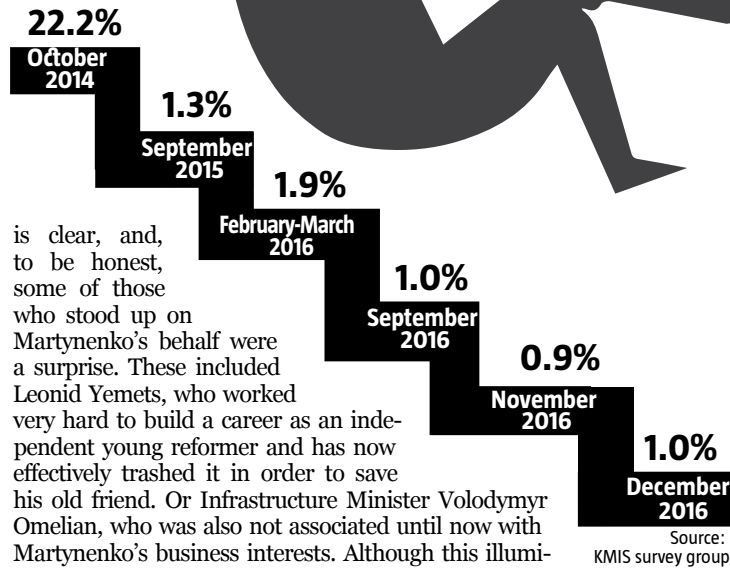
case has shared responsibility with the "senior partner" for all the mistakes and negative developments. The way the party's ratings began to slide after the Yatseniuk Cabinet was in office a few months was the clearest proof of this. Nor did the situation improve much after Yatseniuk himself resigned and the dirty details of the internecine war among the coalition partners came to light. In fact, this conflict was inevitable from Day 1, because access to government means access to resources and that means *ipso facto* competition in the best of Ukrainian traditions during the grand redistribution of influence.



**THE STRUCTURE OF NF WAS WRONG FROM THE VERY START, BECAUSE IT INCLUDED UNRELIABLE AND OFTEN EVEN DANGEROUS ELEMENTS. THE OBLIGATION TO WORK CLOSELY WITH ITS "OLDER BROTHER" IN THE COALITION WAS DOOMED TO END BADLY**

It's obvious now that *Narodniy Front* was prepared for this eventuality from the start and went in aware that their image would suffer. Why they did so is a different question: one segment, indubitably, for selfish reasons, the other segment—and one hopes the bigger one—for patriotic ones. Whatever anyone might say, the Front is one of the few state-minded forces in the legislature. Despite its nuances and problems, in contrast to the presidential BPP, NF members are generally driven by national interests in process of legislating and developing a strategy. Of course, sometimes private interests are veiled under state ones, but to accuse the faction of being destructive would be completely unfair. On the contrary, its patience and sometimes even irrational commitment to its unscrupulous partners is striking. NF's diversity is no news. The groups that constitute the Front are often so different that they could not possibly coexist: old oligarchic political clutches with heroes of the war and members the Maidan Samooborona. And so we have the groups of Speaker Andriy Parubiy, Interior Minister Arsen Avakov, one of the party's main sponsors Mykola Martynenko, Serhiy Pashynskiy, Arseniy Yatseniuk, and Oleksandr Turchynov, Acting President after Viktor Yanukovych fled Ukraine. Over time, this all became mixed up. Some field commanders came under the influence of business groups, some stayed with their old companies, and some preferred going solo. The most influential group in *Narodniy Front* remains Mykola Martynenko's. This became clear when an attempt was made to jail him and a slew of MPs and Ministers raised a hue and cry in his defense. Some, needless to say, gleefully rubbed their hands together, insisting that all these people were on Martynenko's payroll and that the way they closed ranks was the clincher. Some may be on his payroll, some may not. But that they are working with him

## The downfall Narodniy Front ratings in 2014-2016



is clear, and, to be honest, some of those who stood up on Martynenko's behalf were a surprise. These included Leonid Yemets, who worked very hard to build a career as an independent young reformer and has now effectively trashed it in order to save his old friend. Or Infrastructure Minister Volodymyr Omelian, who was also not associated until now with Martynenko's business interests. Although this illuminated many interesting things about individual MPs and confirmed the diversity of NF—a significant number of faction members did not stand up to defend one of the party's main sponsors—it also played into the hands of the leader, Yatseniuk, who once again showed himself as one of the pillars of the current political system and whoever attacks him will face a serious confrontation. Based on the example of Martynenko, one of the top people in the party, this was clearly shown. Politics is not merely the art of the possible, but a game in which you either compromise or you don't. Indeed, in this light, assumptions that Martynenko voluntarily gave up his immunity are fairytales. He did not want to do that. He was forced to do that and that nicely played the trick was nothing more than an element in the game of cooperation with coalition colleagues, in order to turn some of the negativity associated with Martynenko away from NF itself.

No less influential is the group associated with top cop Arsen Avakov, represented, among others by his deputy Anton Herashchenko and a top special purpose patrol police official Yevhen Deydey. Whatever one may think of him otherwise, Herashchenko is a charismatic individual and has considerable clout in the faction. Managerial talent, connections and financial resources lie behind his self-sufficiency and so others take his opinions seriously. Hence his influence and persistence. The faction also takes Turchynov seriously, who is represented by Pavlo Unguryan and Viktoriya Siumar in the Rada. Some would like to see him join forces with Pashynskiy, but they have completely different spheres of interest. Rumor has it that Serhiy Pashynskiy and his business partner, Serhiy Tyshchenko, are interested in petro-products and in the Russian business connected to this—which they would happily take over, under cover of patriotic slogans.

The Yatseniuk group is a fluid phenomenon. However the fact that it is represented by the faction head, Maksym Burbak, makes it influential. Parubiy's group, which is mostly people from the Euromaidan, keeps more-or-less

to itself. Martynenko is in competition with it because he'd like to see his own people in the Speaker's seat and in charge of VR Secretariat, but so far he has failed in this game. Finally, there is Andriy Ivanchuk, who is seen as a completely independent player, sometimes even as the *éminence grise* of the party. Maybe this is an exaggeration, but he is, in fact, the party communicator and has friends in almost every single faction in the Rada.

How this motley crew manages to stay together is anyone's guess, but the faction has demonstrated a solid level of discipline. Every Monday, there is a general assembly involving the top management, including Yatseniuk. They discuss problems and current issues, and set a plan for the week. On Wednesday or Thursday, the faction meets again, but without the bosses, to clarify any finer points. Decisions are made based on bills that were previously discussed and drafted by the top leadership, and are now presented to the membership. When the faction is radically opposed to some aspect, the bill is simply set aside since it won't find the necessary support. Nothing unusual in that but, despite everything, NF tends to vote more-or-less unanimously, which says a lot.

Indeed, *Narodniy Front* has few real options for now, other than to stick together. Its marginal ratings make it unlikely that NF will return triumphantly to the new Rada. Its lack of a vision for a common future does not help. Anyone who has been at the trough once and tasted the parliamentary porridge is unlikely to refuse a second portion. However, this requires resources and a strategy. And this is precisely where some would say that NF is lacking: strategic thinking and the necessary capacity. Moreover, what direction should it go in? Other factions have enough of their own. If you're not some honcho or otherwise of interest, who needs you? Whether it wants to or not, the herd will stick together, both at the micro, faction level, and at the macro, coalition level.

The reluctance to call a snap election and the suspension of all possible appointments, such as a new CEC, for instance, is part of all this. The time for playing politics will run out in 2019—at least that's what the current so-called strategy presumes. What will come next, what kind of configuration will present itself at that point, who will be breathing down their necks, whom they will have to fight and whom to kiss, is not clear at all. Yet going forward as a united Front, as in 2014, is also highly unlikely. For one thing, there are no grassroots structures. For some reason, the party has failed to establish itself locally, as its non-participation in the local elections testified. Secondly, warlike slogans alone will never capture anything, the names of commanders no longer carry the weight they once did, and the party does not have much to brag about in the way of achievements. And thirdly, too many divergences have appeared among the allies as they have worked together, much less a vision for a common future. Perhaps the differences aren't quite so huge as in BPP—where the cat seems to have dragged in every scrap it could find, especially among the FPTP MPs and, unable to grow together, the bits and pieces have long ago splintered along lines of interest—, but still noticeable.

Unfortunately, such is the nature of artificial parties that are organized in a hurry to go to the polls. It's not necessarily bad, either. Given what was going on in 2014, this may have even been necessary. Someone had to be the *ka-mikaze* and take on the thankless suicidal task. Whether the execution was quality or slapdash only time will tell. But, working together, they managed to preserve the state. That alone merits a medal. ■

# Diversifying from Russia: Don't stop now...

Oleksandr Kramar

Although there's been a sharp reduction in trade and commercial ties with Russia and in Ukraine's dependence on its neighbor, some key sectors still show levels of interaction that pose a threat to national security

The last five years have seen Ukrainian-Russian trade relations actively decline. The original impulse came when the Customs Union was set up in 2011 by Russia with Kazakhstan and Belarus, following which Russia began trade wars against Ukrainian manufacturers and producers as a way to force Ukraine to also join. In summer of 2013, pressure grew once more as President Viktor Yanukovich prepared, for all intents and purposes, to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union that included a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. With Russia's military aggressions against Ukraine in early and mid-2014 and the economic component of the AA between Ukraine and the EU coming into force in 2016, the process accelerated steadily.

The economic aspect of Russia's hybrid war has cost both countries enormously. By 2016, Ukraine's exports of goods and services to Russia had shrunk to US \$6.68 billion from US \$20.31bn in 2013 and US \$25.26bn in 2011. Russian suppliers lost even more: imports from Russia collapsed to US \$5.65bn from \$24.65bn in 2013 and US \$30.47bn in 2011. The winner, if one can even talk in such terms in this kind of situation, turned out to be Ukraine. Its huge trade deficit with Russia, which amounted to US \$5.2bn in 2011, had turned to a surplus of more than US \$1bn by 2016.

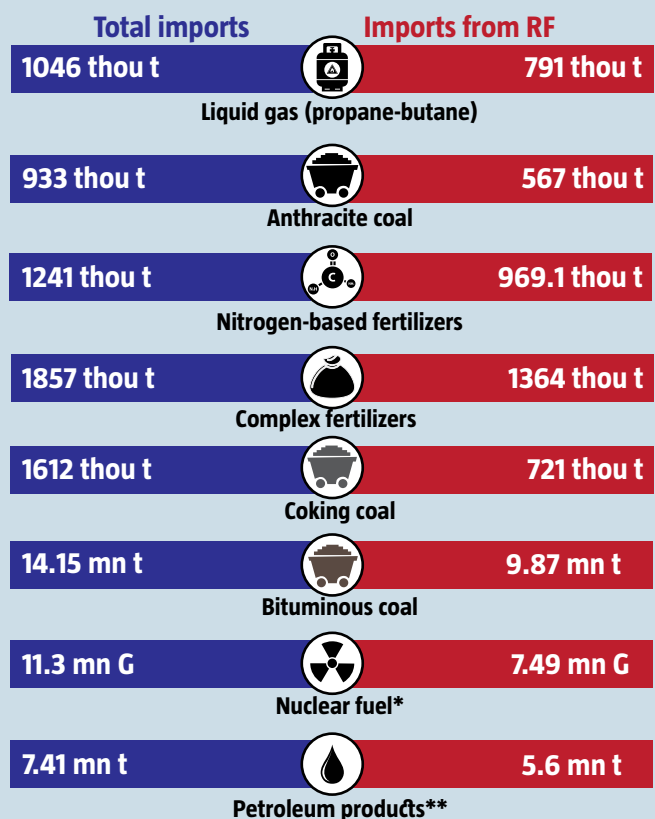
## A SLOPPY CLEAN-UP

The main thing is that Russia lost its status as Ukraine's key trading and commercial partner, a dependence on its larger neighbor that forced the country, for more than two decades, to concede to Moscow's demands, even when Kyiv enjoyed a pro-European administration, and made the majority of its producers effectively Russian lobbyists. This release from its dependence is now a fact at the level of the economy in general, but has not yet been absorbed in the consciousness of Ukrainian business—which can be seen in the way a large chunk of it positions itself. The consequence is that too many businesses have remained pro-Russian through sheer inertia.

This is partly encouraged by the remnants of economic dependence on Russia, as well, by the large debts that a slew of Ukrainian companies have at Russian banks. Other factors include the dominance of imported Russian top managers, the continuing and significant dependence of strategic domestic sectors on supplies of raw materials and fuels from the RF, and the dependence of certain export goods on the Russian

## Unjustified and dangerous dependence

The share of some strategic goods from RF in total imports of such goods by Ukraine, 2016



\*of fissile isotopes

\*\*Including those produced at Belarusian refineries

Calculations by author based on DerzhStat data

market. To overcome these factors, a new push is needed, either from ordinary Ukrainians or from targeted restrictive measures on the part of the state—perhaps both.

The biggest positive impact in releasing Ukraine from the dominance of Russian business more recently can be attributed to the sharp loss of position by IUD, the Industrial Union of Donbas, a corporation once owned by Serhiy Taruta and now controlled by Rus-

sia's Vneshekonombank. In 2013, it was responsible for almost 20% of Ukraine's metal output; since the blockade of ORDiLO, it has almost completely lost its market. Another factor was the sale of the Kharkiv Tractor Plant by its Russian owner. Yet another one is sanctions against Russian banks and other companies, which is forcing them to find a way out of the Ukrainian market, including the sale of the Ukrainian subsidiary of Sberbank, the Russian state savings bank.

Still, there remains the threat that these sales are fictions, because the buyers are Russian business entities, the way it was with Sberbank in Ukraine. Or that someone is taking advantage of the situation to reduce the evident presence of Russian business on individual Ukrainian markets in order for them to be dominated by companies that are nominally Ukrainian, but are actually owned by Ukrainian compradors who are closely linked to Russia, such as SCM's Rinat Akhmetov or Oleksandr Yaroslavskiy, who has long been an agent for Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska.

In a discussion of the prospects and purpose of maintaining Russian business in Ukraine that took place in March 2016, the President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RUIE) Aleksandr Shokhin told those present that, according to Putin, "you have to be patient a little longer. At least there's still a chance." As long as this opinion does not change to its opposite and we don't see a large-scale, irreversible exit of Russian businesses from Ukraine, there's a great deal that needs to be done.

It is also evident that an opposite tendency is taking place: a growing presence of other Russian FIGs on the Ukrainian market, such as the Alfa Group, which recently added Italy's UniCredit—and along with it, its subsidiary and one of Ukraine's larger financial institutions, UkrSotsBank—to a portfolio that already contains its own eponymous Ukrainian subsidiary. Alfa also continues to control the largest mobile operators in Ukraine, Kyivstar, and has a stake in a smaller one, life:), and the other major operator is owned by Russia's Mobile TeleSystems, which has rebranded its Ukrainian subsidiary as Vodaphone. Dozens of other Russian providers also continue to operate on the internet and telecoms service markets.

In this regard, the recent decision to add owners of Russian social networks to Ukraine's sanctions list seems like just a small step in a huge task that needs to be undertaken to free the country from the domination of Kremlin agents in strategic sectors. Because any Russian entity operating in these sectors is completely dependent politically on Russia's security forces for its survival.

### TRENDS IN BILATERAL TRADE IN SERVICES

Exports of Ukrainian goods to the Russian Federation bottomed out in 2016, possibly temporarily, at US \$3.59bn or 9.9% of Ukraine's overall exports compared to US \$15.05bn or 23.8% in 2013, and US \$19.8bn or 29.0% in 2011. Since the beginning of 2017, exports began to rise again, reaching US \$1.28bn over January-April, which is 38.5% more than for the same period last year. Still, the trade wars of recent year have led to a situation where the cumulative domestic export to Russia, the volumes of goods and services are almost equal. Nearly US \$3.09bn of services or 32.1% of overall exports of services from Ukraine went

to Russia in 2016. The decline in such exports compared to 2013 and 2011 is also significant, when they were 36.9% and 38.5%, but nothing compared to the collapse of trade in goods.

At first glance, Ukraine's dependence on the export of services to Russia remains considerable, and exchanging them seems beneficial primarily to Ukraine, as it ensures a substantial surplus balance of US \$3.1bn, compared to less than US \$0.5bn of imported services in 2016. However, these apparent figures hide a radically different reality. The lion's share of domestic exports is transport services, which constituted US \$2.77bn or 89.6% of all exports and US \$2.63 of the trade surplus. But included in these figures is more than 80% of the cost of Russian gas that transits through Ukraine's gas transport system (GTS).

This transit is a service exported to Russia only as a consequence of the fact that, at one point, Ukraine's leadership allowed the Russians to maintain their colonial approach to Ukraine and its GTS. And so gas is sold to Europe, not at the Ukrainian-Russian border, as it should be, but on the Ukrainian section of the one-

## UKRAINE IS ENORMOUSLY DEPENDENT ON IMPORTS OF MOST OF ITS RAW MATERIALS AND FUELS FROM RUSSIA, WHICH CONSTITUTES A THREAT TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC SECURITY IN KEY SECTORS: THE POWER INDUSTRY, STEEL-MAKING AND FARMING

time border of the USSR. In the end, this approach entrenched Ukraine's status as almost little more than a Russian autonomy, a territory through which Gazprom simply transported its fuel to consumers. Once Ukraine puts into effect its announced intention to change things when the current contract with Gazprom expires in 2019, European consumers will be buying Gazprom's natural gas at the border between Ukraine and Russia, and the transit services will then be exported to EU countries, not to the Russian Federation.

If transporting gas is removed from the equation, it turns out that there is no other serious component in the export of services to Russia from Ukraine. And that means that Ukraine has a significant positive balance only in such service areas as IT, with US \$145.1 million exported vs US \$68.1mn imported, equipment maintenance and repair with US \$29.3mn vs US \$5.3mn, construction with US \$5.5mn vs \$1.3mn, and processing raw materials on a tolling basis, with US \$4.2mn vs US \$0.9mn. Russia, by contrast, has a huge positive balance in providing a slew of services to Ukraine, suggesting that the post-colonial inertia in business, finance and insurance remains: business services with \$206.7mn imported vs US \$119.1mn exported, financial with US \$34.6mn vs US \$2.7mn, insurance with US \$5.7mn vs US \$1.0mn, as well as royalties and other matters related to intellectual property with US \$10.5mn vs US \$7.2mn.

### WEAK SPOTS IN BILATERAL TRADE IN GOODS

The weak spot for Ukraine's export goods to the RF remains the fact that most of them continue to constitute a major share of their makers' overall exports. For instance, over January-April 2017, 70% of all Ukrai-

nian deliveries to Russia represented 40%+ of the total export of such goods out of Ukraine, while for around 30% of deliveries to the Federation, the Russian market represented 70%+ of the total export of such goods out of Ukraine. To be more precise, nearly all of Ukraine's alumina exports—96.1% worth US \$166.6mn in Q1 of 2017—and all of its exports of radioactive elements and isotopes, worth US \$36.6mn, end up on the Russian market. They are the final remnants of Moscow's strategy of incorporating Ukrainian assets into the "transnational corporation" known as the Russian Federation.

In the case of alumina, it's about the output of the Mykolayiv Alumina Plant (MHZ), which is part of Deripaska and Partners' Rossiyskiy Aluminium [Russian Aluminium]. Indeed, the domination of the Russian monopolist has led to a situation where, despite its capacity to satisfy all of Ukraine's domestic needs and even export aluminum and goods made of it, Ukraine still imports it to this day, including from Russia! Meanwhile, the commitments Rossiyskiy Aluminium made to build an aluminum plant in Ukraine and process part of the alumina into aluminum locally during the privatization of

Russia has a huge positive balance in providing a slew of services to Ukraine, including business services with **\$206.7mn** imported vs **US \$119.1mn** exported, and financial with **US \$34.6mn** vs **US \$2.7mn**. This suggests that the post-colonial inertia these sectors remains

MAP were forgotten the moment the papers were signed. Moreover, for a long time, RA deliberately blocked the work and effectively destroyed another enterprise in the industry, the Zaporizhzhia Aluminum Plant (ZAK).

The export of all of Ukraine's nuclear materials to Russia, which is reprocessed into nuclear fuel and other materials in the Federation and then imported to Ukraine as a finished product, is similarly the consequence of many years of failure on the part of Ukraine's governments in establishing a domestic nuclear production cycle for the country's atomic energy stations (AESs).

Still, substantial dependence, more than 40% of all exports, on the Russian market can be seen in an additional 30 or so other Ukrainian commodities whose deliveries to the RF are worth nearly US \$1bn a year and more—each. These are predominantly a large variety of machine-building products, which were connected to supplying components to Russian enterprises: turbines worth US \$83.1mn over January-April 2017, or 66.8% of all such exports from Ukraine; railcars worth US \$22.5mn or 82.4% and locomotive railcar components worth US \$24.5mn or about 53.0%; liquid pumps worth US \$24.2mn or 65.9%; electric motors and generators worth US \$16.1mn or 63.5%; transformers worth US \$12.3mn or 44.7%; motion transmission mechanisms worth US \$14.5mn or 68.5%; farming equipment worth US \$11.5mn or 64.8%; and equipment for moving soil, rock and ores worth US \$8.9mn or 62.5%.

For these manufacturers, it's clear that the Russian market remains key to their export business and sometimes even represents most of their production, however small the orders might be. On one hand, this illustrates just how flaccid are the marketing and production strategies of the management of these enterprises, which are not putting serious effort into finding oppor-

tunities to reorient their production facilities towards modified versions of items that could be sold to different markets or even domestically. On the other, it also shows that the government is doing little or nothing to encourage this kind of reorientation from the Russian market to the domestic one or other foreign ones. For instance, it could offer targeted interest-free or low-interest loans for the purchase and modernization of equipment and for retraining personnel. There are also not enough public procurements and often unjustified preferences in purchasing that kind of equipment and technology in Ukraine itself.

A huge dependence on the Russian market is also evident among certain types of finished rolled steel products. For instance, 77.5% of all of Ukraine's exports of steel angles, structural bars and sections, worth US \$72.3mn in the first four months of 2017, 58.1% of all galvanized flat-rolled steel, worth US \$27.8mn, 72.7% of stainless flat-rolled steel, worth \$20.0mn, and 48.1% of bars, rods and sections of corrosion-resistant steel, worth US \$14.5mn, are exported to the Russian Federation.

Clearly, the export of certain types of steel to the RF was huge within its category, even though it was relatively minor compared to the total export of all steel products from Ukraine, worth US \$1.4 billion during this same period—never mind all ferrous exports, which were worth US \$2.9bn. Ukrainian pipe-makers have pretty solidly moved away from the Russian market, after being the focus many a trade war between the two countries in years past: over January-April, they shipped only 24.3% of their products, worth US \$31.2mn, to the RF.

Other industrial manufacturers, however, still are quite dependent on this market. 50.5% of Ukraine's wallpaper products, worth US \$20.2 million over January-April 2017, went to Russia, 58.4% of ceramic tiles, worth \$12.8mn, 45.1% of uncoated paper and cardboard, worth US \$9.5mn, and 50.0% of plastic containers for transporting and packaging goods, worth \$13.5mn. Even though this represents sectors that are far from leading ones in Ukraine's economy, each of their annual sales to the Russian market amount to generally UAH 1bn and more and their share of overall exports is quite large. So the loss of the Russian market for many manufacturers in key sector could be quite painful.

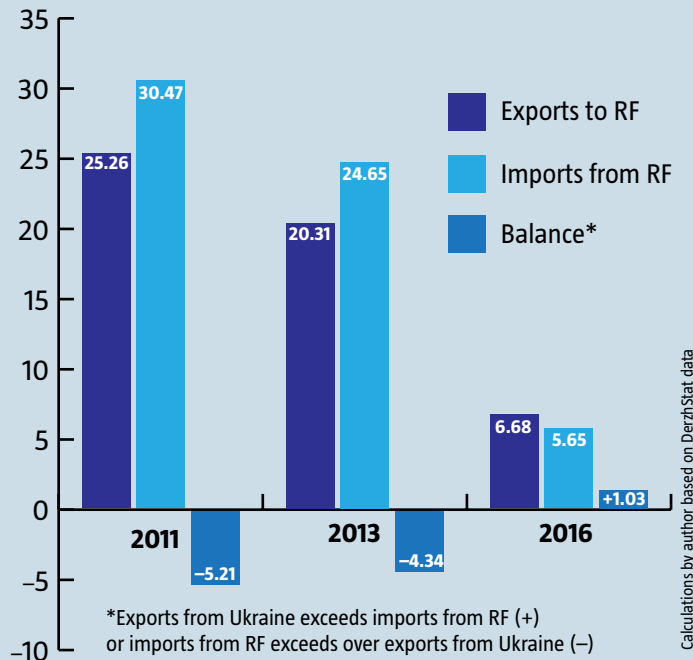
And so, the shrinkage of the Russian market share from around 30.0% to only 9.3% of exported domestic products in the first four months of 2017 does not reflect the uneven share of individual groups of goods. The fact is that the majority of industries either export only a few percentage points of their product or none at all to Russia. The basis for Ukrainian deliveries to the RF continue to be predominantly those products that are simply very dependent on this particular market and makes these manufacturers very vulnerable not only to the economic situation in Russia but to bilateral relations. In terms of Ukraine today, this means that they will inevitably tend to lobby Russian positions.

## THREATS TO ECONOMIC SECURITY

Meanwhile, Ukraine is enormously dependent on imports of most of its raw materials and fuels from Russia, which constitutes a threat to the country's economic security in key sectors: the power industry, steel-making and farming. Moscow has demonstrated

## The impact of trade wars: Ukraine's victory at a cost

Total exports, imports and balance of Ukraine-Russia trade in goods and services, 2011–2016, US \$ bn



on many occasions its readiness to use not only restrictions on imports of Ukrainian goods that are very dependent on the Russian market in its hybrid war against Ukraine, but also restrictions on the delivery of raw materials and fuels from its own suppliers. Such artificial shortages threaten to cause serious problems for Ukraine's economy. The latest examples are coal, piping and liquid gas. Moreover, this does not mean that in the future this kind of manipulation might not be extended to other commodities for which Ukraine is critically dependent on supplies from the RF. Most of these can obviously be substituted by switching to other suppliers, but with Russia delivering 50–80% of the needed quantities today, switching in a hurry is likely to present real problems. That means that this switch needs to be happening gradually, already today.

In the power industry, this means the hyperdependence on Russian nuclear fuel at Ukraine's AESs, and on Russian anthracite, petroleum products and liquid gas at its cogeneration plants or TESSs. The example of nuclear fuel is one of the top success stories in this regard. Although 66.3% of Ukraine's nuclear fuel for its AESs, calculated in fissile isotopes, and 70.5% in terms of value was imported from the RF in 2016, this was still considerably less than just a year earlier, when the same shares were 90% and 95%, while in the first four months of 2017, the share of RF imports of fuel assemblies was down to 53% by value.

With other forms of energy, the situation is much worse. In 2016, 69.8% of all anthracite imports were from Russia, 66.7% by value. Since the beginning of

2017, all deliveries came from Russia, despite earlier announcements by the Ministry of Power and Coal that they would be banned. Moreover, there are indications that shipments of anthracite to Tsentrenergo, one of the central power utilities, marked as apparently coming from Georgia appear to have been fictitious sales.

The situation is also critical with deliveries of petroleum products and liquid gas. Fully 75.6% or 71.7% by value of the former came to Ukraine from the RF and Belarus in 2016, even though in 2015 only 67.9% and 66.7% did. This year, the share is up to 77.0%. In 2016, 75.6% of all liquid propane-butane came from the RF or 75.4% by value, while another 20.7%, 19.1% by value, came from Belarus. By comparison, these same imports in 2015 amounted to only 60.4% and 58.3% from Russia and 93.1%, 89.9% by value, for the two countries combined. And so we can see, not only complete dependence on supplies from the only realistic source, and continuing pressure to reduce supplies from alternative sources. Yet it would seem that the import of this kind of gas should be a lot simpler to diversify than imports of piping.

In the metallurgical industry, Ukraine is hyperdependent on deliveries of coke and bituminous coal from Russia, which is needed to process ores. The share of RF imports of bituminous coal grew to 69.8% in 2016, or 63.2% by value, compared to 55.0% and 46.8% in 2015, while imports of coke rose to 44.7%, 45.1% by value, compared to 34.5% and 36.9% in 2015—although the total volume of imported coke in 2016 was actually down from 2015.

In the farm sector, dangerous dependence levels can be seen in imports of Russian nitrogen-based and especially complex fertilizers. In 2016, 78.1% of nitrogen-based fertilizers, 80.6% by value, came from the RF. The lion's share of other fertilizers came from Belarus, whose enterprises are completely dependent on the supply of gas from Russia, which is needed to produce them. Ukraine also gets all of its semi-finished ammonia to produce fertilizers at domestic plants. Last year, 73.4% or 67.4% by value of all complex chemical fertilizers came from the RF as well, representing a domestic market share that is significantly larger because of the smaller output volumes from domestic manufacturers.

And so, overcoming Ukraine's critical dependence on Russian imports of raw materials and goods that are important for the economic security of the country requires active, immediate measures to gradually diversify supplies. At the same time, it's important to avoid getting into prohibitive tariffs and other mechanisms that simply provide artificial breaks to individual market monopolists and create problems for consumers, as happened not long ago with mineral fertilizers.

A more measured and long-term instrument against dumping and monopolization on the Ukrainian market by Russian suppliers could be to apply a cap on the volume of deliveries from a single source, say, not more than 25% or 35%, which is acceptable according to domestic anti-monopoly legislation. But the calculus for such measures must be based on the real, not nominal, country of origin of each product. For instance, it's obvious that supplies of petroleum products or liquid gas from Belarus should be treated as the equivalent of supplies coming from Russia, which is the sole source of all raw materials for producers in Belarus. ■

# Where are we?

Interviewed by Andriy Holub, Stanislav Kozliuk, Roman Malko, Tetyana Lomakova

*The Ukrainian Week* asked politicians, activists, experts and artists how they interpret the point of no return towards Russia and whether Ukraine has turned the corner



## Yuriy Bereza, MP, Narodniy Front

I think we passed the point of no return during the battles of Ilovaik and Debaltseve. In the mental and moral sense, no return is definitely possible after such events. Those whom we once considered brothers fired at us point-blank after they promised us a green corridor. However, the divorce in the historical and philosophical sense is still underway.

For most of the society, unfortunately, it is not yet a fait accompli, as it is for me or for those who have been to this war. The task of the Parliament and the MPs is to put the process on the acceleration track. This is quite important. The key factor of our divorce are priests and teachers. I am absolutely convinced that if we can protect our children from the myths

about the "happy Communist past," then the divorce will be completed as quickly as possible. Wars are not won with weapons or army — they are won with teachers and priests. Will pragmatic relations between Ukraine and Russia be possible in the future? This issue can be addressed only after the change of the political regime in Russia. I have many relatives living in Russia. Recently, they came to Ukraine because of the death of our common relative. I met them at the train station and took them to the cemetery. Although we have the same blood, we are different mentally. They have lived in the territory of that empire for 40 years. At the beginning of their stay here, they were completely hostile, although we grew up in the same village. Now, they are trying to move to Ukraine. After having been fully rooted in Russia, two weeks in Ukraine became a mental, cultural, moral, and emotional shock for them. In Russia, they are under constant pressure of information.



## Mustafa Dzhemilev, MP, Petro Poroshenko Bloc

Russia's politics towards the world and Ukraine leave us no choice but to move as far away from it as possible. It is Russia itself that drives this movement. After all, those in power there call Ukraine dirty words and want no normal relations with our country. They stick to the only principle, as

in the Soviet times: segregation into "younger" and "older" brothers. Russia has no other dimension of politics now. Therefore, I think that the further we move away from that country, the better for us. That could change if Russia becomes a civilized, democratic state. However, it has no sufficient internal forces for that as of today. Although take Germany: 99% of the population supported Hitler at some point there; now the country has changed completely and became one of the most democratic countries in the world.



## Andriy Vadaturskiy, MP, Petro Poroshenko Bloc

I believe that we have not yet passed the point of no return. You can just have a look at the trade volumes, and it will tell you a lot. I am talking about the things that still have not been disconnected, such as energy systems: electricity and water, for example. Everything is tied so tightly there that I don't even know how to clean it all up. Trade turnover with Russia has decreased significantly, this is

true. And trade with Europe have significantly increased. We

have not yet got rid of political dependence. We have problems due to the financing of political parties, the influence is exerted through Crimea and Donbas. Therefore, we can say that politically we became even more dependent than before. Or, maybe, this dependence has simply surfaced. I think we should terminate relations with Russia as much as possible. I had personal experience when I completely severed my business relations with it in 2008. Because, on the one hand, (Russia. — Ed.) is a large and interesting market, but at the same time they all play by their own rules that change constantly. Therefore, you just have to cut once, survive and trade with the world that respects the laws and regulations. The society will only benefit from this.



### Ihor Lutsenko, MP, Batkivshchyna

We will have passed the point of no return when our formal politics has no openly pro-Russian political forces and when our information space has no overtly pro-Russian propaganda mouthpieces.

The intensification of the political struggle in the country will contribute the most to severing these links. Maidan was such intensification, and it helped us move away, and so did the war. I hope that some events in the external and domestic fronts will push us further away. Actually, the intensification of the struggle, both interior and exterior, contributes to that. You see, on May 9 there was a slight intensification, which resulted in the events in Dnipro, and we advanced a bit in these matters<sup>1</sup>. I do not think that any part of Ukrainians will side with Russia after all these events. On the contrary, for Russia, it is more profitable to hush and lull the attention of Ukrainians, then it can succeed.

When it comes to culture, it turns into politics in this case, it is inseparable from politics. The economy, too, is ultimately expressed in politics. So, when common sense with regard to Russia starts dominating in politics, then subsequent economic measures will follow. All the more so that these measures have long been waiting in various draft laws and concepts. But until we define our politics and this until this definition manifests itself in implemented solutions, our economy will keep functioning under the Russian influence, from energy to finances.

To break off this relationship quickly, we need to solve the issue of the occupied territories. Today there are bills waiting in Parliament, introduced by me and my colleagues, that would limit the economic cooperation with the aggressor, from mandatory labeling of Russian goods (currently it is voluntary) to steps restricting the operations of the entities targeted by sanctions. This includes energy, as well as trade in goods and services.

<sup>1</sup> On May 9, still widely marked as Victory Day after the Soviet tradition in Ukraine, a rally of the Immortal Regiment took place in a number of cities across Ukraine. The rally in Dnipro was headed by Oleksandr Vilkul, a Dnipro-based Party of Regions' actor that is allegedly part of Rinat Akhmetov's wing of the Opposition Bloc. At one point, ATO veterans demanded the rally participants to remove the red communist flags they carried. The veterans were attacked by the titushky, the young men of athletic physique and training in martial arts that walked alongside the rally and wore orange stickers as insignia. The titushky beat up the veterans while the police barely intervened or sided with the titushky. This caused public outcry.



### Denys Sylantyev, MP, Oleh Lyashko's Radical Party

I think the point of no return has not yet been passed. There is a Soviet movie about Peter the Great, in which a German guy says: "We can see Russia in different ways, hate it or fear it, but we have to trade with it in order to use its resources and possibilities for the benefit of our country." Therefore, bad peace is better than good war. No matter how much we want to break with it, we are still geographically close to it and cannot be constantly at war with that country. We have to defend our identity and independence, but this should be done in a

way that is profitable to us: through the use of its (Russia's. — Ed.) resources and its market for the benefit of our market. What we have to do is not to put our ambitions to the forefront, but the interests of the country and the people. This is what should be done; the interests of the country and the people should be prioritized over personal ambitions. We should not be following some obscure principles that ruin the country politically and economically.

Politics is the art of compromise, and we should always look for the ways out of the difficult situation. We cannot overcome Russia by military means. The war in the East will end in any case with negotiations rather than the surrender of one of the parties. We have to develop our army and increase our defensive capacity. It would be wrong to think that you can "weed out" people in the East or establish order there. People should be attracted to you because you create

### Serhiy Taruta, MP, unaffiliated



No, Ukraine has not yet passed the point of no return. The experience of South Korea and Israel shows that it doesn't matter how aggressive or powerful your neighbor is in military and economic terms. The main thing is to bring about real

change in your country and to unite both the society, and the right, state-minded politicians. Then you can change the country quickly.

### Yuriy Pavlenko, MP, Opposition Bloc



I don't quite understand what is the point of no return in terms of dependence. Historically, Russia is Ukraine's eternal neighbor, we have the longest border with it, and so we will always depend on whatever is going on there. Simi-

larly, Russia will depend on what is happening in Ukraine. We have some common aspects in terms of history, language. Ukrainians surely understand Russian, and Russians understand Ukrainian, to a smaller extent, of course. However, this is our advantage. We understand our neighbor, and we do not need translators. The point of no return and our status depend mainly on us. I saw some research a year ago, according to which Russia is no longer the key factor of influence on the lives of Ukrainians. At the same time, the number of people interested in the prospects of communication and integration with the EU has increased. Those 30% of people for whom Russia was the main path of integration simply changed their stand and now believe that Ukraine's path is where it is profitable for it. This was a certain step forward. However, in the last year, the dilettantism of the Ukrainian authorities and the debate over the visa-free regime discredited the European integration. The authorities have provided no serious arguments to prove that we can do without Russia. On the contrary, many of their actions even discredited the stance of the Ukrainian citizens claiming that our path lies where it is profitable for Ukraine. Therefore, I would not talk about the point of no return. We will never be able to move our borders. Russia as a neighbor will always be either a danger to Ukraine, or a tool of development. However, what exactly Russia will become largely depends on Ukraine, on how strong and united it will be, and how professional its government will be. One cannot deny Russia's tireless efforts to annex Ukraine. It's in their blood, and this should be understood. This is a risk at least for the century to come.



### Yuriy Yakymenko, Director of Political and Legal Programs at Razumkov Center

Given that we are in the state of an armed conflict that resulted in enormous casualties, as well as territorial and economic losses for Ukraine, I think that the attitude to Russia has changed significantly. Our polls confirm it. As many as 80% of the respondents define the relations between Ukraine and Russia as bad or hostile. This is an indicator. Another

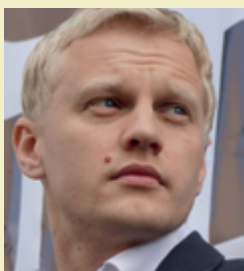
indicator is that most people do not see any prospects for improving these relations either in the short or medium term, not even in the near 50 years. More than 70% of the respondents believe that in the near future these relations will remain unchanged or will deteriorate. If there is optimism, it is for no sooner than a horizon of 5 to 10 years. However, we can say today that there are no prospects for recovering the former attitude of Ukrainian citizens to Russia.

Also, we have myths, an extraordinary phenomenon that is difficult to overcome. One is the myth of "one people". Over 60% of

Ukrainians believe that Russians and Ukrainians are different nations. At the same time, a quarter of the population says it is one nation.

In the myth of the "brotherly nations," more than a half of the population believes that Ukrainians and Russians are fraternal peoples. Although, compared to 2016, this figure has dropped: then it was 62%. However, the question is what people mean by this concept. If it is the common historical heritage and the descent from the same Slavic root, it is one thing; if it is the nature of brotherly relations, it is something quite different. It is difficult to know the reasoning of those 50%.

It is clear, however, that Ukrainians have largely comprehended their identity as the result of the developments of the recent years. It is a fact. At least, because 60% of the respondents support the idea that Ukraine has a history that is different from other countries, that is not tied to any other country. This indicates that Ukrainians perceive themselves to be a separate people, a separate nation. These changes started in 2014, and we have been documenting them in the recent years.



### Vitaliy Shabunin, AntAc Board Chair

There is a good example of Moldova, which received the visa-free regime with the EU and fulfilled all of its requirements. However, later, because corruption had not been overcome, a totally pro-Russian president came to power, the only one who stood next to Putin during the recent

military parade in Moscow. Therefore, I think, until corruption is eradicated or at least minimized, it is difficult to say that Ukraine cannot go back. Corruption destroys the army, the law enforcement system, and politics as such. As long as this tool is not eliminated, we have a chance to return to the past. Although, in fact, we have made many steps forward with visa liberalization, energy independence, and changes to the utility tariff policy. It did cost us dear, but freedom is costly.



### Ihor Mazur, one of UNA-UNSO leaders, officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

UNA—UNSO (Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian Nationalist Self-Defense – Ed.) has always said, since the early 1990s, that Russia is our enemy. People in Moscow cannot view Ukraine as an independent state. They keep dreaming of the "Great Russia." But there can be no "Great Russia," where there is an independent Ukraine, because their scale implies that they should swallow Ukraine first.

Today we are still fighting the war for independence. With the shared border that stretches thousands of kilometers, we have the constant threat of an attack and the loss of our state. However, unlike a century ago, today we have a fairly good chance to win, we have some support in the world.

It is bad that such thing as Moscow Patriarchate exists in Ukraine. It is very bad that the position of the Russian language is so powerful after 26 years of independence. If we were truly one nation, Russia would have no chance. Unfortunately, they still have a chance to win today. Many of our citizens believe that the Russian people is not an enemy, that it is just one bad Putin, that the situation may change, and we can still be united with Russia. This is the problem.

The military are told: "Guys, you have to protect the territory, you have to fight and die." Only, behind your backs, hucksters will rule: Taruta, Akhmetov, Pinchuk, and Poroshenko. They are very smart, because they are good at making money. And they have made their

way to power. And they will continue on this way, to grow their businesses, to become multibillionaires instead of millionaires. Unfortunately, they came to govern Ukraine not to go down in history as prominent historical figures. When Artem Tereshchenko had sugar mills a hundred years ago, he invested in churches. Today someone wants every town to have a ROSHEN shop. For me as a man who fought for over a year for Mariupol as part of a reconnaissance battalion of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, it was very painful to see that the president evacuated his factory from the city at the outbreak of the hostilities. He laid off several thousand people and withdrew all the assets and equipment, thus showing that he was fleeing. In this way, he hinted to Mariupol residents and to the guys at the front line that he had already surrendered the city, that he would not fight for it. The fact that the city remained Ukrainian is not his achievement. It should be credited to those patriots who were in my unit and in other units.

While we have such elite, bound by corruption and billions, there will be a threat to the Ukrainian statehood. Because these guys sometimes treat Ukraine as a large confectionary plant with 27 branches (24 oblasts, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and Kyiv and Sevastopol as special-status cities – Ed.). To close or divest two or three branches for them is business as usual. Unfortunately, our president is not De Gaulle. Unfortunately, he is not Hetman Skoropadsky. Several hundreds of families decide the fate of our country, but most of them are not patriots of Ukraine. They cling to Ukraine, because they have their assets here that they have not yet withdrawn. At the first threat, they will withdraw them, and withdraw themselves as well.



### Miroslav Gai, Volunteer and head of Mir & Co Foundation

Being under the Russian influence has had an impact on what is happening in Ukraine now. There is the Russian influence on Ukraine as a state and as a culture. However, the fact that we are communicating in Ukrainian with you says that we have been able to preserve our national identity and identify ourselves as Ukrainians. The myth of "we are one people with the peoples of Russia" is outright propaganda.

As for me, we should not be talking about the point of no return. We are undergoing the process of building a nation state. The borders do not go along the contact line or frontier posts. They go along mental and cultural lines. With the Russian aggression in Crimea and Donbas, it became particularly noticeable. If you come to Germany and from there go to France, you will not see any border checkpoints, but you will clearly understand that you are in another country, even if you only go 300 m. Because the true boundaries are at the cultural and mental levels. Ukraine has chosen the right path and goes towards civilization. This is especially noticeable when compared with what is happening in Russia with Ukrainian events in social, cultural and political life. The dictatorship that has been built in Russia is sending the country back to the Stalinist

era in its worst forms. Only mass executions are lacking. However, if you look at Chechnya, you can probably say that there are both executions and torture.

In the meantime, Ukraine continues its struggle for the national state. This is a process that European countries underwent a long time ago, the countries that were colonies of empires. In fact, we are now living through the disintegration of the last great empire, the Russian Empire, which failed to collapse entirely in 1917. Ukraine has become the stone that this empire stumbled on. It falls, and we are witnessing this process.

I welcome the developments taking place in Ukraine, including the ban on Russian intellectual products. It would be wrong to talk about banning social networks. This is a ban of dangerous Russian products coming from a country ruled by a dictatorship, where the government hails from intelligence services and uses the methods of intelligence services. We should remember that Vkontakte created by Pavel Durov came under the control of the FSB, as was openly written in the Russian media. Durov himself had to leave the country and to transfer his brainchild into the hands of the FSB. You can use Google search engine to read about it.

In general, we should remember that we are at war, and the price of defeat is the existence of the Ukrainian nation as such. So far we have been successfully resisting and fighting for independence, which costs us blood, sweat, and heavy losses.



### Roman Burko, co-founder of InformNapalm, a volunteer intelligence community

The history of Ukraine is a constant war with Muscovy, but things can change. Time and again, we are drawn into the Moscow orbit and rejected from our European future. Our task is to break this "cycle of sam-sara" and to ultimately gain our independence and our unified state. But it will take a lot of time and work.

There are always a lot of variable models. Chaos theory claims that "something as small as the flutter of a butterfly's wing can ultimately cause a typhoon halfway around the world." Therefore, our task is not to rely on circumstances, but to make our country stronger and its people happy and free, step by step.



### Sean Townsend, speaker for the Ukrainian Cyber Alliance

I think that after the revolution and the three years of war Ukraine will never again be part of the "Russian World," similar to the Baltic States and Eastern Europe that are no longer part of the Russian sphere of influence. This is most noticeable if you have a look at our opponents. As we monitor the

average (and not so average) separatists, we can note that almost none of them any longer believes that Ukraine would someday return to the "family of fraternal peoples," or that Russia would be able to organize at least one more self-proclaimed republic or expand the boundaries of the ORDiLO. I see the main threat to our country today not in Russia, although Russia still has both political and economic leverage and the war is not over (it has yet to be won, since Russia is not going to abandon its plans), but in a revanchist comeback under the Ukrainian flag. When under the guise of fighting for freedom and independence, for decommunization, essentially Soviet methods are used, when criminal penalty for displaying Communist symbols (under Art. 436-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine) is three years more in jail than under the "dissident" Art. 70 ("anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"), when for "public calls to change the system," for a post in a social network you can go to jail — these are all typical purely Russian practices. To finally move away from the common past with Russia, it is important to understand that "freedom" is not a slogan on the flag, it is a value for which a high price has been paid and which cannot be forsaken even to fight the enemy. You cannot defeat the dragon using draconian methods.



### Bohdan Batrakh, Director of B&H FILM DISTRIBUTION

I think that the point of no return in our dependence on Russia has been passed. It has been passed in three very important categories. First, the war broke out after the Revolution of Dignity. The war made Ukraine unhook itself from the gas pipe, which was the source of interstate corruption under all previous governments and elites

of Ukraine. The funding of political parties and presidents depended on that agreement. So, this is the point of no return in terms of gas, because Ukraine has not been buying gas from Russia for two years now, and there is no interstate corruption. Second, severance of all ties with the Russian military industry. This was a great industry worth billions of dollars in trade volumes between Ukraine and Russia, and which did everything to ensure that the Ukrainian defense industry, along with the army, is subordinate to Russia. Up to 50% of all products made in Ukraine had Russian parts. Now those ties are broken, and our military industry is recovering on the Ukrainian economic base. This is a very important point of no return. The third important point of no return is the decline in trade relations. The turnover decreased from USD 17bn to 3bn. Ukraine has lost a huge market for its products and now has to look for new sources and markets worldwide. Most of those things are irreversible. This means that Ukraine's economy has turned away from Russia and towards the other parts of the world. ■

# MORBA



# Numbers about words

Andriy Holub

Is Ukrainian society ready for changes in language policy?

Despite the constant criticism of the pace of reform following the Revolution of Dignity, MPs have been able to adopt many new laws relating to almost all areas of life. Changes were even made to the Constitution and new law-enforcement authorities were created. However, in one field everything has remained almost the same. Namely, in language policy. The so-called Kolesnichenko-Kivalov Law, adopted back in 2012, has still not been repealed, even though it caused protests five years ago – before the revolution and war. Currently, several bills on language status have been presented to Parliament, but the issue remains fertile ground for speculation across the political spectrum. *The Ukrainian Week* tried to get to the bottom of the topic with the help of sociologists and researchers of the linguistic environment.

## STATISTICAL PROGRESS

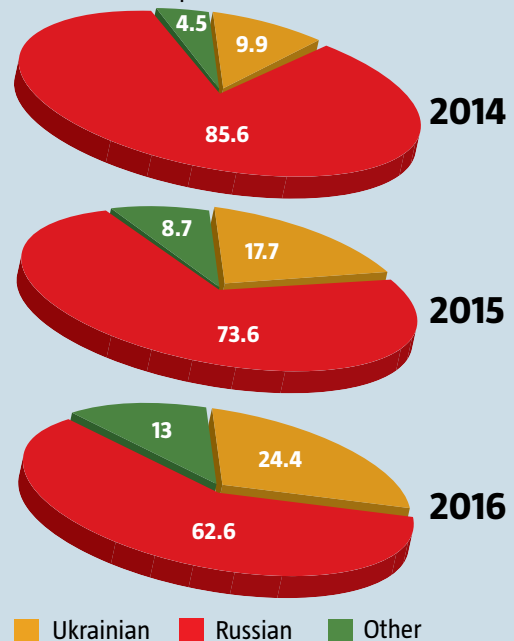
The Freedom Space NGO carries out yearly reviews of the state of the Ukrainian language. The aim is to track levels of its use in public life. In 2016, they presented their study for the sixth time. According to the movement's coordinator Taras Shamayda, Ukrainian, despite its official status, does not perform a number of functions.

"The Constitution provides that the State shall ensure the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life throughout its territory. However, this provision has not yet been implemented. Because there is no law to guarantee it. Accordingly, it does not function properly as in most European countries. This leads, for example, to the underdeveloped state of certain language-related domestic industries, the vulnerability of the markets linked to these industries and Ukrainian language rights, and in general to the absence of a cohesive cultural and information space," he said.

The Freedom Space reviews are based on official statistics, social studies and the monitoring by activists. In addition to general information about language use, they present specific details such as the number of signs in different languages in commercial establishments and menu language in the food service industry. It turned out that in 2016 Ukrainian signs were present in 40% of monitored locations and Russian in 14%. However, the amount of signage in the Latin alphabet has increased almost threefold over the last five years. "If this continues, then in a year or two they will exceed Ukrainian language signs in number," the study notes. Only 60% of food outlets offer a Ukrainian menu.

## The language of magazines and other periodicals (other than newspapers)

% of total media print run



"During the last review, the most problems were found in television and radio broadcasting. The situation on the radio was somewhat corrected by the law on quotas for Ukrainian songs. Now at least a quarter of the songs on the air are in that language. The fact that they could not be heard on the radio before is due not to their scarcity, but the policy of treating anything Ukrainian as inferior that was pursued by many radio station owners," Shamayda is convinced.

He advocates changes to language legislation and supports bill No 5670 "On the State Language". According to the expert, adoption of this document is above all an issue of national security. He states that there are about 4-5 million people in Ukraine who call Ukrainian their native language but admit that they do not speak it at home, let alone in public. "We see this from the West, where the difference is only 2% (when fewer people speak Ukrainian than those who call it their mother tongue – Ed.) to the East and South, where it reaches 20%. Imagine how powerful the pressure and influence had to be for people to ignore the language they consider their

mother tongue. This affects not only the older generation, but also children and youth."

Sociologists constantly record a gap between those who call Ukrainian their mother tongue and those who use it. However, they give varying reasons for this. In 2016, the Razumkov Centre published the results of a large-scale study on Ukrainian identity. One of its sections was on language issues. The findings showed that from 2011 to 2016 the proportion of those who choose Ukrainian as their main language for communication at home was almost unchanged: it increased merely from 52% to 55%; Russian was preferred by 45% and 41% of Ukrainians respectively. However, the proportion of those who call Ukrainian their native language changed significantly. In 2011, it was 61% and it is now 69%. However, it is worth noting that the latest study was not conducted in occupied Crimea.

"We can presume that under the influence of socio-political processes [...] in Ukraine in recent years, there have been some changes in the linguistic identity of citizens, but not in language practices, which are more stable," the authors of the study conclude.

In addition, they acknowledge persistent and substantial regional differences: in the West, Centre and South, most respondents called Ukrainian their mother tongue (97%, 86% and 63% respectively). In the East and Donbas, Russian dominates in this respect (52% and 66% respectively).

### ACTIVATING THE LANGUAGE

Another large survey dedicated to the language situation in Ukraine was conducted in early 2017 with the assistance of Volkswagen Stiftung.

Sociologist Hanna Zalizniak, who worked on this project, has been involved in sociolinguistic research in Ukraine since 2000. According to her, language is not only a means of communication for the country's population, but also an identity marker. "That's why sociologists always record more people who call Ukrainian their mother tongue than those who actually speak it," she says.

The study that Zalizniak participated in consisted of personal interviews with more than 2,000 respondents throughout Ukraine in February 2017 and focus group discussions in four cities: Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa.

"Many people in the focus groups responded that they see Ukrainian as the language of most everyday communication in the future. Often, however, they added, 'I won't be able to speak it myself, but my children...' A change in language practice requires constant work on oneself and leaving one's comfort zone, especially for people who have already established themselves," says Zalizniak.

Accordingly, a change in language legislation should not have direct impact on the way Ukrainians communicate with each other. Other data from the Razumkov Centre study can prove this. The most popular answer to the question "What chiefly determines the choice of the language you speak?" was "I've been speaking this language since childhood". It was given by 41%. Pragmatic reasons for using a language are not very common. Less than



2% of respondents choose a language depending on how widespread access to information or education in it is.

"The only pragmatic motivation is that if a team leader speaks Ukrainian, the whole team starts to follow. It's the same with Russian," says Hanna Zalizniak.

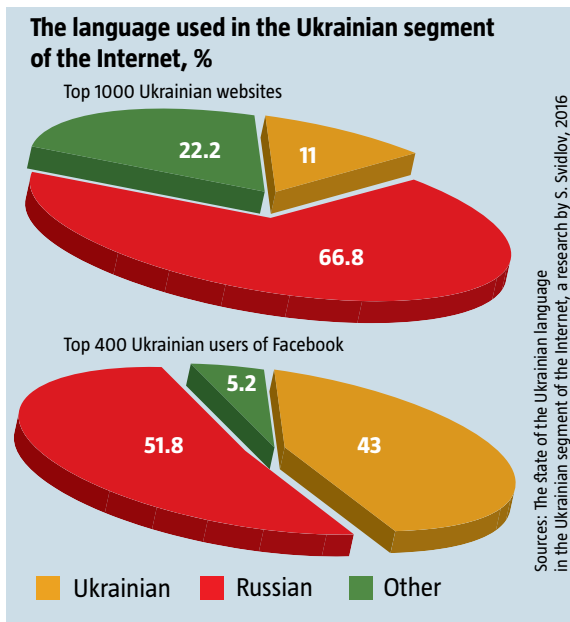
The conclusion that legislation has little direct impact on the language of everyday communication in Ukraine is, in fact, ambiguous. Above all, if the Ukrainisation of all public space had occurred even 15 years ago, it would have been unlikely to cause protests in society. The situation in film distribution can be given as an example. This is virtually the only industry where monitoring by Freedom Space records the dominance of Ukrainian.

"The first films dubbed in Ukrainian only started to come out 10 years ago and now nearly every motion picture in cinemas is in Ukrainian. More than 90% of them. Cinema became entirely Ukrainian," says Taras Shamayda.

By now, few remember the disputes caused by the new rule on the compulsory dubbing of films in the state language. Political speculation on this subject has also stopped. What's more, specialised publications report new box office records every year.

Shamayda mentions education as another ambiguous area in terms of the spread of the state language. On the one hand, the number of schools with Ukrainian-language education has increased significantly since independence, but unevenly across the regions. In addition, there are problems with implementing even the current legislation in this field.

"In Kharkiv, Odesa and the towns in the Donbas between one third and the majority of schools have Russian as the language of instruction. Under the Kolesnichenko-Kivalov law, they can prevent subjects other than Ukrainian language and literature from being taught in Ukrainian. This is an explicit provision in that Russifying document.



If a child from a Ukrainian family attends such a school because, for instance, it is close to home, they undergo intensive Russification, in addition to the Russification in other public areas. Speaking of Ukrainian-language schools, even in Kyiv, not to mention Eastern Ukraine, there is no normal language regime: teachers sometimes teach parts of certain subjects in Russian, let alone extracurricular activities. The situation is even worse in arts schools. In Kyiv, it is a huge problem to find a music school with Ukrainian instruction where a student can study in the Ukrainian language. The lists of recommended literature include some textbooks in Ukrainian and the rest in Russian, even Soviet literature, as well as pieces of music that are Soviet in content. Children are still studying them today. The language spoken the most there is also Russian, except maybe in Western Ukraine where art schools have developed a culture of teaching in Ukrainian," says Shamayda.

## ROOM FOR SPECULATION

Those who support the adoption of a new law to bring language policy up to date say that this would not mean imposing Ukrainian, but ensuring the rights of existing speakers.

"It does not deny the protection of national minorities' rights at the level at which they are set out in our Constitution and international agreements ratified by Ukraine. In addition, they will be protected at a level no lower than in other European countries. Bill No. 5670 On the State Language is written in a way that it does not play the languages off against each other or foresee a conflict between Ukrainian and other languages. After all, the nature of protecting Ukrainian as the state language and the nature of protecting minority languages are different things. Therefore, guaranteeing the rights of every citizen to receive information and services in Ukrainian is on a different level and in no way restricts the rights of minorities. It's just that these

rights will not be protected at the cost of the state language and the rights of millions of Ukrainians," accents Shamayda.

According to Zalizniak, there is no opposition in society to the majority of proposed provisions in the language bills that caused outcry in the media. Questions on this were asked during an early 2017 survey. It was found that 76% of respondents have a positive or rather positive view on introducing a Ukrainian language exam or certification for civil servants. The introduction of an exam for gaining Ukrainian citizenship is supported or rather supported by 61%. Another 88% have a positive or rather positive opinion about the statement that every citizen is obliged to know Ukrainian as the language of their country; 90% consider the language essential for all civil servants and the heads of medical institutions.

Zalizniak's data shows that support for Ukrainisation of the media is slightly lower, but this view is also shared more than half of respondents. In particular, for the distribution and screening of films in the state language – 63%, for Ukrainian language television and radio broadcasting with the establishment of quotas for minorities – 67%, for the publication of print media in the state language – 68%, and for Ukrainian advertising – 68%.

Most of those polled in Western, Central and Southern Ukraine stated Ukrainian as their native language (97%, 86% and 63% respectively). In the East and Donbas, Russian dominates (52% and 66% respectively)

However, even if new language legislation is adopted, we should not expect that this issue will leave the playbook of various political camps. It is most likely that speculation will continue, but will take on new forms.

"Politicians will always find something to speculate on. Wherever there is progressive language legislation that protects the language, such as in France or Latvia, there is speculation. It is inevitable. But speculation that destroys national identity is one thing, and speculation that remains speculation while the state develops and moves forward is another. The argument 'let's not pass a language law, because it will cause speculation' is essentially frivolous. It's about national security, the identity and unity of the country", says Taras Shamayda.

According to sociologist Zalizniak, linguistic tensions were felt from late Soviet times when the first research on this topic was released. In most cases, the issue was raised by politicians. In everyday communication between themselves, Ukrainians rarely notice pressure put on one language group by another. More precisely, 15% of Russian speakers and 13% of Ukrainian speakers talked about this. Frequent harassment was mentioned by 5-6% of respondents.

There will be no reason for these statistics to get any worse after the introduction of a new language policy. However, it is currently difficult to predict whether public figures will want to move from words to actions. ■

# Linguistic puzzle

Roman Malko

## Legislation and bills on the state language: current status and expectations

**T**he attempt to abolish the notorious Kivalov-Kolesnichenko language law from 2012 (read more about it in *Actions Speak Louder Than Words* at [ukrainianweek.com](http://ukrainianweek.com)) was blocked right after the Maidan. The then VR Speaker Oleksandr Turchynov, as well as his successors, Volodymyr Groisman and current Speaker Andriy Parubiy did not risk to sign the bill to abolish the Ka-Ka law after it passed the vote in Parliament. The Constitutional Court was supposed to consider the lawfulness of this law but it is delaying the process. According to *The Ukrainian Week's* sources, the judge-rapporteur was prepared to report on the case two years ago and signaled this readiness with regular official letters to the CC President. The latter, however, ignored the letters as he was waiting for green light from the Presidential Administration. This course of action is business as usual for the Constitutional Court in Ukraine.

According to sources at the CC, the verdict it will make on the Ka-Ka law will most likely come from the Presidential Administration, not the court. In terms of the timeframe, this will not happen before it is clear how the Parliament could vote on the newly-sponsored language bills. Until then, nobody wants to create a vacuum in the language legislation as it will inevitably create space for political speculations.

Currently, four new language bills have been submitted to the VR. Three support the Ukrainian language and one supports the Russian language. The latter is presented as the law to ensure state support to the development, promotion and protection of the Russian language and other languages of national minorities in Ukraine. Sponsored by an ex-Party of Regions member and currently Opposition Bloc MP Yevhen Balytskyi, the bill reinforces the position of the Russian language along the lines of the Ka-Ka law. It has barely any chance of passing the legislature – both the sponsor, and those behind him realize this. Its purpose was to provoke yet another intensification of tensions around the language issue.

In December 2016, bill No 5556 was registered in Parliament, sponsored by Yaroslav Lesiuk, currently MP with the Petro Poroshenko Bloc and previously an ideologist of the People's Movement of Ukraine parliamentary campaign. This bill was supported by thirty MPs from different factions. It defines the Ukrainian language as the only state language in Ukraine and delegates the official status to the Crimean Tatar language as the language of one of Ukraine's indigenous peoples within the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea

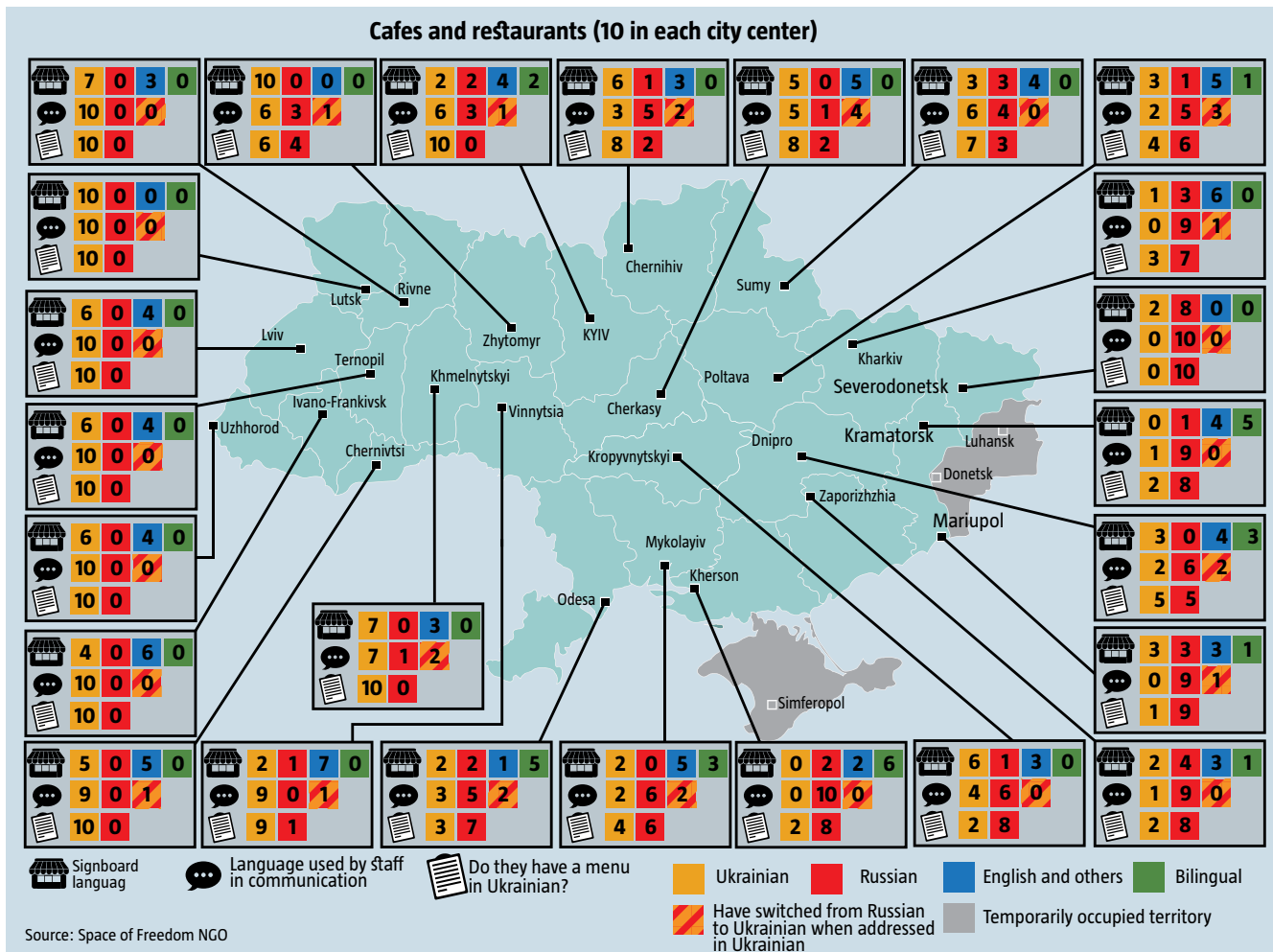
(in Art. 4.3, The languages of indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine). Also, it entails both administrative and criminal responsibility for the violations of its norms, if passed into law. The bill was submitted in a somewhat provocative manner, when the public working group at the Ministry of Culture led by Professor Volodymyr Vasylenko was working on a new language bill. Lesiuk was included in the group but attended just once. Shortly after, he prepared and filed his own bill unexpectedly. That forced the working group to urgently finalize their bill: it wouldn't be right to leave just that one bill sponsored by Lesiuk in Parliament. Moreover, the bill that the public working group was preparing was what its members saw as a novel and logical approach to the language legislation.

Initially, the working group took as the basis of their bill the Draft Law on the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language and the Procedure for the Use of Other Languages in Ukraine. It was developed by ex-Minister of Justice Serhiy Holovatyi and Samopomich's Vice Speaker of Parliament Oksana Syroyid in 2013, right after the notorious Ka-Ka law was passed. It's a reasonable bill that takes account of the experience of many countries with good-quality language legislation, as well as international standards.

It offers the establishment of new institutions that would ensure the implementation of the bill (if passed into law) as a way to boost the development of the Ukrainian language and to prevent the ousting of it from some segments of public life. According to the bill, a commission on the state language would be set up to work on the standards, centralized terminology development and adaptation of new words. Also, it provides for the launch of a testing system like IELTS or TOEFL that would certify the knowledge of the language. Currently, Ukraine has nothing of the sort. The only such document is the school graduation certificate with a grade from the language exam. So, anyone who studies in a different language but has mastered Ukrainian has no way of proving his or her level of knowledge. At the same time, Ukraine has nearly 20 laws that require civil servants and politicians to know the state language.

The bill also introduces the state language ombudsman. He or she would work with complainants regarding the use of the language, provide expertise and recommendations, or apply certain sanctions where public services are not provided in Ukrainian.

As the working group worked on the document, it realized that the draft had one systemic error: it combined two non-combinable dimensions. When



the state language and all other languages in the country are brought together in one document, it results in competition. However, the state language is a sign of sovereignty, just like the state borders, the coat of arms and the anthem. The other languages of people living in Ukraine are in the domain of national minority languages – this is in the human rights domain, not that of sovereignty. The state must guarantee those rights, but based on a different logic: the right of the citizen to preserve his or her language and pass it on to the next generation. Therefore, these two dimensions have to be separated into two different laws, thus removing the competition. A good-quality bill should be drafted to regulate the languages of national minorities and ensure these rights through state guarantees as the state is obliged to do.

The 2013 bill was modified with this approach in mind. In parallel, a bill on national minorities was drafted. The working group was planning to hold discussions and roundtables and work with public opinion through an awareness raising campaign before submitting both bills to Parliament. However, Serhiy Holovatyv prevented this: quite unexpectedly, he filed his original bill (somewhat modified) through MPs Mykhailo Holovko, Maria Matios, Mykola Kniashchyskyi and others. The

working group then had nothing else but to register their bill No5670 On the State Language which they almost finalized but have not presented to the wider audience.

All this chaos could have been the result of attempts to block the update of the legislation on the protection of the state language. It could have been the influence of human factors, such as personal grudges or ambitions.

The thoughts on the language bills vary across the Parliament today. Some MPs believe that nothing can be worse than the Ka-Ka law, and so any bill can well be taken as the basic one (except for the one sponsored by Balytskyi). If any of the three is supported in the first reading, it can subsequently be amended. If none gets 226 votes, all will be rejected and the Parliament would not be able to return to them during one year.

It is necessary to have a discussion on what approach would work best. It is necessary to work on this pragmatically and soberly, not through deals and intriguing. The bills available so far offer various concepts and are at different stages of finalization. However, such laws are passed for a long time. The civil society-supported bill No5670 would be the best option in terms of practical implementation. ■

# Water of discord

Yelyzaveta Honcharova, Bakhmut

How the water supply system is working in Donbas today

**T**he only water supply system in Donbas is operating despite the line of contact dividing the region and is facing any number of problems—financial, environmental and technical—that are extremely difficult to resolve. But first and foremost is the issue of security during armed clashes, when entire counties are left without water and water utility employees trying to repair the lines are killed. The question of providing potable water to the steppe region that is divided by the frontline is one of the hot spots, in terms not only of Donbas infrastructure but also of the political confrontation caused primarily by the bizarre—or maybe entirely logical—approach to work in the occupied territories.

The Siverskiy Donets-Donbas Canal was originally built in 1954 to bring water from this river to the poorly-supplied areas of Donetsk Oblast. The canal route runs through rugged terrain with a drop of over 200 m: part of it carries water in closed pipes with a diameter of 2,100–2,300 mm, but for the most part it's an open channel. Arterial lines run to nearly every population center in the oblast.

This rational arrangement has been disrupted by war. At this time, 67% of the water goes to occupied territories and 33% to the free part of Donetsk Oblast. Not all the towns and counties it supplies can function separately and independently and many towns are getting water from ORDiLO. For instance, the towns of Toretsk and Horlivka both get their drinking water from the Horlivka Filtration Station #2, while Avdiivka gets its water from the Donetsk Filtration Station, which is in the grey zone. Moreover, five filtration stations depend on the operation of the third lock channel and the pumping station on the Pivdennodonbaska

first lock, which are located between Vasylivka and Kruta Balka near the line of contact, for their water supplies: the Donetsk FS supplying the towns of Avdiivka, parts of Donetsk and Yasynuvata, Verkhniotoretske, Vasylivka, and Chervoniy Partyzan; the Chervonoarmiysk FS supplying Bilozerske, Bilytske, Hirnyk, Dobropillia, Myrnohrad, Novohrodivka, Pokrovsk, Selydove, Ukrainsk, and another 24 villages and hamlets in Donetsk Oblast; the Velykoanadolsk FS supplying Volnovakha, Dokuchayevsk, Vuhlehrad, Novotroitskiy and another six towns; and the Mariupol FSs #1 and #2 supplying Mariupol, Sartana and Stariy Krym.

Even setting the moral aspect of risking a humanitarian catastrophe affecting hundreds of thousands of local residents aside, to shut off the valve to the occupied territories is technically only possible by leaving parts of non-occupied Donbas without water as well. The notion of building new canals for individual counties is little more than a fantasy when there isn't even enough money to properly maintain the existing ones. For instance, just laying down an additional water line for Toretsk so that it is no longer dependent on Horlivka would cost nearly UAH 2.5 million, although the oblast can actually only fund UAH 500,000 of that.

The risk that parts of the region might be left without water has been a fact for three years now, and some areas have no alternative sources of power, either. Should the canal stop working at the third lock mentioned above, water will stop flowing to 11 filtration stations: Donetsk, Verkhniokalmius, Yenakiyevo, Volyntseve, Horlivka #1 and #2, Makiyivka, Velykoanadolsk, Chervonoarmiysk, and Mari-



upol #1 and #2. Of these, two—Velykoanadolsk and Chervonoarmiysk have no spare reservoirs and should the canal or the pumping station at the Pivdenodonbaska first lock stop, it will be impossible to supply water centrally to households.

The Verkhniokalmius FS has a spare reservoir with three weeks' worth of water. A similar reservoir exists at the Makiyivka FS, enough to cover both it and the neighboring Donetsk FSs. The Yenakievo and Volyntseve FSs, in turn, can keep going for a few more months from the Volyntseve Reservoir, Horlivka #1 and #2 can be kept going by the Horlivka Reservoir, and the Stariy Krym Reservoir can keep Mariupol FSs #1 and #2 going for nearly three months.

"Right now, the most problematic is the section at the third lock near Horlivka," says acting General Manager Oleksandr Yevdokymov. "At that point, the canal consists of a pipeline of diameter 2,100-2,300 mm laid in three lines. Not far from it is the line of contact, which means that the pipes could be hit at any time." In 2015-2016, the company's work crews were able to repair some of the damaged pipes in the canal at the third lock. But this took not only workers from the Regional Canal Utilization Department but from other company departments as well: the Yenakievo Production Department of the Water Supply and Sewage Division, the Donetsk Regional Production Department, and the Donbas Water Repair Department [Donbasvodoremont].

According to Voda Donbasu, the community water utility, a 12-km section near Makiyivka is also problematic. After a number of emergency stops, the canal bed began to shift, which changed the shape of the channel and led to greater losses and a smaller throughput capacity. If the stream is not reinforced soon, it's entirely possible that it could be shut down completely, which will stop the distribution of water in this area. With the start of hostilities, the canal infrastructure has been under fire many times. The first time was on June 10, 2014, when an artillery hit on the pumping station territory at the first lock in the village of Semenivka, Sloviansk County, and killed two Voda Donbasu employees—a mother and son by the name of Semychev—, the housing of the pumping station was seriously damaged, and the pumping station units at the first and second locks stopped working. At that point, the Siverskiy Donets-Donbas Canal was shut down on an emergency basis, something that had never happened in its entire history. The first pumping unit at the first lock was only able to start operating again on June 23. Since that time, canal infrastructure has suffered damage from mortar fire many times.

In addition to disruptions, 9 company employees have been killed and another 12 wounded since the war began. Most of these incidents took place on the job, as crews were repairing equipment, and included security guards, welders, machinists and electricians. Seven lives were lost in 2014, during the most active conflict. The last person was killed on January 7, 2016, when an employee of the Mariupol Regional Production Department Ivan Spodeniuk, was seriously wounded. Born in 1945, Spodeniuk was a plumber with the Pavlopilsk Production Unit. A week later, he died in hospital of his injuries. This has led to a serious problem with employee turnover and the work of employees at the filtration stations that are in the war zone. Even the road to work for these workers is fraught with risks to their health and lives. Many qualified and experienced specialists have left in the last three years and finding equally good individuals to replace them is very difficult.

This is a critical issue for those aspects of water distribution that cannot operate without qualified specialists. Voda

Donbasu has 19 filtration stations scattered on territory that is Ukrainian and territory that is temporarily occupied. They were all built in the fifties and sixties, other than the Donetsk FS, which went online in 1985, so that, even before hostilities began, they were not in the best of condition: flocculation chambers, filters, tanks, reservoirs, and even buildings at many of the stations needed repairs, especially at the Verkhniokalmius, Chervonoarmiysk and Velykoanadolsk stations. Since it was built much later, the state of the Donetsk station's filtration systems is considerably better, but even it is more than 30 years old now.

"The Donetsk filtration was one of the first to come under fire when hostilities began," recalls Yevdokymov. "In June 2014, the damage was massive and almost all the infrastructure suffered: the administration building, the lab, the filtration building, the garage and our fleet of vehicles. During the shelling, the station's employees managed to save not only their own lives but also much of our lab equipment in the bomb shelters. Altogether, the Donetsk FS's facility has been damaged more than 300 times during this conflict."

Voda Donbasu staff point out that, despite the most dangerous circumstances under which their company works, lab analysis of the quality of drinking water has not been interrupted and thus, during the entire three years of the conflict, there has not been one reported incident of an outbreak of infections because of water quality.

"Not only is the work of the filtration station during wartime conditions a threat to the life and health of our employees, but there are also huge problems with the purchase and delivery of reagents to clean the water and reactives for lab analysis," reads a company press release. "In 2015, reagents were provided as humanitarian assistance by the Swiss Cooperation Office; in 2016 it came from the International Committee of the Red Cross. Thanks to this international assistance, all our filtration station enterprises and the Central Lab for water oversight, innovation and research, which supervises the methodological work of all our labs, have been supplied with reagents to carry out routine testing of water sources and drinking water." While for the residents of the region, the main priority is to have quality services under any conditions, many others take issue with the principles underlying the conditions. Even in the liberated towns of Donetsk Oblast, people think that the high water rates are based on making them pay for someone else's interests." When *The Ukrainian Week* enquired about the algorithm for calculating the cost of residential water supplies on the occupied territories, the official response from Voda Donbasu was: "On the territories that are not under the control of the Ukrainian government, residential users pay for their water to the local water utilities that provide centralized water and sewage. All the property including vehicles, regardless of the address of the unit, whether it's on that side or this side of the line of contact, belongs to the Voda Donbasu Company, which is a community enterprise. No outside management has been installed at the company."

In practice, the process of paying for water use is simple: the ordinary household member living in, say, Donetsk, goes to the local Sberbank branch—these branches operate only on the occupied territory—, and pays a single bill that includes all utilities, from building maintenance to power and water supplies. The stamp on this document says "Central Republican Bank of DNR." It is impossible to get any official information on who gets the money next, and how. ■

# Bad luck

Michael Binyon, London

Angela Merkel has said that the EU can no longer rely on its two staunchest security partners – Britain and the United States. How will this affect the upcoming UK election?

**B**ritain chooses a new government in less than a week's time. But the Manchester bombing and the massive security clampdown cast a long shadow over the election. Campaigning was suspended for several days, terrorism and security rose to the top of the agenda and both the Conservative government and the Labour opposition were left floundering.

Now Theresa May has had to relaunch her fight to be re-elected as prime minister and to win a large majority for her party. It is not before time. The last three weeks have proved disastrous for the Conservatives. Poor campaigning, a major blunder over new social security proposals and a lack of clear focus have drastically reduced her lead in the polls. She began the campaign with a lead of more than 20 points over Jeremy Corbyn, the opposition leader. The latest figures show that she is now only about 6 points ahead, and may therefore increase her majority in the House of Commons by only a dozen or so seats.

So the government has decided to refocus the debate on the big issue that triggered the election in the first place – Britain's decision to leave the European Union. Brexit will again be the main issue on which her party will campaign for the few remaining days. The Conservatives will argue that only Mrs. May has the vision, authority and capability of negotiating a deal with Britain's 27 other partners in the EU that will prevent a rancorous and economically disastrous divorce in two years' time.

Inconveniently, the stakes have suddenly become much higher. Angela Merkel, the German chancellor and the most powerful political leader in the EU, has just said that Brexit, together with President Trump's recent controversial visits to NATO and the G7 summit, mean that the EU can no longer rely on its two staunchest security partners – Britain and the United States. In future, she said, Europe will have to be resolute in forging its own path and taking its destiny into its own hands.

For Britain, this comes as a bombshell. Mrs. Merkel's remarks call into question the transatlantic solidarity that has been the basis of peace in Western Europe for the past 70 years. They undermine all the promises by Mrs. May and her ministers that, although Britain may be leaving the EU, it is not leaving Europe. London will still be a reliable pillar of NATO and a close partner to its European NATO partners, she has insisted. Now she finds that the Europeans seem to be bracketing Britain with the capricious and still vague policies of the new American administration. That is not only a big blow to Britain's global standing; it also will make a Brexit deal far harder to achieve if the Europeans believe that Britain is no longer needed either as an economic or as a security partner.

Mrs. Merkel's regret that she can no longer count on Britain follows President Trump's first official visit to Europe that has proved little short of disastrous. Instead of reassuring America's allies that his administration would, in the end, prove to be pragmatic in continuing the close transatlantic alliance, his remarks have renewed doubts about his commitment to NATO and his readiness to stick by the Paris climate change treaty. Mr. Trump pointedly refused to endorse Article Five of the NATO founding charter, which obliges each member to come to the aid of any NATO country that is attacked. And he made clear that he still sees the Paris climate treaty as hostile to the interests of the United States.

Mrs. Merkel, like most European leaders, does not enjoy warm relations with Mr. Trump. She did not like his campaign rhetoric – and made that clear. She had a frosty White House meeting after he came to power. She did not appreciate his hostility to the EU or recent remarks that Germany was "bad, very bad" for selling too many cars to America. And she was upset by his stance both at NATO and at the G7 meeting.



**MRS. MAY CALLED THE ELECTION TO GIVE HERSELF A BIG ENOUGH MAJORITY TO IGNORE THE OBJECTIONS BY THE ANTI-EU RIGHT WING OF HER PARTY. IF SHE WINS ONLY A FEW MORE SEATS, SHE WILL SUFFER A MORAL DEFEAT AND WILL STILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE VOTES OF HER PARTY OPPONENTS**

Others at the meeting were probably equally disappointed. Indeed few leaders, apart from King Salman of Saudi Arabia, have shown much enthusiasm for Mr. Trump. But by speaking out as she did, she is in danger of turning a spat into a dangerous rift. Mr. Trump does not like being contradicted or losing face. He is quite capable of doing a U-turn and embracing policies totally opposite to those he espoused earlier. Indeed, he often has, nudged perhaps by the cautious senior officials in his administration who would prefer a more traditional approach to US foreign policy. But he sees all opposition as a personal challenge.

Mrs. Merkel's remarks put the British prime minister in a very difficult position. She too disagrees with the US administration over key issues, but she believes it important to try to work with Mr. Trump. She now finds that Germany, and probably much of Europe, now thinks she is a Trump ally and therefore as hostile to European interests as he is. This makes it all the harder for her to seek Mrs. Merkel's help in try-

ing to reach a deal on Brexit. Britain appears to be caught in the middle of an argument between the EU and America just at a time when the Conservative leader wants to project an image of “strong and stable” leadership, able to remain friends with both Washington and Brussels.

For British voters, the accusation that Britain may prove an unreliable ally to their European NATO partners may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is bound to cause resentment, especially as Britain has been one of the biggest contributors to the NATO budget (and spends much more per head on defence than Germany and most other EU countries). As a result, British voters may also confuse the arguments over NATO with the arguments over Brexit and view the defence of Europe with increasingly cynicism.

That, in turn, will damage Mrs. May. Already she is under attack for a spectacular U-turn on her proposal that people should be forced to pay for their care in their old age. She has tried to avoid specific commitments to new policies in her election manifesto because she does not want to be tied down in the future. And she has relied on a few phrases, such as “strong and stable government” that are beginning to sound vacuous and annoying. By contrast, Mr. Corbyn, who was widely derided for his weak leadership of his party, is beginning to look and sound more confident.

Returning to Brexit as the main focus for the rest of the campaign is a risk. Voters may now ask where this will leave Britain. Will it be stranded offshore, a friend of neither America nor Europe? Will it need to forge a new defence policy that relies less on NATO and more on its own forces, which are being relentlessly cut back as the cost becomes ever higher?

Mrs. May called the election to give herself a big enough majority to ignore the objections by the anti-EU right wing of her own party that would not vote for any compromise deal with the EU. If she wins only a few more seats, she will suffer a moral defeat (even if she wins the election) and will still be dependent on the votes of her party opponents. She may now find it impossible to negotiate a deal with Europe that does not cause Britain considerable economic harm. The one person she will not thank for this development is Angela Merkel. ■



PHOTO: REUTERS

# Electronic bandits

WannaCry should make people treat cyber-crime seriously. It has been neglected for too long



In 1933 Britain's parliament was considering the Banditry bill—the government's response to a crime wave. The problem was that criminals were using a newfangled invention, the motor car, to carry out robberies faster than the police could respond. The bill's proposed answer to these “smash-and-grab” raids was to create new powers to search cars and to construct road blocks.

In the end, the Banditry bill was not enacted. Its powers were too controversial. But the problem did not go away; what the bill proposed was eventually permitted, and now seems normal. Since then, the technology of theft has not stood still. Indeed, just as in the 1930s, it remains one step ahead of the authorities.

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, for instance, security companies noticed that a piece of malicious software known as WannaCry was spreading across the internet, first in Britain and Spain, and then around the world. It would reach 230,000 computers in 48 hours, an unprecedented scale of infection according to Europol, Europe's international police agency. WannaCry rendered useless some of the computers that help run Britain's National Health Service (NHS), causing ambulances to

be diverted and shutting down non-emergency services. It also nabbed machines at Telefónica, Spain's biggest telecommunications company; at Hainan, a Chinese airline; and even in Russia's interior ministry.

Malicious software (“malware”, for short) is designed to infect and damage computers. Sometimes, especially if the creators are youngsters flexing their programming muscles, it is written for the sheer hell of it. Sometimes, it is the work of governments, designed to harm the interests of rivals or enemies. Usually, though, it is written for profit. This seems to have been the case for WannaCry, the modus operandi of which is to encrypt a victim's files and demand payment to reverse that encryption—a common technique, known as ransomware. What makes the WannaCry attack special is its scale and the high-profile nature of its victims. That public profile has led to the asking of questions similar to those which resulted in the Banditry bill.

## BUGGING OUT

WannaCry is a combination of two kinds of malware. One, known as a worm, is designed to spread from computer to computer. The other,

delivered by the worm, is the encrypting ransomware itself. It is this combination that has made WannaCry so threatening. Ransomware is usually delivered one user at a time, via spoof e-mails which tempt the recipient to click on a link or attachment that then downloads and activates the software. In this case, a single click was able to infect an entire network.

The outbreak was terminated not by official action but by vigilantism. The malware had its head lopped off by a security consultant who goes by the pseudonym “MalwareTech”—for not everyone in the complex ecosystem of computer hacking is a bad guy. MalwareTech discovered that every time a copy of WannaCry runs, it pings out onto the internet a request for a response from a non-existent web address. This behaviour is intended to check that the copy in question is truly out in the wild, and is not being examined in a “sandbox”, a closed piece of software in which security researchers can dissect digital bugs to learn their secrets.

Sandboxes simulate access to the entire internet, to persuade the malware under examination to run at full capacity and reveal its secrets. That means responding to all pings in the way a real responder would. So, if a ping returns from the non-existent address, the program can deduce it is in a sandbox, shut itself down, and thus retain its secrets. MalwareTech worked out the web address in question, registered and activated it, and thus convinced every copy of WannaCry that it was in a sandbox and so should shut up shop.

All credit, then, to MalwareTech. But the simplicity of stifling WannaCry suggests the whole thing was a bit of a botched job—as does the apparent business model of its creators. Professional ransomware operations come with fully operational call centres in which real people answer calls from distressed owners of infected machines in order to walk them through the process of getting their files back (and paying the ransom, of course).

WannaCry has none of these. It simply asked for payment, into a particular account, of a sum in bitcoin, an electronic currency. Moreover, Check Point, a computer-security consultancy in Israel, has shown that WannaCry’s encryption software is so badly assembled that decrypting a user’s data after payment has been made is practically impossible. Properly organised ransomware criminals, alive to the advantages of repeat business, usually do unencrypt the hostage data once the money has been paid.

“This is not a serious organised crime gang,” Ross Anderson, professor of computer security at Cambridge University, says of the entity behind WannaCry. “It’s some kid in a basement in São Paulo or Bucharest or Aberystwyth. If he has any sense, he will smash his hard drive and burn the shards in a bonfire, and never cash in the bitcoin he’s been sent, because there are about 30 nation states that would like a chat with him.”

In contrast to its encryption software, however, WannaCry’s worm, which spread it so fast, is a sophisticated piece of coding. That is be-

cause it reuses software stolen several months ago from America’s National Security Agency (NSA), and released online by a hacking group known as the “Shadow Brokers”. The stolen software exploits a vulnerability that the NSA discovered in a piece of Microsoft’s Windows operating system known as the Server Message Block, which handles networking between computers. This bug, which first appeared in Windows XP, in 2001, has stuck around in all subsequent versions. How long the NSA had known about it, and kept it secret, is unclear.

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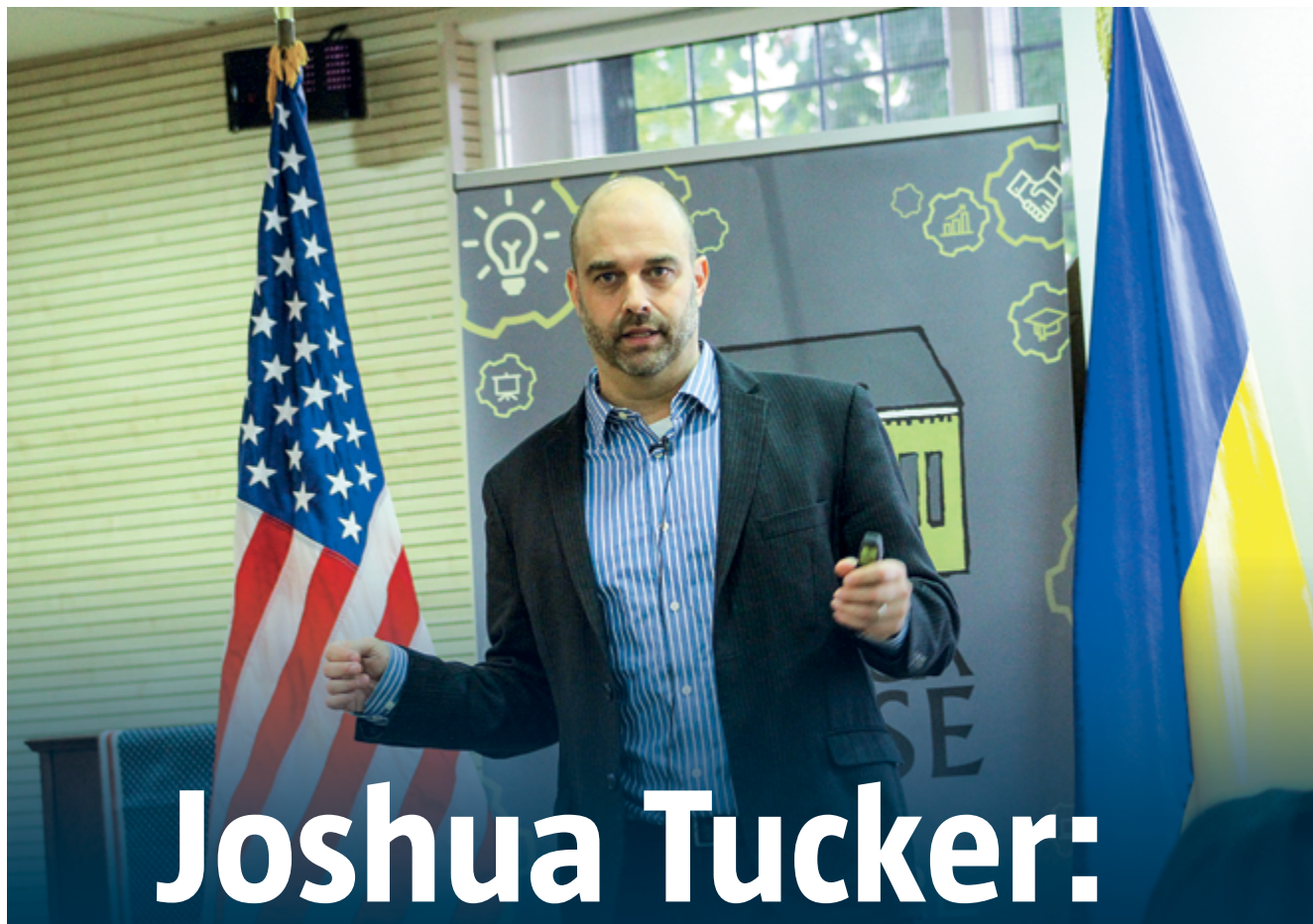
Computers manage their connections to one another through a series of ports, normally 1,024 of them. Each is assigned a specific sort of task, and can be opened and closed as needed. Port 25, for instance, is designated for sending e-mail. The vulnerability discovered by the NSA lets WannaCry spread from machine to machine, as long as those machines have port 445 left open. On home computers’ internet connections, and on astutely managed institutional networks, port 445 is usually kept firmly shut. Exactly how many left it open, and fell victim to WannaCry, has yet to be determined.

## SOFTWARE UNDERBELLY

Despite the flurry of headlines, WannaCry is not the worst malware infection the world has seen. Other worms—Conficker, MyDoom, IL-OVEYOU—caused billions of dollars of damage in the 2000s. But Bruce Schneier, a noted independent security expert, points out that people seem to have a fundamental disregard for security. They frequently prefer to risk the long-term costs of ignoring it rather than pay actual cash for it in the present.

Here, perhaps, the headlines around WannaCry may do some good. Managers in organisations like the NHS know that there will be no second chances for them in this area. If there is another successful attack, heads will roll. WannaCry’s fame has also drawn attention to criminals’ normal business of attacking targets that can be relied on to pay up quickly and quietly. Often, these are indeed hospitals. But not the hospitals of an entire country. This is not publicity those criminals will welcome.

That said, the activities of malware criminals do indeed resemble those of Britain’s 1930s smash-and-grab gangsters in that they take advantage of getaway speeds offered by new technology—speeds with which the authorities have not yet caught up. Criminals can, in effect, retreat at the velocity of light, to a safe jurisdiction that is near-impossible to discover anyway. If they are to be stopped, someone will have to devise modern-day electronic equivalents of road blocks and search warrants. ■



# Joshua Tucker:

«A huge question is whether it will become a norm that presidents and prime ministers will start to use social media to drive mainstream media coverage more globally»

Interviewed by  
Hanna Trehub

**T**he *Ukrainian Week* spoke to the New York University Professor about the impact of social media on the political behavior of citizens, their involvement in protest movements, and ways in which Twitter and Facebook have changed the specifics of the race in the US and European countries.

**Why is it important today to interpret politics not only from the perspective of political studies, but in the context of changing behaviors and relationships, i.e. from the psychological perspective? How, why and when do social media affect the minds and motivations of a citizens in terms of participation in the political life?**

It's certainly the case that psychologists and sociologists think a lot about the determinants of attitudes, including attitudes towards politics. But there is a whole subfield of political science, which is my field, called "political behavior". Political be-

havior is the study of how ordinary citizens interact with politics. Many of political scientists study elites – presidents, military or members of legislative – but there is this whole other sub-field that examines how ordinary people are interacting in politics. In established democracies, and even in new democracies or competitive-authoritarian regimes, the most common way that citizens interact with politics is by voting. In countries where elections are less common or not competitive, the behavior question might be why people are coming out on to the streets and protesting, although we of course are also interested in why people protest in democracies. But in addition to voting and protest, people who study political behavior are also very interested in how the citizens form opinions about political issues.

This sub-field in political science is known as the study of "public opinion" or "comparative public opinion". A lot of times economists and politi-

cal sciences will have models that simply assume certain preferences of the citizens in those models, such as that wealthier citizens might prefer lower taxes. Or models might assume there are certain distributions of preferences across a population. But lots of us are working hard trying to figure out why the citizens hold the particular attitudes as they do. This is the question that motivates the field of public opinion research in political science.

I think you're right that psychologists in particular do try to think about why people hold the attitudes for long periods of time, and why these attitudes might change over time. Political scientists tend to be more focused on the determinants of attitudes, that is why different citizens have different preferences on political topics. So in my earlier work, for example, I was looking at attitudes in Eastern Europe towards EU membership. We examined these attitudes in 10 candidate states considering joining the EU, using data from the 1990s and 2000s. The conclusions from that work were that people who were doing well economically during the transition were more likely to support EU membership. Economic losers were, however, less likely to support such position. In some ways, this was ironic, because some of these losers subsequently benefited from agricultural subsidies once their country joined the EU. But as a political scientist, I was interested in understanding why some people supported membership and others were opposed.

**In one of your articles you called the EuroMaidan the first truly successful social media uprising. To what extent is this true and why?**

Just to be very clear, we were not claiming that other factors didn't matter, because lot of things were going on during EuroMaidan and there were lots of reasons why people came out onto the streets. What we were responding to here was previous research calling into question the importance of social media during previous protest movements. For example, events in Moldova had been quickly labeled the "Twitter revolution", because people were using social media during the protests, and at the time this was fairly new. However, in retrospect some people argued that there were very few people in Moldova who actually had Twitter accounts, so how can we call those events "Twitter revolution"?

**Then came the Arab Spring. Real time videos in English by Aljazeera played a crucial role, I think. Real time communication from participants, some of which was going on Facebook and some on Twitter, led to the Arab Spring being labeled as a social media revolution. But there was a push back again by scholars. Some pointed to the fact that there were not that many tweets about Arab Spring and the fact that a lot of them seemed to be in English. So if this was really just people in the West sharing BBC reports about the conflict on Twitter, how could this impact the actual conflict in the streets?**

In fact we do think that one thing of crucial importance about social media is that it allows events that would not necessarily previously have been picked up by international actors or media to get

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more international attention. One of the reasons why local protesters tweet in English is precisely because they want people living abroad to spread this messages, have it picked up by the international media, and have more and more international attention paid to what's happening.

Then we have Gezi Park and EuroMaidan. We collected a lot of data from people who were using Twitter in both places. In Gezi Park there was just a phenomenal amount of Twitter activity. Moreover, very large percentages of messages with the hashtag "Gezipark" were from within Turkey and in Turkish. We tried to model what was more likely to be retweeted, and found that – conditional on having enough followers – the closer you were to Gezi Park, the more likely you were to be retweeted, suggesting that this was actual information about the protests being shared.

Of course, it was very hard to find casual evidence that proves that social media actually had an impact, so in our research we started thinking of going about this the opposite way: could we come up with a set of criteria which, if held, would allow to fairly legitimately conclude that maybe social media usage wasn't really affecting protests. But if these criteria didn't hold, then it would be harder to claim that social media didn't matter.

Our criteria were the following: social media usage should track real time developments and events; social media should be used to discuss organization related to the protest; you should see healthy amounts of social media usage in the language of the country and located in the country; and if there is a survey and people are asked why they participated, than you should see lots of them saying that they found out about protests over social media. If none of those things hold, then you are probably in good shape arguing that social media have nothing to do with us – but if they all hold, it is harder to claim that social media did not matter. So we examined social media data from both Gezi Park and EuroMaidan and all of those criteria hold: there were lot of tweets coming from within the countries and in the native language of the countries, and the activity on Twitter really tracked what was going on offline. Further, according to survey data collected by Olga Onuch, up to 50% had heard about the protests from friends on Facebook or other forms of social media like vKontakte. You can see this when you look on the actual tweets, which say things like »

“Come to Gezi Park. Why you’re sitting in a café? You should be in Gezi Park!”

And the other criterion is that social media should be used to organize and we should find the evidence of this. We’re talking about logistics. When you look at social media usage during EuroMaidan, there are Facebook pages for organizing medical supplies for hospitals, for people getting rides from outside of Kyiv to the capital city etc. We saw this during the Orange Revolution to, but that was done by sms. Here, the main page was the EuroMaidan Facebook page with tons of information and hundreds of thousands of followers.

Another interesting thing when we look on the data from Ukraine is that Twitter was not as prevalent in your country before EuroMaidan as it was in Turkey. The sheer number of tweets about Gezi Park is much, much higher than the number of number of tweets about EuroMaidan. However, we found that once EuroMaidan got going, large numbers of new Twitter accounts were created in Ukraine. We don’t know for sure, but from that amount of hashtags in Twitter it seems that new accounts in this social media were created by Ukrainians with the purpose of participating in discussions and learning information about protests in 2013-2014.

**Are there any links between social media activity during EuroMaidan and the rise of strong volunteer activity in Ukraine with the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014?**

My coauthor Megan Metzger interviewed people in Kyiv who have suggested exactly this point. Some of the Facebook groups that were created for EuroMaidan organization were repurposed to provide



**SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT SOCIAL MEDIA AREN’T STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT HUGE PROTEST, BUT IN THE UKRAINIAN CASE SOCIAL MEDIA INSPIRED PROTEST AND SEEMS TO HAVE FUELED IT AS WELL**

support for people in the Donbas, as a way raising money, a way of getting supplies to the front, as a way of coordinating and sending food or equipment. It’s interesting and it makes what happened in Ukraine interesting to a wide group of social media scholar, because there is big debate among those who study protest movements on whether social media really has a long-term positive effect on protest movements’ likelihood of success. I think, everybody agrees now that social media is part of most protests.

One school of thought claims that while social media makes it easier to organize protests, it may make it harder to sustain protests movement. Historically, organizing protest movement tended to involve many face to face meetings. It is argued that because more time and efforts are needed for creation of protest movements, this created strong ties between the core groups of protesters, which may have made protest movement more sustainable. The social media, by making it easier to organize protests without these long periods of plan-

ning, may ironically hurt the long term success of protest movements because these strong ties are not formed.

That sort of argument has in particular been made in the case of the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States, which seemed important for a short of time and then sort of fizzled out. Ukraine, however, presents an interesting counter-example because some of these online communities that were formed around Euromaidan have stayed together. Yes, some people say that social media aren’t strong enough to support huge protest, but in the Ukrainian case social media inspired protest and seems to have fueled it as well. Further, the protest did not fizzle out, but instead led to real change in your country after EuroMaidan.

More generally, social media allows for coordination, real time communication, and the sharing of information which is incredibly important in terms of short-time logistics (are tanks on the streets or not?), very useful for crowd sourcing (not me telling just you we need something, but me being able to lots of people simultaneously). Besides this, social media allows you to change geographic boundaries. In the USA lots of journalists are on Twitter, so when you post information on Twitter, you are getting it to a place where journalists can see it. This is very different from the way world used to be.

In addition, our research has found that that not only strong ties, but also weak ties, can be important for spreading information about protest movements. Messages from the core protesters can be tremendously amplified by sharing this information via people who have only weak ties with those in the core. For example, in your Facebook account you have friends with whom you have strong and weak ties. So the question is, if you see information about protest of the street from the poster of a flyer versus your friend on Facebook telling you that there is going to be a protest tomorrow, the friend on Facebook seems likely to have a greater impact on your decision of whether to participate. The information might be the same, but the sender of this information is someone whom you have already chosen to have some sort of online relationship with previously, and thus somebody you at least somewhat know already. In contrast, the sender of the information on a flyer is likely to be much more removed from you.

Moreover, if you see that five thousand people already like a post about a protest, that conveys valuable information as well, beyond the mere text of the post announcing the protest. In the social sciences we often think about the decision to participate in a protest in the terms of costs and benefits. For potential protesters, one cost is the possible punishment for participating. The likelihood you personally will have to bear this cost, however, goes down as more people take part in the protest; your chance of being arrested is much lower if 300,000 people are protesting than if 300 people are protest. From social media, you find out if your friends – and their friends -- think that the protest is a good idea or not. And this type of information can be very powerful.

**After the 2016 presidential election in the US when Donald Trump used all the benefits of social media while campaigning, is there any evidence that we might see European and American elections with the use of the same technologies? How could this change the way of communication in politics?**

Remember that before Trump, Barack Obama in 2008 was very successful using Facebook not to communicate as Trump has been doing, but rather as means of getting his own supporters organized. Obama's first campaign was incredibly innovative about raising money, getting people to the polls, micro targeting and so on.

**Social media campaigns are not going anywhere. But when we're trying to think about how social media might have an effect on election campaigns, it is useful to think about this in three ways. The first is how the candidates use the social media. By now, almost every member of USA Congress has a Facebook page and Twitter account, Instagram. But in terms of how this might affect the election campaigns, it's very important to focus on the level of the election. That is, are you running for a local office or a national office? Are you running for president or for a seat in the legislature?**

What makes Trump Twitter usage so spectacular, in my particular opinion, is not the fact that he can directly communicate with his followers while skipping the mainstream media, but rather precisely because he can use his Twitter account to shape what will appear in the mainstream media. So when Trump says something on Twitter, it almost inevitably ends up in the New York Times or the Washington Post the next day. Say what you will about Trump and his twitter account, but he clearly is a master of using social media to drive mainstream media coverage.

**To which extent can the mainstream media compete with social media now?**

Every candidate in election campaign has accounts on social media, but very few can get national news coverage based on what they are doing with these accounts. When Trump tweets, it has a very large influence on mainstream media. Other candidates, such as someone in the legislature or a regional governing position, might have some effect on local media news coverage, but their tweets and posts in Facebook are something else, another way of campaigning. Different candidates want to present different messages to different groups of people, and social media can be useful for this. So this is different from what Trump is doing on social media.

A huge question is whether it will become a norm that presidents and prime ministers will start to use social media to drive mainstream media coverage more globally, or is this more of a one off-event because Trump is so non-political, behaving on Twitter in ways in which standard politicians are unlikely to do? Trump has a lot of followers on Twitter, but so did Obama. It will be interesting to see in the future whether social media will be used in the same way politicians normally use them, or if the Trump model will become more popular.

The second way in which social media can impact elections is that candidates can use social me-

dia to target advertising at specific voters, which is known as micro-targeting. Trump's campaign was enormously successful in this regard. What makes social media so powerful in this regard is that is very well set up for micro-targeting, sending the exact messages to the people you want to reach. Not only Facebook, but also Google and Twitter, can facilitate this type of advertising. From a normative standpoint, micro-targeting might be bad for politics, because it allows candidates to present different faces to different groups. But it might be good, because by allowing voters to get information on the issues in which they are particularly interested, it might make them more likely to pay attention to politics.

The third way to think about social media and elections is whether social media makes it easier to spread misinformation during an election campaign. So far, it looks like the answer to this question is yes.

**According to the survey done in Oxford during the French presidential campaign, every fourth article shared on social media was fake. That figure was one link in two for the US election. Why is it like that?**

Facebook renders all news very similarly in terms of how the user sees it. There is a headline, a photo, and a blurb. This means that "fake news" sources –

**ONE THING OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA IS THAT IT ALLOWS EVENTS THAT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY PREVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY INTERNATIONAL ACTORS OR MEDIA TO GET MORE INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION**

and here I mean newspapers that were literally made up and did not exist in reality – might look very similar when you see them on Facebook in your feed. Thus it can be very difficult to figure out what's fake and what's not when accessing news through Facebook, which is how a lot of people get their news now. The economics of news media is such now that if you have an article that gets a lot of clicks, you can make money. This is exactly what happened during the last presidential campaign in USA. Many of the fake stories about candidates were published not to impact political result, but in order to make money.

But it's important to remember that when it comes to technologically driven changes in politics, they can happen quickly and actors are always responding to the most recent developments. Thus social media and politics can be thought of as a cat and mouse game. There was a time when social media may have provided huge advantages for pro-democratic protesters in non-democratic societies, but that time may have passed now that non-democratic regimes have tools to counter this threat. But it also might turn out to be the case with fake news as well. We have never seen such huge infusion of fake news online as in the most recent election campaigns in the USA and France. But it is also likely that all sorts of actors – including politicians, parties, and the platforms themselves – will have ways to counter fake news in the future. ■



# Joseph McElroy:

«Critical thinking is what makes us humans and voters»

Interviewed by  
Olena Kukhar

**A** classic postmodernist writer, Joseph McElroy stands among the most influential prose authors in the post-war America. He is also the author whose talent and more than 60 years in literature has been deeply appreciated by only several dozen critics.

*Women and Men* is a novel of 1,192 pages. The best-known of McElroy's nine novels, it has made it into the essential postmodern reads by the Los Angeles Times. Yet, his writing is not well studied. This is because of the uncompromised complexity of McElroy's writing and the length of his works.

*The Ukrainian Week* spoke to Joseph McElroy at the 7th International Book Festival in Kyiv about his latest novel *Cannonball* from 2013 that was just released in Ukrainian by the Tempora publishing house. We spoke about politics and war, humanistic values and a balance between emotions and rational thinking.

**You were once asked whether the canon of a "great American novel" exists. You said that a "Great America" would have to exist for that. What is America for you? How do you interpret it?**

I've been thinking about this while I've been here, in Ukraine. I think about it often. Walking the streets of Manhattan where I live, I also think what it means for me to say that I am an American. It's quite difficult. I am uncomfortable in certain parts of my country just because I am from New York. Other people in the USA see New-Yorkers as fascinating and horrible at the same time: that's where the communists live, a lot of black people reside, there's too much noise... So there's that hostility which in a way makes me feel more a New-Yorker than an American. But when I go abroad, I feel very strongly American.

America is where I was born and where I can best understand things going on, even if they are incomprehensible. It helps me to go abroad, and sometimes I feel not welcome because of being what I am. This makes me feel even more American. It raises the question: to what extent am I responsible for the policies that are coming from Washington? And if the answer is "I am not responsible", then maybe the second part of it is that I should be.

There is something sentimental about my being American. It has to do with the land itself and its vitality. It thrills me. And I've been all over it.

**What has changed for you after Donald Trump came to power, as a citizen, a writer and a representative of the culture community?**

First of all, you could say that we have lived under the Trump-like rule for quite a long time. In the sense that half of the country (it's a divided country) is unsympathetic with the arts. My wife is a painter and a teacher; she has combined her work with the arts.

I think our sense is that even under unfriendly influences in the US we can still manage it. But if funding for the arts is decreased by people like Trump or whoever succeeds him, that is very-very bad.

**In one episode of your latest book, *Cannonball*, you draw a line between three generations and three wars, linking the generation of the grandfather and WWII, the father and Vietnam, and the son and Iraq. Why did you choose this theme of war and armament for your ninth novel?**

First of all, thank you for reading the book so carefully! A lot of people didn't get that! Secondly, never trust a writer talking about how a book came around. To be serious, if I go back to the beginnings of other books, I can give only a rough account.

With *Cannonball*, one source was my absolute anger at the entanglement of Evangelical Christianity with money in the USA. And with the attitudes that have to do with profit taking at any expense. I believe that the so called patriotism of Cheney and Bush and the others came out of this, leading to their willingness to lie to the American public about chemical weapons and so on, and push us into that war, which was a terrible mistake.

To some extent that book came of that feeling – of anger because of the war in Iraq. I would not write a non-fiction book because I don't think that I have anything to say in that form. So I turned it into a story.

**Do you know that most critics write about inability to comprehend your texts, complain that they are too complex?**

Of course, I know that. People also complain about life's complexity...

**The majority of those who read your books till the end admitted that they discovered a certain system of reading that helped them. The readers find thrilling descriptions and warm intonations in your prose (in a detail of a child or a memory of a walk in the part). Thanks to these moments, they get to the end. So it comes that people ascribe loyalty to classic humanistic values with family values at the helm to an outstanding postmod-**

**Joseph McElroy** is an American prose writer. Born in New York in 1930, he graduated from the Williams College and Columbia University. He taught literature for nearly 40 years, first at the University of New Hampshire, then at the Queens College, CUNY. McElroy has authored nine novels, three collections of short stories, numerous essays and reviews. He holds honors and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and more.

**ernist? What do you think of that approach to your prose?**

I think that it's the need of questioning that matters even more than the system. It is not a system that appeals to me. The important parts of texts are questionings. And that is of course inseparable from emotions. Writings do have to connect thoughts with feeling. And I think that fiction at its best does this.

I like characters who think. So I must say that someone who follows through books of mine focusing on heart-melting moments like children or family stuff, sees only part of it.

*Cannonball* has got a lot of energy and joy, but look at what happens at the end... There is a lot bad stuff going on and there is darkness in the end for Zack, the main character. But there is also his voice speaking from the darkness, that has a lot to do with figuring out what is wrong with us.

**THE IMPORTANT PARTS OF TEXTS ARE QUESTIONINGS. AND THAT IS INSEPARABLE FROM EMOTIONS. WRITINGS DO HAVE TO CONNECT THOUGHTS WITH FEELING. AND I THINK THAT FICTION AT ITS BEST DOES THIS**

If you read Marcel Proust, you can do it just for the love that he had for his grandmother. You have to pay attention to the particular themes.

You can call it abstract or rational or critical thinking, but this ability of critical thinking is what makes us humans. And voters. A lot of people who voted for Donald Trump last year, did so – it's hard to say "with their hearts", – but definitely with some chaotic emotional factor in themselves, which meant they did not think enough. Most of the people I've known in my life, who have been most thoughtful, have been deeply feeling at the same time. To start thinking is part of being a human.

**Do you contemplate any experiments in writing? Would you try new genres, methods or formats?**

There is this text that I began in 1948. It is terribly important for me, and it is not finished. It is called *Fathers Untold*.

Everything is an experiment when you write all the time: I want to finish a screenplay. And I also write poems quite a lot – partly because you can finish them quickly. I want to finish a stage play and have it performed. I'd like to have that experience, hearing my dialogues said by actors on stage. And maybe seeing people walk out. Or maybe not. ■

# Sky-blue instruments

Alla Zahaikivych

The history of Ukrainian electroacoustic music from the 1960s to the present day



**The rebellious sixtiers.** From left to right, Valentyn Sylvestrov, Leonid Hrabovskyi, Vitaliy Hodziatskyi, Ihor Blazhkov, Andriy Volkonskyi

**E**lectroacoustic music, created in a modern aesthetic using appropriate technology, came into being in Ukraine in the wake of the Khrushchev "thaw" in the mid-1960s. We associate its origin with the composers of the "Kyiv vanguard", led by Leonid Hrabovskyi, Valentyn Sylvestrov, Vitaliy Hodziatskyi and Volodymyr Zahortsev. They learned about the emergence of "musique concrète" from critical articles about "anti-artistic" trends in the West: their counterparts there recorded separate sounds and edited them together in the studio, changing the speed of the tape and playing it backwards and forwards.

Kyiv Conservatory students Sviatoslav Krutykov, Petro Solovkin and Vitaliy Hodziatskyi were the first to start experimenting with tape. Krutykov was interested in the technical aspects of electronic music at the time. He learned of the existence of an ANS synthesiser in Moscow that could make sound from a wave drawn on glass, was seized by the idea of creating such a device of his own and went to the capital of the Soviet Union. He returned home labelled the "father of electronic Kyiv" and began to develop his own synthesiser that took its name from the colour of the frame to which the tone generators were attached – the sky blue instrument.

**Alla Zahaikivych** is a contemporary composer and curator of music projects, including EM-VISIA, her latest electronic and electroacoustic project at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Book Festival in Kyiv

## MUSIC AND MATHS

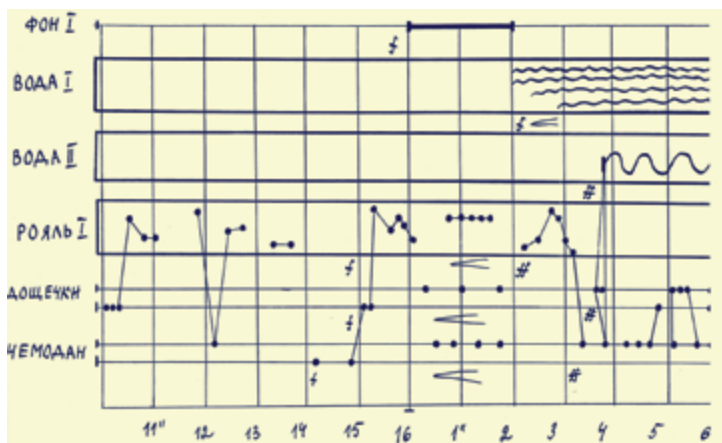
Vitaliy Hodziatskyi was destined to become the composer of the first Ukrainian work in the "musique concrète" genre.

Pierre Schaeffer's original ideas about a "musical object" and the free use of "concrete sound" outside of its original context seemed to fit organically into the socio-cultural situation in Ukraine at the time. These were the somewhat ideological signs of the "liberation of sound" (libération du son) that Edgar Varèse, one of the pioneers of electronic music and musique concrète, spoke about.

Hodziatskyi's first, preparatory work in the musique concrète genre *Four Homely Scherzos* (The Poltergeist's Fun, Emancipated Suitcase, Realisation, Anti-world in a Box) first existed as a recorded version, that is, as *Four Etudes for a Cassette Player*. Later, the composer made a score so that it would be possible to perform the piece in concert. The sound sources – household items (cups, pans of different sizes, a colander, grater, spoons, glasses, metal washtubs and a plastic suitcase) alongside a piano (mostly the strings and soundboard) and drum sticks – were used by the composer to create a vibrant palette of music and noise with a specific atmosphere. Unexpectedly, the "living" sound of household items stood in fantastic contrast to the usual pronouncedly pretentious Soviet choral and symphonic pieces "for glory" and "for honour".

In 1968, while working on music for the cartoon *Career*, the composer created a concrète opus, editing together previously recorded sounds of various origin. They were emitted by a saw being hit and the following vibrations, a plastic ashtray, wooden boards, a suitcase, the inner tube of a car tyre, a prepared piano and a vibraphone. There was also a man shouting, crowd noise, the crashing of water against metal washtubs and isolated orchestral fragments. Using multiple tape machines at different playback and recording speeds, gradually slowing down and speeding up the tape and playing it backwards greatly expanded the intonational opportunities for working with material that was mostly noise (see piece of the score for *Career*).

The early 1960s in Ukrainian music also reflected the emergence of an approach that is a part of electronic music and media art around the world – algorithmic composition. This is in particular reference to Leonid Hrabovskyi, who developed his own method using a random number generator under the influence of Iannis Xenakis's stochastic compositions.



**An experimental combination.** The notesheet by Vitaliy Hodziatskyi. In addition to the music instruments, it uses a number of other objects as a source of sound. These include Background I, Water I, Water II, Piano I, Boards and Suitcase

The result of the composer's work was *Homeomorph I-III* for piano (1968-1969), *Ornaments* for oboe, viola and harp or guitar (1969) and the famous *Concerto misterioso* for nine instruments, dedicated to Kateryna Bilokur (1977). In the latter, the author employed an individual system to combine generated rhythmic series and pitch micro-motifs borrowed from the folklore collection Yavdokha Zuyikha's Songs. This system made it possible to preserve the complexity and variability of lively folk rhythms and look at Ukrainian folklore from a completely unexpected "algorithmic" perspective.

## INVENTORS AND INSTRUMENTS

The 1960s were the time when the first electroacoustic music studios were springing up around the world: America, France, Germany, Italy, Poland... Due to its obvious "ideological" break with the aesthetics of "socialist realism", electronic music in Ukraine received no official government support. Musicians could only dream about the creation of a studio in their country. So Ukrainian inventors and designers started active work on making their own synthesisers.

Even today we do not have a complete picture of the electronic and electroacoustic instruments invented in Ukraine, but even the ones we know about is striking: electromechanical instruments and synthesisers were actively made in Ukraine from the early 1960s and almost up to the emergence of personal computers in 1990. Unfortunately, no working model of a Ukrainian synthesiser has survived (in particular, Sviatoslav Krutykov's "sky blue instrument").

According to noted microtonal music researcher Hennadiy Kohut, some of the first Ukrainian electronic instruments were the Estradyn electronic bayans [a type of button accordion] assembled in 1964-1965 at the Electronic Measuring Instrument plant in Zhytomyr. The well-known Kyiv accordion quartet Yavir performed with them, for example. Experts drew parallels between this model and similar products made by Yamaha.

But more interesting, in our opinion, were the individual designs of musicians and enthusiasts that worked on the latest ideas with no hope of state financing.

Prominent musicologist Oleksiy Oholevets (1891-1967) – his music theory concept in general and temperament theory in particular – was an important figure for teachers and students at the Kyiv Conservatory in the 1960s who were interested in designing new electromechanical instruments. The explorations of this circle of enthusiasts led to many interesting innovations within the walls of the conservatory.

They included the first microtonal instrument in Ukraine – professor Leon Vaintraub's piano with a 17-tone tuning (12-tone temperament is standard). Unlike its well-known analogues with multiple keyboards (made by Ivan Vishnegratsky or Alois Hába), Vaintraub's development could be very easily modified from 12-tone to 17-tone tuning with a conventional piano pedal. The professor suggested tuning part of the string courses to one pitch when the pedal is depressed and another one when the pedal is released. This gave the opportunity to recreate a 17-tone tuning using the pedal and experience microtonal music for the first time.

In addition to work on the microtonal piano, Vaintraub dreamed of using pick-ups in a piano to create an electromechanical instrument with the possibility of adding vibrato and reaching an "organ-like sound".

However, Vaintraub's young colleague Hennadiy Kohut probably developed the most electro-musical devices. He personally created "several models of electro-musical instruments: microtonal (with 17, 29, 41, 53 and 106 tones, the last two duophonic with necks, the rest polyphonic) and 12-tonal, such as an electronic accordion, electronic pedals for organists (particularly for Arseniy Kotliarevskyi and Valeriy Mykhailiuk), a unique "electronic bass" instrument for the accordion etc., as well as several tools for measuring hearing sensitivity to pitch – intonometers". None of them has survived until today. In the 1990s, Hennadiy Kohut was forced to dismantle his instruments... and sell their metal parts at an electronics market.

Among the "legendary synths" worth mentioning is the one made by Kyiv musicologist Leonid Dys, who worked on his own instrument at the end of the 1980s according to the analysis/resynthesis method. His research model was assembled at the Vector plant in Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg, Russia – **Ed.**), which in previous years had produced the famous Polivoks synthesiser in addition to mainly military equipment. Leonid Dys was able to demonstrate the operating principle of his design at the International Exhibition of Electronic Instruments in Frankfurt, although he never received the finished instrument from Sverdlovsk.

Another invention was made by the Information Technology Centre of the Kyiv Conservatory in 1985-1988 alongside the Faculty of Cybernetics at Taras Shevchenko Kyiv State University: Dmytro Zarytskyi and Valeriy Shastal's four-voice software synthesiser. However, it also joined the list of "legends of Ukrainian electroacoustic music".

Concerto misterioso by Leonid Hrabovskiy. In memoriam of artist Kateryna Bilokur





**Early 1980s.** Ukrainian musicians and composers, including Ihor Stetsiuk (right) and Oleksandr Nešterov (left) began to incorporate electronically synthesized sounds into the arrangements of classic music, as well improvisation and film soundtracks

## ENTERING THE MAINSTREAM

The 1970s and 80s in Ukraine were a time that commercial synthesizers and electronic synthesis were actively integrated in the arrangement of classical music, as well as in film soundtracks and improvisation.

Composer Ihor Stetsiuk (b. 1958) was one of the first Ukrainian musicians to explore electronic sound synthesis and use synthesizers.

Like many of his colleagues, he became interested in electronic sound in the 70s under the influence of Isao Tomita's original versions of the Pictures from an Exhibition series by Modest Mussorgsky. His concept of the possibilities of synthesizers was formed also thanks to Eduard Artyemyev's film music. From the early 1980s, the Ukrainian composer studied FM-synthesis on a Yamaha DX7 synthesizer. He captured the fullest picture of the timbral and textural capabilities of FM-synthesis in a cycle of electronic interpretations of classic works from around the world (1983-1990). The main issue of electronic synthesis for Ihor Stetsiuk is the problem of reaching a level of spontaneity and expressive performance comparable to the properties of acoustic instruments. Therefore, he has devoted himself to virtual acoustic synthesis since the mid-1990s. His most substantial explorations have not been in the atmosphere of electronic sound, but rather in the possibilities of accurate and expressive dynamic control of all sound synthesis parameters.

Kyiv musician Oleksandr Nesterov (1954-2005) systematically used electronic synthesis in musical improvisation. He began his studies using electronic processors with a bass guitar (the Dzerkalo [Mirror] album, 1989). The main purpose of the electronics was to "transform" the bass into an instrument with the most dynamic timbral capabilities and flexible control of each sound phase (attack, decay, sustain, release). More often than not, the models for building an electronic tone were "vocal" sounds, which made it possible to integrate the timbre of the bass

guitar into instrumental ensembles with wind instruments. A MIDI guitar appeared alongside the bass on the 1991 album *Claustrophobia*. MIDI control of sound synthesis gave Nesterov much more dynamic opportunities. The most diverse electronic techniques were used on the album *Irradiated Sounds* (1998), dedicated to the Chernobyl tragedy. In fact, this album is made up of electroacoustic arrangements of 15 traditional songs and instrumental tunes from the area that is to-

**ELECTROMECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS AND SYNTHESISERS WERE ACTIVELY MADE IN UKRAINE FROM THE EARLY 1960S AND ALMOST UP TO THE EMERGENCE OF PERSONAL COMPUTERS IN 1990. UNFORTUNATELY, NO WORKING MODEL OF A UKRAINIAN SYNTHESIZER HAS SURVIVED**

day the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, performed by the Drevo [Tree] singing ensemble. The authentic timbre of traditional singing, rich in overtones, was the most important "sound model" for work with electronic instruments (MIDI guitar, synthesizers, samplers, electronic percussion).

## THE PRESENT DAY

Exactly which processes were important for the development of electronic music in Ukraine in

- **2011.** Foundation of the Ukrainian Association of Electroacoustic Music, which is part of the International Confederation of Electroacoustic Music (CIME/ICEM).
- **2014.** A modern electroacoustic music studio was opened at the Lviv National Music Academy.
- **April 2017.** The National Music Academy held its first scientific conference on the issues of studying electroacoustic music as part of the International Electroacoustic Workshops to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Music and Information Technology Department and electroacoustic music studio at the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine.

the 1990s and 2000s (independence and the beginning of democratic reforms, including active international cultural and academic exchange, or global integration processes that shaped the modern international information society) is a separate topic for research. International cultural institutions and foundations started to operate when Ukraine became an independent state in 1991. Young artists now had the chance to study abroad, including at world-famous electronic music centres such as Stanford University and the Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics and Music (IR-CAM).

It can truly be said that there has been a fully functioning academic electroacoustic music scene in Ukraine since the mid-1990s. Starting with the 1992 visit of composers from the French Musical Research Group (GRM), who held several concerts and masterclasses, performances of electroacoustic music featuring the works of local and foreign composers and sound artists have been becoming gradually more common in our country. This is in reference to the international projects Musical Installations and Electronic Music (Berezillia festival, 1997), Electroacoustica (since 2003), EM-Vision (since 2005) and the Vox Electronica festival in Lviv (since 2012).

In 1997, the first electroacoustic music studio in Ukraine was opened at the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine with the assistance of the International Renaissance Foundation and gave a home to the Department of Music and Information Technology. The opening of this workshop noticeably intensified young composers' interest in the electroacoustic genre.

Ivan Nebesnyi, Maksym Abakumov, Danylo Pertsov, Ivan Taranenko, Andriy Karnak, Sviatoslav Luniov, Karmella Tsepkoenko, Serhiy Piliutikov, Ludmyla Yurina, Yuliya Homelska, Liubava Sydorenko, Kateryna Olenych, Maryna Fridman, Anastasiya Arkhanhorodska, Ostap Manuliak, Maksym Shalyhin, Oleksiy Retynskyi, Anton Stuk, Oleksandr Chorny, Mykola Khshanovskyi, Nazar Skrypnyk, Yurko Bulka and many other artists from the younger generation got involved in this type of music.

As in the rest of the world, sound artists and media artists who manipulate synthesised sound in real time have become involved in non-academic electronic music in Ukraine. Often, their performances are accompanied by video projection (synthesis and image processing in real-time with an interactive link between sound synthesis and image synthesis). Modern hotbeds of experimental electronic music are the Ukrainian labels Nexsound, Quasi Pop, the festivals Details of Sound, Kvitnu, Nexsound, Hamselyt in Ternopil and ATOM in Zhytomyr, Kyiv media structure and new media school Black Box, and the "Plivka: One sixteenth" series of concerts in Kyiv.

The names of the most active artists on the experimental electroacoustic scene are Dmytro Fedorenko (Kotra), Andriy Kyrychenko, Kateryna Zavoloka (Zavoloka), Heorhiy Potopalskyi (Ujif notfound), Yevhen Vashchenko (V4W.ENKO), Ed-



**Dmytro Fedorenko, aka Kotra (top), Eduard Solomykin, aka Edward Sol (bottom).** Representatives of experimental electroacoustic music scene

uard Solomatin (EDWARD SOL), Oleskandr Hladun (Dunaewsky69), Oleh Shpudeiko (Heinali).

While the academic side of Ukrainian electroacoustic music is just beginning to secure its place in the domestic and European music space, our sound artists have already earned quite a lot of international successes and awards.

Indeed, as early as in 2005 Zavoloka's album *Plavyna* was commended at the Prix Ars Electronica international festival in Linz (Austria). In 2010, Yevhen Vashchenko's audio-visual work *Harmonic Ratio*, released by the label Kvitnu, was nominated in the Discovery category of the Quartz Electronic Music Awards in Paris. In 2011, the label Kvitnu received three awards at the Quartz Electronic Music Awards, namely Quartz Label, Quartz Artist and Quartz Discovery.

Today, the creative process of Ukrainian electroacoustic music has finally become the subject of theoretical studies. So begins a new phase of its development. A new step and a new chance to make your own "sky blue instrument". ■

June 2 – 3, 11a.m. ————— June 2 – 4, 11a.m. ————— June 4, 9p.m. —————

### CANactions

**Mystetskiy Arsenal**  
(vul. Lavrska 10-12, Kyiv)

Part of this year's architectural festival called CANactions will be a movie section with a series of showings. The program starts with the short "Sunflower Inn" about unusual people and their unbelievable feats. Then movie fans will be able to discover films from the Cinema and Urbanistics Festival 86: "Mariupol and I," "The Metallurgists," "Ma," and "The Living Fire." On the second day of showings, the films "The Age of Loneliness" and "Audience Emancipated" await filmgoers, followed immediately by an open discussion.



### Leopolis Grand Prix 2017

**Various locations**  
(Lviv)

This unusual festival in an unusual city is an exhibition of retromobiles in the City of the Lion combined with a series of concerts, competitions, contests, children's entertainment, and culinary surprises. But the high point will be the reconstruction of a military camp that will take three days. In fact, the Leopolis Grand Prix, which is a circuit car race in the city of Lviv, was part of the original Grand Prix, the predecessor to Formula-1. The course was invented back in 1927, two years earlier than Monaco.



### Mariology: New Ukrainian music

**St. Alexander Cathedral**  
(vul. Kościolna 17, Kyiv)

Summer is coming to the capital together with the presentation of a new album by the vocal group Alter Ratio. Mariology is the name of the new album, which includes works by four contemporary Ukrainian composers: Maksym Kolomyiets, Sviatoslav Luniov, Oleksiy Retynskiy, and Maksym Shalyhin. The lyrics to these melodies are traditional liturgical text from Gregorian chants known as the Marian Antiphons. Hence the name Mariology: the weaving of voices and instruments in an anthology of musical portraits of Our Lady.



June 8 – 14, 7p.m. ————— June 20 – 30, 7p.m. ————— June 22 – 28, 7p.m. —————

### Oscar Shorts 2017

**Kinoteatr Kyiv Cultural Center**  
(vul. Velyka Vasylkivska 19, Kyiv)

Ukrainian film buffs can look forward to a selection of the best shorts from the most prestigious film award in the world. The long pathway to this selection started with a local jury in every country and moved to an international panel of experts. Our Ukrainian audience will get to see the five best, including a Hungarian short called "Sing," the story of a migrant in a French short called "Internal Enemies," a Swiss film called "The Lady and the Train," the Danish "Silent Nights," and "Timecode" from Spanish filmmaker Juanjo Giménez.



### Corpusculum II

**Lavra Gallery**  
(vul. Lavrska 1, Kyiv)

As part of the Corpusculum II sculptural project, 35 artists will present their works to Kyiv gallery-goers. The abstract forms of these sculptures represent the sculptors' views of the world around them and reflect their place in this world. According to the organizers, the exhibit is intended to draw attention to non-figurative art, its potential in Ukraine and abroad, and to motivate young artists to experiment with non-traditional materials and techniques. In addition to the exposition, guests can participate in a series of educational events and workshops.



### Week of Italian Cinema

**Kinoteatr Kyiv Cultural Center**  
(vul. Velyka Vasylkivska 19, Kyiv)

You can't take a vacation in sunny Italy? A Week of Italian Cinema should help you feel like you're in the land of pasta and Pinot Grigio. Some of the best examples of Italian filmmaking will be presented during the 7-day festival. This year's program includes four films: a documentary called "Fire at Sea," "L'Accabadora" starring Barry Ward and Donatella Finocchiaro, a comedy called "Ever Been To the Moon?" and a tragicomedy called "Like Crazy" about women in a psychiatric ward in Tuscany.



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