

The Ukrainian Week

International edition

#7 (137) July 2019

Ukrainian priorities, gas war, occupied
Donbas, and political prisoners

Interview with the Chairman of the Verkhovna
Rada on the future election and possible revenge

Alla Horska: Monumentalist
painter vs totalitarian regime

~~COLONIAL SYMBOLS~~



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The Ukrainian Week

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ТИЖДЕНЬ



**BRIEFING**

The decree on peace

Yuriy Makarov

A trial balloon or a bold demonstration? Somewhat knowing one of the politicians in the viper's tangle of "life-loving oppositionists" who raised the twisted NewsOne channel, I'm pretty certain that announcing a telebridge with Moscow willy-nilly was someone's creative outburst. Knowing others, I can assume that this is part of a long game, where a hybrid response has been prepared for every reaction from Kyiv. If we get away with it, let's up the ante. If we don't, we scream about freedom of speech all over Europe and, most importantly, in eastern Ukraine. If the public gets involved, we say fascists are on the rise.

PHOTO: HANNA CHABARAI



There's even a third option: orders from the Kremlin – but I'm not prepared to reconstruct their logic. In any case, the initiative was not on our side – but then we're used to that.

This latest bit of “informational sabotage” forces us to think about what ideological format the next attacks are likely to take. First of all, “dialog” – moreover over the head of the government, directly between two peoples who have been forced by conflict. In fact, every word here can be placed in quotes. Secondly, “peace at any price.” Well, peace is not just a daydream, but an object of manipulation whose history goes back well over 100 years.

I grew up with this. Crying “Peace to the world!” “No war!,” “Strengthen the world through labor”... Over the radio we heard “May the sun always shine!” “Do Russians want war?” Then, when we bought a television, terrible reports on the cursed Americans, who were bombing peaceful Vietnam, and always a bit about Israel's military. When I was not yet 10 and hadn't learned to listen to the anecdotes of the adults around me, I was certain that I lived in the most just country in the world, surrounded by warlike aggressors. And we were in the right. We were for peace!

EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS THAT YOU CAN HAVE PEACE AS A RESULT OF CAPITULATION, PEACE BY TOLERATING EVIL, PEACE THROUGH INDIFFERENCE, AND PEACE BY CONDONING AN AGGRESSOR. IN UKRAINE TODAY, SLOGANS FOR PEACE ARE A BETRAYAL OF THE STOLEN LANDS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN ABANDONED TO THEIR FATE

Christianity, the late Antiquities, Islam, the Enlightenment, pacifism – humanity has moved steadily towards an understanding that problems are not resolved through war, and that peace is an absolute value. This was the ideological nugget that the communists took up as a reliable weapon on the path to world dominion. The first law of the bolshevik government was a Decree on Peace. The mass of exhausted frontline soldiers took this as permission to empty the front and rush home to rob the rich. The consequences everyone knows: the Red Terror, a bloody civil war, the annexation of independent Ukraine and the restored states of the Southern Caucasus, an attempt to invade Poland, rapid militarization, and the unfolding of World War II... Nor did this get in the way of reviving a hybrid expansion with the help of the entirely USSR-controlled movement for peace and disarmament after the war. Moscow found willing helpers, God forbid, and useful idiots such as the French communist Frédéric Joliot-Curie, holder of both the Nobel Prize for chemistry and Stalin's prize “For strengthening peace among nations.”

Until the very beginning of the 1990s, while the Kremlin was, with one hand, busy churning out nuclear weapons and deploying them wherever it could all over the world and, with the other, financing demonstrations against American imperialism, the slogan “fighting for peace” had a toxic flavor. In soviet kitchens everywhere, badly dressed engineers who built guidance systems for ICBMs during the daytime for 190 rubles a month plus a bonus repeated anecdotes like, “There won't be any war, but there will be such a fight for peace that not a single stone will remain standing.”

In time, the USSR found natural allies: the leftist youth of the Paris barricades and Woodstock generation. Cute, shaggy-haired young men wrote “Make love, not war” on banners with the peace symbol... and stopped the war in Vietnam. No, even more, thanks to the mellowness of the “flower children,” the Vietnam campaign went down in his-

tory as a symbol of disgrace, the unjust and violent intervention of capitalist state № 1 in a just people's liberation struggle.

In truth, the American way of making war, with carpet-bombing, using Agent Orange and napalm, did not gain it any friends. What was forgotten, however, was that there were two Vietnams: the communist North and the free, dynamic and civilized, if admittedly a bit corrupt, South. From the north, across the mountains along the famed Ho Chi Minh trail an unceasing line of units of Vietcong guerillas began pouring into the South, sabotaging, terrorizing, destroying local administrations, attacking army units, and carving up entire villages for cooperating with the official government. The Vietcong never felt any shortage of resources, either, because communist China and the Soviet Union were generously helping them. It was the saboteurs that the Americans fought as they could. Had they been able to hold the line of defense, South Vietnam might have become, like South Korea, yet another Asian tiger. Only now, nearly half a century later, is the country slowly recovering from the management of the heirs to Lenin-Stalin-Mao. And the victims of the Red Terror that counted in the millions have largely been forgotten. It's sad to admit that the idols of my youth – the rock musicians, the writers, the filmmakers – were also useful idiots...

What I'm trying to say is that peace in and of itself is neither a goal nor something unambiguous. I remember what a wave of just anger was raised over a comment by Gen. Alexander Haig, Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration: “There are things that are more important than peace.” He was right! Everybody understands that you can have peace as a result of capitulation, peace by tolerating evil, peace through indifference, and peace by condoning an aggressor. I don't want to say that St. Augustine, Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, Bertrand Russell, and Albert Schweitzer were all wrong and I'm the only wise man here. But calling for peace in Ukraine today is a betrayal, a stupid betrayal without any hashtag, a betrayal of the stolen lands and, most importantly, of the people who have been abandoned to their fate, whether they are aware of this or not.

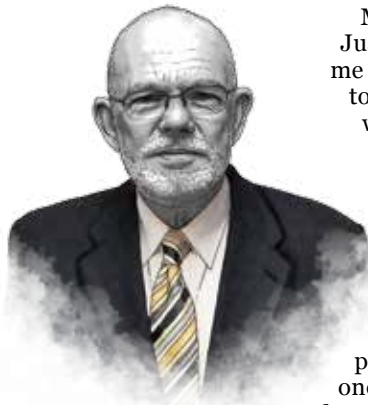
The difference is also that the soviet “fight for peace” was very effective in that many people, both within the USSR and beyond the Iron Curtain, genuinely believed in it. Naive pensioners, our grandmothers, gave their *kopiykas* from the bottom of their hearts to the Peace Fund – which was just another sub-unit of the International Department of the Central Committee – while leftist activists, similarly from the bottom of their hearts, blocked American bases in Germany. Today, no one believes in a bright future any more. The ordinary European simply wants not to be disturbed by bad news, plus low taxes and cheap gasoline. The ordinary Ukrainian whom the war has really not affected basically wants the same. Because enemy propaganda all these five years has bombarded them unhindered about how those in power are responsible for the war, that they are enriching themselves on it, our typical... I won't even say *vatnyk* [birdbrain] but rather *bolotnyk* [cottonheaded ninnymuggins] is under the illusion that it all can be brought to an end with the wave of a magic wand.

I suspect many Europeans don't understand that peace with the Russian monster at this stage would be a betrayal of them, as well. Somebody explained things badly. But our folks can and must be constantly and tirelessly reminded, no matter what it takes. The hybrid war goes on. ■

Open letter to Vladimir Putin

on the 5th anniversary of the attack upon Malaysian airlines flight MH17 on July 17, 2014

Jerry Skinner, Counsel for Applicants in ECHR case № 25714/16 Ayley vs Russian Federation



Mr. Putin, respectfully:
Justice must still be done. Let me be blunt My public letter to you began philosophically when it was published just before the 3rd Anniversary of the MH17 attack which was July 17, 2017. That was 730 days ago. 730 more days for the families of Flight MH17 victims to live without justice or explanation for the sudden, violent and public deaths of 298 loved ones, including 80 minor children. Russia chose to act on July 17, 2014. Russia did act. Within just

or the 30 days Russia took the land, the industry and the people from the Eastern Ukraine based upon purported oppression that did not exist. You chose to take sovereignty over the Donbas, which did not belong to you and you chose to do it by killing 298 innocent souls with no interest in Ukraine, the Russian Federation or the foreign affairs or destiny of the Russian state or its people.

The 730 days has passed not only for the 298 families of MH17, but the suffering has been extended to the peace loving families in Crimea and the Donbas. Justice means setting the record straight. You sought to create “Novoroyssia”. But there is nothing new in what you did. The apartment bombings were not new. The evil opportunity presented by the hostages in the Moscow Theater and the Beslan School was not new. The little green men in the Crimea were not new. The snipers in the buildings at Euromaidan were not new. Most of all in the context of shooting down a commercial aircraft with a sophisticated missile sitting beneath a commercial flight corridor, that was not new. No, these acts and thousands more between 2014 and this day were all alike. Brutal, uncivilized and unjustified.

Each was an act of a powerful state using the deliberate sacrifice of innocent life as a provocation for making foreign policy moves and taking what they want in the full view of the world. To those with eyes to see, it is still murder. However, in the two years since I last wrote to you there have been some things that are new which have become known or which have been decided. A few are very important:

1. Russia’s military readiness leading up to and including July 17, 2014 makes a strong case supporting the intentional act of shooting down an airliner.

2. Social media and the immediate strong reaction of national authorities in the affected states probably caused the delay between the MH17 attack and the ultimate Russian Army invasion in August 2014.

3. As early as February 2014, a Russian Presidential advisor was making intercepted telephone instructions to pro-Russian forces to instigate unrest in Donetsk and the Donbas.

4. In 2014 significant and powerful leaders in the Donetsk and Luhansk pro-Russian, rebel movement were actually Russian citizens, Russian military and Russian Army GRU (Intelligence) who held themselves out as Ukrainian, such as Igor Strelkov (Girkin), Igor Bezler and Alexander Borodai. Despite denials to the contrary, Russian regular military were present in the Eastern Ukraine before MH17 was shot down. Some of these people have been criminally indicted in full view of the world.

5. Criminal Indictments of Russians have occurred, more are likely.

6. The Dutch State has chosen to intervene in our civil action. Giving us a strong, motivated ally.

THE LITTLE GREEN MEN IN THE CRIMEA WERE NOT NEW. THE SNIPERS IN THE BUILDINGS AT EUROMAIDAN WERE NOT NEW. MOST OF ALL IN THE CONTEXT OF SHOOTING DOWN A COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT WITH A SOPHISTICATED MISSILE SITTING BENEATH A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT CORRIDOR, THAT WAS NOT NEW

When viewed in the context of the destruction of MH17 these events and others make Russia’s denials seem foolish and add the aircraft attack to a much larger list of political and military events which concern the larger issue of Ukraine independence.

Mr. Putin, neither the families nor the states now involved in the ECHR by invitation of the Court want to see this controversy go beyond this anniversary. But you must act and initiate contact with my legal team through the Dutch Foreign Ministry office in the Hague. Your actions there will be treated with confidence. Yes the states are involved, but my clients stand alone on their own behalf. We must be included in your resolution, if any.

Five years has passed, you need to take voluntary steps to make this right. The reality is that the nation states involved are gathering to resist your denials and hold the Russian state responsible for the 298 deaths on MH17. The further truth does appear to be that while MH17 was the target of a 9M38 series Russian Buk missile, the real target of the event was the freedom of the Ukrainian people. Ukraine should take stronger legal action against Russia in support of the MH17 families and petition the ECHR to intervene in that Court determination. Ukraine should take stronger ECHR legal action on their own behalf as a part of their arsenal of weapons to protect their own freedom.

“The truth still exists, evil is real and justice is still worth the pursuit.” ■

The rhetoric of Normandy

Without action on the part of Ukrainian diplomats, the Normandy format will not work

Alla Lazareva, Paris

The 75th anniversary of the Normandy landing will be celebrated this year without Vladimir Putin. Moscow mumbled something about being offended in public, but decided not to make a big deal of a snub that was not to its advantage. The French argued lamely that a change in the level of representation at the ceremony, which was to be conducted by the premier, and not the president, as five years earlier. Reaction was somewhat sour because, after all, US President Trump had been invited.

However, the situation did not develop beyond some annoying comments from Dmitry Peskov. Moscow focused its lobbying efforts elsewhere instead: getting sanctions against it cancelled in the Council of Europe, without returning Crimea to Ukraine. Without the French and the Germans, changing the rules of this international organization was improbable, so the Russians decided not to get hung up on the Normandy events.

WHILE HOLLANDE WAS PRESIDENT, THE FIRST, HOT PHASE OF RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION WAS TAKING PLACE, WHILE MACRON INHERITED WHAT HAS BASICALLY TURNED INTO A FROZEN CONFLICT

The newly elected president of Ukraine was also not invited to France for this ceremony, although in April, during a short visit to Paris by Poroshenko, the likeliness of a Ukrainian presence in Normandy was discussed. The Foreign Ministry told *The Ukrainian Week* that the French had decided “not to make an exception and treat any of the post-soviet states differently.” Five years earlier, François Hollande used the historic anniversary as an opportunity to try the role of mediator in the armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia, Emmanuel Macron in the same situation chose to do the opposite. Only those countries that had been directly involved in the events of 1944 were invited: the British, the Americans, the Canadians and the Belgians.

“The French tradition, started by François Mitterand, has been to gather a wide circle of leaders of states and governments on major anniversaries: 40, 50, 60, 70 years since the launch of Operation Overlord,” the Presidential press service told *The Ukrainian Week*. On five-year anniversaries, the ceremony is always more modest.” This is the official version. What goes on behind closed doors?

What is striking is that the Queen of Great Britain, like Macron, also did not invite Putin to Portsmouth, although the English celebrations were larger in scale than the French ones and were announced as a meeting of the leaders of allied countries. Angela Merkel was also present in Britain – but not in France. However, the descendants of the “victorious Red Army” are not anticipated in any event. Why is that?

“Russia has not stepped back from its expansionist plans not only in terms of its nearest neighbors, but basically with the entire world,” suggested a former French diplomat in

talking with *The Ukrainian Week*. “Neither the British nor the French are happy with the obvious interference of trolls in their elections and in the Brexit referendum. At the same time, neither Paris nor London are prepared to invite, say, the presidents of the Baltics, Ukraine, Belarus, or Moldova while bypassing Putin. No one’s prepared to openly aggravate him.”

When Hollande invited then President Petro Poroshenko to the ceremonies in Normandy five years ago, that was read as a repudiation of Russia’s policy of appropriating the victory in WWII as its solo accomplishment, as thought other nations of the USSR neither fought nor died. Varying estimates are that of Ukrainians alone, some 5-7 million died in the war. With both presidents, Poroshenko and Putin, present in Normandy, Hollande had an opportunity to try on the role of peacemaker, following the example of Sarkozy in Georgia.

Thus was the “Normandy” format of talks launched, with the participation of France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia. The presence of France and Germany prevented manipulations that would have inevitably emerged if the talks were merely bilateral between Kyiv and Moscow. An attempt to get the Americans and the EU involved, the so-called Geneva format, remained an experiment that Moscow was not happy about. For Ukraine, of course, the presence of the US and EU leadership would have been a big plus. But negotiations without Russia present would make no sense. With Hollande’s light hand, the Normandy format became the compromise that made it possible to bring the aggressor and its victim to the negotiating table in the presence of respected witnesses.

How successful this initiative proved is another matter. Whereas Minsk 1, signed in September 2014 managed to at least slow down the bloodshed, Minsk 2 became little more than the symbol of a hopeless agreement containing commitments neither side was prepared to take on. Still, no better negotiating base has been found so far. In Paris, everybody sighed with relief when Ukraine’s new National Security Council Secretary Oleksandr Danyliuk confirmed that the Normandy Format would continue and that the Ukrainian side would participate as soon as the next meeting was scheduled.

So far, an approximate date has not been mentioned. “As soon as the necessary political conditions are in place,” said Macron. Undoubtedly, Ukraine’s western partners are waiting for the results of the snap Verkhovna Rada election on July 21, and also time to observe what specific steps the new president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, takes. Where Hollande treated the Normandy format as his diplomatic brainchild and put a personal effort into making sure meetings and consultations took place, Macron seems either skeptical or even indifferent.

Possibly the French leader, like many other politicians, doesn’t see a clear, realistic path to implementing the Minsk Accords, and doesn’t want his name associated with another diplomatic fiasco. It could also be that with a tight schedule and a slew of domestic French *force majeures*, he really



Enough trouble at home. Domestic issues in France have moved Ukraine to the bottom of the heap in President Emmanuel Macron's agenda

doesn't have the time or desire to take up this very unpromising matter in any depth. In the end, Macron's personal motives are not even that important. What really matters is the facts, starting with the fact that the date of the last meeting of the Normandy four at the highest level – October 2016.

Why is it that, in two and a half years, the Normandy format continued only at the level of consultations at the ministerial level? There are several reasons, the most important being that the open armed conflict has been slowly turning into one of maintaining position. While Hollande was president, the first, hot phase of Russia's aggression was taking place, while Macron inherited what has basically turned into a frozen conflict. There are no new developments, no dynamic, and therefore no reason to rush. For French foreign policy, the priorities have always been relations with Germany, the development of the EU, relations with the US, and Africa... These constants were not established yesterday and so they won't just change tomorrow, either. The French press publishes very little about Ukraine as the accents lie elsewhere.

The second reason is the general international context. Under Hollande, sanctions against Russia were established, while under Macron they are simply continuing. Everyone is used to the sanctions by now, as well as to their reason. Moscow's lobbyists are plowing the soil to cancel restrictions on Russia's industrial sector.

The current sanctions are in effect until July 31. In relation to Russia's expansionism, Macron's actions are a continuation of the Hollande line. At the personal level, in contrast

to Sarkozy, both politicians maintained their distance from Putin. However, neither rejected *real politik*, either, recognizing the RF as an old, familiar, big, and still influential partner. Macron has no interest in getting together in order to agree on nothing. The chances of a change in the situation in eastern Ukraine that might be attributed to active diplomatic successes are simply not there. And so there's nothing to spur the French leader to active steps.

Thirdly, elections in Ukraine are another reason for the quiet. The country's German and French partners are far less motivated to resolve Ukrainian problems than Ukrainians themselves. Much depends on the nearest steps of the new head of state. The quality of the negotiations process in the Normandy format now depends, like never before, on how actively and professionally Kyiv carries out its own foreign policies. The temptation to come to agreements about Ukraine without Ukraine has not gone anywhere. Telephone conversations among Merkel, Macron and Putin have already taken place since Zelenskiy's inauguration. It's critical for this kind of mechanism not to become the norm.

It would be an exaggeration to see President Macron as a pro-Ukrainian politician. However, he's also no pro-Russian, in contrast to many other French leaders. For Ukraine's diplomats, this window of opportunity could shut down completely in three years. The Normandy format, for all its flaws, could well be the most appropriate step leading up to Ukraine's next successful steps towards the West. All that is needed is political will. ■

Modi-fied 2.0

What way will India go after the parliamentary elections

Mridula Ghosh

By the end of May the dense ink mark on the finger of Indian voters, signifying that they had cast their votes and preventing them from doing so again or in plain language, preventing rigging, faded away. The largest democracy in the world saw the end of a chapter, end of the month long grand exercise, universal adult suffrage of its 900 million eligible voters. Elections to Lok Sabha, the national parliament of India, held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019 ended. A new chapter begun, when, on May 30, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and 57 ministers took oath. Winning

record number of 303 seats by a single party, Narendra Modi has led the Bharatiya Janata Party to a resounding victory on May 23. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance won 353 of the 543 parliamentary seats. The main opposition alliance, led by the Indian National Congress, admitted defeat but, won 52 seats, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won 91. Congress Party President Rahul Gandhi, son of Rajiv and grandson of Indira Gandhi, lost his seat in Amethi, (a strong bastion for the Gandhi family) but won from Wayanad in Kerala. Other parties and their alliances won 98 seats.

In 2014, when Modi won the elections after his rigorous campaign of bringing change and a turnaround for India, many paraphrased his victory as India being “Modi”fied. The 2019 victory won the same cliché with a “2.0” added to it, meaning Modi’s second term. But before we go into the depths and subtleties of a “Modi-fied India 2.0”, a quick look at the mammoth electoral mechanism shows why it is the largest democratic exercise on earth. And how, step by step, India has moved its electoral mechanism from a poorly funded, manually managed



Political Hindutva. Ideologically, Narendra Modi and his associates oppose themselves to westernized elites, criticize secularism and stand in the positions of cultural majoritarianism

PHOTO: REUTERS

with human errors and rigging to a relatively transparent digital platform.

Involving 900 million eligible voters casting their votes in 1 million 35 thousand and 918 polling stations, the final turnout stood at 67.11 per cent, the highest ever turnout, 600 million, recorded in any of the general elections till date as well as the highest participation by women voters. Approximately 270,000 paramilitary and 2 million state police personnel provided organizational support and security at various polling stations. The counting of votes took place on 23 May, and on the same day the results were declared. How was that achieved?

PAPERLESS VOTING

Outside India, it may still be a big news for many, that India does not use paper ballots any more. Developed by the state-owned Electronics Corporation of India and Bharat Electronics in the 1990s, electronic voting machines (EVMs) were introduced in Indian elections between 1998 and 2001, in a phased manner. Since 2004, India has fully opted for EVMs, which record the vote of each and at the closure of the polls, by pressing one button the total number of votes, with details of votes in favor of each candidate/party in that particular machine is immediately available. This has eased the manual counting and other logistical issues. In 2010-2011, in order to prevent possible tampering with the EVMs, a device called voter-verified paper audit trail unit (VVPAT) was approved. This VVPAT is like a small printer, which prints out the voter's choice into a piece of paper. The voter watches how the paper gets printed and drops down to a small closed transparent basket after vote has been casted. VVPATs are used selectively in some constituencies. In 2019, a total of 3.96 million EVMs were deployed by the sole authority guiding the process, the Election Commission of India (ECI).

However, after series of complaints of possible hacking and malfunctioning of EVMs, on 9 April 2019, the Supreme Court ordered the ECI to increase VVPAT slips vote count to five randomly selected EVMs per assembly constituency, which means ECI had to count VVPAT slips of 20,625 EVMs and check its full coincidence with the EVM data, before it certifies the final election results. ECI deployed a total of 1.74 million VVPAT units. Even after that, there are complaints and the judiciary has to be involved to resolve disputes. Before the voting begins, the EVMs are tested in front of representatives of all candidates/parties in the respective constituencies. Thus, EVMs are said to be fairly tamper-proof. Not a bad idea for Ukraine to procure such machines from India!

EASY BUT CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL FUNDING

India still battles poverty but the Indian parliamentary elections were one of the costliest in the world. Budget allocations for ECI alone increased to 2.62 billion rupees, which would be used for transportation – use of elephants and helicopters for easily inaccessible areas and technical support to the elections. Most of the spending isn't publicly disclosed. While candidates have a legal expenditure cap of around \$100,000, parties can spend unrestricted amounts. Most of the jump in spending was for the political campaigning, such as use of social media, travel and advertising, surging to about 50 billion rupees from 2.5 billion rupees in 2014.

Campaign funding was obtained through donations to parties. Data show that the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), an election watchdog, in the financial year 2017–18 BJP received \$63 million, about 12 times more donations than Congress and five other national parties combined.

A serious issue transpiring in this area is the anonymous funding of political parties from Indians abroad and subsidiaries of foreign companies in India. A key amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, which in its previous version banned political parties from receiving foreign funding was adopted hurriedly by the parliament in March 2018, enabling them to get such funding in the future as well as not be investigated for past such funding. For example, India's two main political parties – the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Congress Party – were found guilty of breaking the law by a Delhi court in 2014. In its ruling, the court had said that the two parties accepted funds from companies owned by London-listed mining group Vedanta Resources between 2004 and 2012. The latest amendment has ensured that funds received by political parties since 1976 cannot be investigated. Notably, there was general consensus among all political parties on this issue. Who doesn't want easy money and not account for its sources?

The electoral bonds in denominations ranging from 1,000 rupees to 10 million rupees (\$14 to \$140,000) can be purchased and donated to a political party. The bonds don't carry the name of the donor and are exempt

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance won **353** of the **543** parliamentary seats. The main opposition alliance, led by the Indian National Congress, admitted defeat but, won **52** seats, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won **91**

from tax. According to Factly – an India data journalism portal, which traced the electoral bond donations for 2018 under India's Right to Information Act, electoral bonds worth about \$150 million were purchased in 2018 accounted for 31.2 per cent of political donations from corporates. According to Bloomberg, 51.4 per cent of the total donated amount were each below \$290 and were from unknown donors. About 47 per cent of the donations to political parties were from known sources. Between 1 January and 31 March 2019, donors bought \$250 million worth of electoral bonds.

Activists are extremely worried about this development and they accuse the Modi government of harboring double standards, because during its first term, using the same law, the government suspended licenses of NGOs under the plea that they engaged in “anti-national activities” and did not disclose the details of foreign funding. Foreign donations to parties however will have to show their identities to the State Bank of India, but will not be subject to scrutiny by ECI, government or public. Defenders of this amendment say that the desire is to make election funding cashless, and this is a first step. However, bulk of the funding comes from petty cash and it is a long way to go.

Overall, the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) in New Delhi estimated the election campaign to be \$8.6 billion, ■

exceeding the \$7 billion spent during the 2016 US Presidential and Congressional elections. It marks a 40 per cent jump from the \$5 billion spent during India's 2014 parliamentary elections. And paradoxically, it amounts to roughly \$8 spent per voter in a country where about 60 percent of the population lives on around \$3 a day.

Suffice it to say, reaching out to the global non-Resident Indians' pockets was easier through anonymous donations, than giving them real opportunities for exercising their political rights, including the author of this article. Almost 27 million Indian citizens (a negligible number considering 600 million voters in the country), ordinary civilians staying abroad cannot yet vote in their Embassies or via electronic or postal ballots. They have to be present in India to do that. Despite repeated communications, the government or the ECI failed to make adequate provisions.

CARNIVALESQUE CAMPAIGNING

With all the resources available, 8000 contestant candidates spent months on heated debate and campaigning, which, as often is the case, possess elements of carnival culture. Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi, respectively leading the ruling party and the opposition, questioned more on the political economy of reforms, rather than ideology or strategic discussions. Debates centered around the major economic achievements of the NDA government: inflation rate less than 4 per cent, the General Services Tax reform, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, positive programs of Clean India, rural cooking gas and electricity for homes as well as the

GIVEN THE PRESENCE OF UPPER CASTE PEOPLE AMONG NON-WESTERNIZED ELITES AS WELL AS IN CURRENT BJP LEADERSHIP, THE SITUATION WITH DALITS, OTHER RELIGIOUS MINORITIES WILL BE PRECARIOUS

high GDP growth rate, expected to be reach up to 7.3 per cent during 2019–2021. Modi claimed that his government pursued demonetization in 2016 (taking out higher denomination banknotes out of circulation) in the national interest, his government has identified and de-registered 338,000 shell companies, identified and recovered \$19 billion in black money since 2014, and almost doubled India's tax base. The GDP growth data as well as all of the above has been disputed by the opposition, arguing that these did not translate into employment and well being for people. If, in 2014, the BJP campaign promised a well-functioning market economy free of red tape and corruption, plentiful employment opportunities for all, fair sharing of the fruits of speedy economic expansion, and ready availability of primary health care and school education. The 2019 campaign, could not boast of fulfilling the promises. The "Make in India" initiative was expected to give the manufacturing industry a boost through foreign direct investment, but the sector has witnessed a significant slowdown. Unemployment is very high, 18.6 million people – a 45-year peak, economic growth is jobless and uneven, having 393.7 million underemployed or not gainfully employed, elementary health care remains comprehensively neglected, and there has been no striking decrease of red tape and corruption. Agrarian distress and plight of the farmers were worsened.

Even then, economic promises were in full swing from both sides. While the Congress program spoke of providing basic income to the poorest, and many other social issues, the BJP program also contained concrete targets with timeline. However, In February 2019, terrorist attacks in Pulwama, Kashmir, which caused death of almost 50 armed forces personnel and the following airstrikes by India in Balakot, Pakistan, turned the campaign towards national security and terrorism issues – this happened for the first time since the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971.

In the age of post-truth, the carnivalesque nature of the campaign could not be without abuse of social media, dramatic spread of fake news, polarized content with occasional use of hate speech, to launching of NaMoTV via cable and satellite network (promoting Narendra Modi's speeches and campaigns), attempts of release of Modi biopic by BJP. The ECI did not allow the release of the biopic until the end of the elections. But it ruled prior approval of NaMoTV contents to its committee. Towards the end of the campaign, Modi's solitary pilgrimage to the Kedarnath temple in the Himalayas and his meditation in the cave provided enough cinematic appeal, transcending the biopic. On April 12, 2019, during the time the elections were on-going, the news of President Putin awarding Modi the highest state decoration of Russia, Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, for exceptional services in promoting special and privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India, also acted as a personality booster. To many, this signaled a departure from the support rendered to Gandhi family by Russia. Modi became the first representative of a democratic state to receive this award. Modi also got awards from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Palestine and South Korea.

Unchallenged in charisma and oratory, Modi made the most judicious use of what could yield more votes, that is – appealing to the differences, appealing to the masses, not the elites, using people's fear of terrorism, perpetrated by hostile elements within India. He did not send bland unifying messages. At the same time, he also did not encourage open hate speech against Gandhi. Pragya Thakur, a BJP activist's praise of Gandhi's assassin to be a patriot was condemned and the latter had to apologize. BJP's "Political Hindutva" thus, was more of an electioneering tool, not a "battle of ideas", as remarked by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. Congress could not manage to win even after Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi, campaigned using their Gandhi family political and historical background.

DILEMMAS OF POLITICAL HINDUTVA

Adherents of political Hindutva opine, that India's power structure was constituted by Anglicized or westernized élites and secularism has become a cultural symbol for contempt of Hinduism rather than a constitutional philosophy of toleration. Comfort of the élite with Congress's "dynastic politics" as alleged by BJP, as well as the fact that other parties also are largely family fiefdoms whose intellectual legitimacy was sustained by élite intellectual culture. Hence BJP aims at cultural regeneration of Hindutva and an open assertion of cultural majoritarianism and anti-élitism, which will overstep caste differences. Opponents of Hindutva were certain that caste divisions will prevent from the shaping of a homogenous cultural Hindutva. Given the



PHOTO: REUTERS

Elections without paper. Citizens of India do not throw bulletins into ballot boxes, but use special voting machines

presence of upper caste people among non-Westernized elites as well as in current BJP leadership, the situation with Dalits, other religious minorities will be precarious. In most cases, In addition, there are risks that emerging leaders of BJP will be prone to interpret their winner's mandate as an indulgence to impose their views and approaches on those who do not agree with them – with isolated instances of extremism like cow vigilantism and attacks on those consuming beef. To alleviate these fears, Modi has added two words “Sabka viswas” (Everybody's trust) to his earlier inclusive slogan “Sabka saath, sabka vikas” (Together with Everybody, Development for everybody”). Time will say, how these inclusive attitude will permeate across the length and breadth and grassroots levels of BJP.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Issues that Modi has to deal with are many and all are of high priority. First – fragile relations with Pakistan. If there are more attacks from Pakistan-aided terrorists, that will cause hurdles on that road. Second, relations with China should stretch beyond trade and encompass strategic partnership, with no border disputes. Modi needs to create jobs at a rate of 10 million to 12 million a year—the number of Indians joining the workforce annually. Half the country's population is under 27. Urban men between the ages of 20 and 24 make up 13.5 percent of the working-age population but an as-

tonding 60 percent of the unemployed. The need to resolve trade disputes with US, related to India's e-commerce policy of localizing all data, and US policy of suspending the generalized system of preferences status for India.

Internally, Modi's extraordinary charisma and abilities also show dangers of concentration of power and the deification and personification of one leader by the rank and file of BJP. Also, independent institutions, like the Supreme Court, Election Commission of India and the Armed Forces of India, should be kept away from the lures of political partisanship. Dissent and difference should not be silenced. The fundamental bases of a democracy cannot be compromised. For that, a viable opposition and a robust civil society, which will hold the government into account, is required. As Shashi Tharoor, winning member of Lok Sabha from Kerala writes, “Fights over symbolic aspects of identity need to be replaced by political competition over how to benefit all Indians. That will require an opposition in India far savvier and more in touch with the country's poor than exists today.”

In his victory speech, Modi declared “this victory is for united India.” In Modi-fied India 2.0, minorities should not feel threatened, significant parts of the population economically empowered, and businesses grow, the ruling party in a democracy of 1.3 billion people should treat competitors as adversaries not as enemies. ■

Gerard Elzinga:

Interviewed by Yuriy Lapayev

During the 2nd Ukrainian Defense Hackathon The Ukrainian Week talked to the Head of Spectrum and C3 Infrastructure Branch at NATO Headquarters C3 Staff on the results of the competition, the details of the main projects of the Alliance for Ukraine and prospects of cooperation with the Ukrainian security and defense sector.

How satisfying was the result of this year's defence hackathon? Is there any difference comparing to the previous challenge?

– I think it is similar to last year. One of the good things is that you see that the problems and challenges the participants are faced with, are addressed by each team in offering their own unique solution. But most importantly, the teams are getting new ideas by learning from each other. In addition we are also getting some new ideas on how to solve and how to tackle the problems. During the presentations, I saw some new approaches to solving the challenges especially when comparing the solutions from younger people as compared to the more older participants. The young generation immediately looks at the new technologies, they integrate it with, for example mobile technologies, with mobile phones, mobile apps like scanning QR codes, etc. That was definitely something that I have noticed last and this year. This integration with modern technology is a good thing to see. One of the main shortfalls that was noticed in the past, and one I think, is extremely important to address, is that different defence and security sectors within Ukraine operate pretty much in a stove-piped isolated manner – they had their own domain and they did not or in only in a limited fashion communicate and share the information with each other. What you see here at the hackathon is that people from different organizations start to talk to each other. Which means they are building up a personal network, that will help them in the longer term. And that is a big plus of the hackathon. Of course, it is still a competition and everyone wants to be the best, so they don't share everything, keeping some very good things for themselves. But at least they get to know each other, this is breaking down barriers, which is a very positive post-event effect of the hackathon.

Which assistance gets Ukraine from NATO C4 (Command, Control, Communications & Computers) trust fund?

– This NATO-Ukraine Trust Fund is funded by ten Alliance nations, it is led by three of them – the United Kingdom, Canada and Germany. The goal is to improve Ukraine's C4 capabilities and to improve interoperability with NATO. The first step was to conduct a Feasibility Study where the whole command and control structures were assessed. This ultimately resulted in 4 project proposals that are now at various stages of implementation:

The first project is situational awareness, which effectively is to provide Ukraine with some NATO software tools for creating situational awareness. As Ukraine has built its own situational awareness tool using NATO standards, the NATO tools will be used to validate and verify the interoperability between Ukrainian and Alliance systems. The result will be that when Ukraine joins an operation with NATO units they can immediately interoperate. At this moment we are awaiting final approval from the lead nations to commence the project. This is expected shortly.

“Ukraine is one of the nations, where we are sharing the most of our information with”



PHOTO: SERHIY STANISTEIKO

The second project is in the field of secure communications. The delivery was in last December when we provided Ukraine secure communications equipment including assistance. This project was recently implemented and very well received. It provides the friendly force tracking information, which is needed to track forces in the operational areas and also allows to exchange securely orders, tasks and messages between command posts in a closed network. This doesn't mean that Ukraine didn't have such capabilities, but as the existing equipment is vulnerable for jamming and exploitation from adversaries in the field, this project provided a resilient (back-up) capability. The work in this project is still ongoing, it helps Ukrainian forces and military personnel. I can only say that I was impressed because the Ukrainian forces have exploited this system beyond than that we normally use that system. They have even included the ability to exchange emails and really well understand how the system works and exploit it to the maximum possible meeting their requirements.

The third project is the Regional Airspace Security Program. This system, will align and coordinate civil and military air traffic, specifically the air traffic crossing the Ukrainian border and coming from Ukraine to other nations. This system will be connected to the system already deployed in Poland, Turkey and Norway, consequently it will allow to get a complete picture of air traffic, what is flying in and out of Ukraine, in order to avoid incidents. The equipment has been produced and is now undergoing testing. The expectation is that the implementation will be in the second half of this year with a final acceptance test by the end of this year. Subsequently it could be operational somewhere around early next year.

And finally, the fourth project is Knowledge Sharing. It means that we share all the C4 related information we have in NATO, which is releasable to Ukraine. This includes sharing of information such as standards, doctrines, concepts and lessons learned. It goes down to details such as definitions of roles and responsibilities. This is an important aspect as in NATO we have a very decentralized execution of tasks with a handover of the responsibilities to the lowest levels of command possible. In Ukraine this has now started. Command and Control is very much centralized because of the legacy that is still present. And

in order for you to use your capabilities and your forces as efficient as possible, it simply doesn't work anymore. As a result of the high operational tempo in today's battlefield, you have to give the responsibilities to the lower levels of Command in order to operate effectively and efficiently. As an example: You can not call to your capital asking for every decision or permission, it is not efficient. Through that knowledge sharing initiative, we also help Ukraine to understand implement standards, we provide advises on how the NATO and NATO nations do the business in various areas, related to C4. This included, for example, giving workshops, providing courses for C4 personnel, courses on how to manage your IT-systems and information management training. What is also important is that Ukrainian experts have direct access to NATO experts, we bring them in touch with NATO colleagues as well as NATO nations' experts, who have a lot of experience, build up in different specific areas. I can honestly say that, maybe with the exception of one or two other partner nations, Ukraine is one of the nations, where we are sharing the most of our information with. Everything that is available and releasable we are immediately releasing to Ukraine, this includes engaging with experts and personnel in the defence and security sector. We are telling them what we are doing right now, so they get a better understanding of what we already have and where we are going. We try to give them as much information as possible in order to improve their C4 capabilities and interoperability with NATO. That was our focus for the last two years. Now we have a confirmation from lead nations for a follow-up project, that will allow us to continue this kind of activities.

What comes next after that?

– In the next phase of the Knowledge Sharing Project we aim to put more emphasis on Ukrainian-led project teams that address a specific topic – for example: Federated Mission Networking, which is one of the main drivers within C4 domain in NATO. Next is on joint ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance). We want no longer that NATO runs this teams, it should be Ukrainian-led, supported by NATO. Through this approach, enduring commitment will be better guaranteed

So they can get more experience?

– It is not only about experience because your people in security and defence sectors are already well experienced. But it's too easy if we do all the work for them. If the lead is with Ukraine, they have to put more effort in it and that will result in the fact that that it gets better integrated into their way of working. It is not that we want to impose on Ukraine a specific way of working that NATO or one of the NATO nations have adopted. Every NATO nation is different. We all work by certain standards and procedures, which allow us to cooperate, but there will always some national flavours in doing that. So the way you will plan or implement our procedures will always be a little bit different. Because your culture is different, your structures are different etc. And as long as you have some common basic structures and processes in place, it will allow you to interoperate with NATO and Alliance nations. It is not as simple as buying the same radio or the same piece of equipment, also your way of working needs to be aligned. So your procedures and processes need a minimum level of standardization, compatibility. The equipment is probably the easiest part.

What is your experience in working with Ukrainian colleagues?

– In our first engagements with Ukrainian Armed Forces, the Ukrainian focus was really on the material side i.e. equipment. The Ukrainian counterparts thought that as long as equipment is provided it will somehow solve all of the interoperability

Mr. Gerard Elzinga. 1986 – graduated from the Royal Military Academy (Netherlands) as an Air Force Officer (Electronics Engineering, specializing in Telecommunications). 1983–2003 was a CIS Officer in the Royal Netherlands Air Force serving at Operational F-16 Air Bases as well as in a variety of Staff functions both in Operations as well as Plans. After graduating from the Air Forces' Command and Staff College, served as a Financial Planner and Deputy Program Manager of an Air Force wide IT System that aimed at modernizing the entire Royal Netherlands Air Forces' IT Infrastructure. After a tour as national C3 representative at the Netherlands Delegation in NATO HQ, joined the NATO Headquarters C3 Staff, first as a Staff Officer (2003-2016) in the Spectrum and C3 Infrastructure Branch and later as Branch Head. Since 2016 – Head of Spectrum and C3 Infrastructure Branch at NATO Headquarters C3 Staff.

problems. That is not how it works. You need to have also the rest in place. After follow-up discussions it was really understood that the material side is only one part but you also need the other parts of the puzzle and this message is spreading effectively. If you improve your C4 capabilities it will make your decision making more effective and therefore it will allow you to better execute operations with a high level of security and safety of personnel. By using fewer resources and not wasting them, at the end of the day, it will simply cost you less. It should also be taken into account that the C4 Trust Fund has a limited budget; it is not like we have hundreds of millions available for supporting Ukraine. So we need to find smart ways to change the things that should be changed and to focus on things that will have the biggest impact. That is why we have developed the projects as they are now. We see now that at all levels, from high to low, the initiatives that are taken are gradually being understood. Now Ministry of Defence and General Staff they are supporting us very much. In the beginning everybody was a little bit skeptical, something like – "here are some other guys from NATO, come to tell us what to do". We were absolute strangers to each other. But now we have a level of cooperation, contacts and that help to progress very satisfactory. It is also a matter of trust, it takes time. Now the trust, between us and the people we are in contact with, is sufficiently there. If some Ukrainian representatives that we engage with in Ukraine, come to NATO headquarters we just grab a cup of coffee together and discuss the issues freely. Previously, we didn't do that, now it is a standard procedure. I'm in almost daily contact with the Ukrainian mission to NATO and we have a very good working relationship. That helps to progress all of these projects.

Do you see any changes in Ukrainian policy toward NATO after our presidential elections?

– I haven't seen any changes since the elections, the time is too short to see any of them; change takes time! I hope that in some way this will help to change faster. But regarding our C4 trust fund, I think we will not face any major changes because we are very much focused on technical and procedural details. That will not change our cooperation, I don't see at the moment how it can impact our work other than that it will shape the conditions to execute the programs as effectively and efficiently as possible. At a more global level I hope that any changes will be for the better and that will positively reflect on NATO-Ukraine cooperation. I hope that the positive attitude that we have created now through this and any other initiative will only help to increase our partnership. ■

Empty pedestals

Yaroslav Tynchenko

What does Ukraine have to offer against the Russian myth of “the glorious victory of Russian military power”?

Ukrainian military history can boast a lot of heroes. Many countries in Europe, mainly Eastern European countries, are proudly singing their own praises, congratulating themselves on much less successful historic campaign or events than Ukraine. Moreover, they managed to turn those events into a national cult. In Ukraine, on the other hand, such historic events are of rare interest even to professional historians.

If we compare ourselves to Soviet-Russian military historical narrative, Ukraine has much less advantage not only in the amount of available historical figures and heroes, but also in a way the narrative is presented. Russia, as well as some other countries across the world, has learnt to turn its national heroes onto brands. It does not really matter whether from the researchers' point of view such people as Suvorov, Kutuzov or Zhukov were not much of a heroes Russians claim they are. Russian military brands became a propagandist collection of images, sculptures, statues; they were printed and shared in children's books, school textbooks or even represented on national currency notes.

Russian and Soviet militaristic hero-brands always possess certain distinctive features. Its prototype of a hero is someone in the middle between the God and the Leader. This prototype

spends all his life proving that he is worthy of his own nation and deserves the glory, and, most importantly — he always dies from natural causes. He has never been tortured, executed or murdered; this prototype of Russian-Soviet hero has lived a happy life and passed away in the company of his close family and friends. Soviet military order-medals of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Nakhimov, Alexander Nevsky, as well as Bohdan Khmelnytskyi are currently one of the most expensive ones for phalerists and collectors due to its unique artistic execution.

Famous monuments to Bohdan Khmelnytskyi or Taras Shevchenko in Ukraine were erected by either Russian or Soviet governments. The question is how many Ukrainian heroes have been commemorated by the Ukrainian governments throughout the whole period of independence? How many of them have had the potential to become Ukraine's national militaristic brands?

In 2001, during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma, Kyiv received its Independence Monument, erected on Maidan Nezalezhnosti Square (Independence Square) — a tall triumphal column, crowned by a statue of woman, the so-called Berehynia, a woman symbolising hearth mother or protectress of the earth according to pre-Christian Ukrainian beliefs. This, however, is very far from



The martyrs' cult. Yushchenko-built memorial to Ukrainian patriots, who died in a battle of Kruty against the Russian occupying forces symbolises the tragedy, rather than the victory

powerful militaristic image. Monuments of the founders of Kyiv, or Cossack Mamay sculpture, placed under the Berehynia's statue become less noticeable and important. During the Kuchma's times the monument of Petro Sahaydachnyy, one of the Ukrainian hetmans, was built in Podil district of Kyiv. This monument is, however, situated far from political epicenter of Ukrainian capital and is rarely used for official events or state meetings. Interestingly enough, Russian authorities were earlier trying to include Petro Sahaydachnyy into the "Russian" military pantheon and the song dedicated to him was even allowed to be sang by the Russian imperial army and was added to their official songbooks.

Viktor Yushchenko's presidency was marked by grief and mourning over martyrs and murdered Ukrainian patriots. Ukraine received its national museum dedicated to the horrors of Holodomor named "Holodomor Victims Memorial", which is indeed an extremely important step on the way to building and strengthening national identity and memory. However, such museum hardly qualifies as a glorious monument and will scarcely boost young men or soldiers fighting spirits.

Poroshenko's era should have brought monuments of various Ukrainian military leaders from different historical epochs — from the Kyivan Rus' princes to the heroes of Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas. However, such monuments can barely be counted on the fingers of one hand. Moreover, many of those monuments have been built on private citizens' finds, rather than being financed by the state. Ukrainian politicians and oligarchs preferred to keep quiet and remain indifferent, voluntarily choosing to avoid the issue of glorification of the defenders of Ukrainian state interests.

Another important matter is to synchronise one's own military history with the crucial global events — and in this regards Ukraine is similarly far behind. Everyone remembers President Petro Poroshenko's state visit to Paris, which coincided with the World War One memorial service. Ukrainians were asking themselves — why did President Donald Trump shake hands with Vladimir Putin, but not with Petro Poroshenko? For American leader Russia is the country which was one of the key contributor to Entente victory in the World War One — however, he hardly is aware of that fact that nearly one third of Russian imperial army were ethnic Ukrainians. How would he know this anyways, if Ukraine itself completely ignored the ending of the World War One and failed to hold any official, state supported celebrations?

Ukrainian authorities could have turned this event to their own advantage in order to tell the global community about its valuable contribution to end the war. Ukraine had a chance to tell everyone about its heroes and high casualties. Ukrainian government could have told the public that in 1918 authorities of Ukrainian People's Republic publicly announced that they were prepared to take on one third of former Russian Empire's foreign debt. Representatives of Ukraine participated in Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. Surely, it would hardly cause uproar among European politicians, but still many of them could have said to Poroshenko, "So it looks like your ancestors sat here together with ours?"

The only person in Ukraine, who was genuinely interested and made a great effort to celebrate the end of the World War One, was the ambassador of Canada in Ukraine, Roman Vashchuk. He is a grandson of the two veterans of Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, a Ukrainian unit within Austro-Hungarian army during the World War One. He has spent a lot of time trying to find support among Ukrainian politicians in this matter.

Sadly, despite big words and generous promises, independent Ukraine has spared itself an effort to build monument to Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, or at least a monument dedicated to everyone, who was protecting Ukraine and its sovereignty throughout the history. Absurdly, Canadian ambassador as well

as representatives of the others states were forced to celebrate the end of the one of the bloodiest wars in European and world history in Kyiv's Park of Eternal Glory, next to the Soviet Tomb of Unknown Soldier, which has little to do with the World War One.

This theatre of absurd has continued when Petro Poroshenko attended a number of patriotic events organised in the territory of the National Museum of History in Ukraine and dedicated to Ukraine's role in the World War Two. There were exhibitions of Soviet soldiers statues and Soviet symbols, and Ukrainian president held his speech about Ukraine's inevitable historic and political victory in the exact same place where once spoke Brezhnev and Shcherbytskyi.

Ukraine's World War Two heritage has also been misjudged by the politicians. How more absurd and surreal can it get, when Ukraine has officially joined Europe in commemorating the victory over Nazism celebrated on the 8th of May, called it the day of remembrance and peace, however some people still stubbornly carry the flowers to the Soviet monuments on the 9th of May? Because if this was the day of peace (and it is understood to be the peace between all the Ukrainians who fought on the German side and the Soviet side), then why the flowers are only being put onto the Soviet Tomb of Unknown Soldier?

How more absurd and surreal can it get, when Ukraine has officially joined Europe in commemorating the victory over Nazism celebrated on the 8th of May, called it the day of remembrance and peace, however some people still stubbornly carry the flowers to the Soviet monuments on the 9th of May

Andriy Parubiy, speaker of Ukrainian parliament once said in one of his interviews that after a couple of years Ukrainians will forget about inflated living costs or difficult economic situation, but the memory of removing communist symbols form the public sphere will stay. This statement is debatable though. It is true, that over the past five years many Soviet monuments and symbols were destroyed and Soviet names of the streets or cities were changed. However, Ukrainian government has failed to replace those perished Soviet symbols with something new and meaningful and many local communities did not seem to relate to the new street names.

It turned out that in practice it takes few hours to few days to annul the law that has earlier ordered to rename the street or the city. It is much more difficult to destroy the monument or a memorial, however, but Poroshenko's administration did not seem to be interested in erecting new statues or monuments either. Kyiv, and other Ukrainian cities are full of empty pedestals, once crowned by the grotesque statues of Lenin or other Soviet leaders — one of them is now situated in one of the Kyiv's main boulevards, the Taras Shevchenko Boulevard.

This is the crucial difference between Russian way to use the history and Ukrainian. If Russians were to start massively destroying the monuments, they would immediately build the new ones — to Suvorov, Zhukov, Kutuzov... Leaders of the possible pro-Russian revenge seekers among Ukrainian politicians will even thank their predecessors, who cleared up Ukrainian public space form the communist symbols — this will leave them an open space for their new political symbols.

In terms of ideology Ukraine has lost a lot during these five years and has failed to use that unique opportunities it had. From now on, for every empty space left after Lenin, pro-Ukrainian powers will have to stage a fierce fight with the worshippers of the old Soviet symbols. ■



Andriy Parubiy:

“The current division into “old” and “new” politicians is the new Bolshevism”

Interviewed by
Dmytro Krapyvenko

The Ukrainian Week discussed with the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada the likely scenarios of revenge and means of its prevention, as well as the results of the government's activity over the past five years.

When did the revenge begin?

– Attempts of revenge have not stopped since 2014. But it is not important whether they were, but to what extent they were successfully implemented. During these five years Azarov, Portnov & Co obviously pursued anti-Ukrainian policy. It was clear that these people would do their utmost to bring the country back to the pre-Maidan times. However, the present moment has created favorable conditions for their stay in Ukraine and the deployment of their activities here. A striking example is filing lawsuits against the Maidan by Portnov. For instance, they try to accuse me, as Commandant of the Maidan, of organizing unauthorized rallies, of Odesa events on May 2, 2014, in fact, of those actions that were aimed at preventing Russian aggression. Today, hostile saboteurs are operating freely in our territory. The decision of the Taras Shevchenko National University to restore Portnov has clearly signaled the official establishment that the old times are coming back. The reaction to this was my appeal to the Verkhovna Rada and the students' protests. Society and mainly young people are ready to re-

sist the revenge. Active citizens are ready to show that they will not allow steps aimed at devaluing what once made people fight for at Maidan.

Portnov's return and other significant events took place under the Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko. He is still in office. Why did the PGO (Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine) not take any noticeable measures?

– I cannot speak on behalf of the Prosecutor General's Office. The Verkhovna Rada's position has remained unchanged all these years. My recent application about ZIK channel, and similar statements and appeals about NewsOne and 112 Ukraine, which appeared before, aimed at necessity to check their work and law compliance. Today, immediately after the new president's inauguration, shadows of the past have begun to feel more freely and behave more aggressively.

Hennadiy Kernes is a shadow from the past that has not disappeared from Kharkiv for all these five years. We see today his initiatives to return Soviet names to the streets, obviously, we will witness other revanchist moves. Were such compromises with Kernes and his likeminded for the past five years really so necessary?

– No, these compromises were not necessary. My position on this issue is unchanged: people with anti-Ukrainian views

and activities must face the consequences. But I will repeat myself: the implementation of Kernes's initiatives has become possible right now. You mention the legal aspects, but apart from them, there is a general political atmosphere in the country that favors revanchist steps, when anti-Ukrainian forces allow themselves to check how far they can go and how much they can hit our basic values. I have repeatedly stressed that the basis for the construction of the state is the question of national identity. This question nobody will solve for us. In this cadence, we adopted a number of fundamental decisions: the recognition of the UPR (UNR), Carpathian Ukraine, OUN and UPA members as Heroes of Ukraine, recognition of the participants of the Resistance Movement and granting them the status of combatants, the decommunisation, the autocephaly of the church, the law on language, quotas on radio and television. And just at these achievements the attack is now being directed. Today, we both – I, as the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, and citizens of Ukraine – should show that in the event of an attempt to revise these legislative acts the revanchists would feel in hot water! During these five years the state has finally become Ukrainian, when we have restored historical justice; therefore our task is to keep these achievements from neglecting.

A tool of revenge is the courts. Could the current situation have been averted over the last five years?

– Judicial reform is one of the most difficult. Courts are a separate branch of government, and protection of each judge is not only an internal matter of Ukraine but also pan-European. Let me remind you that some of the dismissed judges were reinstated in office precisely through the European Court. It was extremely important to update system of justice. We began to change from above. I am proud to be directly involved in the creation of the Anti-Corruption Court, which we have been shaping according to the best European models, with the involvement of foreign experts. The High Council of Justice is also an important step for updating the system. Of course, at the lower level there are still many judges who were appointed at the times of Yanukovich, which are a big problem and a great warning. Reforming has not reached this link yet, and there has not been a massive upgrade of personnel. That is why the courts today can use the forces of revenge in their interests. We must demonstrate our own position and apply convincing arguments. De-Sovietization is the law that any Ukrainian court must consider. Our activities should be convincing at the level of public and political actions; these should be the basis for politicians, social activists, and journalists to unite.

One of the most popular memes of the current election campaign is the abolition of deputies' immunity, as if such a decision should restore justice in society. But in reality it is what the judicial reform is aiming at, is not it?

– I have always been in favor of abolishing deputies' immunity, at least in order to satisfy this public demand. I will remind you that the parliament voted for Petro Poroshenko's draft law on the abolishment of immunity twice. But few people know that the Constitutional Court, which must give an assessment of such a decision, determined that this initiative itself contradicted to the requirements of the Constitution. It is possible that the subsequent attempts to abolish immunity will have the same result. In most countries parliamentarians have some immunity, but if the Ukrainian society demands the abolition of this immunity, let it be so. As the Maidan showed, the parliamentary mandate does not

Andriy Parubiy, Ukrainian politician, the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada since April 14, 2016. He previously served as Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council. From December 2013 to February 2014 was a commandant of Euromaidan. He was a coordinator of the volunteer security corps. In the July 2019 Ukrainian parliamentary election Parubiy is placed second on the party list of *European Solidarity*.

protect from the Berkut's truncheons, that is, in the event of the unfolding of high-level repressions in the country, immunity will not protect the deputies.

Was it possible to finish off with the fifth column without going beyond the limits of democratic methods?

– Our war takes place in several dimensions. We must simultaneously resist Russian aggression and move towards NATO and the EU. Would our actions be effective if we could not have mobilized the entire civilized world for sanctions against Russia? Therefore, we cannot afford to act in a non-democratic way; this will mean a break with the Western world with all the relevant consequences. When we banned Russian TV channels or social networks, we heard a lot of criticism in our address. But you should not fall back on abuse of police measures, because it can eventually lead to breaking of cooperation with the civilized world. Perhaps if we had acted as rigorously as possible, violated human rights, we would have gained stronger public support, but then we would have failed to have progress in our foreign policy. Our war against Russia is the war of two civilizations, we must demonstrate qualitatively different approaches compared to those of Russians. As our Western partners say, when one dictatorship fights against the other, they will not be able to find arguments for their citizens, why they should support one of the parties in such a conflict.

We are forced to resist Russian technologies to destroy Ukraine from the inside every day. One of them is the complete discrediting of the Ukrainian authorities, the encroachment between power and society. We are reaping the fruits of it now.

What are the main mistakes of power over the last five years?

– It was an unpleasant moment for me to vote for the initiative of declaring incomes by public activists. I myself did not vote, because I consider this step to be erroneous, in fact that spoils our relations with the western partners. We should have taken greater pains to prevent Medvedchuk from controlling a large share of Ukrainian media, since the occupation of the information space is no less a defeat than the loss of part of the territory.

The presidential election revealed one paradox: many of our citizens simply do not notice the war. Is it due to the fact that it does not significantly affect their welfare?

– It is a direct responsibility of the authorities to care on the well-being of their citizens. During the years of war, we have built more roads than for the whole previous period of independence; we have achieved though not a rapid but quite noticeable economic growth. It was crucial for us to show that we are a successful European state. During the war it is very significant. But the citizens' awareness of the fact that the country is still at war is not a matter of well-being, but of information influence.

There is a substitution of notions, for example, to the foreground comes not our defense capability, but the fight »

against corruption. It reminds me of the century-old events – Liberation competitions. At first, Ukraine had remarkable successes: Bolbochan held the eastern front, controlled the Crimea, agreement on the entry of Kuban into our state on the rights of autonomy was signed, and the Western Ukrainian Republic united with the UPR. What was Russia's reaction? It changed information agenda. They said, the Ukrainian state was not important, the scrooge-landlords treat cruelly the peasants, so it was not Russia they should fight, but against the “bourgeois”. Socialists in the Ukrainian government have played along with Russians: it was not necessary to fight the Bolsheviks; it was better to wage class struggle. Thus, the paradigm of a successful Ukraine then was destroyed.

AT FIRST, WE HEAR THAT WE SHOULD NOT SEEK MEMBERSHIP IN NATO, THEY SAY, THERE ARE WONDERFUL EXAMPLES OF NEUTRAL COUNTRIES WE SHOULD LOOK UP TO. BUT THIS IS ONLY A PREPARATORY STAGE FOR FURTHER MERGER

What is happening now? We hear: “Well, there is some kind of war there, but it's not the main thing, but the fact that new faces have come to power, because the old ones have completely discredited themselves.” And who are the old politicians? This is Rabinovich, Medvedchuk, Dzhemilev and Shukhevich at the same time. What do they have in common? “Young Regional” Dmytro Razumkov, Kolomoyskiy's lawyer Andriy Bohdan are the new faces, and those veterans and volunteers who were in the current convocation of the Rada are the old, aren't they?! And the main conflict we have turns out to be, according to some TV channels, not the conflict with Russia, but the domestic one, between generations of politicians. We have quietly approached the moment when Medvedchuk's pro-Russian force have had more than 10% of support, and the most popular political force is indifferent to it, moreover, it has the former regional as its first number. If they cooperate, albeit *ad hoc*, we will face a direct threat of revenge.

Is parliament's upgrade a challenge or chance?

– After the 2014 elections, the parliament was upgraded by more than 50%. The next convocation will be updated by about 60%. But that's not the point! If 300 young regionals enter the Rada, should we rejoice with such “new faces”? Significant is not the age, but the presence of the pro-Ukrainian group in the parliament and its quantitative representation. It is necessary to have if not the majority, then the critical amount of deputies, enough to hold back the revanchists. And this question is to the voter.

The current division into “old” and “new” is the new Bolshevism, an illusion. For some reason, in public policy now there is a big demand for some elements of show business. This is a global trend, but in Ukraine it has a tangible peculiarity: behind all those parties with showmen, the oligarchs are at the head.

Volodymyr Zelenskiy says that his initiatives the men in the street will lobby if the Rada does not support them. However, we do not see this lobby, but the men in street, as the events at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv showed, are on the side of the pro-Ukrainian forces. Will it continue?

– There is a lot of virtual in Zelenskiy's policy. At first they conducted a propaganda campaign on the president, now they are attacking the Rada. There is a huge information re-

source for this, and it is at their disposal. But let's remember, who stood at Maidan? Sensible and energetic people, it is them who can become the force for change. They are not subjected to zombifying by TV channels. The protest of students against Portnov is a phenomenon of the same order as the Maidan. Therefore, the men in the street will continue to be an effective tool for protecting against revenge. However, they solely will not solve anything (let's recall the Kharkiv agreements and Kivalov-Kolesnichenko's law), for it a sufficient number of anti-revanchist forces in the parliament are needed.

Playing democracy is also extremely dangerous. First, all dictatorships at some stage played with the tools of direct democracy. Secondly, referendums are what Medvedchuk and militants constantly insisted during the negotiations in 2014. Thirdly, two-chamber parliament is the way to federalization and legalization of the LNR / DNR within Ukraine.

We know about the project of European Ukraine and the model of the “Russian world”. Sometimes there is the so-called third variant: Ukraine as “liberal Russia”, which “simply stops firing”, where the language question is bracketed out. There are forces in the West, which would be satisfied with such a Ukraine, they seem also to be among Volodymyr Zelenskiy's coterie. How do you feel about this project?

– There is no such option. Ukraine will either be Ukrainian or become part of the Russian Empire. The third option you mentioned is just the transitional stage before returning to the colonial state. At first, we hear that we should not seek membership in NATO, they say, there are wonderful examples of neutral countries we should look up to. But this is only a preparatory stage for further merger. If Moscow now explicitly states that it wants to join Ukraine, there will be few supporters in our country, but a lot of people will stick to the tales of neutrality. We have an example of Belarus, we should take it into consideration. Today it is extremely difficult to resist full assimilation.

Does the president understand this? Are there people in his team who can explain him how dangerous it is?

– When I met Volodymyr Zelenskiy, I clearly outlined those red lines that can not be crossed. I said: “I see that you want to stop the war, and I know that you will be offered in Moscow to give autonomy to the LNR / DNR with the right to veto the issues of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. To accept such conditions will mean absolute surrender. It will be touted as follows: well, we have decided to wait with the EU and NATO, but in fact it will be the first step towards returning to the colonial state. The next will be the steps towards cultural, economic and political rapprochement with the Russian Federation. Such processes will be strengthened by the fifth column inside the country and a large number of indifferent citizens: they will not actively defend any position, and therefore will not resist revenge. There are three basic points: national identity, because it is self-preservation issue; cooperation with NATO, because it is national security issue, we confront a very strong enemy, and the North Atlantic Alliance is today the most effective military alliance; and European integration, because it is the issue of our prosperity, economic development, social standards. These things must remain inviolable.”

What was the president's reaction?

– “I will do what the people want” – this was the answer. ■

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The well-known path

How popular parties plan to implement rule of law reforms

Hanna Chabara

Both new and familiar faces top the polls in the runup to the parliamentary election. Their platforms signal that the current MPs expect to return to the Rada based on inertia from previous accomplishments, while the newbies run on slogans for “all things good”. The Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR), a coalition of NGOs, has invited representatives of political parties to present their vision of governance and rule of law reforms. Candidates from Petro Poroshenko’s *European Solidarity*, Yulia Tymoshenko’s *Batkivshchyna* (Fatherland), Sviatoslav Vakarchuk’s *Holos*, Ihor Smeshko’s *Strength and Honor*, and Volodymyr Hroysman’s *Ukrainian Strategy* joined the discussion. Experts proposed that the parties share their vision for establishing and reforming the Government, developing anti-corruption institutions, reforming courts, law enforcement authorities and the election code, continuing decentralization and reforming the parliament. **The Ukrainian Week** looks at the proposals from the parties that have a good chance of getting through the 5% threshold and do not have an anti-Ukrainian agenda.

EXPERTS PROPOSED THAT THE PARTIES SHARE THEIR VISION FOR ESTABLISHING AND REFORMING THE GOVERNMENT, DEVELOPING ANTI-CORRUPTION INSTITUTIONS, REFORMING COURTS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES AND THE ELECTION CODE, CONTINUING DECENTRALIZATION AND REFORMING THE PARLIAMENT

Yulia Tymoshenko’s *Batkivshchyna* with its 9.4% of votes from the decided voters, according to the latest polls by the Social Monitoring and Oleksandr Yaremenko Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies, offers an audit of the Government functions in order to delegate some to those better capable of performing them. *Batkivshchyna*’s Serhiy Vlasenko believes that competitions should be abolished for some civil servant positions. “Open competitions have brought new blood to civil service. At the same time, they have killed the desire to grow within the institution itself. Everyone suddenly wants to become State Secretary, while professionals with some experience in civil service but lacking some of the things that outsiders have had no chance to compete,” he explains. According to Vlasenko, civil service needs professionals, not new faces.

In terms of decentralization, *Batkivshchyna* wants to preserve the three-tiered system of local self-governance: hromada (community), county (rayon) and region (oblast), cut the functions of the counties and make the counties larger. “The principle of everywhere (coverage of the country’s entire territory – Ed.) should be upheld, so should be the principle of money following the powers. We believe that we should switch to the three- or five-year term for budget formation. The forecasting of local self-governance budgets should be sustainable,” Vlasenko said.

Also, he proposed downsizing the Verkhovna Rada. But this should be preceded by the all-Ukrainian census to under-

stand how many MPs Ukraine really needs. *Batkivshchyna* supports the abolition of MP immunity. Vlasenko believes that the methods of criminal persecution for anti-corruption purposes are not sufficient. So programs should be introduced to “decrease mental addiction of society to corruption.” He did not specify what programs these could be.

The judiciary system needs mechanisms to unify court practices. It should be developed by the Supreme Court, *Batkivshchyna* representative says. According to Vlasenko, the system should be less loaded with functions: mediation should be introduced for dispute resolution, and the justice of the peace institution should be established to deal with small cases. The party supports the creation of a proper jury service and better quality of law education.

Sviatoslav Vakarchuk’s *Holos* is currently polling at 8.3%. Its program director Pavlo Kukhta proposes a review of the functions of the state apparatus and delegation of part of them to the private sector, civil society. “The vision we have is a fully electronic state, normal interaction between registers within the state and between citizens and the state,” he says. “This is what we would like to see at the end of the next Rada term.” According to Kukhta, ministries have too much leadership which should be downsized.

Holos suggests not interfering with decentralization, but communication with the communities should be better to prevent feudalization whereby communities are established based on a strategic plan, not the interests of local leaders.

In order to improve the quality of the Parliament’s work, *Holos* wants to change the election code: introduce open party lists and abolish the first-past-the-post (majoritarian) system. “We want MPs to be more effective. Among other things, we need to remove the shameful phenomenon of systemic no-shows. For this, we propose linking salaries of MPs to their attendance. More specifically, we would not pay the salary to any MP who has missed over 25% of votes. Those who have missed 50% should be stripped of their mandate,” Roman Suprun, a representative of *Holos*, said. Vakarchuk’s team also plans to fight against the button-pushing by introducing fingerprint sensor buttons. It wants to introduce the mechanism of majority vote for the majority of those present at the session to replace absolute majority, and to abolish MP immunity.

Deputy party head Yaroslav Yurchyshyn proposes re-criminalization of illicit enrichment – the Constitutional Court decriminalized it earlier; implementation of civil forfeiture for the assets gained illegally; re-launch of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO), the National Corruption Prevention Agency and the State Investigation Bureau; empowerment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) to independent wiretapping based on court ruling; and introduction of the audit system for law enforcement agencies. In addition to that, ProZorro, the transparent public procurement system, should cover energy and security sectors, according to Yurchyshyn.

The key tasks for the judiciary, according to Yurchyshyn, include the re-launch of the High Qualification Commission



Talk of reforms. Most pro-European parties are willing to have a dialogue with civil society. Servant of the People avoids such dialogues

of Judges and the Supreme Council of Justice – currently they include compromised judges. “We now see the best scenario: both institutions will, during the selection process, receive support from the Public Council of International Experts – their term in office has not ended yet, so it’s realistic to re-launch them within six months. The people who conduct the competition cannot be less qualified or not pass the integrity appraisal,” Yurchyshyn says. The renewed High Qualification Commission of Judges should take into account the conclusions of the Public Integrity Council on judges and conduct re-appraisal of them. In addition to that, *Holos* representative offers a procedure of competitive selection of judges for the Constitutional Court.

Petro Poroshenko’s *European Solidarity* is polling at 8.2%. Poroshenko’s term in office ended with a big victory: Ukraine’s vector towards the EU and NATO were recorded in the Constitution. This declaration does not mean that Ukraine will quickly join any of these two, yet Poroshenko’s party is using these accomplishments in its electoral campaign. *European Solidarity*’s Rostyslav Pavlenko says that their team will support the formation of the future coalition around euroatlantic integration. “It is clear that we need to shrink the functions the state by outsourcing to the civil society or fulfilling jointly with it the ones it can and the ones where IT can be applied. This would decrease the dependence of economic processes primarily, and of social processes on a wider scale on the human factor,” he said.

According to Andriy Smoliy, another representative of the party, the team will work in the new parliament to prevent the pro-Russian revanche and usurpation of power. It will also work to introduce the policy of strengthening the role of the nation-state in the issues related to the Ukrainian language, Church and de-communization. “We are against the bicameral parliament which normally works in federal states. So, we need to elect under the proportional system with mandatory open party lists. The next parliament will need to act as a guarantor for continued decentralization because these are the things that have

empowered local self-governance bodies to actually implement their policy,” Smoliy says. Poroshenko team’s recipe for the fight against corruption is to remove inappropriate functions from law enforcement and security agencies, to reform tax authorities, and to re-criminalize illicit enrichment.

European Solidarity plans to reset the Supreme Council of Justice and the High Qualification Commission of Judges and hints at the need to reform the system of the Interior Ministry and oversight over it. In addition to that, the party wants to introduce citizen education for Ukrainians. This would cover the awareness of citizens’ rights and the capacity to exercise them.

Ihor Smeshko’s *Strength and Honor* is on the verge of getting through the threshold with 4.1%. Its representative Olena Sotnyk sees the need to deepen decentralization and go from the current 25 oblasts to the “historic administrative arrangement of lands” with heads elected in local elections. She also supports the idea to pass a law on local referenda. According to Sotnyk, Ukraine should have an automated system for verification of officials’ declarations and to revise the functions of the National Corruption Prevention Agency which is not fulfilling its mandate properly. SAPO should be independent from the Prosecutor General’s Office and recriminalize illicit enrichment. Sotnyk supports the change of the system for the selection of judges, increased accountability and salaries for them. According to her, Ukraine needs a law on small criminal violations to ease the workload for investigators in the regions.

Nobody attended the discussion from Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s *Sluha narodu* (Servant of the People) which is polling first at 42.3%. Its platform declares the abolition of MP immunity, re-criminalization of illicit enrichment, open-party list election, “state in the smartphone”, independence of anti-corruption agencies, reset of the Supreme Council of Justice and the High Qualification Commission of Judges. It is currently unclear how exactly the party plans to implement these plans. ■

Price too high

Oleksandr Kramar

How Zelenskiy's efforts to keep the parliament under control may pave the way to the loss of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity

New president's circles have been actively looking for a way to influence Ukrainian MPs, especially after a fierce and bitter confrontation between the President and, as it looks already dissolved, Ukrainian parliament that took place after Zelenskiy's election. President cannot trust the new parliament's loyalty either. Zelenskiy's 73% of support gave him the feeling of his unique election and he has been rather annoyed that the current parliament absolutely does not seem to be interested in acting as an assistant to Zelenskiy's party parliamentary ambitions. Zelenskiy's representative in Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian parliament, and at the same time one of his key ideologists, Ruslan Stefanchuk, has recently announced, not able to hide his annoyance: "Since the moment of inauguration, from May 20 until June 7, parliament has not supported a single initiative, suggested by the president. They are all declined and dismissed."

After a bold attack on the parliament, initiated by Zelenskiy who attempted to assault MPs and bring their public humiliation, long awaited by Zelenskiy's voters, MPs have quietly switched to an opposition against the new head of the state - and he has no way to prevent that. At the moment a single party majority in the parliament, won by *Shuha Narodu* (Servant of the People) is not as certain as it seems yet, and even Zelenskiy's circle understands this. For instance, it is not unlikely that recent calls to reform the parliament, based on long forgotten Kuchma's reform, dating back 20 years ago, are a living proof of Zelenskiy's inability to secure a clear and effective control over the parliament in the current circumstances.

...20 YEARS LATER

In one of his recent interviews the afore-mentioned Ruslan Stefanchuk openly claimed that "We are not ready to ignore the opinion of Ukrainian citizens voiced in 2000. At that time we had presented the people with four questions, referring to the creation of the two houses of parliament and decreasing the number of MPs [...] we are not in the position to ignore the public opinion (82.9% - **Ed.**).” Hereby it is worth explaining the reason, why then-president and today a close aide of Volodymyr Zelenskiy, Leonid Kuchma, initiated a referendum for the Ukrainian public to decide on the parliamentary laws in 2000. Current Ukrainian Constitution was passed in 1996 in the middle of a fierce confrontation and antagonism between then-president Kuchma and mostly oppositional parliament, which was headed back then by Kuchma's irreconcilable opponent, Oleksandr Moroz. In its initial draft, 1996 Constitution fixed a dualism of power in Ukraine. On one hand, executive power institutions such as President, government and local administrations, could function autonomously and exercise their basic functions regardless of the situation in the parliament. On the other hand, fundamental questions, such as the state budget, as well as appointment of the Prime-minister, Prosecutor general, as well as Heads of other central executive institutions were to be decided solely by the parliament.

Prior to 2000 Verkhovna Rada was headed by a populist leftist majority and the executive powers headed by the president for a while co-existed with each other. For instance, from time to time the parliament would pass various laws of dubious importance without consulting with the president or the government. Common fundamental decisions were made after a long period of talks and compromises. After his re-election in 1999 Leonid Kuchma began an open campaign against the parliament and tried to revise



An example to follow? Bicameral parliament has always left a space for a third player in the political game – the presidential administration

some of the functions granted to the MPs in 1996. In the early 2000 the parliament managed to stage a "Velvet revolution", as it was called back then by the journalists – this was possible owing to a temporary alliance with centre-right parties in the parliament and the creation of Viktor Yushchenko government in December 1999.

In one of the sessions, that the MPs were made to hold outside of the actual assembly building, communists and socialists were isolated from heading the parliament and the pro-government majority was created. In order to secure the victory, Kuchma's government called for a nationwide referendum on 16 April 1999, which then supported presidential initiatives. First decision allowed the president to dissolve the parliament should it fail to secure a functional majority within one month or fails to approve the state budget within three months. Secondly, the article of the Constitution of Ukraine which prohibited arrest, investigation of MPs without parliament's approval, was removed. Third initiative called to decrease the number of MPs from 450 to 300 and create a bicameral parliament, where one house would represent the interests of regions in Ukraine.

However, at that time president's attack on the parliament was neutralised after the conflict in the pro-government centre-right majority, public civic protests calling for "Ukraine without Kuchma", Yushchenko government resignation and two epoch-making election campaigns – the Parliamentary campaign of 2002 and the

presidential campaign of 2004. Results of the referendum were put aside, because according to the decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, those results were to be first approved by the constitutional majority in the parliament – which, despite ruthless efforts of the presidential administration turned out to be impossible. At the same time, changes to the constitution, which limited presidential powers and empowered the parliament were passed during the Orange revolution in 2004. These changes were prepared by the Putin's protégé in Ukraine and also at that time head of the Kuchma's presidential administration, Viktor Medvedchuk. Those changes were aimed at limiting the powers of the newly elected Viktor Yushchenko, openly anti-Kremlin candidate, as well as to implant a time bomb into Ukrainian politics and create grounds for constant tensions between the parliament and the president.

After another series of tensions in the triangle president-parliament-government on 16 April 2008 Ukraine's Constitutional Court announced that “the decision of the nation-wide Ukrainian referendum concerning the drafting and passing the laws is final and does not need to be ratified by the parliament or any other state institutions in Ukraine”. Therefore this has opened up a way to implement the results of the 2000 referendum in the best interests of then-president Viktor Yushchenko. His administration, however, has failed to use this advantage up until presidential elections in 2010. Nevertheless, the 2000 referendum and the Constitutional Court's decision in April 2008 left the window of opportunity to pressurise the parliament open, as well as provided the possibility to change the constitution and increase the presidential powers at any moment – should there be a political will to do so. This is exactly what Volodymyr Zelenskiy is trying to do now, it seems.

AGAINST THE REASON AND THE SANITY

If we take a look at the changes, approved by the referendum 19 years ago, it turns out that currently the president does actually have the right to dissolve the parliament provided it fails to form a legal majority. Additionally, talks are being held to remove MPs immunity. Therefore, there are only two promises that have not been fulfilled yet – to decrease amount of MPs from 300 to 450, and to create a bicameral parliament. If the former one is easier to achieve and is a rather populist slogan, the latter may indeed have fateful political consequences for the whole country.

During his presidency, Kuchma's logic behind the creation of the two houses of parliament was simple – he wanted to create a second house, to “represent the regions”, which was also thought to influence and counterbalance the second one, elected via proportional representation, where opposition had higher chances to win the more seats. Additionally, in any case two houses of parliament always leave more room for president's manoeuvres.

At first glance, Zelenskiy's case is in every way different. His chances to grasp the control over the parliament are in fact higher now, should his party, *Sluha Narodu*, be elected via proportional representation system. Right now he is likely if not to achieve an absolute majority, then at least keep strong positions in the parliament. However, in the long run such system seems unfavourable for Zelenskiy. After he gets all the power and, predictably fails to fulfil most of his promises to his desperate electorate and as a result, suffers an unavoidable blow to his popularity, it is only the plurality voting system that will save Zelenskiy and keep him in power.

Meanwhile, Zelenskiy's team members are actively exercising their persuasiveness and power of speech, trying to convince the public that the country needs bicameral parliament. For instance, Ruslan Stefanchuk stated that “If we get together MPs elected via plurality system and the ones who were elected in proportional representation, there will hardly be any constructive communication. We will lose both political structure and regional representation. Mixed system turned our parliament into the huge political market.” However, in reality such statement is just an unwilling-

ness to accept the fact that outdated plurality system should have been liquidated long time ago. In fact, this system was successfully brought to an end in 2000 and was only resumed by Viktor Yanukovich in 2012, who realised he has had no other chances to stay in the parliament otherwise.

In Ukrainian postcolonial realities and environment of underdeveloped national identity, second house of parliament will turn into escalation of interregional contradictions, renewed calls for federalisation, and, the last but not least, creation of favourable environment for Kremlin to destabilise Ukraine.

Two houses of parliament are common for countries that are either federations or confederations established as a result of two countries uniting into one state. Another example is for countries where historically and traditionally there have always been two houses of parliament – one for aristocracy and one for commons. In Ukrainian realities upper house of the parliament will not be able to represent municipalities, especially when there are talks of decreasing the numbers of MPs. For instance in France the reason behind existence of the Senate, the second house of the parliament, is argued to be the need to represent regional communities. However, French Senate on its own has 348 members.

SECOND HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT WILL TURN INTO ESCALATION OF INTERREGIONAL CONTRADICTIONS, RENEWED CALLS FOR FEDERALISATION, AND, THE LAST BUT NOT LEAST, CREATION OF FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR KREMLIN TO DESTABILISE UKRAINE

Therefore, potential decrease or even keep the current amount of MPs in Ukraine as well as creation of the bicameral parliament are two self-contradictory matters. According to the Kuchma's logic in 2000 and his followers within Zelenskiy's circle the idea is to provide wide representation for big regions – oblasts. This, on the other hand, will create a dangerous threat of fragmentation and creation of regional centre alternative to the capital, as well local elites who would be distributing the resources. Additionally, according to Zelenskiy's and his team suggestions, interests of the local communities and regions will likely be closely tied to local regional lobbyists – not unlikely with a dangerous addition of the openly “Russian world” aftertaste.

An adequate model of decentralisation based on the interests of local communities does not need any sort of territorial representation or the second houses of parliament. Because in this case unrepresented minority among the communities will suffer from the loss of financial resources or its uneven distribution – the scenario will follow the previous scheme of isolating disloyal MPs elected via plurality system. Let alone other possible confrontations between the municipal and village communities, eastern and western regions, steel and oil and gas regions, etc.

Zelenskiy's representative in the parliament has admitted that there are only two ways to solve the parliament issue. “We can either create provinces headed by the chairmen – this way we will create another plurality system. Otherwise, we will structure the society and thus we will create proportionate system.” However, this may lead to a dangerous creation of local “feudal owners”, which can potentially endanger Ukrainian independence and its territorial integrity. If we combine these statements with Zelenskiy's populist calls to create bicameral parliament, as well as utterly absurd idea to decide on majorly impotent state matters via national referendum, it seems that Ukrainian political scene will turn into an unmanned chaos. One does not need much imagination, to understand that intentional creation of regional conflicts and creation of an illusion of the “direct power of Ukrainian people” will benefit anyone, but not Ukraine in its effort to consolidate its unity, independence and power. ■

System cacophony

How the branches of power live and interact after the presidential election

Roman Malko

The new president of Ukraine was suddenly forced to stop the cavalry attack on the system of authorities, which had already begun during the inauguration. He did this, of course, by necessity, because he did not intend to have dead time on the way to victory. Perhaps, if he were starring in a new series, and everything went according to the script, it would have been so. But the reality turned out to be different. A talented actor, vulnerable and delicate, suddenly realized that waving of his sword didn't scare anyone, and the menacing look only amuses those who must bow their heads in obedience. And if you do not rein in the horse, it is quite possible to smash into the already regrouped enemy line. Say what you like, but our warrior does not love defeats with all his heart. First of all, he wasn't used to them (well, he didn't happen to meet defeats throughout his life), and secondly, it would be the height of folly to lose so foolishly after winning the election. So he switched to plan B.

THE MAIN SYSTEMIC TASK NOW IS NOT TO DELAY THE TIME OF EXPRESSION OF THE WILL, BUT ONLY TO TEACH THE YOUNG PRESIDENT GOOD MANNERS, BRINGING TO HIS ATTENTION THAT IT IS HOPELESS TO DISREGARD THE INSTITUTIONS OF POWER WITHOUT HAVING ENOUGH FORCES

The state of relations, in which the institutions of power are at the moment, could be called a quadruple power, but this is too loud and pompous. There is no particular reason to think so. You cannot call it dormancy either, because, despite the exponential inhibition in the depths of these organisms, in fact, actually, very violent processes occur. In fact, all this is more like an ordinary cacophony. Each institution today is trying, within the limits of its capabilities and talent, to play its own party as best as it can under existing conditions.

The president lives his life, patiently waiting for reality to change, which, finally, will enable him to continue what he, in fact, went to the post for. Having burned himself on the Rada and having understood that he would not be able to bring it to heel; leave alone finding common language with, Volodymyr Zelenskyy decided to switch to areas where it was possible to go wild. If he can, he rules and introduces his people into the system, if he cannot, he doesn't. He meets with delegations, signs decrees, submits bills to parliament. His worst headache is how to manage not to lose the support he received before the parliamentary elections, and where to find the appropriate staff to control the necessary directions. And since there is obvious shortage of personnel; friends from "95 Kvartal" are few in a number, and not everyone obviously wants to change their profession, and appointing a good-for-nothing in a key position is very irresponsible (the predecessor has already made such mistakes), so even a slight delay is quite handy.

Of course, the electorate, who seeks to see the promised miracle now and immediately, does not agree to wait long and may scatter. To prevent this from happening, you should take real pains imitating active work, creating informational storms. For-

tunately, in this area the president's team is up to par: throwing fake news about a referendum on negotiations with the Kremlin, a selfie with shawarma at the gas station, an official visit to Monatik's concert, an emergency briefing on the return of Leonid Kuchma to the Tripartite contact group on the settlement of the situation in Donbas or demonstrative instructions to Ivan Bakanov, a business partner who is now trying himself as acting chairman of the SBU, you are always welcome. However, there happened a small incident with Bakanov. The press release with the loud title "President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy demands in two-week's period that the Acting Chairman of the Security Service of Ukraine to report on the first results of work" really touches to the heart. Bakanov's words deserve a special notice: "We always told each other the truth; we did not allow others to tell lies. We never stole; we didn't let others steal, and always remained humans." But in reality, this whole story reminds a scene that two friends act out to the public, realizing that they are being spied on. Either the president's press service has not yet learned how to write messages dryly, leaving extra information behind the scenes, or it's in the promulgation of ambiguous details that they see certain schticks that the electorate should buy, but it was much Freudian. Volodymyr Zelenskyy's phrase: "We have very little time to reload the SBU, we need real criminal cases" can be interpreted, well, very ambivalently.

The fact that the adoring electorate will swallow this message like a candy should not be doubted. But are these revelations really addressed to them and should they be heard by those who were not under the rock? Of course, there is no secret that, due to the sluggish performance, the rating of the president's team will quickly melt with each week and they need some specific actions that can slow down this process. There is almost nowhere to go wild, and this is an annoying reality that they will have to face. It is also clear that the tactic of blaming the predecessors, who do not want to leave and throw a spanner in the works, in all possible sins, albeit effective, but it will not work for ever. Therefore, the situation must clearly be somehow rescued, and so, willy-nilly, you will have to resort to window dressing. In the end, the method is proven...

But who throws a spanner in the works, blocks the president's initiatives and his attempts to pull the blanket over himself? Clearly, it's the parliament, which is working in its usual mode as if nothing has happened and seems to be doing it consciously. It has little time left. Countdown to pre-time parliamentary elections has started. It is unknown whether an attempt to abolish this presidential initiative through the Constitutional Court, despite its dubious legality, will succeed. But the remaining time is still worth using in order to cool the hot heads of the presidential team and, if there is no time to create fuses about which there is so much talk and almost nothing is done, then at least to bring down its rating to a minimum.

So, Zelenskyy, in anticipation of such meanness, is trying to submit to parliament as much as possible high-profile bills (on impeachment, on illegal enrichment), well aware that they have little chance of getting even on the agenda. But it is also a trump card. It will make possible to keep on talking about the "throw-



PHOTO: UNIAN

The day before yesterday's instead of yesterday's. Leonid Kuchma's return to the Tripartite Contact Group on the settlement of the conflict in Donbas is hardly an "anti-system" decision

ing a spanner in the works." And the demand to adopt laws on the impeachment of the president and lifting of parliamentary immunity in one package is nothing more than an attempt to challenge the Rada as a dare. But this cannot surprise the elected representatives. They themselves will make a fool of anyone, as they have done more than once. The law on temporary investigatory commissions is already ready for second reading. It contains the entire procedure of impeachment, but there is nothing about the lifting of immunity. Votes in favor, most likely, there will be enough...

With the government, the situation is even more interesting. It not only plays its own game, feeling support of the Rada and clearly recognizing its own significance, but it can also break all presidential plans related to early elections. And the matter is not even that the Ministry of Justice allegedly does not want to bypass the rules to fix the statutory problems of the party "Servant of the People", which can make the participation of a virtual presidential political force in parliamentary elections impossible. The most influential lever is money. According to the CEC estimates, the needed sum for the elections must be as much as UAH 2 billion (\$73 million). It is the Cabinet of Ministers that appropriates funds for this. And it may simply not find them in the budget or give them too late. To crown it all, there is the latest problem with Arsen Avakov, whose retirement you can smell in the air after the tragedy in Pereyaslav-Khmelnytskyi. Prior to this incident, it was the Minister of the Interior with its security structures that was the pillar on which the president could safely lean on. But now the circumstances are such that if the parliament on the spur of the moment dismisses Avakov from the cabinet for his men's killing a child, then even the servant of the people will not feel comfortable to resist it.

The only branch of power that can with pain and misery be considered an ally of the president remains the judicial one, which gives symbolic signals of loyalty. This is not even surprising. The judicial system always keeps its nose in the wind

and quickly takes the right side. Although it is not all clear. On the one hand, there are refusals of the Supreme Court to open proceedings in the case on the legitimacy of the presidential decree on early termination of parliamentary powers and early elections and on the case on the legitimacy of the appointment of Andriy Bohdan as head of the Zelenskiy PO. But on the other hand, the Constitutional Court did accept the submission of people's deputies regarding the constitutionality of the above decree. And since the deputies ask badly to reduce the examination procedure to a minimum and make a decision as quickly as possible, it's not at all a fact that this case will lie for indefinite time somewhere in deep drawers. By the way, it was almost by chance that the day before the question of consideration of this issue in the Constitutional Court, Volodymyr Zelenskiy appointed there his representative Fedir Venislavskiy. This is just a remark. Since it is unknown whether there is a connection between the events mentioned. Moreover, there is no reason to doubt the honesty and impartiality of the Ukrainian judges. But it is also impossible to reject attempts to pressure them. The case is really fateful. And on how the question is settled, a lot will depend.

Everyone more or less likes this game, because there are no other options yet. So far, no one is openly hostile with anyone, and the cacophony of the authorities is still on. The presidential team needs control over all branches of government, and it is ready to wait as long as necessary. They cannot make losers of themselves, and they are well aware of this fact. The parliamentarians, as well as the officials, seem to have also accepted the fact that the elections will be pre-timely, and this suits them to a certain extent. The main systemic task now is not to delay the time of expression of the will, but only to teach the young president good manners, bringing to his attention that it is hopeless to disregard the institutions of power without having enough forces. Of course, the situation may change at any time, although now it seems that nobody is interested in speeding it up. ■

Defeating ourselves

How Ukraine has played soft with Russia in preparing for a gas clash next year

Oleksandr Kramar



Moscow's goal has not changed. It is to restore Ukraine's total dependence on Russia's fuels and to impose the terms of cooperation cementing that dependence for a long-term prospect

The response of the previous government to Russia's open and long preparation for the gas war and the likely energy blockade of Ukraine starting from 2020, was shockingly passive. While Russia was finalizing Nord Stream 2 and building TurkStream in the south, Ukraine wasted at least four years it could have used effectively to prepare for the inevitable clash in the energy front. Ukraine expected someone far beyond the country to solve the problem. But counting on the talks, involving the EU, to extend gas transit or to impose sanctions on the companies involved in Nord Stream 2 was a sign of complacency from Ukraine's leadership. The potential price will be a forced capitulation to the enemy on the gas front this winter. Sabotage by Ukrainian officials, inactiveness and the lack of a strategic approach amongst the top officials and the key institutions responsible for Ukraine's preparation for the potential challenge in the gas and energy sector contributed to its shrinking chances to avoid that scenario much more than the perfectly expected treachery from Russia did.

What we see is that the new team in power led by Volodymyr Zelenskiy, too, lacks a well-planned strategy to strengthen

Ukraine's position in the potential clash with Russia. Moreover, one risk is that it may take populist steps that will help the Kremlin accomplish its goals in forcing Ukraine to accept unequal, de facto post-colonial conditions of cooperation in the gas sector even in the aspects where it has been undermined with much effort in recent years. Moscow's goal remains unchanged: to prevent Ukraine's independence, to restore its total dependence on Russian fuels, and to impose the conditions of cooperation that would cement such dependence for the long-term prospect, thus helping Russia to eventually take full control over Ukraine's energy infrastructure and its domestic gas market. All this would lead to its political control over Ukraine and further swallowing of it, or to a Belarusian scenario for Ukraine.

FORCE POSTURE

Gazprom has long and consistently prepared for 2020. It finished laying the sea section of the TurkStream pipeline on November 19, 2018. 57% of Nord Stream 2 was completed by early June 2019. Russia is waiting for the decision of Denmark that

will define whether the pipeline is launched on January 1, 2020, when the contract for the Russian gas transit through Ukraine expires. Finally, a recent decision by Gazprom will have it pump the record 11.4bn cu m of gas into the European storage facilities it controls, compared to just 5.8bn cu m in the 2018-2019 heating season.

Meanwhile, Gazprom has increased its presence on the EU market and its influence in the key decision-making states in the EU. This is supposed to ensure their loyalty in case of another war with Ukraine.

The share of gas the EU consumed from Gazprom was under 30% in 2013. It went up to 36.6% in 2018. The amount of gas shipments increased from 161.5bn cu m to 200.8bn cu m over this time in absolute numbers. Germany's share of Russian gas consumption has exceeded 60%. The sales of Russian gas to Germany and Austria, the locations for the key gas hubs, grow at a shocking pace. By contrast, deliveries to most other EU member-states have shrunk in recent years.

The amount of gas sold to Germany in 2018 grew to 58.5bn cu m from 53.4bn cu m in 2017, while Austria purchased 12.3bn cu m in 2018 compared to 9.1bn cu m in 2017. Turkey bought only 24bn cu m in 2018, down from 29bn cu m in 2017, while Italy purchased 22.7bn cu m in 2018 compared to 23.8bn cu m in 2017. If Russia's plans are to be implemented, it will be the hubs in Germany and Austria where extra gas will go through Nord Stream 2. Coupled with Nord Stream, its total capacity will amount to 110bn cu m. All this makes it highly likely that the Russian gas will no longer flow to Ukraine's gas transit system for further transportation, unless Ukraine accepts Russia's ultimatum expressed by Gazprom's leadership: to extend the current transit contract that benefits Russia and was forced upon Yulia Tymoshenko by Vladimir Putin during the previous gas blockade in 2009.

According to Moscow's plans, the European side will be perfectly willing to pressure Ukraine into accepting that proposal (at least as a way to postpone the problem) if it faces a risk of not having the amount of gas critical for the heating season. That will give Russia an extra tool of pressure in favor of the construction and the distribution infrastructure to deliver Nord Stream 2 gas to the European countries, and gas from TurkStream to south-eastern Europe. Once it does, the EU's need for gas will no longer be affected by the termination of transit through the Ukrainian system. For Ukraine, however, the inactivity of the responsible top officials in the past and continued inactivity of the new team in these issues, if it is the case, will only aggravate the problem of critical gas deficit. Ukraine will then be forced to speak to Gazprom and even accept a contract to buy gas under the terms dictated by Moscow.

Ukraine has so far been purchasing gas from the EU under reverse contracts. This gas was de facto coming from Russia. If Russia stops all transit through Ukraine (or if Ukraine faces a deficit of gas as a result of this termination), it will be difficult to physically import the amount necessary for Ukraine from the hubs in Germany and Austria, and this will be done at inflated prices.

WASTED TIME

The 20/20 program, a trump card in the possible gas war with Russia in 2020, envisaged an increase in domestic extraction of hydrocarbons to 20bn cu m, and to 27bn cu m with other state and private companies. The program was never implemented. If it had been, it could have brought to a minimum Ukraine's need for gas from Russia, layered over the saving of gas for households. Ukraine would then only lose transit revenues if Russia stopped the transit, but it would have no problem meeting its domestic demand.

In reality, UkrGazVydobuvannia (Ukrainian Gas Extraction company) increased its gas extraction by less than 1bn cu m over recent years to a mere 15.5bn cu m in 2018. The growth in 2018 was 0.25bn cu m. As a result, Ukrainian companies will be lucky to extract 16bn cu m in 2020 by contrast to the 20bn cu m as planned under the 20/20 program. The protracted blockade of gas extraction concentration by oblast councils (especially in Poltava Oblast) and delays in authorizing extraction have contributed to the non-implementation of the program. UkrGazVydobuvannia received 13 authorizations in 2016, 4 in 2017 and 1 in 2018. The key components to this situation were probably the clash for spheres of influence between frenemies from the power conglomerate and the interests of the key decision-makers in the industry.

Who is now responsible for the actions or the inactivity that has resulted in this situation? Who allowed the long sabotage of preparation for the expected gas war with the enemy? All this may be revealed quite soon. What is known is that Ihor Kononenko, one of Petro Poroshenko's closest allies, initially opposed the 20/20 program and insisted that private companies had to increase gas extraction, meaning the companies possibly related to him. The role of state companies was to fill in the state budget, he claimed. Interestingly, Petro Poroshenko Bloc had a strong presence in the Poltava Oblast Council for five years, while its representatives were actively justifying the non-authorization of extraction by UkrGazVydobuvannia.

As a result, Ukrainian companies will be lucky to extract **16bn cu m** in 2020 by contrast to the **20bn cu m** as planned under the 20/20 program

The need for imported gas equals the gap between consumption and domestic production. Therefore, the non-implementation of plans to shrink gas consumption was another of the government's failures. Quite on the contrary, it grew from 31.9 to 32.3bn cu m in 2018. The key consumers were households accounting for 17bn cu m, while industrial consumers got 9.3bn cu m. 18.9bn cu m was used by households in 2015. This shows that a mere 10%-decrease over all these years. It is the household sector that still has the most potential for further decrease, even after the serious increase of utility rates that was supposed to incentivize gas saving. Industrial consumption shrank from 11.2 to 9bn cu m over the same period.

The reason is the lack of real investment into energy efficiency. As gas price rose, the government offset this with a wasteful system of subsidies that supported further consumption, leading to the negative consequences. Ukraine spent billions of dollars for subsidies over the past years. Just under US \$300mn was channeled to the decrease of gas consumption by households. Meanwhile, the industrial sector is slowly exhausting its reserve for consumption decrease. Therefore, the only way to save is to decrease the consumption of gas by households. This can amount to 6-7bn cu m on the nationwide scale. These savings can be accomplished in the peak winter periods when the price of gas and the rates of consumption are the highest on the European market, making the imports more difficult and pricey for Ukraine. Other categories of consumers, especially the industrial sector, uses gas evenly throughout the year.

Ukraine lacks over 11bn cu m of gas annually with the current consumption rates, which is far higher than what one could have expected five years ago. The pace of consumption decrease and domestic extraction increase then inspired expectation of cutting the amount of imported gas to 5-6bn cu m by 2020. Importantly

in this context, Ukraine failed to use other opportunities to improve its position vis a vis Gazprom in advance of a gas conflict with it. Ukraine failed to implement plans to build a pipeline to transport extra gas from Poland to Ukraine. It does not have any serious initiatives for using the Trans-Balkan pipeline (which used to transport gas to Turkey through Ukraine) to deliver gas for Ukraine. Turkey could potentially have serious excess gas from different sources and sell some of it to Ukraine. Instead,

WHAT WE SEE IS THAT THE NEW TEAM IN POWER LED BY VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY, TOO, LACKS A WELL-PLANNED STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN UKRAINE'S POSITION IN THE POTENTIAL CLASH WITH RUSSIA

Ukraine is almost fully dependent on gas supply from Slovakia and Hungary (the capacity has recently expanded to 0.6bn cu m per month). But both directions are uncertain: if transit through Ukraine's system stops, these countries will have a problem meeting their own demand.

Counter the *The Ukrainian Week's* proposals from a year or so ago, the government has failed to use the potential of the underground storage facilities. With the capacity of 31bn cu m, they only held 20bn cu m in the past winter heating season even though Naftogaz managers realized how serious Russia's blockade was. Given the time lost, there is no technical capacity to pump more gas there. According to Naftogaz, the facilities held a mere 11.46bn cu m as of June 1, even after a dynamic growth of 1.97bn cu m in May. But even this pace will hardly allow Ukraine to accumulate 20bn cu m in its storage facilities by September. Time and opportunities were still wasted this spring. When the

heating season ended on April 4, Ukraine's storage facilities still held 8.75bn cu m of gas, adding just 0.7bn cu m (or 1bn cu m less than possible) in April.

STUMBLING BLOCKS OF DIRECT SUPPLY

Media controlled by Viktor Medvedchuk and the top speakers of his party have lately been actively promoting a trap for Ukrainians and the new team in power, seducing them with direct supply of Russian gas at 25% less than what Ukraine pays for reverse supply from the EU. This is further aggravation of Ukraine's dependence on monopoly supply from Russia, and free cheese in a mouse trap. What can come with the 25% discount is Ukraine's recognition and payment of the debt for gas supply from Russia to the occupied parts of the Donbas in 2015-2019. Gazprom was officially supplying it through the Prokhorivka and Platovo gas meters based on its own interpretation of the contract with Naftogaz and billing Ukraine for it. The sums are huge.

According to Gazprom's statements, it supplied 1.7bn cu m to Ukraine (to the occupied parts of the Donbas after Naftogaz stopped buying gas from Gazprom) in 2015 (Naftogaz stopped supplying gas to that territory or recognize supplies from Russia in February); 2.39bn cu m in 2016; 2.43bn cu m in 2017; 2.74bn cu m in 2018, and 1.2bn cu m in Q1 of 2019. Therefore, Gazprom supplied almost 10.5bn cu m to the occupied parts of the Donbas by the early April 2019. This is almost equal to the amount Ukraine has been importing in a year lately. Gazprom billed Naftogaz at US \$1.3bn by December 2017 for the gas supplied to the territory Kyiv does not control. Obviously, the payment for gas supplies to the occupied parts of the Donbas would double the price of gas for Ukraine purchased under direct contracts. So the 25% discount promised by Russia is just a trap. ■



To help Russia keep the ORDiLO?

What the new government's initiatives to lift the blockade from the occupied Donbas actually mean

Oleksandr Kramar

Following the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) meeting in Minsk on June 5, Leonid Kuchma, who has recently been returned to the talks by President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, assured that the negotiations were “constructive” for the first time, “all parties tried to find a solution”, and rhetoric was “absolutely different from what was before” and “there was climate of mutual trust”. Events and information, which followed, showed that such changes are due to the fact that the Ukrainian side began to demonstrate willingness to do what the enemy wants. Today it is already obvious that the “trust” regarding both another attempt of forces separation near Stanitsa Luhanska and another cease-fire turned out to be fruitless. Yet, the most promising surrender, which Kuchma initiated on behalf of Zelenskiy, seems to be Ukraine's refusal from the economic blockade of the occupied territories. According to the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-office to the TCG, Martin Sajdik, this proposal “came from Kuchma, and it was supported by participants from the ORDiLO.” The termination of the blockade means that the new Ukrainian leadership agrees to remove perhaps the last serious tool to create discomfort for the Russian occupation administration in Donbas, to lighten the Kremlin's burden of keeping these territories. It will also mean to test the Ukrainian society's reaction to the next steps of the authorities in fulfilling the terrorists' “desires”, that is, accepting these territories for Ukraine's keeping while maintaining Moscow's actual control over them.

THE BLOCKADE HAS WORKED OUT

A war, especially long-lasting, and all the more hybrid confrontation, is always not only and not so much a military component as economic and informational ones. The function of the blockade of the ORDiLO two years ago was to stop supporting the economy of the occupied territories (that is, in fact, not to finance the war against ourselves). Although it was not declared, but no less important was the creation and maintenance of a direct relationship of issue – “since you fight against Ukraine you are going to have a lower standards of living within the territories under your control.” Even if it does some harm to Ukraine itself, such an approach is justified, especially if the enemy suffers much larger economic losses. The economic blockade of the ORDiLO, despite smuggling and “shady” schemes for supplying a number of goods in both directions, still leads to an increase of cost of living within the occupied territories, and at the same time reduces local incomes and inhibits the development of the local economy. This is an indisputable fact; such a situation forces the occupant to make additional compensation expenses and provides a favora-

ble contrast with the territory of the country free from militants. The termination of the blockade without receiving anything significant in return is the undoubted loss of a strategically important advantage.

Despite the widespread notions about the allegedly incredible economic losses of Ukraine due to the breakdown of ties with the ORDiLO in 2017, the situation is in fact quite ambiguous. In part, Ukraine, on the contrary, received benefits for its enterprises and industries. Even before the cessation of full-scale trade with the ORDiLO, *The Ukrainian Week* drew attention to the fact that despite all attempts at intimidation by officials and oligarchs who had assets in the occupied territory, breaking

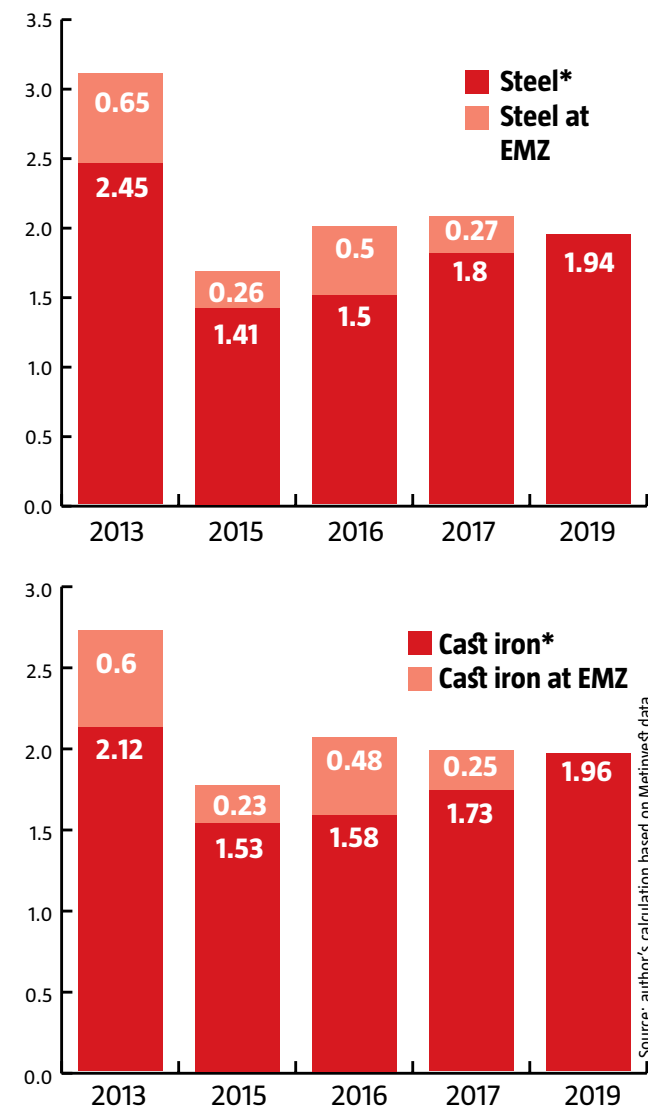
The production of electricity in thermal power plants (and hence coal consumption) in 2018, on the contrary, decreased by **16.6%**, if compared with 2016 (from **72.9** to **60.8** billion kWh)

ties with the ORDiLO could stimulate development in a number of industrial sectors in territories controlled by Ukraine. First of all, it concerns the metallurgical sector. And the last more than two years have confirmed these predictions. In total, on a nationwide scale over the period of 04.2017 – 04.2019, iron making increased from 1.47 mln t to 1.84 mln t, coke industry showed an increase from 0.74 mln t to 0.9 mln t (in January 2017, before the beginning of the blockade, only 0.73 mln t were produced, and together with the enterprises in the ORDiLO territories – 1.01 mln t). Steel making (1.98 mln t) exceeded the figure of pre-blockade in January 2017 by 6.6%, even taking into account the volumes of occupied enterprises. At the same time, enterprises in the territory under Ukraine's control increased its production by a quarter – from 1.57 mln t to 1.98 mln t. The situation with coke and cast iron making is the most significant, since these types of metallurgical products were called as potentially vulnerable due to termination of economic ties with the ORDiLO. Considering that a significant part of coking coal, and coke itself, were supplied from there.

Also, even before the blockade began, *The Ukrainian Week*, based on the analysis of the largest Ukrainian mining and metallurgical companies group reporting, justified why and how the production in the ORDiLO harmed even the same companies-owners in the free territory. In this situation, the total and export revenues from sales of products of enterprises in the occupied territories received »

Blockade in action

Dynamics of smelting of metallurgical products by Metinvest, for the Q1 of 2013-2019



*Without Yenakiieve Steel Plant (EMZ), located in the occupied territory

by the companies were about the same that would have come from the greater capacity utilization of the plants located in controlled Ukraine. But instead, the production was reduced at the enterprises of the Dnipropetrovsk region or the free part of the Donetsk region in favor of production structures in the territories occupied by the enemy, for example, in Yenakiieve, Makiivka, Alchevsk.

After the breaking of economic ties with the ORDiLO, there was a rapid replacement of the capacities captured by the enemy within the largest mining and metallurgical group in Ukraine – Metinvest (its managers at one time were perhaps the most ardent critics of the blockade). In the first quarter of 2019, compared to the same period of the pre-blockade 2016, cast iron production at the Mariupol combines of the company increased by 24%, steel – by 29.3%. This increased production in the free territory of Ukraine led to the almost complete replacement of the

capacity of the Yenakiieve Metallurgical Plant located in the occupied territory (which in 2016 provided about a quarter of the company's total metal production). Before the blockade, the opposite tendency was observed. In 2013, the Mariupol combines produced 9.5 mln t of steel and 8.91 mln t of cast iron, but in 2015 the volumes dropped to 5.85 mln t and 6.4 mln t. Simultaneously in 2015-2016 there was an almost doubling of iron and steel production at EMZ (Yenakiieve Iron and Steel Works), which is in the occupied territory, and this against the background of almost unchanged production volumes at the enterprises of the territory under control, and the potential of the Mariupol combines was far from being used to full capacity.

A similar situation is with the extraction of power station coal by another industry monopolist – DTEK. Its annual report for 2015 showed that, whenever possible, the company tried to support mining in the mines of the occupied territories, while simultaneously slowing down production in free territories. The electricity requirements of Ukraine in the coal-fired electricity stations have decreased, but instead of increasing the production share of those blocks that operated on gas-coal, the company tried to increase the production and import of anthracite coal from the occupied areas. DTEK's reporting of those years clearly shows that the reason for the refusal to replace electric power units operating on anthracite from the occupied territories with units using gas-coal mined in the territories controlled by Ukraine, was precisely the desire to restore full-scale deliveries of anthracite from mines in ORDiLO. In particular, during the second half of 2015, 2 mln t of anthracite coal was supplied to DTEK's thermal power plants from the occupied territories – 160% (or 1.4 mln t) more than for the same period of 2014. And in the pre-blockade 2016, the trend became much more noticeable. The DTEK report on production performance for the three quarters shows the practice when within the company, coal production preferences were given to the mines of the occupied territories causing its decrease in the free territories. The production of anthracite in the ORDiLO increased by 63.6% (or 2.1 mln t), while the production of gas-coal in the free territories reduced by 1.5 mln t (9%). Thus, there was a clear replacement of coal production in the territory of the Donetsk region controlled by Ukraine, as well as in the east of the Dnipropetrovsk region, with coal from the ORDiLO. This led to losses for mines in the free territory of at least \$ 70-80 mln and at the same time to additional revenues for the DTEK mines in the ORDiLO.

The ORDiLO blockade at the beginning of 2017 radically changed the situation in favor of enterprises in the territory controlled by Ukraine. Top management of Akhmetov's DTEK, which until the last minute opposed the blockade, radically changed its priorities in the direction of increasing fuel production in the mines of the free territories and switched blocks of its thermal power plants to gas-coal. And in June 2017, the results of these mines exceeded by 7.2% the volumes that were reached in the same month of 2016 together with the ORDiLO enterprises. Thanks to the blockade, we nevertheless received a refusal from the lion's share of anthracite, which until then had been actively imported from the ORDiLO and had ousted gas coal in the free territories of Ukraine. Both the state-owned Tsentroenergo and the largest private electricity producer at DTEK coal blocks continue to switch their capacity to the use of gas-coal. The share of this fuel, extracted in the mines in the territories controlled by Ukraine, is steadily growing.

On the other hand, the use and import of anthracite is being reduced (although slower than it should be). Due to this, the extraction of power station coal in the free territory of the country is developing quite rapidly. So, in 2017 it grew by 1.23 mln t, in 2018 – by another 1.28 mln t and reached 27.5 mln t (against 24.9 mln t in 2016). And this despite the fact that the production of electricity in thermal power plants (and hence coal consumption) in 2018, on the contrary, decreased by 16.6%, if compared with 2016 (from 72.9 to 60.8 billion kWh). Still, the effect of breaking economic ties with the ORDiLO could have been better if there had been an appropriate state policy of replacing the capacities lost in the ORDiLO and the development of alternative industries in Ukraine. Despite this, even under the following circumstances the positive significance of the blockade on the development of coal mining in Ukraine is obvious.

Industrial regions in the Southeast Ukraine have gained obvious benefits from the blockade of the ORDiLO. Their industrial sector in recent years has been developing at an accelerated pace compared with other regions. So, if nationwide industrial production for the first four months of 2019 exceeded its volumes for the same period in 2017 by 3.2%, then in the controlled part of the Donetsk Oblast – by 8.6%, in the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast – by 10.2%. Moreover, the production in the mining and metallurgical sector and the production of power station coal have increased after the end of competitors' access to the market from the ORDiLO.

TO SUPPORT THE TERRORISTS?

To lift the ORDiLO blockade under the current conditions means to level the achieved positive changes. Significant amounts of coal (including coal extracted from makeshift illegal mines, with unregulated working conditions, and therefore cheaper one) from the ORDiLO will undermine the positive tendency of increasing of gas-coal production at mines in free Ukraine, exacerbate the problem of wages and work for miners, in general, it will strengthen socio-political tension. And such social situation can be used by the enemy. Opening access for metallurgical enterprises from the ORDiLO to the Ukrainian market will lead to a reduction in production by enterprises in the free territories. In addition, there will likely to be a decline in production due to the increase of exports from the ORDiLO. And the leaders of the terrorists will be able to take an advantage of this situation, convincing the population that their confrontation policy with Ukraine is correct, because even being in a state of war, they have managed to achieve favorable conditions for “their” enterprises.

Lifting the blockade from the ORDiLO also means taking part in the financing of terrorists, helping the Kremlin in their maintenance. First, the militants of the LNR and DNR appropriate a significant part of the funds, which in various ways go to the occupied territories. All enterprises, including those mines and metallurgical combines, which the terrorists confiscated during the 2017 blockade, work primarily in their interests and belong to them either directly or through related business structures. Secondly, these enterprises in any case deduct “taxes” in the so-called budget of the LNR / DNR. The tax system determines an extensive list of fees, due to which the hryvnia, ruble or dollar, getting into the occupied territories, eventually end up in the hands of terrorists. For example, “The Law of the LNR on the tax system”, signed by the leader of Luhansk terrorists Ihor Plotnitskiy on December 28, 2015, includes the list of 10 “republican taxes and fees” alone

and five more “local” ones. Moreover, both “residents and non-residents who carry out and / or do not carry out activities in the territory of the LNR” are recognized as payers. Therefore, any trade of Ukrainian companies with structures from the ORDiLO means filling their “common funds”, from which then financing of military operations and sabotage and terrorist acts against Ukraine will be carried out.

In terms of article 69 of “The Law of the LNR on the tax system”, for those who carry out “operations with non-residents” – for example, a business entity which trades with companies registered in Ukraine – the tax amounts to 10% of the transaction amount in the case of product purchase and 20% of the transaction amount in the case of work delivery or provision of services. There are also fees for the transit, sale and export of certain types of goods, which include ferrous and non-ferrous scrap, coal and coal products, all sorts of flour and food grade wheat of I-III types. Consequently, for the export of coal products to the free territory of Ukraine by rail fixed charges of 400 UAH / t (coking coal) and 180 UAH / t (power station coal) are established. In the case of export by road, the flat rate will be 400 UAH / t regardless of the grade of coal. The export of ferrous metal scrap brings to the terrorists of the LNR 200 UAH / t, non-ferrous – 1.5 thousand UAH

ANY ATTEMPTS TO TEST THESE CONCESSIONS TO THE ENEMY
“EMPIRICALLY” WILL ONLY WORSEN THE POSITION

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THE PRICE OF “PEACE” FOR IT

/ t. There is also a fee “for the use of subsoil”, which is 11 rubles / t for coking coal and 16 rubles / t for anthracite. From the makeshift mines, which the terrorists interpret as “coal artels”, they charge “simplified tax”. If the annual sales of products do not exceed 240 mln rubles, then the “artel” deducts 3% of the amount.

To lift the blockade from the DNR / LNR, as well as other possible concessions, is a one-sided game, which Kuchma, obviously, begins to follow Volodymyr Zelenskiy's instructions, and this will not have any positive outcome for Ukraine. The conviction that the unblocking “will pull at heartstrings of the ORDiLO's citizens,” who, due to the limitations of the relationship, allegedly felt alienated from Ukraine, or it would tie ORDiLO to Ukraine economically, is an irresponsible and even hostile manipulation. The decision on the fate of the occupied territories is still taken in the Kremlin. And the issue of the Russian Federation for us is not in “bad Putin” or his regime, but in the mood of the Russian people. Putin's regime and his foreign policy are aimed at fulfilling the demand of the majority of the Russian population to restore the empire and revenge. As the data of the last Levada-Center survey showed, 56% of Russians support the occupation of the Southeast Ukraine or the formation of a separate quasi-state there, and only 14% agree that the ORDiLO should become part of Ukraine on pre-war conditions. The return of the territories occupied by Russia under such circumstances is impossible, except for the complete surrender of Ukraine or the collapse of the Russian imperial project itself. Any attempts to test these concessions to the enemy “empirically” will only worsen the position of Ukraine itself and raise the price of “peace” for it. ■

ORDiLO: The new party line

What's behind the flashmob about "Accept Donbas's choice"?

Denys Kazanskiy

Since the elections and the coming of a new president in Ukraine, the occupied counties of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast have seen unprecedented processes start up. For the first time since 2014, official statements have talked about ORDiLO possibly returning to Ukraine – as an autonomous region, of course. Indeed, such a scenario was written into the very first Minsk accords, signed in the fall of 2014, but until now, the leadership of the pseudo-republics has diligently avoided this issue in its speeches and pronouncements.

After the first ceasefire was signed in Minsk, the nominal leaders of LNR / DNR adopted a fairly schizophrenic position: they both promoted the Minsk process and its implementation – and kept saying "Donbas will never return to Ukraine" because they saw their future "only with Russia."

"Our direction is decided – integration with the Russian Federation," said LNR militant leader Leonid Pasichnyk. "Returning our republic to Russia as a full-fledged

member of the family, that's the only path I see for Donbas," Denys Pushylin echoed. But now the leaders of the illegal military formations have begun to admit that "returning to our harbor" will have to wait for a while. First of all, they will have to return under the blue and yellow flag of much-hated Ukraine.

The new general party line began with a kind of flashmob, the kind of "happening" that only happens for money from upstairs in ORDiLO. As part of this campaign supposedly involving "ordinary residents" of the occupied territory, video appeals were made to the new president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, demanding that he accept Donbas's "choice." Among the more familiar demands – to stop shooting and pay out pensions, which are long in the tooth at this point – was the most important one, for which this flashmob was launched in the first place: give LNR and DNR autonomy as part of Ukraine.

All the appeals were recorded like carbon copies. It's also noticeable that people often read texts that were writ-



To Ukraine! Hup two! The leaders of the self-proclaimed republics suddenly rejected calls to join Russia

ten for them by someone else or mouth memorized statements. Moreover, these kinds of clips started to be churned out at the speed of light. The appeals to Zelenskiy were all signed with the hashtag #ZelenskiyAdmitDonbassChoice.

As usual, in their efforts to diligently serve their handlers, the folks running this propaganda machine managed to look absurd. For instance, among the clips was one of a woman dressed as Peppa Pig asking Zelenskiy to return Donbas as part of Ukraine. The video went viral and hit all the social nets – and the harshest criticisms came first and foremost from people living in the occupied territories.

Those who are very familiar with the reality on the ground in the occupied territories immediately understood where this flashmob had come from. No one in today's Luhansk and Donetsk would dare to put out something so subversive without a green light, possibly even pressure, from their bosses. And the local bosses could only have done so on the basis of clear instructions from their handlers in Moscow.

That this “flashmob” is supported in Russia was clear from reports on RF federal channels. The new initiative is being given as much publicity and exposure as possible, with news programs churning out “human interest” stories about the people who are appealing to the president of Ukraine “with tears in their eyes.”

Of course, the new flashmob roused a wave of indignation and annoyance among nationalists in Russia and supporters of LNR / DNR. Calling it a betrayal of the idea that has been fought over for five years and began to talk about the “inadmissibility” of merging the pseudo-republics with Ukraine. Still, pro-Russian radicals like Pavlo Gubarev, Andriy Purhin and Oleksandr Khodakovskiy were made marginal in ORDiLO long ago. Nor do any of them have any influence over the agenda. What's more, these fans of Russia drove themselves into the trap without anyone's help.

In the “Russkiy mir” that they so eagerly helped establish, everyone knows that democracy is a dirty word, and nobody gives a damn about human rights. Those who fought against Ukraine, who justified their persecution of “wrongly oriented” residents of Donbas and turned the region into a concentration camp where any opposition was punished with basement tortures and killings, have now found themselves prisoners of the very “gulag” they helped build. Now no one asks them about anything, and so the only way to express their dissatisfaction is through social nets and Telegram channels.

The flashmob proved to be just a trial balloon. Obviously the militants were checking out the reaction of locals and left themselves an opening to withdraw in case there was a particularly strong negative reaction, saying that it was all a spontaneous initiative from below by individuals to whom the leaders of the “republics” had no connection. But after the flashmob “test” with appeals to Zelenskiy, the leadership of DNR came out in support of it.

For instance, the “mayor” of Horlivka, Ivan Prykhodko, supported the “pro-Ukrainian” initiative and told the Russkaya vesna site in an interview that, prior to “returning to Russia,” the Donbas will have to agree to autonomy as part of Ukraine. One of Pushylin's closest allies and chair of the Donetsk Republic Movement's executive committee, Russian Alexei Muratov, even posted a link to the flashmob's site on his official site in a social network.

This led to a new burst of criticisms and indignation. The most radical supporters of LNR and DNR griped that

the war is effectively losing meaning, because the leadership of the “republics” is abandoning the slogans that the separatists marched under in 2014. But it seems that the opinions of radicals, who were very useful to Russia five years ago to undermine the situation, no longer interest anyone. Today, they find themselves in the same situation as pro-Ukrainian people who were silenced, mostly by force, in the spring of 2014.

“How can we fight against Ukraine while asking its president for an amnesty?” was the rhetorical question put by DNR political analyst Roman Manekin on his page. “Who's going to fight?”

THE DEMAND THAT PRESIDENT ZELENSKIY RECOGNIZE THE “CHOICE” OF DONBAS IS NOT COMING FROM ORDINARY FOLKS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, WHO HAVE LONG AGO LOST THE RIGHT TO ANY KIND OF CHOICE, BUT THOSE WHO WRITE THEIR TEXTS FOR THEM

One-time DNR field commander Khodakovskiy posted the image of a guidebook on his page according to which Muratov's Donetsk Republic movement operates today. It says, among others, that all the branches should, as soon as possible, unanimously announce their support for the flashmob appeal to Zelenskiy. Thus, it is quite obvious that there was no real flashmob of initiative “from below,” and all the appeals to Zelenskiy are just the latest publicity stunt by the Moscow-managed occupation administration of the Donbas. This spectacle has no connection to the real mood of the people who are living in ORDiLO. What is being presented as “the voice of the people of the Donbas” is no more than a poorly staged circus show.

This is the latest simplistic and typically clumsy attempt by the Russians to, yet again, try to “stuff” occupied Donbas back into Ukraine and legitimize the republics within the country's legal framework. And so it's very obvious that there's little point to taking all the “appeals” at face value and responding to them. However, the demand that President Zelenskiy recognize the “choice” of Donbas is not coming from ordinary folks in the occupied territories, who have long ago lost the right to any kind of choice, but those who write their texts for them. Yet the residents of the region have never given these individuals the right to speak on their behalf.

Overall, this supposed flashmob shows the unabashed poverty and primitiveness of the methods being used by LNR / DNR's Moscow handlers. The campaign itself came across as so histrionic and false that it's unlikely there's anyone believes in this new popular “breakthrough.” In the end, both sides of the frontline responded extremely negatively to it. And so, it's not clear, ultimately, what its organizers were expecting and who their initiative was aimed at.

Demanding that the Ukrainian president accept ORDiLO back into Ukraine effectively nullifies the slogans and all the actions of the pro-Russian militants in the Donbas for the last five years with their 13,000 Ukrainian deaths. What's equally typical is that, in order to invite themselves back into Ukraine, they didn't even have to go through the motions of a phony referendum, as was done in 2014. Whereas, back then, Russia and its proxies tried to make it look like the conflict was the “will of the people,” they are no longer bothering with such subtleties. ■

Art of prioritization

Why it is dangerous to neglect the topic of war and what the mission of the media community should be

Maksym Vikhrov

One of the most notable achievements of the previous government is that the war in the Donbas has been made practically imperceptible for most Ukrainians. Of course, they have not forgotten about the war: more than 80% of our fellow citizens consider it an important issue ("Rating", 2019). Yet, remembering the problem is quite different from being actually aware of its scale. And just with the latter, the situation is somewhat alarming. Thus, in February, among the urgent threats to Ukraine, the war with Russia took only the fifth place, giving way to labor migration, economic recession, impoverishment of the population and inflation ("Sociological Monitoring" Center and others, 2019). An even more eloquent example is the improvement of the attitude of Ukrainians towards Russia. If in May 2015 the number of its supporters collapsed to recording 30%, then at the beginning of 2019 it rose to 57% (KIIS). This means that war is becoming an increasingly less influ-

skiy could be the exception to the rule, because his rating allows to avoid trembling over every percentage of support. But frivolity in matters of national security is precisely one of the main Zelenskiy's "shticks" — first as a candidate, and now as president. No need to explain that pushing the topic of war into the background will only condone the dangerous inclinations of the new government. Not to mention the fact that refocusing the attention of Ukrainians from defense to any other subject (corruption, poverty, reforms, etc.) is entirely in the interests of Russia and its Ukrainian satellites are working hard on this.

Responsibility for the devaluation of the war theme lies partly with the previous government. Bankova appealed to the external threat very actively, but not once used it for their political purposes. The gravestone to this political technology work has become a meme "or Putin will attack," generated in response. Thus, not only did official rhetoric devalue, but the feeling of a real threat from the East was also dulled. The current government is falling into levity as another extreme. However, the lion's share of responsibility lies with the media community. No matter how low the credence to the Ukrainian media is, they still affect public opinion. And the vectors of this influence are formed in specific editorial offices and in the minds of specific media professionals. And the latter are also facing the temptation to adapt to public sentiment, omitting the theme of war, which has long since not been of such interest to the audience as in 2014-2015. One can avoid the topic of war both unconsciously and under various noble pretexts. For example, in order not to "militarize the public consciousness", not to "play up to nationalism", "not to impose your own agenda", "not to become propagandists", etc. It has recently been a popular trend not to sing along with government with its "Army, Language, Religion". You can debate about the correctness of certain arguments for a long time, but in the end, the media still added to reducing attention to the military theme in society. And now it has noticeably decreased on Bankova. In such circumstances, drawing attention to war is not just a professional duty of media people but their public mission. This should be done no matter how "tired of war," the target audience is; neither politicians nor their own readers should let their hair down.

So, what kind of tasks are we talking about? Pumping out a military-patriotic hysteria is a completely unproductive and even dangerous way. A society in a state of hysteria is much easier to manipulate. It is worth remembering the spread of fakes in 2014-2015 that the Ukrainian authorities deliberately destroyed the patriots in the encirclements, removed men from trains and enrolled in the National Guard, about thuggish actions

ONE CAN AVOID THE TOPIC OF WAR BOTH UNCONSCIOUSLY AND UNDER VARIOUS NOBLE PRETEXTS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN ORDER NOT TO "MILITARIZE THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS", NOT TO "PLAY UP TO NATIONALISM", "NOT TO IMPOSE YOUR OWN AGENDA", "NOT TO BECOME PROPAGANDISTS", ETC.

ential factor in Ukrainian life: it is remembered, but on the agenda it is slowly being relegated to the background. In many ways, this is an objective process: a prolonged absence of large-scale armed hostilities affects. However, the trend is threatening. This is not a moral issue, but of national security, because strong public support for opposing the enemy and awareness of high stakes are part of the country's defense (RAND, 2018). Given the current political situation, the marginalization of the war theme threatens with the fact that Ukraine will turn from a weak subject of a geopolitical game into its helpless object.

It is impossible to neglect public opinion, since under its influence not only the electoral result is formed, but so is also the current state policy. It is no secret that Ukrainian politicians have chronic problems with ratings, so they prefer to adapt to public sentiment, avoiding unpopular decisions. The blocking of Russian social networks, de-communization and a number of other decisions of the previous government were approved not so much because Bankova (Office of the President of Ukraine) understood their critical need, but because they felt just such a public inquiry. This can also work in the opposite direction: "calming down" the society about the war will contribute to the corresponding deformation of state policy. In theory, Volodymyr Zelen-

of the refugees from the Donbas. In practice, mass hysteria can burn no less a hole in national security than can public indifference, since it is guaranteed that the external enemy will try to take advantage of it. Hysteria is also useful for internal destructive forces, ranging from supporters of anarchism and ending with the pro-Russian fifth column. Obviously, this is not about emotional arousal, but about understanding the challenges that Ukraine faces.

The indifference of society to the war became possible not because the dust of 2014–2015 had settled, but because in the mass consciousness there is still no stable idea about what has been happening in the country and how significant the events in the Donbas have been. One has only to think that the very fact of the war between Ukraine and Russia is realized only by 72% of our citizens (“Democratic Initiatives”, 2018). And some of them believe that it is possible to simply “sit down and talk” with Russia and return to good-neighborly relations. The fact that in the sixth year of the war such naive notions are still common in society is a consequence of the flaw not only of the authorities, but also of the media, most of which had been avoiding the “language of hatred” all this time, had not wanted to “incite Russophobia” and so on. The media should form an adequate agenda in which resistance to Russian aggression is Task №

1. It is not that defense is more important than the fight against corruption, reform implementation, European integration or economic development. On the contrary, it is the basic prerequisite for performing each of these tasks. It is equally important to form realistic ideas that the current state of Ukrainian-Russian relations is not a temporary misunderstanding, but a hot phase of a quiet war that had begun long before 2014 and will last until Russia is capable of imperial encroachment.

Another task is to contribute to the understanding of the war experience by the Ukrainian society. It is no secret that social thought was practically not ready for Russian aggression. The previous war on the territory of Ukraine ended almost 70 years ago, and even that collective experience was not properly learned. Its whole layers were erased by the Soviet censorship or were buried under layers of propaganda slag. Inherited knowledge of the Second World War is of little use today, since it is largely fake and artificial. Moreover, they are politically toxic, since they were deliberately distorted in order to strengthen the totalitarian system. “Arise, you, vast motherland!” (the first line of “Sacred War”, a popular Soviet patriotic song written in 1941 after German invasion of the USSR — **Ed.**) contains the hidden refrain “women will give birth to more children”, and behind every assumed Maresyev (Alexey Maresyev was a legendary Soviet fighter ace, who lost both legs but returned to war. Boris Polevoy wrote *The Story of a Real Man* having made him a Russian propaganda symbol — **Ed.**) there is an invisible political officer.

This experience turned out to be suitable for use in the Russian Federation, where it meets the needs of the Putin regime and is superimposed on Russian messianism. In 2014, Ukrainian society intuitively rejected the Soviet-Russian paradigm of war perception. For us, front-line casualties are not a hecatomb for the cult of victory, but personal sacrifices with the fates of real people behind them. Participation in the war is the fulfillment of the duty to the country and fellow citizens, and not self-sacrifice for the sake of great-power goals, the greatness of which only the tsar (General Secretary, the autocratic president) can comprehend. Anonymous cemeteries of “there-are-no-of-them” and widows, who are trying to distance themselves from their dead husbands who died by the order of special services, are hard to imagine in Ukraine.

Obviously, an intensive revision of the Soviet ideological heritage, which was conducted here during the years of independence, as well as the deep cultural differences between us and the Russians, are having an effect. It is impossible to reflect such things by transferring them from the plane of sad feelings to the form of ideological positions, without high-quality fiction, without social and cultural studies. But the same media should be the catalyst for this, since it is they who determine what Ukrainians think and argue about: some petty sensations, contrived problems or the war in which, according to the UN, more than 13 thousand military and civilians have already died. Thus, the role of the media of a country that is at war is also to keep public opinion alert, to prevent it from losing focus and going astray, even if it is prompted by all objective and subjective circumstances. To report on current events on the frontline and near it, to fight Russian fakes and not to distribute own ones are important and noble tasks. However, that does not go far enough. ■



Around Holy Sepulchre

In Jerusalem Christian churches are united for dialogue on their status

Michael Binyon, London



A blessing in disguise. The common problems of the Christian churches in Jerusalem forced the priests to reject the former hostility and unite their efforts

An agreement announced last month by the three churches guarding the Holy Sepulchre to undertake extensive repairs to its drains, electricity and infrastructure marks the first time in centuries that the Christians in Jerusalem have agreed on how to protect the site where Christ was buried.

The multi-million dollar restoration will be the second phase of urgent efforts to prevent the Holy Sepulchre from collapse. Earthquakes, throngs of pilgrims, candle soot, grime and the wear and tear of centuries had left the ancient marble structure dirty and dangerously unsafe. The Israeli authorities briefly closed the entire complex in 2015, declaring it unsafe, and threatened to step in to make compulsory repairs.

The marble shrine, known as the Edicule and extensively rebuilt in Ottoman times, is part of the common areas of the Holy Sepulchre complex. For centuries it has been controlled by the three main churches in Jerusalem: the Greek Ortho-

dox, the Armenians and the Latins – the ancient name for the Roman Catholic Church. So fierce was their rivalry and so jealous were they of their privileges, however, that they rarely agreed on any change or repair, however small. As a result, after a severe earthquake in 1927, the entire building became unsafe and for years was propped up by emergency scaffolding erected by the British during their mandate rule in Palestine.

Arguments over the protection of the Holy Sepulchre also played a big role in the start of the Crimean War, when Moscow insisted it had the right to defend the Christian heritage in Jerusalem. The tsar demanded the right to be declared the protector of the holy places, instead of the key being handed to the French as proposed by the Sultan of the Ottoman empire.

The agreement by the three churches to make major repairs, now completed, and share the cost is part of a few-

found unity among all churches in Jerusalem. This is a far cry from only 20 years ago, when pilgrims used to arrive at the Holy Sepulchre to find monks from different factions fighting each other with broomsticks for having “trespassed” in sweeping the floor area of a rival church. Indeed, in 1810 so bitter was the rivalry that when workmen employed by the Greek Church began to repair the Edicule, armed Armenian monks opened fire on them from a nearby gallery, killing eight of the workers.

The eagerness of all churches now to cooperate has also been forced on them by common threats: the huge emigration of Christians from the city, sweeping new Israeli taxes on all church property and the scandal of the fraudulent sale of leases on key Christian sites in the Old City to an extremist Jewish settler group aiming to “Judaicise” Jerusalem.

As a result, the churches – which barely spoke to each other and for centuries had been locked in theological dispute – set up a council of all the 13 churches in the city 15 years ago to co-ordinate their views. The Anglicans provide the secretariat, which convenes the council every two months, and where the churches work out a united response to challenges.

One of the sharpest came two years ago, when the city’s former mayor, Nir Barkat, suddenly announced new property taxes on church land, backdated for the past 27 years and amounting in total to some \$200 million. Fearing immediate bankruptcy, the churches reacted swiftly. In February last year they took a step not seen for at least 500 years of closing the entire Holy Sepulchre church for three days. This caught public attention around the world, especially in America, and alarmed the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, who was eager to underpin White House support for his government. Within days the new tax had been set aside. But the churches fear that, because of the severe shortage of building land in Jerusalem, there will be fresh attempts to tax their extensive properties.

The Russian Orthodox Church, however, which has huge land holdings in Jerusalem, has been able to count on the close relations between President Putin and Israel, and has been largely free from Israeli pressure. It is nevertheless one of the important churches in the city, and Patriarch Kirill visited the Holy Sepulchre during a high-profile visit to Jerusalem in 2015.

The other huge challenge the other churches face is the fall-out from the scandal of the fraudulent sale of leases 15 years ago by the Greek Orthodox Church to Ateret Cohanim, a right-wing settler organisation whose long-term aim is to “redeem” land in Jerusalem and expel the city’s non-Jewish residents. News of the secret deal was splashed across an Israeli newspaper in 2005 and caused fury and consternation in the Greek Orthodox Church and among all other Christian denominations in Jerusalem, whose members are mostly Palestinian Arabs. The Patriarch, who claimed he did not know the details, was deposed within weeks and reduced to the status of a monk. Key documents relating to the contract disappeared.

A new patriarch, Theophilos III, was elected and promptly declared the leases invalid as they had been obtained by bribery and fraud, without the agreement of the Holy Synod or the signature of former patriarch Irineos. They had been negotiated by a junior 29-year-old official of the patriarchate for a sum less than half the market value. He subsequently fled to Greece, where he was arrested with over 100,000 euros in cash and the same sum again in watches and jewellery, but then escaped to Panama.

The issue affected all the other Christians, as the Greek Church, dating back to Byzantine times, is the oldest in the

city, has by far the largest land holdings and is one of the three responsible for the Holy Sepulchre. In 2008 Ateret Cohanim went to court to obtain possession of the four properties in strategic places within the Christian quarter: a big hotel next to the Jaffa Gate in the Old City, a smaller hotel nearby, a property near Herod’s Gate and the St John hostel, a large building right beside the Holy Sepulchre which has subsequently been occupied by Jewish squatters after Ateret Cohanim paid the tenant to leave.

The first court case upheld the deal, and so the Greek patriarchate then appealed. The final judgment was delivered on Monday and again backed Ateret Cohanim – although acknowledging that it had bribed the patriarchate official and criticising the settler group for not going to court to explain this \$35,000 bribe. Unless new evidence can be found, there is now no further appeal.

The churches see this as a huge blow. They fear it will increase the pressure on their dwindling congregations and will encourage Israeli politicians to impose new taxes or pass laws to make them release land needed for housing. The churches argue that they need the income from their tenants to pay for hospitals, social work and the schools they provide that offer a Christian education.

IN VIEW OF THE PRONOUNCED SHIFT IN ISRAELI POLITICS TO THE RIGHT AND THE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR ATERET COHANIM AND ITS AIMS IN KEY ISRAELI INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE JUDICIARY, THE MAYORAL OFFICE AND THE KNESSET, THE CHURCHES FEAR THEY WILL SOON BE THE TARGET OF A NEW POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEIR PRIVILEGED POSITION

Most worryingly, the judgment is seen as a challenge to the all-important “Status Quo”, under which church rights and properties, many dating back to Ottoman times, are broadly protected. There has been an informal agreement with the Jerusalem mayor’s office and with the Israeli government that this freezing of the churches’ standing in the city should not be changed until the overall political status of Jerusalem has been settled in an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

Most of the churches are made up largely of Palestinian Christians, who regularly puts pressure on the leadership to take a more overtly pro-Palestinian political position. Church leaders are reluctant to do this, fearing it would jeopardise their working relations with the Israeli authorities and would ensnare them in current political disputes.

In view of the pronounced shift in Israeli politics to the right and the widespread support for Ateret Cohanim and its aims in key Israeli institutions such as the judiciary, the mayoral office and the Knesset, the churches fear they will soon be the target of a new political campaign against their privileged position. “They want to keep the churches as museums for tourists without any of the Christians here,” is how one anxious Palestinian expressed the widespread fears.

The common threat, however, as well as the urgent need to repair the Holy Sepulchre, has done more to cement church unity in Jerusalem than 500 years of frigid co-existence. Clergy and bishops welcome this unity. They see it as more relevant to their day-to-day work in trying to bolster the embattled position of Christians in the Holy Land than conferences on ecumenism or issues of doctrine. And for the throng of pilgrims arriving in ever greater numbers in Jerusalem, the new welcoming atmosphere in the repaired Holy Sepulchre increases their veneration and awe for this historic birthplace of their faith. ■

Industrial reset

How Estonia solves the problems of its “Donbas”

Denys Kazanskiy, Tallinn

Restructuring of the coal industry is one of the most acute and painful problems that Ukraine has faced during its independence. The outdated and crisis industry, which was inherited from the USSR, became a source of serious economic problems for the young state in the 1990s. The large-scale shutdown of the mines, which the country was forced to resort to, made life in the coal province unbearable, at the same time creating a favorable environment for the development of various destructive, anti-state sentiments and thus laid the groundwork for the 2014 conflict. Until now, mining towns have remained cells of social tension.

The occupation of the Donbas by armed formations of Russian-controlled militants partially facilitated the task

of Ukraine to eliminate the crisis. The problem mines and depressed towns turned out mostly to be in the territory of the ORDiLO. As the saying goes, it was a mixed blessing. However, there are some of the depressed mines, which are to be liquidated soon, in the controlled area — in Lysychansk, Toretsk, and also in Novovolynsk. And Ukraine will still have to solve this problem sooner or later.

The experience of other post-Soviet countries that also faced the need to restructure their coal industry after the collapse of socialism and transition to market economy can help our state in solving such a sensitive and complex issue. And they solved this problem more successfully than Ukraine. First of all, we are talking about our neighbors — the Poles, as well as Estonians, with whom the



Mine-museum. Old Estonian industrial sites, as in other EU countries, have become peculiar attractions for visitors

Ukrainians have recently lived as part of the united Soviet state. Few people associate this small country with heavy industry or mining work. However, the relevant industry in Estonia is still working. With the only difference that it is not coal that is mined there, but oil shale.

Slate burns worse than coal, costs less, but the industry is profitable, so Estonians continue to develop it. The deposits are concentrated mainly in the eastern part of the country, in the region of Ida-Virumaa, where the largest number of Russian-speaking population lives. Since 1945, the Soviet Union had actively industrialized this region due to the development of mineral resources. Therefore, the Russian-speaking population that still lives there was brought to Ida-Virumaa from other parts of the USSR.

This circumstance, like the mining specifics of the region, makes Ida-Virumaa akin to the Ukrainian Donbas, albeit adjusted for the scale and national characteristics of both countries. The problems in the Estonian region were in many ways similar to those in the pre-war Donbas. In the early 1990s, separatist sentiments also ran high there, and the Russian-speaking population tried to organize the disconnection of the territory from Estonia. On July 6, 1993, the local authorities of the cities of Narva and Sillamae belonging to the Ida-Virumaa region held a referendum on the establishment of Russian territorial autonomy with the prospect of declaring independence or even reunification with Russia. The organizers said that the majority of the population supported such an initiative, but the government ignored the referendum and, as a result, the separatist movement got nowhere.

One of the factors that contributed to this was the rapid rise in the standard of living in Estonia. The mining regions had more problems, so they developed worse, but the government of the country made every effort to solve them and finally achieved certain success.

Oil shale is not very high in the world, the demand for it is insignificant, therefore Estonians mainly satisfy their domestic needs due to this fuel. They use it for power stations, and also in the chemical industry (for producing shale oil).

This energy source is burned predominantly within Estonia at the local power plants, which were originally designed to use this type of fuel. The largest oil shale stations in the world are now owned by the Eesti Energia concern and provide more than 90% of Estonia's electricity. Thus, the government supports the demand for oil shale and provides sales for the enterprises that mine it.

However, a number of old and unprofitable mines Estonians still had to close as well as reduce staff at others that are still functioning.

As Lembit Kaljuvälle, the former head of the "Eston-Slanets" company, said, at the end of the 1990s, about 8 thousand people worked at this enterprise, which included shale quarries and mines. And within several years more than 3 thousand people were sacked due to the reduction and liquidation of some mine adits. The state did not have money to pay unemployment benefits, but the company itself decided to allocate the money to redundant employees (1 million kronas). They decided to send these funds to retrain the miners.

"Back then many were skeptical about such an initiative. The media wrote that it was impossible to retrain miners. But we still decided to complete that task. And we managed to employ the majority of those people. We formed commissions that were involved in transferring

young workers to other mines that were still operating. We literally forced their management to hire new employees. We carefully analyzed the lists in order to minimize the negative effects of the cuts, for example, so as not to dismiss two people from the same family at once. Those who were less than five years until retirement the enterprise were able to allocate funds from its resources, and thus the problem of finding jobs for this category of people was solved simply by allowing them to retire on pension. Thus we managed to survive the most difficult period in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Now the situation has become much better; normal unemployment benefits have appeared, more workplaces have been created at new enterprises", says Anneke Teylak, the head of the Ida-Virumaa department of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (similar to Ukrainian employment agencies).

The creation of workplaces was the main prerequisite for overcoming unemployment, the crisis and the economic decline of the mining region. Without the appearance of enterprises that could offer people new jobs to replace those that were liquidated, it would have been impossible to solve the problems of the region. Therefore, the Estonian authorities have begun to actively attract foreign investors in Ida-Virumaa.

The largest oil shale stations in the world are now owned by the Eesti Energia concern and provide more than 90% of Estonia's electricity

Over the past 10 years, several industrial parks have been established in the region, incorporated in "Development of Industrial Parks in Ida-Virumaa", which is engaged in attracting investors to problem cities. For example, in the mining Kohtla-Järve, the industrial Baltic Chemical Park was opened in 2018. And as its name implies, it will mainly specialize in the chemical industry, which is historically developed in the region. The volume of investments in this technopark by the EU and Estonia amounted to € 2.6 million.

Things are not bad in other cities too. Thus, in the Narva Industrial Park, a new line of the "Waldchnepe" electric motor plant has recently opened. And in the park of the city of Johvi, an enterprise for the processing of used tires is being built.

As for the liquidated mines, on their base now they are creating a completely new tourism industry for the region. Old industrial sites in Estonia, as in other EU countries, are becoming a kind of attraction for visitors. In the city of Kohtla-Nõmme, the shale mine, closed in 2001, has been turned into a mining museum. Now tourists can descend into the adits and find out what the mining of shale in the past was, to see the mining equipment — underground combines, electric locomotives and minecarts.

At the same time, the mine-museum has created dozens of jobs, and over the year thousands of tourists visit it. Perhaps, this is not many, but it is better than nothing. And, of course, when you look at how it works in Estonia, you involuntarily think: why does Ukraine not at all use its unique industrial complex of the Soviet times, which came out of the production process, to attract tourists? After all, for this we have much more opportunities than little Estonia. And for a western tourist, any Soviet factory or mine is exotic. ■

Who will free the Kremlin's prisoners?

How President Zelenskiy's choice of staff will affect the cause of political prisoners

Stanislav Kozliuk

Volodymyr Zelenskiy inherited the problem of Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia from his predecessor. Russia is keeping over 100 Ukrainians, accusing them of various crimes ranging from spying to terrorism. All these accusations stem from bogus evidence, false testimony or Russia's anti-terrorism laws. Russia tends to qualify activists, volunteers, journalists and human rights advocates as "criminals", while its courts do not see any political motivation in these persecutions and come up with verdicts sending Ukrainians to jails for 10-20 years. The latest such decision arrived on June 18 in Rostov-on-Don. The court imprisoned five Crimean Tatars accused of involvement in the Hizb ut-Tahrir organization for anywhere between 11 and 17 years.

THE LAST TIME UKRAINE MANAGED TO GET ITS POLITICAL PRISONERS FROM RUSSIA WAS IN OCTOBER 2017:

CRIMEAN TATAR LEADERS ILMI UMEROV
AND AKHTEM CHYIGOZ RETURNED TO KYIV

The last time Ukraine managed to get its political prisoners from Russia was in October 2017: Crimean Tatar leaders Ilmi Umerov and Akhtem Chyigoz returned to Kyiv. According to the human rights advocates interviewed by *The Ukrainian Week*, the Mejlis, the representative body of the Crimean Tatar people, played a serious role in this. Ukraine also hoped that its political prisoners would be exchanged before the 2018 World Cup hosted by Russia. Rumors had it that Russia was preparing to hand Oleh Sentsov over to Ukraine, right after he announced a hunger strike. But rumors remained just that.

The issue of political prisoners was partly used during the presidential campaign. The previous administration pledged to finally regulate the status of the Kremlin's prisoners in law, or at least to kickstart the process. Pro-presidential MPs kept telling the families of the prisoners that they would vote for bill 8205 regarding this issue. It has been in the Rada since March 2018.

"We wanted to meet with Iryna Herashchenko in March. But she sent her lawyer who was working on an alternative draft law on political prisoners (bill № 8337 – Ed.). We explained that we would not support their draft law as it recognized the status of the Kremlin's prisoner after liberation, arrival to Ukraine and interrogation by the SBU (Ukraine's Security Bureau – Ed.). This means that Oleh Sentsov must spend his 20 years in jail to be

officially recognized as Russia's prisoner. We are talking about this everywhere now. Bill 8205 essentially says the same thing. But one difference is that bill 8205 was to be voted in the first reading, then amended. The proposal for the alternative bill was to pass it as is," Ihor Kotelianets, the brother of political prisoner Yevhen Panov and head of the Association of Families of the Kremlin's Political Prisoners, explains.

"There was a meeting with the families of political prisoners and human rights advocates before the election where we were told that they would not vote for the alternative bill. In exchange, they asked us to not write anything bad on social media. Later, Iryna Herashchenko promised to pass the law on the prisoners in May because the language law was the Rada's priority and they would not have enough time to pass the political prisoners law earlier. They didn't do it in May. Honestly, I didn't believe that they would deceive is like this. I thought of the upcoming parliamentary election. As a result, the representatives of the previous administration simply cut off communication with us," Kotelianets complains.

In fact, Iryna Herashchenko was President Poroshenko's envoy for the peaceful resolution for Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. She was also in charge of political prisoners after the previous administration failed to appoint an envoy for that issue in its five years in office. Herashchenko resigned after the presidential election and Poroshenko signed her resignation on May 18. As a result, Ukraine temporarily found itself without anyone with the responsibilities and the powers to work on the liberation of political prisoners in the Donbas and those held by the Kremlin.

"Yes, Herashchenko was in charge of political prisoners. But she did not work on it seriously. She did useful things, but there was no systemic work as seen by human rights advocates and the families of the prisoners. De facto, there was – and there is no one responsible for this issue," Maria Tomak, coordinator of the Media Initiative for Human Rights, explains.

Volodymyr Zelenskiy found a replacement for Iryna Herashchenko after his inauguration, appointing former ombudswoman Valeria Lutkovska. She was appointed as member of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk responsible for humanitarian issues, including the exchange of prisoners between Ukraine and the LNR / DNR. It is yet to be seen whether she will deal with political prisoners as well.

"There was no talk of Crimea or of political prisoners in Minsk. It was always about ORDİLO (occupied regions

of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts – **Ed.**). When Lutkovska was ombudswoman, she was always in touch with us. Whenever we had any problems, she could instruct her team and notify us of who would be dealing with it. She knew how to approach Tatiana Moskalkova (Russian Ombudswoman – **Ed.**). She knows how to speak to that side. It's good that she's back," Kotelianets insists.

The families of political prisoners also hope that Lutkovska will have more opportunities further on and will oversee the efforts focused on the Kremlin's political prisoners. Their families also expect a series of other steps from the new administration. These include the establishment of a coordination council on political prisoners, the appointment of an official in charge of this issue and the adoption of the hostage status law. All these initiatives were mentioned at the May 30 meeting with President Zelenskiy. He voiced support for them.

"Zelenskiy asked us whether we had specific proposals on what could be done right now. We listed these three items. He supported us and promised us that he would look at the issue and allocate a person to communicate with us on behalf of the Presidential Administration and notify us of the appointments. Draft proposals on the envoy and the coordination council are ready, we developed them during Poroshenko's presidency. So, everything is essentially ready. We've got the promises, but no appointments have followed so far. It's been a month," Kotelianets says.

"There is no progress in this yet. There are no decisions. Because the elections are everyone's topic No1 right now. We have a contact person at the Presidential Administration who is in touch with us. But I would not compare the quality of communication in the two administrations. I would compare the results. There have been none so far. It was obvious at the meeting that the issue of the Kremlin's political prisoners is important for Zelenskiy. Especially in the runup to the election. The main thing now is to keep scoundrels out of these efforts. Not necessarily out of evil will. But because the Presidential Administration may not be fully aware of what's going on," Tomak says.

According to *The Ukrainian Week's* sources, Liudmyla Denisova, the Verkhovna Rada Ombudswoman for Human Rights, would like to be appointed as envoy for political prisoners. She is reportedly trying to persuade the Presidential Administration that she would manage the new responsibilities. She has reportedly been collecting requests to be released from Ukrainian political prisoners. But this activity from Denisova worries the people dealing with the Kremlin's political prisoners.

"If you look at the way Lutkovska has interacted with the civil society after the Revolution of Dignity, she is more oriented at human rights. Denisova is a politician first and foremost. She's not a human rights advocate. We would be ok with Lutkovska, but Denisova seems to be claiming this office, she wants to be ombudswoman. But she already has her function, she is the ombudswoman for human rights! We need someone with a strategic understanding of the problem, someone to look for negotiators, engage them in negotiations with Russia, get access to people in prisons and get them out of there. This is all very difficult to do," Tomak comments.

Russia's President Putin has, too, spoken on the upcoming appointments. He met with Viktor Medvedchuk, the father of his goddaughter and the head of the Opposition Platform – For Life party, to discuss the liberation of



A candidate for the office. According to the people dealing with the Kremlin's political prisoners, current ombudswoman Liudmyla Denisova wants to become the Presidential Administration's envoy for the liberation of political prisoners

imprisoned Ukrainians. Their families interpret Putin's rhetoric as a hint that exchanges will only take place with Medvedchuk involved.

"Putin's statement does not mean that the exchanges will start tomorrow. But it's a good thing that he has mentioned this. We don't like Medvedchuk for a reason. But Putin's statement signals that the issue of exchanges cannot be solved without Medvedchuk. We must understand that Medvedchuk does not represent Ukraine in this situation, he represents Putin. I personally hope that political parties will try to use this issue in parliamentary election, trying to free people to gain votes. But how good is Medvedchuk as a negotiator when we haven't had any exchanges for two years now? Plus, I don't think that the voters supporting NATO and European integration would suddenly decide to vote for the Customs Union and a man who has Putin as his daughter godfather. His electorate is not interested in political prisoners anyway. So, I don't see risks here. If several people are freed under the aegis of Medvedchuk, I don't mind that," Kotelianets comments on Putin's statement.

Exchanges are unlikely to happen before the parliamentary election in Ukraine. The June 19 talks with a new contact group in Minsk delivered no results. Russia speaks about exchange, but it does not specify the category of people it speaks about – those held hostage in OR-DiLO, hostage navy sailors or the political prisoners put in jail under the Kremlin's decision. The new Presidential Administration must learn the lessons of its predecessors and find solutions to the problems that remain unsolved for the past five years. Ukrainian political prisoners and their families are waiting for the state to help them today, not in 20 years when their sentences expire. ■

How to succeed in a revolution: the Lithuanian way

How Lithuanians acquired their right to recognition

Vaidas Saldžiūnas, Vilnius



Baltic Way–1989. The Living Chain of Vilnius – Riga – Tallinn has become a remarkable symbol of the completion of the occupation of the three countries

Singing, holding hands, flag waving, chanting in a huge crowd. Those are just a few memories of the millennials from the events 3 decades ago. The Revolutions of 1989 changed the face of Central and Eastern Europe. Now it's but a distant history of very different times. For some the hope of changes happened too quickly, others enjoy the fruits of success, far beyond their expectations.

"It has been long since the war", – in her Facebook post wrote Ieva, a successful young Lithuanian woman, who works as head of communications in one international company. This post on 9th of April very quickly went viral and until today remains part of a common jargon to describe certain part of population.

It was not about the war at all, just a metaphor to point how life has changed in Lithuania. If late 80s and early 90s could be described as threshold, where poverty, fear, chaos, lawlessness, things short of war situation were mixed with wild hopes and aspirations about the uncertain future, this starting position for modern Lithuania would be a mark, comparing with other countries of former Soviet prison.

And where are we now, three decades later? The very question is still highly debatable and often ever overcritical of themselves Lithuanians tend to notice darker shades, instead of noticing the good. Ieva attempted just that and triggered a larger discussion, that spilled in various colors of

reflection – even the outgoing president Dalia Grybauskaitė herself gave a review of not only her decade in power, but offered a larger look.

DON'T LOOK BACK AND SEE THE BRIGHT FUTURE

"There have been conflicts and arguing in various bubbles, but I dare to say, that in a nutshell everything is ok with our country. We are learning to live in freedom, I see a lot of sacrifice and people, who care about everything. The maturity of our State is reflected in international recognition – name of Lithuania is mentioned with honor and trust, we have our voice in EU and NATO, our ideas matter, we form the international agenda and we are not to be pushed around", – said president Grybauskaitė, mentioning support to Ukraine.

Her second and final term ends in July, so in her last speech she not only warned not to look back to the East, but also look forward – the next 30 years.

"We are living in good times. We have great potential in bio, cyber and information tech, public services and high tech industries. Internet speed is a matter of pride and in e-services we are at the top 5 among European countries.

Our scientists can offer inventions not just to local economy, but to the world – data and human mind is the new oil. Our FinTech sector with over 170 companies is the signature of our growth", – she went on, while President of the European

Central Bank Mario Draghi confirmed this as Lithuania is now a “go-to-European destination for financial-technology”, coming second after UK.

One of the leading startup hub-investment friendly nations, and, according to Swiss IMD world competitiveness rating – 29th in the world, ahead of all neighbors, Lithuania has a slowing, yet still booming economy with growing average wage € 800 euros after taxes and € 27900 of average GDB per capita per year is clearly visible in certain bubbles of society.

With tradition of emigration finally over (more people are coming to Lithuania since last year, than leaving), the consumption is at all times high: people can afford to buy better good, better cars and banks enjoy higher interest rates with demand of new homes (as well as builders from Ukraine) skyrocketing before the ever growing warnings about impending new financial crisis.

If few years ago people complained about growing prices, now economists, like Žygimantas Mauricas are talking about growing middle class and their wages, that have already surpassed some of the older EU states, like Greece.

“The younger Lithuanians (25-49 year olds) have higher income than their counterparts at is at 50% rate of EU”, – he wrote, adding that in general growth of Lithuanian GDP per capita has reach 82% of EU average this year and could surpass this number in 2034 with 3% annual growth, unless there is a crisis.

Few would like to think only in optimistic colors, nevertheless Lithuanians on average still spend more, than they earn, especially the younger generation, who don't have memories of crisis of 2008, 1999 or even hardships of late 80s and early 90s, when they were crawling babies or weren't even born.

CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

This was exactly the point of Ieva's post, when she wrote only about Lithuanian upper middle class – not the rich, who made their fortune in business over the decades, but rather the cream of Lithuanian society, mostly urban, young, hopeful, Western in nature, earning several thousand euros per month and more.

“We bought a hoover and I thought it'd be as good as the one my dad has bought 17 years ago in a flea market in Germany, when he drove an old Mercedes from there. And then I thought how things have changed: we take secondhand cars, fix them and sell to Ukraine as we afford new cars, new branded tires.

We're spoiled as we've seen all of them operas and musicals in London and Rome, we can easily afford travelling to Tanzania, Kenya, Argentina, while Australia, New Zealand and Asia is already too mainstream for us. I remember my mum travelling France on a bus, now in next few years they'll have all continents on their visited list. We can't chose where to brunch due to variety of choices – we've tasted it all.

We feast on truffle butter, we drink lemongrass latte and exotic cocktails for € 12 euros, we buy expensive shower gels and shampoos and dental paste, robots and other expensive household items, we subscribe on Netflix and Amazon prime – € 100 per month for good content is ok.

Men groom their facial hair and posh barbers thrive. Spa, massages, tennis, lawlessness – they're all overlooked in advance. Few years ago we cared about defense and cyber, now we care about woman and animal rights. Even our kittens shit in specialized cotton-silicon bubbles and eat only balanced food”, – Ieva wrote among other things.

Naturally, this caused a storm of reactions – from laughter to anger as she wrote only about slowly expanding, albeit still small number of people, maybe 10,000 strong of

a population 2,8 million. Ieva herself recently turned only 27, so she's a late millennial, a generation born in 80s and yearly 90s.

She has not seen the dramatic changes her parents had to endure during the fall of communism, early years of wild capitalism, trying to adapt to the “Western standards” – until recently popular and magical phrase, describing the the race to catch up with the living standards of the West.

SUCCESS – FROM HOPE AND FROM SCRATCH

Back in 1989 in Lithuania and Eastern and Central Europe in the general the future looked uncertain – a mix of hope as well as gloomy predictions. The failing Soviet empire and it's economy, oppression, queues at those few shops with poor selection of goods – for Ieva's generation this looks as a grey colored picture from the past they never seen with their own eyes.

Reality may be closer, than it seems – a very reason, why critically acclaimed HBO hit Chernobyl was mostly filmed in Lithuania's capital Vilnius, one of the districts, reminiscent of Pripyat – a majority of 700 old Vilnius population still live in Soviet era buildings.

Lithuania has a slowing, yet still booming economy with growing average wage € 800 euros after taxes and € 27900 of average GDB per capita per year is clearly visible in certain bubbles of society

Yet those hopes with revolutions of 1989, that ended communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe have left very different marks in countries once behind the Iron curtain.

They were never equal to begin with – since 40s many, when Iron curtain fell, life in Soviet occupied Lithuania and, say socialist Poland, Hungary or even East Germany have been completely different: for Muscovites Baltic states seemed Western already, for people of Baltic states life of socialist Germans, Poles or Czechs looked like a Western dream.

Few imagined how it would look like in several years after the fall of USSR or decades later. Irrelevant of who was in power and what the Moscow has been saying, Baltic states, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and to extent Bulgaria and Romania chose to jump into EU and NATO train. This required radical, sometimes painful, but necessary reforms.

It wasn't quick, flawless and did not eradicate corruption, populism, did not bring happiness to all. But there was never a doubt about direction and it paid off – at least for Lithuania reforms brought Western mentality into public sector, business and everyday life.

“It was February of 1990 when I've opened the doors of the parliament for the first time after first free elections. I was 32 back then, almost a child”, – recently wrote Rasa Juknevičienė, a long-time MP, former minister of defense and now a former leader of NATO Parliamentary assembly, as she's been elected as MeP from Lithuania recently. She said, she could not have imagined 30 years ago, then a doctor from the province, she'd later be present in international arena, represent independent Lithuania and speak as equal to the head of Pentagon, advocating not only for Lithuania's cause, but also of Ukraine.

She was present during the turbulent events of 1989–1991 and proved to be a strong supporter of NATO, United States and Ukraine, travelling to frontline in Donbas as well as supporting Kyiv at every international opportunity. One of her last

moves in NATO PA was to invite leader of Ukraine supporting NGO Blue/Yellow Jonas Ohman to PA session to speak about Ukrainian situation. Things have changed for many over years.

“The challenges we faced to create our army according Western standards were immense, because in a way, we still had a lot of Soviet army in Lithuanian army back then. Then again, we did not have other experience, and back in 1994, when I returned home from Germany, from officers training course I was the first Lithuanian officer to try the taste of Western military. We had to learn everything – procedures, training subtleties, languages and it wasn’t easy to defeat the smell of 50 years of occupation”, – recently said the outgoing commander of Lithuanian armed forces, general Jonas Vytautas Žukas.

Back in 1989 he was a short, thin volunteer with mustache and a green armband – one of the few, armed with hunting and sporting rifles or simply iron sticks, who would make a stand against Soviet army with tanks. Those first volunteers would later make a core of Lithuanian army, created from scratch. Now, 30 years later, Lithuanian soldiers help train Ukrainian counterparts in “NATO standards”.

And despite Lithuanians do like to moan now and then about standards of living in Poland, Czech Republics or especially Estonia, where those standards are slightly or somewhat higher, the starting position of a country with small population and virtually no natural resources, teasing warnings from Moscow “how will you manage alone without us?” was the same and grudges are slowly sinking into the past.

SURPASSING THE EXPECTATIONS

Now more Lithuanians consider themselves Western, rather than Eastern Europeans, when travelling abroad. There is still a large and unspecified number, maybe half a million of Lithuanian immigrants, who went abroad to seek better wages or any job to support their families, who haven’t returned.

State supported and young, urban likeminds as Ieva herself run programs, such as “Create Lithuania” and “Invest Lithuania” are headhunting hard to recruit young professionals with experience abroad to return to their homeland.

Some do, as they bring along very different business culture and generally different approach of work environment – little things to improve micro-climate in companies or public sector and communities, all of that natural in the West and still somewhat foreign to some.

Few of those, who returned did not need any state help and made their own little fortune. Sigita, 65 now earn € 350 per month of his pension and adds € 650 more on his part time job as mechanic.

“It’s enough for me”, – he says. Sigita spent 13 years in Sweden and six more in Denmark, where he started his little business as lorry driver in a small logistical company with a Latvian friend from Soviet army times. Their company grew from 3 trucks to 50 and Sigita made enough money to build his own house near Vilnius and buy mechanic shop. He came back as many reemigrants do – because of the sentiment.

Still 64% of population is unhappy how democracy works, warned president Grybauskaitė. Distrust in political parties, parliament, government is still in high numbers and certain decisions or actions, like political deafness, attempts to control media, law institutions and ignorance of Constitution leads to destruction, she warned.

Yet many of those day-to-day problems all too often sound just business as usual in European politics: there are institutions and NGOs, leading pro-Western parties and communities as well as independent media that helps the state with self-control. One of the last indicators of a free society was an LGBT parade in Vilnius, the other week.

International rankings of Lithuania



- 14** Doing Business (World Bank)
- 21** Index of Economic Freedom (The Heritage Foundation)
- 40** The Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum)
- 38** Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International)
- 30** Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders)
- 40** Global Innovation Index (World Intellectual Property Organization)

Only 9 years ago during the first parade the LGBT community had many reasons to be afraid – cornered and fenced in a more distant area of Vilnius with heavy police protection they’ve marched under wave of angry mob, which was throwing bricks and insults.

This year the parade looked more like a fest in the downtown, with minimal police presence, no insults or harassing, no incidents, no arrests, just thousands of happy people – not just LGBT community, but random supporters, families with children as well – simply another peaceful march with demands to defend human rights.

The few disgusted had their chance to express dissatisfaction and were more unhappy due to little coverage they’ve got – few really care about the issue, that has caused waves just 9 years ago.

Shift in mentality is becoming more visible, when national events are celebrated these days: in general they remind a celebration, with communities and families enjoying a day off in public, without extra and forced fanfare or pressure and grim faces. Lithuanians are becoming happier every year and it shows.

This theory may be still put to a creative test this year, when 30th anniversary of Baltic Way – a chain of 2 million people, who joined their hands to form a human chain spanning 675.5 kilometers across the three Baltic states will be celebrated. The author of these lines was part of that chain, now it’s just a sweet memory of times when Lithuanians and others sought to fulfill their hopes. Despite all potholes on the road those hopes seem to have surpassed some of the expectations. ■

An artist against the machine

Who wanted to get rid of Alla Horska?

Liubov Krupnyk

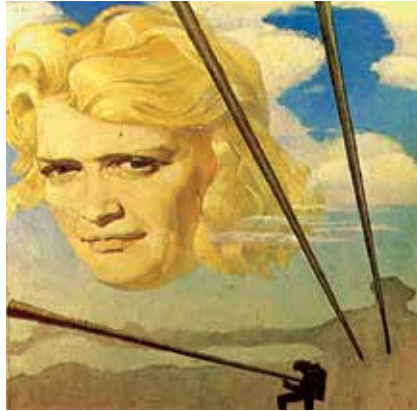
Painter Alla Horska would have turned 90 on September 18. She left a distinct trace in the history of the dissident movement in Ukraine. Her tragic death triggered serious outcry. The KGB monitored and recorded information about her death, regularly reporting to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, including its first secretary Petro Shelest. The prosecutor's office of the Ukrainian SSR had the case under its special control.

Alla Horska was a driver behind the Sixtiers movement in Ukraine and *Suchasnyk* (The Contemporary) Club for Young Artists in Kyiv. She realized her national identity as an adult, learning the Ukrainian language and throwing a lot of commitment towards the national cultural revival of the 1960s. "You know, I want to write in Ukrainian all the time," she said in a letter to her father, then director of the Odesa Film Studio, in 1961. "When you speak Ukrainian, you start thinking in Ukrainian. I'm reading Kotsiubynsky. The language is beautiful..." She also had a complaint: "The memories are a huge burden. The memories of the 30s. My heart pounds terribly with the pain of my soul. I want to do something, run somewhere, resent and scream."

Together with poet Vasyl Symonenko and director Les Taniuk, Horska discovered mass graves of the NKVD victims in Bykivnia, a forest near Kyiv, in 1962. They reported this to the Kyiv City Council, proposing to open a memorial. The Club for Young Artists initiated an investigation. Les Taniuk, Vasyl Symonenko and Alla Horska began to collect information. In 1963, they faced pressure, and Vasyl Symonenko died after he was beaten by the police.

THE STAINED GLASS CASE

The destruction of the stained glass co-designed by Horska for the 150th anniversary of poet Taras Shevchenko in the hall of the Kyiv National University in 1964 triggered another wave of outcry. It portrayed an infuriated Shevchenko with a woman as a symbol of Mother Ukraine leaning onto him. "I shall magnify those speechless slaves! I will put the words as their guardians!"



In memory of Alla Horska. Trembity.
Painted by the sixtier Halyna Sevruck in 1971

were Shevchenko's quotes put on the stained glass. It was demolished immediately after completion as a "piece that is deeply alien to the principles of socialist realism." Mykhailyna Kotsiubynska, a sixtier, recalled that "The main pogromist was Shvets, the university president. He smashed the ideologically damaging stained glass before the commission even delivered its opinion... Why is Mother Ukraine so sad? What sort of "trial" and "punishment" is Taras calling for? And what is Ukraine doing behind bars?" The Bureau of the Kyiv Oblast Office of the Artists' Union of Ukraine concluded in its opinion on April 13, 1964, that "The stained glass portrays the image of T. Shevchenko in a brutally distorted way, archaized as an icon, that has nothing to do with the image of the great revolutionary democrat... The image of Kateryna is in the same icon-like style. It is nothing more than a styled image of the Mother of God... Shevchenko's words are written in the Church Slavonic language (Cyrillic), which are ideologically dubious when combined with the images interpreted as icons. The images in the stained glass do not even try to show Shevchenko's soviet worldview. The images created by the artists intentionally lead us into the distant past."

The authors of the stained glass piece were expelled from the Ukrainian SSR Artists' Union. Some faced a more tragic future: the first post-Stalin wave of repressions hit Ukraine in 1956, hitting artist Opanas Zalyvakha, a co-designer of the piece and Horska's close friend. He was accused of anti-soviet agitation and sent to high-security prison for five years.

CARNATIONS IN COURT

Alla Horska was a witness in cases of Yaroslav Hevrych, Yevhenia Kuznetsova, Oleksandr Martynenko and Ivan Rusyn arrested for possessing the Ukrainian literature banned in the Soviet Union. When brought to the Kyiv Oblast Court on March 25, 1966, they were surprised to find poet Lina Kostenko, Alla Horska, human rights advocate Nadiya Svitlychna and critic Ivan Dziuba with bouquets of carnations supporting them.

On December 16, 1965, Horska publicly accused law enforcement authorities of psychological pressure on Yaroslav Hevrych during the interrogations, resulting in his false testimony. She used the effective Constitution and laws to prove that it was not a crime to read a book, even if ideologically opposed to the official doctrine. Her persuasiveness was disarming and irritating. She came to attend the trial against dissident Viacheslav Chornovil in Lviv in 1967 with a group of people from Kyiv and signed a letter about the illegal nature of the trial. In 1968, Horska was among 139 academics, writers and artists to sign a letter to the Communist Party Central Committee Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev, Head of the Council of Ministers Aleksei Kosygin and Speaker of the Soviet Union Supreme Council Mykola Pidhorny. The intellectuals wrote that "the political processes of the recent years have turned into a form of repression against dissidents, a form of stifling civic activity and social criticism that are necessary for the health of any society. They signal an increasingly stronger restoration of Stalinism... In Ukraine, where violations of democracy are amplified and aggravated by distortions in the national issue, the symptoms of Stalinism are even



Liudmyla Semykina, an associate of Alla Horska, a decorative artist, painter and sextier, a co-organizer of the Suchasnyk Club for Young Artists. Member of the Artists' Union of Ukraine (1957; expelled twice, membership restored in 1988)

We were romantics, not realists. Alla Horska referred to me as sister, she put her hand on my shoulder when we spoke with our friends. I observed her as a painter, how she holds her hands and her head. Alla was beautiful, brilliantly brought up, intelligent, walking proudly, not a single move without sense. Alla loved art, then she loved herself in art, and she was happy for the people who accomplished something in art. She was poetic and philosophical in her nature, and passionate about national revival that became the sense of her life. Meanwhile, she

did not care about comfort in her daily life. Alla Horska was born for a protest, she was a defender, a torch. She was willing to sacrifice and never afraid to say the truth. I was afraid of her bravery, and I understood the danger. She was courageous, brave, she could break any politicized trial. That's why she was black-listed, and then eliminated. The murderer was following her, studying his victim. She was dragged into a trap. There is one assumption shared by Les Taniuk, whereby I was supposed to go with Alla in the car following the one that delivered the sewing machine from Vasylykiv. But I was working on costumes for *Zakhar Berkut*, the film.

harsher." The signed letter was sent in April 1968. By the end of April, the authorities were clamping down on the signatories. In July 1968, Horska wrote a public letter to the *Literaturna Ukrayina* newspaper along with Lina Kostenko, Ivan Dziuba, and writers Yevhen Sverstiuk and Viktor Nekrasov, against a defamation article about the signatories of "letter of the 139", and against KGB informer Oleksiy Poltoratskiy. She then broke uneasy silence at the subsequent assembly of the Artists' Union where accusations against all these people were made. She claimed that all the accusations were a lie and forced the presidium to read the text of the protest address. The reading revealed that the letter had no hint at a coup, only polite demand of justice. Horska was once again expelled from the Union for that speech.

This failed to stop the brave woman. In the winter of 1969, she visited Opanas Zalyvakha at the ZhKh-385 area of the Mordovian Concentration Camp. When he was released on August 28, 1970, she co-organized a huge meeting with him at the Kyiv restaurant Natalka. In 1970, she was summoned for interrogation in Ivano-Frankivsk for her support for speeches by historian Valentyn Moroz. She refused to testify.

THE SECRET OF DEATH

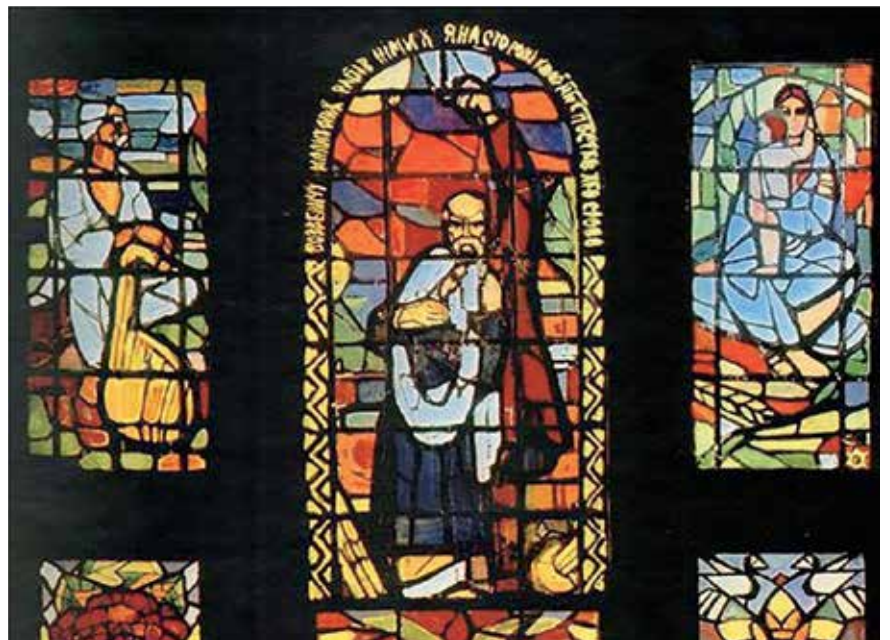
Horska corresponded with political prisoners, including artist Opanas Zalyvakha, and stayed in touch with their families, providing them with moral and material support. Her apartment turned into a place where the returnees from jail would find accommodation and their families gather. She was the epicenter for the intelligentsia and an authority for these artists. Horska was extraordinarily courageous, even if she probably realized how much of a risk she was taking. She faced surveillance

and intimidation. Listening equipment was installed in her neighbors' apartment to monitor her home.

Horska went to visit her father-in-law in Vasylykiv, a small town near Kyiv, on November 28, 1970, never to return again. Her body was found in the basement of her father-in-law Ivan Zaretskiy on December 2, 1970. The Vasylykiv County prosecutor's office investigated the case initially. On December 7, the case was transferred to Deputy Head of the Investigation Department at the Kyiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office, advisor to justice V. Viktorov, criminal prosecutor H. Baumstein, and the Kyiv Sviatoshyn prosecutor's office investigator H. Strashnyi. According to the autopsy report, "A. Horskha died as a result of mul-

tiple skull fracture with a hemorrhage in the brain cavity." The examination concluded that the death was caused by "the blunt force trauma with limited impact area", i.e. a hammer.

Horska's husband Viktor Zaretskiy was arrested on the day when her body was found under the suspicion of murdering his wife. He faced psychological pressure in interrogations. As a result, he confirmed the official scenario that accused his father, Ivan Zaretskiy, of reasons to kill his daughter-in-law. In the resolution On the Completion of the Criminal Case Accusing I. Zaretskiy Under Art. 94 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR, "based on the testimony of the Horskys' neighbor and friend H. Zabrodina, O. Horskii (Alla's father),



Shevchenko. Mother. Stained glass by Halyna Sevruck, Alla Horska, Opanas Zalyvakha, Halyna Zubchenko and Liudmyla Semykina. 1964

and I. Zaretskiy's letters to his nephew K. Mytsmanenko to Tambov", the investigators stated that the father-in-law "felt hostile against A. Horska and murdered her on November 28, 1970. He then committed suicide on November 29, 1970."

That official scenario raised a slew of doubts mostly coming from those who knew Horska closely. One of their claims was that the old and weak Ivan Zaretskiy could not have handled the physically strong Alla, and "no traces of dragging, struggle or self-defense were found on the body and clothing." Alla's friends, family and researchers assumed that her death was the work of "the political murder department" reporting to the Soviet leadership.

AN UNFINISHED CASE

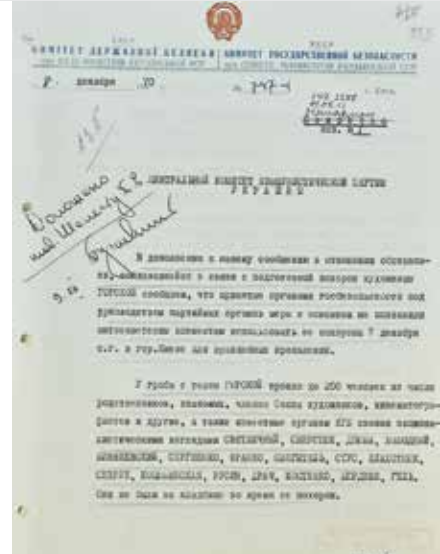
The outcry triggered by Horska's death disturbed the authorities. On December 3, 1970, the Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee received a letter signed by Vitaliy Fedorchuk, KGB chief in the Ukrainian SSR: "Since A. Horska is known as a figure of authority in the environment of nationalistically-minded elements, they may use her funeral for provocations. We are holding measures to prevent possible unwarranted actions by these people." That special letter had a handwritten resolution by Fedorchuk: "Reported to Comr. Shelest on December 4, 1970." The Secret Report of the Ukrainian SSR KGB to the CPU Central Committee dated December 5, 1970, noted that "According to the data sent from the KGB under the Ukrainian SSR Council of Ministers, the nationalistically-minded individuals are attempting to use the funeral of Alla Horska for undesired purposes. Because the funeral was postponed to December 7, provocative assumptions and fabrications are spread: Korohodsky, an employee of the Mystetstvo (Art) Publishing House claimed that this was an intentional delay. The KGB does not want the funeral to take place on the Constitution Day so that it does not turn into a political demonstration. Some individuals have proposed a protest at the prosecutor's office and the city council, demanding that they give back the body. As a result of the measures we have taken, their intentions failed to gain wide support."

Ivan Franko's granddaughter Zynovia arranged for the burial at Baikove Cemetery in downtown Kyiv on December 4. But it was eventually rescheduled to December 7 and the Berkovetsky Cemetery in the suburbs. The farewell



Serhiy Bilokin, PhD in History:

"The historians researching Ukrainian culture in the 20th century cannot bypass the powerful figures of Vasyl Stus and Alla Horska. They both died. The archives of the Security Bureau of Ukraine (SBU) still store files signed by the ruinous people, such as Vitaliy Fedorchuk. It is all so simple, so straightforward."



Archives. A special report for the Ukrainian SSR Communist Party Central Committee from Vitaliy Fedorchuk, chief of the KGB in the Ukrainian SSR. 1970

ceremony took place at the art workshop on Filatov Street. Several hundred people attended.

A December 11, 1970 note to the CPU Central Committee signed by Fedorchuk mentioned that "Mysterious circumstances and reasons of the murder were spoken about at the funeral... Therefore, we believe it advisable to instruct the prosecutor in charge of the case to interrogate Serhiyenko and Hel in order to stop the spreading of provocative rumors around the murder of Horska." It also mentioned that "poet Lina Kostenko said 'All this is too ugly to be true' in her assessment of the involvement of I. Zaretskiy in the murder of Horska."

After the funeral, a special note signed by Fedorchuk was sent to the CPU Central Committee on December 18, 1970: "According to the information sent to the State Security Committee at the Ukrainian SSR Council of Ministers, Olena Antoniv, resident of Lviv and the wife of Viacheslav Chornovil known to the KGB for his nationalist sentiments, is commenting on the death of artist Horska in her circle, spreading provocative ru-

mors about the state security agencies allegedly wanting to eliminate those representatives of the intelligentsia who they failed to eliminate in the 60s. According to Antoniv, such actions should be taken by the beginning of the XXIV assembly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. According to her, this information has reached Ukraine from Moscovites, but she did not mention specific names. Antoniv and her acquaintances are concerned about their future. The KGB under the Ukrainian SSR Council of Ministers is taking actions to identify the sources of the provocative rumors."

Oleksiy Zaretskiy, Alla's son, believed that the purpose of the crime had been to intimidate, discredit and demoralize the Ukrainian human rights movement. The murder eliminated the person who provided serious support to the circle of the like-minded. Subsequent repressions, the "great pogrom" of 1972, was probably already in the making by then. The case of Alla Horska was closed. It remains unresolved in spite of the many requests for the prosecutor's offices of the Ukrainian SSR, the Soviet Union and the independent Ukraine. ■

July 16 – 18, 21:30 ————— July 19 – 21, 15:00 ————— July 29, 20:00 —————

UPark

SKY family PARK
(prospekt Generala Vatutina 2T, Kyiv)

Big Stars on the big stage. The UPark Music Festival has impressed with its line-up of headliners for a number of years now. Once again, this year, the festival's guests include world-famous bands and performers. On the first day, Kyivans and their guests will see Bring Me The Horizon, Nothing but Thieves and SWMRS. The musical marathon will then be taken up by Thirty Seconds to Mars, Rag'n'Bone Man and Pale Waves. The topping on this year's cake will be MO. Come join us for this three-day party and feel a real heat wave of positive emotions!



Taras Bulba

Spartak Stadium
(Dubno, Rivne Oblast)

"This is where Ukrainian rock is tempered," say the organizers of this festival. "This is the place where you can get a real charge of amazing energy and drive from the top rock groups in Ukraine," say the fans. Taras Bulba is more than just a festival, it's a great tradition, a place where friends and great Ukrainian rock get together. This year, the festival site includes a main stage, an alternative stage for indie, folk and country, a literary stage for poetry readings, and a kids' area with a puppet theater and entertainers.




Live Jazz Monday: Ivonika

Caribbean Club
(vul. S. Petliury 4, Kyiv)

What's summer without Jazz – especially when you have a performer as subtle and lively as IVONIKA? At the request of many music fans, we have brought this talented jazz singer back for Live Jazz Monday. Ivonika will lend her colorful vocals to a mix of jazz, soul and blues, performing favorites from such singers as Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles. Ivonika will be accompanied by virtuoso composer, musician and singer Oleksandr Remez. In music circles, he's known as the frontman for the Ruky'v Briuky R&B band, cofounder of the Jazz Epoch retro show, and leader of the Kyiv Rhythm Kings swing orchestra.






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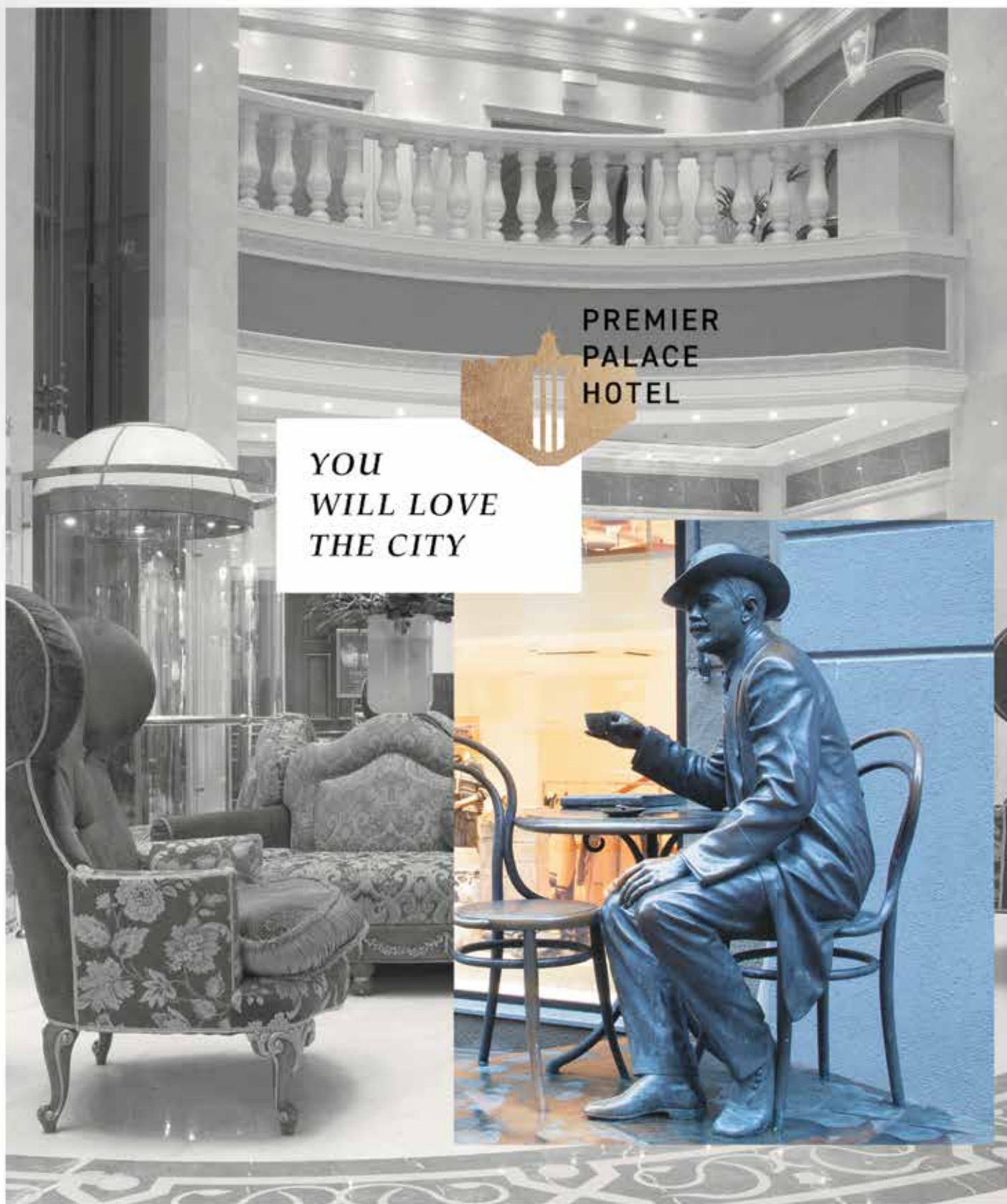


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