

THE FREEDOM RELAY

The Fire of Maidan

21.11.2013–22.02.2014

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THE LIGHT FROM KYIV

In the East – it is always dark. It’s hard to look into that space, detecting more Soviet order in it than any modernizing aspirations towards democracy. Against this background, the Ukrainian breakthrough of 2013/14 contradicts the rule: a person does not have to lose against the system, isn’t obliged to give in to social conformism, can choose an independent existence. The 21st century had not witnessed a more spectacular confirmation of human solidarity than this pro-European revolt. It’s worth noting that, within united Europe, the strongest declaration of belonging appeared beyond its borders.

In February 2014, the KARTA Center was already asking itself what could be done for the Maidan. How could we respond to this

signal coming from Kyiv, which we read as a contemporary version of the long-term process of societies liberating themselves from communism and its derivatives. Some natural associations sprang to mind. When we undertook to produce a day-to-day account of August 1980 in Poland – the first of its kind in the country – we did so twenty years too late; the memory of that revolution omitted both details and emotions. We understood how important it was that the Ukrainians should tell the story of their revolution immediately.

In September 2014, a surprising reply to the question of how we could help emerged from conversations with the organizers of the Maidan Museum in Kyiv: It was important to create the fullest possible account of the experience. We hesitated over whether

Ukrainian remembrance could be recorded according to “Polish” precepts – if the suggestion of a formula on our part might not provoke uneasiness and an instinctive aversion to “outsiders” The encouragement to undertake such an attempt was, however, so unequivocal, indeed enthusiastic, that we were positively obliged to act. Even greater confirmation of approval reached us from Ukraine throughout 2014/15 as our work progressed.

Supporters were found at the KARTA end: Maciej Kowalczyk, an exuberant friend of Ukraine, and Anna Richter, an editor and Ukraine specialist. The large Ukrainian-Polish team which they brought together unearthed the majority of testimonies available from the time of the Maidan 2013/14 – including almost a hundred books dedicated to

the subject, several hundred audio and film recordings, thousands of internet entries, TV recordings from the Maidan stage, and press reports... Two language versions were created at the same time from the assembled sources: in Polish and in Ukrainian. The first of these appeared in autumn 2015.

Eight years have passed since the events described here. Both the details and emotions still run high. Another striking aspect of this record is the presence of contemporary communication technology, thanks to which it is easier to understand the experience of a given moment, and also its mode of apprehension. Though such fleeting historical testimonies are rarely drawn on, here their use is incontestable. The Maidan gained its own bards, who commented not via song, admittedly, but via the pithy phrase – many of which, quoted here, had the chance to enter the Ukrainian canon.

The Maidan endured – this was splendid news for all allies of freedom, but terrible for the beneficiaries of the dictatorship still dominating the East. Kyiv 2013/14 is a phenomenon – an authoritarian power had so far managed to control social rebellion as soon as it

used force: Berlin 1953, Poznań 1956, Budapest 1956, Novochoerkask 1962, Prague 1968, Szczecin 1970, Radom 1976, Gdańsk 1981, Minsk 1996, Moscow 2010. But the Maidan survived. Convinced that it must, that if defeated it would become a trump-card for despots. What becomes of that victory is what matters now.

The Maidan won the battle, but it is losing the war. Not the regional one which is playing out only in the Ukrainian borderland. This is a war of the entire pro-Kremlin realm, whose active battle front is relatively small – but the conflict concerns vast areas. And two elements: a civil society demanding democratic principles, and the conformist masses, who in return for temporary sustenance and a sense of security are ready to recognize self-appointed (based on fake elections) authorities.

The leaders of Russia, Belarus, and still, unfortunately, Ukraine – are the custodians of the world of the East, with its conventions inimical to human beings: universal corruption, secret political police, an oligarchic economic system, a subservient judiciary, subordinate politicians and media, an incapacitated

society. Ukraine needs independent leaders, vigorously rejecting these tenets in order to achieve freedom, justice, and democracy.

This is also our war. The losses of Maidan threaten us, too, with the return of the East – the latter will either slip toxically through a half-open border or it will build a wall upon it. And for Poland, it is crucial that the dialogue with the democratic European society of Ukraine should take place across a completely open border. Together, we could deal also with the lurking phantoms of the past.

Whatever the future brings, that three-month flame should endure in the collective consciousness. Polish Solidarity, the Ukrainian Maidan – these are fundamental steps towards a world free of despotism. Freedom is a human right, but the defence of that right has seldom been so powerful. The light of Kyiv should shine as an unquenchable torch.

JUNE 2020

Zbigniew Gluza



PHOTO: FILIP SINGER / EPA / PAP

1

THE PRELUDE

21–31 NOVEMBER 2013

On 21 November 2013, the Ukrainian prime minister, Mykola Azarov, declares that preparations to signing an association agreement with the European Union had been suspended, to the surprise and the indignation of Ukraine's citizens. The final decision was to be taken at the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius on 29 November. Ukrainians came out onto the streets of Kyiv in the hope that civil protest would influence the political direction of their country. At the same time, they organize representatives for a parliamentary opposition. The tenuous agreement, achieved with some difficulty by the two Maidans, is interrupted by a sharp response from the authorities.

MUSTAFA NAYYEM

(Ukrainian television journalist) on Facebook:

Come on, seriously now. Who's ready to go out to the Maidan by midnight tonight? "Likes"* don't count. Only comments underneath this post with the word: "Ready" As soon as we get more than a thousand, we'll start to organize.**

21 NOVEMBER 2013

[21]

OLHA MALISHEVA (civil activist):

When I clicked on "like" it was at about the three hundred mark. I went to the kitchen for a smoke, I come back 5–7 minutes later and the likes had reached five thousand. I knew something was beginning. And that it was going to be a lot more serious than anything until then.

21 NOVEMBER

[14]

ANDREY KURKOV (writer) from his diary:

Eurointegration has been abandoned. Now we're going to love Russia again. It looks like Europe's in shock. Me too. [...]

Back home, I glanced at Facebook. People are rallying each other to the Maidan to demand they sign the treaty [for association with the European Union]. They say to bring warm clothes, rugs, flasks of tea and food supplies for the night. I don't have the strength to go. I don't feel like it either – I don't feel like anything at all. On television they were showing Putin, grinning from ear to ear, with the commentator adding that Russia would be delighted to develop its collaboration with Ukraine. What collaboration?

[...] Once again, we're left without a future.

21 NOVEMBER

[18]

YURIY LUTSENKO (politician, opposition parliamentary bloc "Our Ukraine"), speaking at the Maidan:

Invite all your friends, telephone all your family – on 24 November there must be 100 thousand of us at the Maidan. Only that sort of force can triumph. When there are 100 thousand, we can turn to Europe and say: let us join you, let us join you – regardless of the politicians!

21 NOVEMBER

[17]

BOHDANA BABYCH (psychologist, journalist, member of the Maidan Coordination Committee***):

I posted an event [on Facebook] called "Euromaidan. We're making history." I invited 53 thousand people – acquaintances at first, and then they invited all their acquaintances, and so on.

It was very cold and damp; it was a hard night was hard to get through. There were literally a few dozen of us left.

22 NOVEMBER

[46]

VOLODYMYR HONSKY (teacher):

I first got suspicious in the night, when there was a down-pour. A group of female students had covered themselves with a huge plastic sheet. The "Berkut"**** suddenly pounced and ripped off the plastic, saying that it was a "small architectural structure". I've some experience of their brand of brutality and I felt that something wasn't quite right – this was something new. They're capable of breaking ribs, beating people up, shoving them around, but to snatch plastic off girls sheltering from the rain... Then I realized this wasn't just a clash with Yanukovych, this was a battle with an evil empire.

23 NOVEMBER

[46]

← ← On the previous page:
29 November 2013. Anti-EU
demonstration.

* Clicking "Like" on Facebook.

** In fact, people began to gather at the Maidan as soon as 500 comments with the word "Ready" had appeared.

*** Committee formed by the activists who'd gathered on the Maidan on 22 November 2013.

**** Special Military Unit [riot police] "Berkut" – the body responsible for the security of citizens and the fight against organized crime.



PHOTO: SERGEY DOLZHENKO / EPA / PAP

← 26 November 2013.
Students protesting
on the Maidan.

OLEKSANDR ZAKLETSKY (photographer):

The parliamentary opposition constructed a stage on the steps of Ukrainian House [on European Square], declaring that they would stand there. The students and many of the activists said: “Fine! You stand there, but our Maidan is here. We don’t want your flag, we are standing here in defence of our rights – human rights.” [Vitali Klitschko* came, as did [Andriy] Parubiy** – come over, they said, warm up! But our boys said: “No, better you come to us. Without the flags!”

23 NOVEMBER [14]

VOLODYMYR VIATROVYCH (historian):

A meeting was planned for Sunday [24 November], but there was no coordination between the civil part of the protest on the Maidan and the opposition politicians. There were conversations, in which Mustafa Nayyem, for one, took part. When they returned, they were disappointed, for our requirements were very straightforward: we could do this together, but without any party flags. [Ar-seniy] Yatsenyuk*** and Klitschko agreed, but [Oleh] Tyahnybok**** said that the “Svoboda” flags were sacred to them. There were voices from the civil side of the Maidan against the 24 November action – let the politicians do what they liked.

23 NOVEMBER [47]

OLEKSANDR TURCHYNOV (politician, leader of Batkivshchyna):

We turned to the people on the Maidan proposing that we pool our efforts for a joint protest on the Sunday.

But the journalists and civil activists: Mustafa Nayyem, Ihor Lutsenko, Vika Siumar, Ruslana [Lyzhychko, a singer] – decided they were not interesting in cooperating with political parties, and since people had started gathering on their own initiative, they could try to organize their own event on Sunday, a kind of alternative to ours. [...] Meanwhile on the Maidan, the youth and activists had already put up a stage under the monument***** and hooked up a sound system.

23 NOVEMBER [17]

BOHDANA BABYCH:

The politicians reacted very negatively to our Maidan. They could see they were losing the initiative and were alarmed because for the first time, a mass of people was responding in an uncontrolled way, with no one leading them. So a competition began between civil society and the opposition politicians. They saw that we were taking the initiative.

We knew what we wanted: to join the European Union. Though I was a eurosceptic myself, it was a choice between civilisations: either Europe, or the Customs Union [Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan] and a completely new geopolitical arrangement.

23 NOVEMBER [46]

MARIA VASILYEVA (television journalist) on Facebook:

It’s important to remember that we’re all riding in the same wagon. And we’re not there for Yatsenyuk, Klitschko or Tyahnybok. We’re there for ourselves... People: of course the backstage games of politicians are often very ugly; but this can’t be used to justify anything now. Or the fact that

* Leader of the UDAR (Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform) party, opposing Yanukovych.

** Deputy of the opposition party “Batkivshchyna” [All-Ukrainian Union “Fatherland”], led by Yulia Tymoshenko.

*** One of the main opposition activists from the Batkivshchyna party.

**** Leader of the nationalist party “Svoboda”, which opposed the president and the Party of Regions.

***** The Independence Monument on the Maidan in the form of a pillar crowned with a figure of the goddess Berehynia.

you don't want to muddy your precious selves in puddles because there will be – yuk – party flags. Come to European Square on Sunday at 12.00. Not for the politicians. For yourselves.

23 NOVEMBER

[24]

BOHDANA BABYCH:

The politicians led the people to the Euromaidan [on European Square] and we realized that this action was meant to create the impression that our Maidan was no longer relevant. There were around fifteen hundred people left on the Maidan, maybe two, whereas a hundred thousand were going there. The latter had no idea that a protest was happening on the Maidan.

We got the students and activists together and I said: "Let's block Khreshchatyk*, we won't let them through." And to passers-by I said: "Come on, the action isn't over." There was music around the monument, people standing about, so a few came up, curious as to what was going on. They started to ask why we were standing there. We told people not to disperse but to join us, that we spending the night here – it wasn't just a meeting, it could be a much longer action. A few thousand stayed.

24 NOVEMBER

[46]

MUSTAFA NAYYEM on Facebook:

Today is a great day. The first day for many years that we've had a chance to change the course of history. At twelve, I will come to the Shevchenko monument** in order to demand that the agreement for cooperation with the EU is signed. I'm not coming because all my friends and family

will be there. Not because it's fashionable. And not even because at passport control I want to stand in the line for "EU citizens" and not "All other passports". I'm going because the road to Europe is my conscious choice and I sincerely believe that my – personal – attendance can change something.

I have been involved in political journalism for a long time and believe me, I am more cynical and mistrustful than any of you. I too am tired and disillusioned. I too dislike the party banners. But today it doesn't matter who supports what I myself believe in. What's important is to make a contribution. Come, because there is a chance. Regardless of how many people gather today, sooner or later this country will find itself in Europe. We can either speed up the process and witness the birth of a new country, or wait passively for others to do it – after us. I'm not going to wait, I don't want to.

24 NOVEMBER

[21]

VOLODYMYR VIATROVYCH:

In the night, they tried to suppress or restrict the rally at European Square. There was a scuffle, Andriy Parubiy's finger was broken. The situation seemed less safe, so I stayed overnight.

There weren't many young people left at the civil Maidan. Around five o'clock a friend called me: "Hurry to the Maidan, the police are heading that way, they'll storm the place." I ran, a few people followed from the political rally. The Maidan looked pathetic – maybe a few dozen people. I asked who was on duty because I couldn't see anyone. The people were frightened, the police were close. We switched on the sound system, Eduard Kurhansky, one

* The main street of Kyiv, linking the Maidan with European Square.

** The opposition had planned a march for that day from the Shevchenko monument at the university to the European Square.

of the activists, helped me. I started to reassure people.

We had to find a way to keep everyone on the spot, and when the temperature's below freezing that's not easy. So we tried dancing. We thought we had to keep the people there while the summit was happening in Vilnius to show both Ukraine and the world that we demanded a choice for Europe.

The dancing began. The funniest thing was that though we had a sound system, no one had prepared any music. I made the first playlist quickly on my phone, there were about 20 songs, most Ukrainian: Okean Elzy, Tartak, Haydamaky.

24/25 NOVEMBER [47]

BOHDANA BABYCH:

We organized a folk event at the Maidan metro station. There were a few dozen people dancing, the whole metro was booming. The dancing was infectious, everyone who got off was drawn in.

And then – to the Maidan! We brought people from the metro along. And then the public singing of the national anthem. Everything just happened, without any planning. It was like: "Let's do something!"

25 NOVEMBER [46]

OLENA PODOBIED-FRANKIVSKA (manager, civil activist):

There were a few days of jostling over who should join with whom. Some discussions were held, but it was impossible to ascertain which Maidan was the real one: the student one or the political one. Some of the people migrated: two hours

at one stage, then two at the other. There were more people at the political Maidan in the evenings, then at about three or four in the morning the numbers would even out.

We were convinced that something had to happen.

26 NOVEMBER [47]

OLEKSANDR TURCHYNOV:

Late in the evening, we had two huge flags on European Square – the Ukrainian flag and the flag of the European Union. We took hold of them, and processed towards the Maidan. All the party symbolism was left back European [Square]. The dismantling of our first tent village and stage began that same night. The youth were amazed that the politicians had overcome their pride and come to them, without aspiring to be leaders. United, we could act together. The first joint meeting was to take place on Sunday [1 December].

26 NOVEMBER [17]

BOHDANA BABYCH:

At first, we covered our own costs. Then when they started to show us on TV [25 November], people asked: "How can we help, where do we send money?" I went to the Coordinating Council and said: "We have to start a collection so that we can buy some warm things, tea." We decided that we'd use Ihor Lutsenko's account.

Self-organization began to take off. During the TV transmission we told people what to bring: honey, ginger, tea, sandwiches. It united people and also meant we didn't freeze.

27 NOVEMBER [46]

MIRIAM DRAGINA (poet, journalist, civil activist)
on Facebook:

I took my daughter to school. Most of the parents had yellow and blue ribbons, some had flags. [...] That group of several thousand on the Maidan is not just “students and fans”. Unless the students and fans are a new generation of parents. [...]

An important night awaits us on the Maidan.

28 NOVEMBER

[7]

OLEKSANDR KRAVTSOV
(Automaidan activist*):

I drove to the builders’ hypermarket and bought a special self-adhesive tape in yellow, because my car is blue – blue and yellow are the colours of the European Union flag, the flag of Ukraine and the Tryzub [Ukrainian coat of arms. I found a page on the internet with the Euro-maidan logotype – twelve stars, and the Tryzub in the middle. I thought to myself that I could make those twelve stars and tryzub on the car bonnet, a massive smooth one. I cut them out in foil and stuck them on the bonnet, I cut out the letters “EU – Yes” and stuck them on the side and set off like that for the evening demonstration, having alerted my friends to join with their cars and drive round Kyiv.

29 NOVEMBER

[14]

NATALIA HARNA (musician):

The Berkut and the internal forces were on the Maidan.** They came and just stood there, while we came right up to them the whole time – on that day too. We knew they

could beat us up, but we said to them: “But boys, you promised to serve the nation, and we’re people too, why are you doing it when you can see who we are.” I approached them and said |I was a musician, not a bandit or a militant. “Why are you coming at us with truncheons?”

They stood there, some of them cried. You could see it wasn’t straightforward for them.

29 NOVEMBER

[14]

SERHIY PASHYNSKY
(Batkivshchyna deputy,
associate of Oleksandr Turchynov):

A special operation had to be organized in order to get the minibuses with the sound system to the monument. [...] The buses reach the Maidan via Mykhailovskaya Street. I knew that the critical point was the approach to the monument from the side of Instytutska Street. When the buses were practically at the crossroads, I saw some car driving up Instytutska, it stopped a few metres before the junction, parked across the road, the driver switched on his alarm and got out. There are only two lanes there, so he’d blocked the traffic completely along Instytutska. It was impossible to take the lane alongside – there was too much traffic. A traffic policeman came rushing up but the other guy had a brief word – and they both disappeared. The car remained. Our buses were stuck by Trade Unions building, before the junction of the Maidan and Khreshchatyk.

It all happened in a matter of seconds. That was the first time we saw what the Berkut was up to. When a vehicle stopped on Instytutska, from the October Palace and Conservatory side, the Berkut began to appear

* An organized group of drivers, supporting the Maidan.

** Units subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, known as “veveshniki” from their initials [Vnutrishni Viys’ka].

from the subways. The slope was black, there were so many of them. They had clear orders and they carried them out. Apparently, the arrival of that car was the signal to begin the operation.

I was standing on the other side of the street and I realized there were going to be problems. I raced to the bus with our people. There were three or four opposition deputies there. A moment later the Berkut came flying up and surrounded us.

29/30 NOVEMBER [17]

PAVLO BRADULOV (manager, civil activist):

We met by the monument. There weren't many people, maybe 200. It was Friday, midnight. We went for a stroll. Cars were driving about, we walked, warmed up, drank tea – until three in the morning. There was a military tent between the monument and “Globus” [shopping centre] where you could warm up; it was around zero degrees, or maybe even lower. Quite a few students had gathered, 20–23-year-olds.

At 3.45 there was a commotion. A truck pulled up via Instytutaska or Khreshchatyk with a fir tree and a crane.* It tried to drive up but the people blocked it.

29 NOVEMBER [20]

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO (politician, Batkivshchyna deputy):

Around four in the morning, some municipal services trucks with metal barriers arrived on the Maidan. [...] I ran over immediately to avert any conflict. The vehicles were stopped and discussions began. They insisted that

they'd been ordered to deliver these barriers; they would do so and leave immediately. They behaved oddly, speaking evasively, without making eye contact. We had not idea what these barriers were all about. [...]

Then the Berkut hurried in. A moment before there'd simply been a motionless black mass. Now it moved, pouring onto the street at Institutskaya, it went up a bit and then began to surround the Maidan.

I think they were counting on people attacking the municipal services workers to prevent them unloading and that force would then be needed. [...] But 5–10 minutes later, without waiting for an excuse, the Berkut moved on the Maidan. They acted precisely according to plan, at a strictly specified time. Further confirmation: at exactly 4am, telephone connections were suspended on the Maidan.

30 NOVEMBER [17]

PAVLO BRADULOV:

At four in the morning, the Berkut began to appear from behind the Conservatory, two rows came first with lowered helmets, shields and truncheons. A few grenades went off. It was the first time I'd heard explosions. They began to move people from the “Globus” and the hotel Ukraina, pushing them down steps, hitting them wherever they could.

They pushed us in the direction of the subway, and then the Berkut began to run after us. There were three chasing me, without shields, but with truncheons – shouting that they would kill me.

30 NOVEMBER [20]

* There was a plan to put up a Christmas tree on the Maidan that night.



PHOTO: SERGEY DOLZHENKO / EPA / PAP

← Kyiv, 25 November 2013.
European Square – demonstrators
clash with the police.

ANATOLIY (civil activist):

The Berkut started coming down Instytutska Street from the side of the October Palace, down the steps where the Trade Unions building and McDonalds are. They practically surrounded the column from Instytutska Street. They formed three rings – one huge one, a second smaller one and a third, smaller still. Someone shouted over a loudspeaker that everyone who was there should tighten ranks around the column. To defend it.

So that's where we went. In fact, there weren't many of us, a hundred at most. Others stood to one side. We all linked arms, to stand more solidly. The closest row of Berkut started to crowd us and back us against the column. We were standing in a circle and they were pushing us. They were in full riot gear – helmets, shields, rubber truncheons. We were resisting in three rows – I was in the third. A hail of blows came down on the first row. They were thumping and the people had no defence, they tried to shield themselves and got knocked off their feet. A second row of Berkut started to pull out the people lying down and loaded them straight into the patrol wagons.

They pulled a few out – carried them by the arms and legs like animals. One Berkut guy grappled me and tried to drag me to the wagon, but he couldn't get out of the line so he just swore at me and let me go.

30 NOVEMBER [20]

MYKOLA YEGOROV (civil activist):

When the Berkut had pushed us onto the street, some people began to run to the so-called barricades which had been put up by the internal forces soldiers. The *veveshniki* even lowered their shields, let people through, shielding

them from the Berkut. People dispersed down three different streets leading uphill. Those who didn't know the city ran down dead-ends – thinking they'd find a way through. The Berkut came after them, beating them, dragging them to the police wagons.

We managed to run to the Khmelnytsky monument. There were about 40–50 of us. It was chaos – they'd blocked cellphone access in the area. No one knew what was going on.

30 NOVEMBER [47]

HENNADIY KUROCHKA (businessman):

Just one word – uttered loud and incredibly clear. Shouted at the top of the lungs. “Berkut!” You freeze for one second – and then you're racing in the tail of a group. The most important thing – not to trip over. Everyone's running, fast as they can. When I turned for a split second, the image was imprinted on my mind like a photograph. A grey mass of people, moving concurrently, like little cartoon soldiers from some computer game.

One more second – and you've fallen away from the rest. But the fear... In a moment the fear has filled your veins with energy. The next second – you spot the narrow doorway of some little café. A slight girl in a cappuccino-coloured apron, waving her hand in the air, shouts: “Here, here!” The space sucks people in like an ocean whirlpool. Another second and I hear: “That's enough, that's enough! I'm closing!” Click! – the sound of a lock.

And suddenly that [...] feeling when you're not in time and you hear: “Attention! The doors are closing.” Everyone realizes, but you're left gazing after the departing train in silence. [...] Do you knock or not? Will they open

→ → On the next page:
24 November 2013. Police
clash with protestors near the
government buildings.

PHOTO: ALEXEY FURMAN / EPA / PAP

up in time or not? Or maybe they'll be afraid that that grey whirlpool will fly in after you? [...] So... run for it! But you realize that it's too late and any minute the "holy" hand of justice will get a hold of you.

30 NOVEMBER

[13]

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO:

I looked and I couldn't believe what I was seeing, just couldn't believe it. It was like a paralysis. You're cut off from the square by a wall of Berkut, over there people are being beaten up, and you can't do a thing. The most you can do is fall to the feet of the Berkut, so that they trample you too and go on.

On the Maidan – a crush. Shrieking cries. Some student escapes from the square, he wants to hide in a subway, but the Berkut catch up with him, knock him down, beat him with truncheons. Someone topples headlong down the steps of the subway. A terrible sight. Ten minutes later it was all over.

By midday, we'd retrieved all 34 people who'd been detained. I came out with the last of them. I was desperate to sleep, in horrendous spirits. At home I found my mother, wife and daughter, sitting watching the television where they were showing clips of young people being dispersed over and over. They were all sitting in silence and crying. I'll not forgive those tears.

30 NOVEMBER

[17]





PHOTO: KONRAD FALECKI / GAZETA POLSKA

2

FORMATION

30 NOVEMBER – 8 DECEMBER 2013

The brutal dispersal of the Maidan is followed by social mobilization. The language of force to which the authorities have resorted exacerbates an attitude of rebellion. Almost a million citizens respond to the appeal of the parliamentary opposition to come to the Maidan. At the same time, a protest structure is established, taking an organized form. Activists take over public administration buildings – the City Hall, the October Palace and the Trade Unions building which from then on functions as the revolution's headquarters. The authorities do not enter into dialogue, the first detentions are made, and finally, once again they attempt to clear the square of those keeping vigil. But the Maidan is ready.

SERHIY ZHADAN (poet):

We wake with the consciousness that everything has changed and that further talk will be not so much of eurointegration but of our right to this country, our right to be citizens and decide our own future. [...] Just a few months ago, such vocabulary – “citizens”, “rights”, “the future” – was confined to our politicians at most. Such words seemed too pompous for the average Ukrainian. But we quickly became used to serious conversations and serious words, [...] they regain their meaning, that whole post-information skepticism, those domestic reflections, are vanishing. Good – we are citizens and we like to speak of ourselves in those terms.

30 NOVEMBER 2013

[48]

YURIY ANDREYEV (civil activist) on Facebook:

Dispersing the Maidan – is a sign that Yanukovych really does intend to push Ukraine into Putin’s arms. [...] It’s spitting into the face of everyone of us. Tonight, Yanukovych has violated an entire country of millions of people.

Are we to remain silent after this and wait meekly for 2015?

Are we to wait for weeks on end?

Or will we show today who is really master in our country?

People, come out to the Maidan. Come in the morning, don’t wait for someone to summon you. Come out today, so that tomorrow you don’t wake up in a second Belarus.

30 NOVEMBER

[7]

OLEKSANDRA MATVIYCHUK (civil activist):

Our organization, the Centre for Civil Liberties, was just planning a seminar for people with whom we’d worked earlier, from the regions. It was devoted to a completely different theme – the creation of a police database containing the details of every citizen. But in the morning, when the visitors were gathering in the hall, we already knew what had happened only a few hours earlier. It was obvious that there was no question of any seminar.

Everyone was downcast, concerned. We didn’t know what to do. Some said: Let’s go to Mykhailovsky Square, people are gathering there.” But I said: “We can go to the square to participate in the protest, obviously. But we deal with defence of the law, so let’s do something more.” We understood that in this situation it was necessary to create a system. There were victims, lawyers were needed – they had to be put into contact with each other. I said: “Let’s work out how to be of use.” And that’s how “Euro-maidan SOS” began.

30 NOVEMBER

[46]

YULIA PISHTA (civil activist):

In the morning we arrived at the Mykhailovsky cathedral. The bells were ringing, priests were walking around. Stuff tossed all around in the middle: a backpack, a book. There were ambulances, doctors, students – shock written across all their faces, as though they didn’t understand anything. A few journalists were milling about. Someone kept repeating: “I just don’t understand why they were beating us!”

In the afternoon an unbelievable crowd gathered on the square in front of the cathedral. Countless crowds

← ← On the previous page:
1 December 2013. Clashes with the
“Berkut” on Bankova Street by the
presidential palace.

arrived within hours. It was reminiscent of the Orange Revolution. Everyone was saying: “It’s a second chance, it mustn’t be wasted!”

30 NOVEMBER [47]

OLEKSANDRA NAZAROVA (civil activist):

The Maidan stopped being something unreal, defending some abstract eurointegration. It became the place of protest against our inhuman treatment by the state. I was angry because apathetic despicable authorities defending their own interests is one thing; essentially I expected nothing different from them. But authorities which permit so much open aggression towards their citizens should be prosecuted. We stood there all day with posters: “They’ve lost their fucking minds!” “Human rights first”

From the moment of the action on Mykhailovsky Square I understood that the Maidan stood on behalf of human rights. A specific purpose. That it stood against violence. And also in the name of people being able to gather – to go out onto the street.

30 NOVEMBER [20]

IRYNA PETROVNA (civil activist):

I saw a river of people at the Lenin monument. They were exhilarated and outraged. Exhilarated because there were so many of us – we finally believed that the people had risen. Policemen were coming along the avenue, twenty of them, their heads down, hurriedly, disorganized; there was a woman with them, she couldn’t keep up in her high heels – the crowd was shouting from both sides: “Shame on you!”

Then we turned onto Khreshchatyk, that whole avalanche of people. I got a shock when I saw how many people had come with children, without fear – carrying them, or holding them by the hand. There were people in wheelchairs, someone was pushing them. No one was afraid of the crowd.

The people formed a corridor down which a group with weary faces passed, carrying a banner saying “Donetsk” – some 15 to 20 people – they were let through with respect and applauded. At moments like these a person feels like a human being and not an animal...

1 DECEMBER [20]

ANDRIY ANDROSHUK (journalist):

It was a special day. It’s sinking in, for me, that the Ukrainians have got up from their knees again. You get the impression that nothing and no one will hold back such a mass of people. It becomes clear that a real revolution is beginning, who knows if it will be bloodless. People were ready to sacrifice what was most valuable.

We were looking forward to more than the agreement and the resignation of both the president and prime minister. Those demands were only a pretext. What we really wanted from the state was not much: security, fair taxes, transparent rules of the game, the rule of law and civil liberties.

1 DECEMBER [14]

MYKOLA YEGOROV (civil activist):

When we reached the Maidan, as the first group, we saw off the *veveshniki*, took down the metal barriers, got to

the column and made a tight ring on the steps around it, about five or six rows deep.

Yatsenyuk, Tiahnybok and Klitschko also came. With heads held high they said: “Maidan is ours.” I thought to myself: “Oh yeah!” People hadn’t come out for the politicians, after all. That was our leaders’ first big mistake: they thought they’d organized this rally. But people had come to stand up for their families, their children. If you can beat up children, students and old people like that – then you can beat up anybody. It was the nation that demonstrated its unity and readiness to defend its rights without fear – not our leaders.

1 DECEMBER

[47]

OLEKSII HRYTSENKO (IT specialist, leader of the Automaidan):

We were among the first to arrive at the Maidan. [...] When they got up close, people began to dismantle the barriers and in a few minutes they’d taken over the square. A sea of people flooded the entire area and soon there was no space left. They went further along Khreshchatyk towards European Square and up along the sidestreets beside the October Palace. [...]

In the middle of the square, next to the Conservatory, jutted a monstrous skeleton – the base of the Christmas tree. Some daredevil had climbed up and hung the European Flag from the top.

1 DECEMBER

[17]

DMYTRO PRIYMAK (business analyst):

The rally was something phenomenal. Full carriages in the metro. Everyone is singing the Ukrainian anthem. “Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the heroes!” We began singing in the metro already. It took us five minutes to get out of the station, there were so many people. And what’s more it was polite and civil, no fuss. We went in the direction of the Maidan. A vehicle turned up, there was music. Some performer dressed as a skeleton was chasing about with a scythe and shouting: “Rulers, I’m coming for you!” The barrier around the Christmas tree was forced down. The Maidan is ours again.

1 DECEMBER

[20]

DMYTRO KOLCHYNSKY (screenwriter, tv director) on Facebook:

During the day, when I got to the Maidan, now regained, the boys were decorating the “Christmas tree” with flags. Terrific. It was very powerful symbolically. But there was an unpleasant incident – the boys from “Svoboda” had tried a bit too hard. Their party banner turned out to be hanging some three metres above the Ukraine flag. I look around, no one’s coming, they’re securing the flag, so I go up. At first, they weren’t letting anyone through, ostensibly the tree was unsteady. Finally, I climbed up. [...] “Boys, don’t you think it’s absurd for the flag of Ukraine to be beneath a party’s colours, however pro-Ukrainian it may be?” Their faces fell a little. They thought it over, the people at the bottom agreed – and they started hoisting the line to raise the national flag.

1 DECEMBER

[19]



PHOTO: AGATA GRZYBOWSKA / AGENCIA GAZETA

← Kyiv, 8 December 2013.
The March of a Million
at the Maidan.

TETIANA KOKHANOVSKA (civil activist):

Turchynov appeared at about 14.30, but he was ill, they were supporting his arms. Somehow he got onto the stage and said: “We won’t leave you, we will support you.” People had been gathering for some time and had begun to organize a “Samoobrona” [“self-defence”, Maidan citizen’s “army”], without knowing if there would be any political support. Then Turchynov said: “I am unwell, but I leave you Parubiy.”

By evening, not only had they established a *Samoobrona*, but had brought barrels and wood. An expensive-looking car drove up, the driver opened the boot and pulled out firewood. People drive up, set up a table, pull out thermos flasks and start to pour out tea. Or they make sandwiches. Anywhere it’s possible to park, there are cars, whole rows of them.

When it got dark, a lot of cars drove past sounding their horns. This wave of cars circled Kyiv for half the night. Then I realized the city had risen up. People were so enormously enraged, I’ve never seen anything like it in my life. Nor such conscious mobilization. When we found ourselves in a huge crowd with a great number of people chanting: “Re-vo-lu-tion!” I began to understand that this was history in the making.

1 DECEMBER

[14]

OLEH TIAHNYBOK (leader of the nationalist party “Svoboda”) speaking at the Maidan:

Soon we will set up a stage, there’ll be tents all over the Maidan. From today we begin a national strike.* Whether you like it or not, a revolution has begun in Ukraine!

1 DECEMBER

[24]

OLEKSANDR SOLONTAI (civil activist):

We’ve never had barricades before – not in 1991, or during the Orange Revolution. And here a few people come running to me and say: “Listen, let’s pile up all these barriers. First of all, people will be able to get past, and soon there are going to be crowds, so we’ve got to find somewhere to put them. And secondly, they might try to storm the Maidan again. Let’s build a barricade.” So we began building the first on Khreshchatyk. People liked it. They began to organize themselves.

1 DECEMBER

[47]

IHOR SEMIVOLOS (academic):

The organization of “sotnias” [i.e. military units, making up the *Samoobrona* – self-defence] began as soon as the square was occupied and the first barricades determined. There were no previously formed groups. The foundation of the organization began right there – people dismantled the structures which had been put on the Maidan and began to build barricades. There was a distinct appropriation of public space. It was a question of authority – of demarcating a space with the barricades where everything could function completely differently. Hence their symbolic significance.

The authorities understood this very well. They saw that they were losing a large chunk of the centre of the capital and that a completely different structure was appearing in that space. Units were being created alongside the barricades. Duty shifts began. With time, these units and duty hours became increasingly well organized, they turned into *sotnias* which were then assigned to specific barricades.

* Ultimately, the general strike announced by the opposition never came about.



PHOTO: SERGEY DOLZHENKO / EPA / PAP

← 1 December 2013.
Opposition demonstration. The protesters try to break the police cordon using a charger.

OLEZIA STRATIENKO (civil activist):

The creation of structures began, the organization of medical assistance, legal aid – leaflets about what to do if detained, what action to take, who to turn to, what rights we have, what the police can and can't do... A kitchen was set up. This self-organization during that terrible night was reminiscent of the Orange Revolution.

Then we realized that it wasn't like that any more – that this was something different. It wasn't the same aesthetic, the same euphoria, inspiration. Everything was organized pragmatically, with no revolutionary romanticism. Like an uprising.

1 DECEMBER

[14]

OLEH M. (civil activist):

We decided that we had to go to the President's administration. We arranged for friends to meet with other friends, so that we could get a group of people together who would be prepared for more forceful ways forward. We had no arms, just a few fireworks.

When we got to Bankova Street, we saw that there were actually several thousand people similarly disposed and equipped. They looked a curious bunch: someone dressed as a knight, someone as a character from *Stalker*, someone with a ski helmet or a sports fan. A disorganized uncoordinated crew which had emerged spontaneously out of anger and a desire for justice from the authorities.

We decided to assess the situation a bit, but at that moment a bulldozer moved off. Previously, when we'd been walking, it had been standing on the corner of Bankova and Instytutaska Street; we didn't know whose it was. We watched its progress and decided it was time to attack.

We caught up with it and pushed it, as it wouldn't move. We asked the women and older people to step aside. Then we dismantled the palings separating us from the *vevesh-niki*; now we just had to launch an attack. Then a journalist turned up and said we should stop. I said: "Why?" "It's not worth it, you'll injure them." And then suddenly, though I'd been the organizer before, I supported him. I called to the boys and told them to stop and they say: "What's this? You pushed it yourself, we're just about to get started, and now you want us to stop?"

1 DECEMBER

[1]

SERHIY DOROSH (civil activist):

It seemed that if we attacked, we would take both the President's administration and the Supreme Council. So many people! No Berkut could hold us back. I approach the cordon surrounding the government buildings and I say: "Boys, what are you defending? Come over to our side! These authorities are criminals. Just look at what they've done, how many kids they've beaten up!"

More and more people were arriving. I thought to myself: this revolution will end today.

1 DECEMBER

[46]

OLEKSANDR SOLONTAI:

On Bankova, I saw a real attempt at a storming – when a bulldozer began to plough through the metal barriers separating the people; in a moment it would kill a few soldiers.

There were a few people with me and we understood that somehow it had to be stopped, because if somebody

died, there would be no holding things back. In excitement, I jumped onto the bulldozer. Then it stopped. I began to summon people, they surrounded the bulldozer so that it couldn't move – it would have killed our people. I pulled up [Oleksandr] Polozhynski [singer, civil activist] and when we'd found a megaphone I gave it to Polozhynski and said: "Sasha, convince the people not to do this." I myself made a call to tell people what was happening on Bankova. I said: "Either the politicians show up and we stop this, or the situation will get out of control."

[Petro] Poroshenko [independent deputy, businessman] turned up. Together with his security people we made a space for him. The radicals said they were willing to step back if they heard a politician with something concrete, clear, sensible to say. But no one listened to him. When he spoke, they pulled out coins, throwing them at him and shouting: "Poroshenko, you work for money, take it and go away, you're hindering our revolution!"

1 DECEMBER [47]

OLEH M.:

After we'd stopped the bulldozer, we spent two hours negotiating with the *veveshniki*, persuading them to disperse. Poroshenko and [Mustafa] Nayyem turned up. Poroshenko was greeted with a hail of money, they threw it at him like a Judas. But he did come just in time – at the moment of crisis.

I turned to Nayyem and Poroshenko with a request for help. The *veveshniki* had some trust in me, I had talked to them, but when Poroshenko, one of the most important people in the country, a former minister, one of the leaders, addresses them and asks them to disperse

– that makes an impression. The same with Nayyem. But Poroshenko says it's all right, let them stay.

1 DECEMBER [1]

SERHIY DOROSH:

At first, everyone thought: Poroshenko's come, he'll lead the attack. But he didn't want to, so they chased him away, saw him off – let him go, we don't need that kind of colonel! If no one's going to direct things, we'll do it ourselves – without a commander – we can manage.

1 DECEMBER [46]

IHOR SEMYVOLOS:

Why did they go to Bankova Street? No one had counted on just taking it, like in 2001 during the "Ukraine without Kuchma" action. But people still had a sense that it was worth trying. During the Orange Revolution everyone had also gone to Bankova and stood there a long time, but force hadn't been used that time. Both police and protesters were there.

It's hard to say if it was a provocation, or a real, authentic action.

1 DECEMBER [14]

PETRO RIABENKO (Afghanistan war veteran):

With so many people on the Maidan, no provocation is going to work. Directing such an enormous crowd would need an appeal from the stage, and that won't happen, insofar as the opposition leaders are not completely mad. When a gathering is smaller, up to a thousand people

– such a group is more mobile, like a living organism, and can be swayed by provocateurs.

The latter understand the principles of crowd response. In the end, ordinary citizens are not the ones who provoke conflict between protesters and enforcement officers. We even recognized one of them – a member of Berkut; he was standing on Bankova shouting: “Get the cops!” And a former policeman was sitting at the wheel of a bulldozer.

1 DECEMBER

[8]

OLEKSANDR ZAKLETSKY (photographer, journalist):

I heard that something was happening on Bankova, opposite the Writers’ Union building – I raced over there. The Berkut were advancing, then retreating. Stones and rocket grenades were flying. Suddenly, the Berkut began to run in our direction, we hid in a courtyard. They ran past us, then they turned back.

We said we were journalists, showed them our press passes. And their officer, in a gas mask, shouts: “I’ll show you bastards!” They ran into the courtyard and yelled: “On the ground!” They ran up to me, ripped off my pass, hit me with a truncheon. I shouted that I’m from the press: “Here’s some freedom of speech, you bastard! Give us the camera!” He struck me across the hand first, then across the kidneys, but I had a backpack with a notebook so it protected me a little. In the end they smashed up my cameras and decided that was enough. But every one of them who ran past hit me again. I didn’t even try to get up.

1 DECEMBER

[46]

OLEH M.:

There was a scuffle with the *veveshniki*. Then an attack – they chased us, used gas, truncheons, people were running away down Instytutska. The riots continued. When it got dark, there was a second assault, more severe this time.

Klitschko, Tiahnybok and that whole parliamentary crew arrived on Bankova. They stood with the Afghan veterans, facing us, backs to the Berkut, shouting: “To the Maidan!” People dispersed quietly.

1 DECEMBER

[1]

ANNA VOLOCHOVA (medical student):

It quickly transpired that there were more people distributing food than there were people in need of it. Then they began to bring medicine, it was all enormous chaos. I suggested I sort the medicine. I’m a medical student so it was easier for me. Vitalik – an anaesthetist – came up to me. He asked where the medical station was. I said there wasn’t one at the moment and we were only just sorting the supplies. He began to help me. Then a woman came up and another one, and another – all doctors. A whole team of medics. We gathered everything up and transferred it outside. They brought us a stove, some stools – school benches. Eight of us organized a medical point out on the street.

1 DECEMBER

[20]

OLEKSANDR POLOZHYSKY (singer, leader of the band Tartak) on Facebook:

Friends, I know that our opposition trinity does not inspire hope, but at the moment we have no other leadership.

We have to support them for as long it makes sense and is in the interests of Ukraine, but at the same time we have to organize ourselves, for mutual defence and to exert constant pressure – on them, among other things. Unity, endurance, organization and common sense – this is our strength, our weapon.

2 DECEMBER [7]

SERHIY VYSOTSKY (journalist) on Facebook:

Yanukovych has chosen war [...] it seems to me that a scenario of force is being launched. This means that in the night there could be an attempt to break up the meeting and a brutal clearance of the Maidan. The authorities are obviously counting on stifling protest like this. Except that things have already gone a long way. The Party of Regions won some senseless battle today concerning the Cabinet of Ministers.* But it has put its own physical existence into question, should there be an escalation of violence. No meeting can withstand in the face of the army and police. But no army will withstand if the whole nation rises as a result of a peaceful meeting.

2 DECEMBER [7]

KRISTIAN ZHEREGI (film-maker) on Facebook:

The most important thing is to remain human. These are days of choice. To go on or stand still. To wait, or to act. To live, or to give the impression that we are living. It is time to make a decision, because the future of this great country depends on every person standing there on the Maidan, whether on one side or the other.

3 DECEMBER [7]

ANASTASIA BEREZA (journalist) on Facebook:

I can't remember the traditional justification for cowardliness – “but I have children” – being used as frequently as it is now. [...] “But I have children” – and that's why I go to work for a corrupt government. [...] “I have children” – and that's why I pretend I don't see when someone is being intimidated, robbed, coerced, killed.

[...]

It turns out that it is exclusively for these dearest of individuals – those, for whom we take responsibility – that all these ignoble acts are carried out and, what's worse, why the honest ones are not. [...] There are many things that children do not choose – their parents, their homeland, the circumstances of their birth or life. There are many things we cannot choose for them either – for example making it possible for them to be the citizens of a European country. But we can always always have an influence on whose descendants they will be – of silent cowards or of people with a sense of their own dignity.

4 DECEMBER [7]

VOLODYMYR ARIEV (Batkivshchyna deputy) on Facebook:

Friends, comrades! Criticise, quarrel, curse the opposition and the leaders, but do not disperse. There are three solutions: peaceful (ongoing protests and hard negotiation), violent (deaths and the possible collapse of the country, and capitulation (not for us). I am ready to arm myself with patience and to fight. I appeal to you also. It's normal to vent your anger! Above all, let us remember who the enemy is.

4 DECEMBER [7]

* The parliamentary opposition submitted a motion on that day – which proved unsuccessful – to dismiss the government of Mykola Azarov.

TANIA TERESHCHENKO (television director):

I arrive at the City Council. There are a lot of cars on Khreshchatyk, blocking the way, most of them expensive vehicles. A crowd at the doors. I stand in the queue. [...] From time to time shouts can be heard: “Glory to Ukraine!” – from the crowd: “Glory to the heroes!” Then some other slogans, everyone replies together. Everyone’s clean and sober. [...]

I go inside. [...] Such order and gravity! Long tables with food, constantly handed out to the people. A mountain of warm clothes, coats, down jackets – men’s and women’s. I walk along with a silly smile on my face, walk round the whole place, can’t believe my own eyes. I go into a bigger hall – but quieter, so that people can sleep. In the corner is a medical point. A stack of medicine. [...]

I go to hand over some things. In front of me a big man straight from the station asks for a hat, socks and a razor. They give him a cap and a razor. A razor! A one-off! I’m so shocked I forget why I’ve come. But with the socks they say: “We haven’t got any.” I show them my parcel: “Here, I’ve brought some.”

5 DECEMBER

[45]

SERHIY GUSOVSKY (restauranteur) on Facebook:

Just a few weeks ago, our nice native Ukraine seemed doomed. Like a sick person eaten away by an incurable disease. All you could do was pray and sit silent and grieve by the sick person’s bed.

Today, there’s hope for recovery. Because there is the Maidan. [...]

When the country regains its health, it will be hard to make it sick again. We’ll be vaccinated: we won’t forget

the Berkut’s fascist methods, we won’t forget how the judicial system deals with “suspects” in a flash, we’ll remember very well how those bodies we mistakenly call “law enforcement agencies” occupy themselves.

6 DECEMBER

[7]

VICTORIA ARBUZOVA-POWELL (TV presenter) on Facebook:

Don’t stay home, come to the Maidan! [...] If we botch this revolution, the “regionals” will tighten the screw so that it will never, ever be able to happen again. And we’ll have to live with a tyrant, in a totalitarian regime. Dispersals, special police units, paddy wagons, prison, complete suppression...

[...]

Can’t you shift your backsides and come out to stand at the Maidan? For all your predecessors, who also stood and fought for independence and the dignity of calling themselves Ukrainians.

Today the most dangerous moment in the history of Ukraine’s independence has come. Putin has a real chance to suppress us. We must hold out to the end.

6 DECEMBER

[7]

SERHIY VYSOTSKY on Facebook:

No revolution, whether velvet, or bloody, lasts only a day. [...] The dictatorship can fix up Yanukovych and his mercenaries, but it’s completely useless to people whose lives are definitively and irrevocably linked with the West. Through business, through life, through bank accounts... [...]

→ → On the next page:

7 December 2013. A night in the town hall occupied by opposition forces.

Tomorrow, we'll take a walk through the centre of Kyiv. Maybe we'll have to walk even further. We might not achieve what we wish, but each millionth meeting brings Yanukovych's fall nearer, and also instills uncertainty in our opponent, forces them to hesitate, robs them of their arrogance. The government may not fall immediately, but sooner or later under such pressure it will crumble, like granite blasted by the wind. We must simply come out to the Maidan – again and again. Come out and stay there.

7 DECEMBER

[7]

KOSTIANTIN PAVLOV (journalist) on Facebook:

There is no leader. There is no leader. The headless trinity does not count. The trouble is that everyone today who attempts to lead – is a person with presidential ambitions. And that is exactly what isn't needed. What we need is a person who is capable of changing the history of Ukraine and be recorded for ever in Wikipedia.

8 DECEMBER

[24]

PHOTO: AGATA GRZYBOWSKA / AGENCJA GAZETA





PHOTO: AGATA GRZYBOWSKA / AGENCJA GAZETA

3

THE FRONT

8–11 DECEMBER 2013

On 8 December, unknown perpetrators overturn the statue of Vladimir Lenin. The police were unable even to react. The authorities seek to avoid unrest for the moment. In the attempt to clear the centre of Kyiv two days later – the Berkut and the internal forces do not use physical force, but attempt to push aside the line of defenders. The Maidan concentrates all its efforts and emerges victorious.

ANTON ZAYATS (civil activist):

I was there when Lenin was toppled. I saw such brava-do among my colleagues, such zeal – they took hammers and smashed up the monument. It was a symbol. I thought to myself: “Wow! It’s begun! Everything needs to be overthrown.”

8 DECEMBER [20]

From a declaration of the NATIONAL UNION OF UKRAINIAN WRITERS:

Lenin has long since ceased to be an authority for the new generation of Ukrainian citizens, raised during the era of independence. That is a symbol of a totalitarian epoch which deprived millions of Ukrainian citizens of their lives. [...] Totalitarian regimes and their symbols are held to account in the civilized world. [...]

We do not approve the method by which the symbol of the totalitarian past has been overthrown in Kyiv, but the people did what the authorities should have done. [...] We appeal to the authorities not to make an issue of the destruction of the monument.

8 DECEMBER [23]

IHOR MIROSHNYCHENKO (politician, Svoboda deputy) in a statement for radio:

Patriots came along and toppled that idiot because he has no right to stand on our soil. [...] This is our view. Executioners of the Ukrainian nation, people who denied the existence of the Ukrainian state – have no moral right to stand here. That is why this statue was destroyed in Kyiv. [...]

I am convinced that with the fall of Lenin in Kyiv, the regime of Yanukovych will also fall.

8 DECEMBER [3]

MYKOLA MYSHOVSKY (Roman Catholic priest, editor of “Credo” journal):

When they pushed over Lenin, many people said it would make a good scene on Russian TV. We knew already that whatever we did, whatever we said, however we lived – Russian television would show it whatever way they liked. We don’t have to do anything to look guilty in their eyes – the mere fact of our existence is enough.

8 DECEMBER [47]

OLEKSIY SIHOV (editor):

About seven in the morning, I was returning from the Maidan, very tired. I passed the Lenin monument where five people were still picking off pieces – as a souvenir. It was quiet. An interesting scene: the sun rises, the night has passed, and here lie the remains of Lenin.

9 DECEMBER [20]

ROMAN ORYSHCHENKO (coordinator, Executive Committee of the Maidan Samoobrona):

A barricade is not really a pile of planks, stones, sacks of sand, or snow, but the people who stand there. That is the true barricade.

9 DECEMBER [47]

← ← On the previous page:
11 December 2013. Protests
in the capital.

YEVHEN DYKYI (psychologist, university lecturer):

After the weekend the number of people dwindled and within a few hours the police managed to demolish the barricades, since each was defended by only ten to a hundred people. Next, an internal forces unit approached each one in turn, and carefully, without great force, they pushed aside the participants and demolish the barricade.

This didn't arouse great outrage or protest because we were thinking legalistically – and according to the law it's not allowed to block the traffic in a government district. We felt that the law was on their side, so the resistance was rather symbolic.

9 DECEMBER

[14]

SERHIY VYSOTSKY (journalist) on Facebook:

Ask yourselves if you'll come next to the Maidan next Sunday [15 December] if your demands are not met. I asked myself the same question long ago and I know the answer – I will come. And I'll come tomorrow too. I am there every day till nightfall.

We'll come and stand as long as it's necessary – to extract our rights from the authorities.

9 DECEMBER

[7]

OLHA PEREKHREST (poet):

Despite the cold, fear, and provocation, our country is more alive than ever. Hundreds of thousands of people are pulling it out of the fog and gloom into which we have sunk in recent years. A feeling of independence is being reborn. Voices are returning and a sense of our

own dignity. Handshakes grow firmer. Looks grow more confident. Smiles increase. Someone said that Ukraine is beautiful in summer and wise in winter. For me, it has never been more beautiful.

10 DECEMBER

[45]

YULIA ORLOVA (ethnologist) diary entry:

I had a long journey to work to day. The metro stations at Khreshchatyk and Maidan had been “mined” (in the evening it turned that this was the fourth time in the last two days)* and the line was closed – just in case. I must have been mad to go on foot from Arsenalna. In front of a line of internal forces and police on the corner of Kriposny Lane and Hrushevsky Street. Then *titushki*** Then another cordon, near Parliament, near Lipska Street.

There were supposed to let people who worked on Hrushevsky through on the basis of their identity cards. I smiled, pulled out my university pass, and showed it to some police officer. He looked at it for ages, an expression of dismay on his face: “So young and an academic already?” “Yes,” I replied. “An academic.” Then, the police guru says something that blows your mind: “There was no order to let academics through, only administrators.” He checked with his friend to make sure that academics are not administrators. He turned round to me and handed back my pass. “So the young lady academic has to go round.”

10 DECEMBER

[22]

* In order to make access to Maidan more difficult, the authorities closed metro stations under the pretext of receiving reports of bombs.

** Hired thugs brought in on the government's orders to attack the supporters of Maidan (named after Vadim Titushko, who – commissioned by the authorities – had beaten up journalists during the Day of Europe rallies in May 2013).

OLEKSANDR TURCHYNOV (politician,
Batkivshchyna leader):

On weekdays, and nights too, there were few people on the Maidan. [...] Some of the barricades lasted barely 24 hours in all. They were quickly [9/10 December] “pushed aside” by the security forces. This might have inspired those upstairs – hence the decision, probably, to “clean up” the whole of the Maidan. They knew there weren’t many people about at night, so they counted on being able to tackle it quickly.

10 DECEMBER

[17]

PETRO POROSHENKO (opposition politician,
non-party deputy):

I was one of the last to come out of the Headquarters [of the National Opposition, at the Trade Unions building], it must have been 0:45. My car was parked below, on the corner of Mykhailovska and Kostelna Street. We managed to drive up a few metres – where the fork begins and it’s one-way traffic. I looked and above, a solid wall of Berkut were approaching from the church. I told the driver to stop. [...] Their commander said: “Petro Oleksiyovych, we have orders to go to the Maidan. You’re blocking our path.” [...] I let Andriy Parubiy know what was happening. I asked him to muster everyone as quickly as possible at the Maidan. It was a question of minutes.

“Make a column. Bypass Poroshenko’s car in pairs,” I heard. And indeed – they simply skirted around me.

11 DECEMBER

[17]

NATALIA NAGORNAYA (TV journalist):

We received information that an assault might begin at 1:00. I phoned a girlfriend at one on the dot. I was already in my pyjamas and getting ready for bed. And she said to me: “Everything’s fine, don’t worry, go to bed.” Suddenly, a minute later, she called me: “It’s begun.” I was wearing nightclothes – pyjama bottoms and a “Superman” T-shirt. I put a ski suit on top. [...] I rushed out of the house in this gear. Someone gave me a lift on the way and we arrived at the Maidan.

There weren’t many people, I don’t know – 5 thousand? And the Berkut and police were there – a horde of them. The women were gathered by the stage and taken under protection. I recorded everything on a tablet. I knew that we were the only ones with a camera. And I knew that towards morning the news absolutely had to appear. People had to see what had happened in the night, although we didn’t yet know how it would all end.

11 DECEMBER

[44]

OLEKSIY FILANOVSKY (marketing specialist):

I came by car, in case we had to transport the wounded. There weren’t many people – two thousand maximum. But more began to arrive. The Maidan started to fill up. The barricades were purely symbolic, on the side of Mykhailovska, Kostelna and by the Trade Unions building. Bulldozers arrived and began to dismantle the barricades, but there was no aggression on the part of the Berkut. It was obvious that the order was simply to crowd the people out. But the crowd on the Maidan began to grow in force.

11 DECEMBER

[20]

MYKOLA MYSHOVSKY:

We remembered what had happened a dozen or so days previously, the cruelty with which the Berkut had beaten activists, journalists and paramedics. It was obvious that they weren't going to look closely: priest or not – they'd beat me up just the same. I went up to them to convince them. I talked with the *veveshniki*, with the Berkut. They were all kinds of people, variously motivated, with all kinds of arguments. I told them that it would end in dictatorship, that they would not be worthy of being called men if they beat people who did not constitute a threat but were simply standing there, protesting and not threatening anyone's life or safety. It was shameful to beat a defenceless human being. I talked to them, shamed them. Told them they would be ashamed to look into their children's eyes if such a dictatorship came about. When they dropped their eyes, I understand that I'd done my work and moved on to the next ones.

Sometimes they tried to debate with me. They attempted to argue that the Maidan protestors were destroying monuments. I realized they meant Lenin. Then I understood that although we were citizens of the same country and stood side by side – there was a gulf between us.

11 DECEMBER

[47]

ANTON MIKOV (civil activist):

At the first storming – they had neither truncheons nor grenades. They didn't use force to any great extent. Our lines were broken by the Berkut using a formation known as the wedge – in this way they reached the barricade. I saw someone whom they'd separated from the rest being literally trampled into the asphalt. I was saved by the fact

that they used gas during the storming. They didn't manage to get their own masks on, so they suffered the consequences as well.

Panic ensued. They dismantled the barricade. Dividing us with the wedge, they advanced further. People realized, however, that this wedge had to be cut off. When they did that, the others really took fright. You could see it in their eyes. Two or three were separated from the wedge, their shields were taken and... they were permitted to cross the crowd. Corridors opened and they passed down them and when they'd got through, their shields were passed overhead and returned. Everyone understood that we were letting them out and they'd start storming us again. They were in full battle gear and they didn't even lose their shields. But what were we supposed to do – kill them?

11 DECEMBER

[14]

IVAN SYDOR (deacon, lecturer at the Orthodox seminary, Kyiv patriarchate):

I am the administrator of the Mykhailovsky cathedral internet page, you can find my details there. There was silence; suddenly – phone call after phone call, people were calling from all over Ukraine and all over the world. From Australia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, many calls from the United States – almost exclusively women, almost all crying, hysterical. They begged me to ring the bells to sound the alarm. I telephoned the principal (it was about one o'clock in the morning). He said if that's how it was then we must ring the bells. One of my colleagues and I ran to the bell tower and together we started to sound the alarm. Since in Orthodox churches the bells are rung at night only for Easter, and this was December, it was

obvious that something unusual had happened.

We were ringing and Kyiv began to get up. When they said on the television that the bells were ringing at the Mykhailovsky cathedral, people were filled with new spirit. The people of Kyiv began to head to the town centre.

Historians have established that for seven centuries no one had rung the bells to sound the alarm – not since the Tatar invasion and Batu-Khan.

11 DECEMBER [47]

YULIA PISHTA (civil activist):

A friend calls: “Have you heard what’s happened? They’re clamping down on the Maidan!” We’re ready in a second (I’ve never dressed so fast). I phone other friends. We leave the house and wonder how to get transport at 1am in the morning. We look: there are columns of cars from the Vynohradar district heading for the Maidan. “We ask: Are you going to Maidan?” Everyone says: “Maidan, get in.” We climb inside, there’s a heap of medicine.

The bells were ringing when we passed the Mykhailovsky cathedral. We’re driving along and I’m thinking, will they really dare to raise their hands against such a crowd of people.

11 DECEMBER [47]

KRISTINA BERDYNKYKH (journalist):

I watched the reports and was terrified and ashamed because I was afraid to go to the Maidan. I was afraid and I didn’t go.

I saw that people were messaging that they were on their way and had room in their cars – they could give

someone a lift. It was one o’clock at night, there was no public transport. I started to post information about lifts on Facebook and Twitter, I joined a Facebook “Getting to Maidan” group. I carried on till morning.

11 DECEMBER [46]

OLEZIA STRATIENKO (civil activist):

That night everyone was standing in rows. The first were close to the ranks of military, and those behind supported them. Some people fainted in the crush, and they formed a corridor and carried them out.

It was humanitarian to the extent that no one fired or killed anyone. The army was pressing down from Instytutska Street, the Maidan protestors were at the bottom. They clung on, held fast and then suddenly felt they couldn’t hold out. Then Tolik Bondarenko, who’d come up with the Orange Revolution slogan: “Together we are many, we cannot be defeated”, had an idea.

He said to the army chief: “Do you want a smoke? Let’s have a cigarette.” They said: “Ok, let’s take a break.” They stopped for 20 minutes and rested – both one side and the other. These were regular service soldiers. They themselves were shocked at the situation in which they’d found themselves – they hadn’t expected to be deployed against civilians.

11 DECEMBER [14]

NATALIA NAGORNAYA:

Then a miracle – an impossible, but necessary miracle. It was half past two, maybe quarter to three. People began to arrive at a run from every side. And yet the bridges

were blocked... But they'd left their cars and come on foot. They started to tumble onto the Maidan, more and more of them. Is that not a miracle: when five thousand suddenly become thirty thousand? They came running, enraged, woken up and – I assume – with their jackets thrown over their pyjamas.

11 DECEMBER [44]

OLEH M. (civil activist):

We arranged ourselves in ranks, because we knew that the segment we were defending was too wide and that no one would be able to hold City Hall if there was a forceful attack. But we wanted the very fact of our resistance to be noted, that it wouldn't end in a beating like the night of 29/30 November.

We waited. At four in the morning a trumpeter played the national anthem at the entrance to City Hall and then the song *Chervona ruta* and everyone waited – they were afraid, but were ready for battle. That was a really powerful moment, when we stood there on the steps, friends, family, deputies, musicians. It was one of the more moving moments.

11 DECEMBER [1]

OLEKSIY SIHOV:

I spent most of the night jostling with a policeman – a young lad, maybe younger than me. The whole time either we were pushing them, or they were pressing against us. It was a strange feeling: there was no hatred in that boy. At one point, I asked: "Are you not tired?" and he said: "All fine so far, what about you?" "Me too." Then,

when the police began to advance, he said to me: "Watch out now, some new unit has arrived, don't fall down." And I said: "OK, thanks."

I was wearing a cap, and an orange helmet over it – those were the only ones they were handing out. It got very packed and someone behind me elbowed it off, but it didn't fall to the ground, it couldn't – it was stuck on my shoulder. We're going forwards, a police captain was front of me. I said to him: "Please could you put on my helmet." And he tried to, but we're shifting all the time and moving apart. He shouted to his lot: "Boys, put his helmet on." One of them had a go – a shield in one hand, he was putting the helmet on with the other, and another guy was pulling at my cap – adjusting it. They did it.

The night passed. We asked: "Why are you doing this?" and one of them said: "At least you can go home whenever you like, we've got to stay here. I don't know why you're here. That must be some cause, to stand through the night for like that."

11 DECEMBER [20]

MAKS LEVIN (photographer) on Facebook:

The most moving thing that night, in my view: all night long the protesters rolled a fire barrel along the line of boys from the internal forces. So they could warm up a bit. They were standing at the junction of Khreshchatyk and Khmielnitsky all day and all night. Their commanders don't see their subordinates as people.

11 DECEMBER [7]



PHOTO: AGATA GRZYBOWSKA / AGENCJA GAZETA

← 9 December 2013.
The "Berkut" surround the street barricades put up by demonstrators around the access roads to government buildings.

ANDRIY PARUBIY (commander, Maidan Samooborona)
from a speech on the Maidan stage:

I've just been round all the barricades. Our boys are everywhere – they've maintained their positions and the Berkut are no longer advancing. Bravo, boys! [...]

People on all the barricades can hear the stage, can hear us, can hear our girls, they can feel our support clearly. The most fantastic boys in the world are defending us. You're safe! There are whole rows of them standing. And now I ask the people of Kyiv who get here by metro to head for the most sensitive points of resistance – first, the barricades at the back, by the Trade Unions building, second, by the entrance to the Trade Unions building, more support is needed there, and third – to the first barricade on Instytutska Street.

11 DECEMBER [2]

VOLODYMYR VIATROVYCH (historian):

The bells were ringing, a mass was said on the Maidan stage, people prayed, the slightly hysterical voice of Ruslana [Lyzhychko]* resounded: "Peace and calm, peace and calm!" But, in fact, there was neither peace nor calm.

It was drummed into people constantly that if they could stick it out till morning, till the metro starting running – that would be our final victory.

And then the sun started rising. We realized that the assault was over.

11 DECEMBER [47]

SONYA KOSHKINA (journalist):

The black helmets of the Berkut and internal forces evoked associations with unclean powers, descending on the bright circle of Maidan from every side. The bells from the Mykhailovsky cathedral deepened this impression. Everyone had the same thought: to make it till morning, to endure. Till cockcrow. Though there weren't any cockerels in the town centre, the morning was the turning point, the moment when – according to all the rules of the genre – unclean forces lose their power.

11 DECEMBER [17]

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO (politician,
Batkivshchyna deputy):

When it grew light, we looked around and saw tens of thousands of people. Tens of thousands of orange builders' helmets opposite black helmets. All in the first rays of sunlight. It was a surreal sight, like an ultimate battle of good against evil.

11 DECEMBER [17]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

It didn't occur to the authorities to close the metro. So at six in the morning the trains started to run, because in the night people had come on foot – some had been brought by taxi for free.

At six in the morning there were suddenly 30 thousand people. That was a breakthrough in the situation. It transpired that it was not us surrounded by the army, but them in the middle of a swirling crowd. Then their command ordered a retreat.

* A singer, one of the most well-known faces of the Maidan protest.

That was the first victory. It was fantastic weather that day – the Maidan was covered with snow-white barricades of snow and ice, chipped out with crowbars, carried in sacks and piled up, then poured with water, turning them into walls in the cold.

11 DECEMBER [14]

PAVLO PEDENKO (new media specialist) on Facebook:

Lots of us are afraid – and that’s fine. Me too, after all – putting this whole revolutionary pathos to one side – common sense tells me that if they want to, they can sweep away the whole Maidan very fast. [...]

But in honesty, aren’t we waiting for that moment? Wouldn’t we like to do something which we can recount to our children with pride? Wouldn’t we sense the support of our nearest and dearest, watching us with admiration as we head for the Maidan?

I remember a story from my childhood about a broom someone tried to break over their knee.*

Let’s make a broom over which every knee can be broken.

11 DECEMBER [7]

SAID ISMAGILOV (Ukrainian Tartar, muslim activist) on Facebook:

Last night was a triumph for civil society. I watched live broadcasts all night [...]. The Maidan was shouting: “Kyiv, get up!” And then it happened, the thing that differentiates Ukraine from other countries of the former Union. People really did get up and in the night, through frost and snow, they rushed to help, ran to defend their own.

For a second time in the space of two weeks they showed that a civil society had been born in our country. It grows stronger with every day. We stifled the cowards within us, the hypocrites, the cynics, the cattle and the idiots. We became human beings!

11 DECEMBER [7]

FEDOR SIVTSOV (poet):

Today [...] I became a nationalist.

When I saw those soldiers – my countrymen, the ones who should embody the law, the ones who should be defending rights in my country. Carrying out a stupid terrible order, defending the interests of one human being only – the president of a neighbouring country (no one now recognizes the president in this one) – advancing on peaceful demonstrators – children, women, old people; and it was all the same to them.

When the shout came from the stage: “They’ve heard us! People are coming from the whole of Kyiv!” When I turned and saw behind me not a desert but an endless stream of people – Ukrainians for whom the fate of their co-citizens is not a matter of indifference. Ordinary compatriots, who came out in defence of a peaceful society.

[...]

Today, I will go out to the Maidan again. For that night, for those people, for the pride of being part of a united nation – for the pride that we defended last night.

11 DECEMBER [45]

*In this story, to show some quarrelling brothers how important it is to work together, a father gives them a broom made of twigs and tells them to break it. They can’t do it. So the father tells them to break it twig by twig – and in this way they broke it easily.



4

ORDER

12 DECEMBER 2013 – 10 JANUARY 2014

The Maidan has gained its first triumph over the authorities; now begins the task of building and organizing the structures of social rebellion. The government intensifies its efforts to obstruct revolution. After the brutal beating of journalist Tetiana Chornovol, it becomes clear that no Maidan activist can feel safe. Meanwhile, people look forward to New Year and Christmas (7 January in the Orthodox tradition). A period of peace and relaxation approaches and also a sense of relative security. Carnival begins on the Maidan.

ANDRIY ROTOVSKY (university lecturer):

Yesterday, at the political information seminar that I lead at the university, [...] I asked a student, the head of year: “Have you decided what you’re going to do after your studies?”

And he replied: “Be the President of Ukraine.” Calmly, without pathos.

A few mean laughs in the lecture theatre. But the boy carried on speaking and the laughter subsided. In the ringing silence: “I’d like to change this country. I’m a believer. I know that God is with me and with our nation. I’ve been to the Maidan. I’m not afraid. I’m ready to die for Ukraine.”

[...] I observed the students. First one, then a second and a third spoke up in support of their friend... Yanukovych has let a genie out of the bottle. He has freed the spirit of the nation which now soars over Ukraine.

There are thousands of boys and girls “ready to die for Ukraine”. With every new piece of senselessness (like storming the Maidan after talks with an American diplomat*) there will be more Ukrainian kamikazes.

Events have passed the critical point. Klitschko is right – there’s only one option possible now: a complete change of government. None of the leaders of the opposition will be in a position to turn this back. There’s been an avalanche. Yanukovych has burnt all the bridges.

A rapid crystallization is taking place in the solution in which the Ukrainian protonation found itself a month ago.

12 DECEMBER 2013

[45]

SONYA KOSHKINA (journalist) on Facebook:

The Maidan resembles a swarm of bees or an anthill in a children’s book: everyone is linked, they all know

their part in the whole, they carry out their work with dedication, they help others. The doctor-volunteers, the girls in the kitchen, the centres ceaselessly organizing beds for the night, heating, the transport of food supplies, clothing, sleeping mats, tents...

The Maidan erases social barriers. Next to each other, in a single row, are people whose paths would probably never have crossed in ordinary life. [...] They differ in how they see the future of the country, in what methods are acceptable to reach their aim, but their goal is the same – a free, united, prosperous Ukraine. They are also united in the conviction that this is impossible with the present government. [...]

It had to happen sooner or later. In 1991, independence came quite easily to Ukraine, as a gift really. We didn’t fully experience what it meant to fight for it. To fight and triumph. Now we’re making up for it.

12 DECEMBER

[7]

MYKHAILO SVYSTOVYCH (civil activist, member of the organisation “Vidsich”):**

First of all, people came to the Maidan to protest peacefully. They weren’t angry, not even towards the “law enforcers”. Sometimes we tried to work with the police, to find a common language. We approached them, particularly the girls, we talked. Also with the regular service soldiers and the Internal Army. We told them what the Maidan was about, that they were being messed around because we were no fascists. There were all kinds of people, radicals, fascists too – but less than 1 percent, as in society as a whole.

Now the Maidan began to acquire a more threatening face. Truncheons appeared, masks, bulletproof vests.

← ← On the previous page:
17 December 2013. Barricade on
Khreshchatyk Street.

*6 December 2013, at a meeting with American Under Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, Yanukovych championed a peaceful solution to the conflict.

**An organization which came into being in 2010, in response to Yanukovych’s election victory – its purpose was to mount civic opposition to criminal actions on the part of the government.

It was unnecessary. We needed ordinary people, so that Maidan could have a human face.

12 DECEMBER

[46]

OLEKSANDR TURCHYNOV (politician, leader of *Batkivshchyna*):

After that night we understood that next time the representatives of government organs would not restrain themselves – we had to prepare ourselves for a serious assault and to serious resistance. We bought a lot of builders’ helmets, gas masks, personal protective gear. We ordered some shields [...]. These first shields were obviously the most primitive kind – of material normally used to make palings. But it was some kind of protection against Berkut truncheons.[...]

Samooborona began training sessions – how to fend off attack, how to behave in case of confrontation. The Maidan turned into a huge training camp.

12 DECEMBER

[17]

ROMAN ORYSHCHENKO (coordinator, *Samooborona Executive Committee*):

We worked on a schedule because the people on duty at the Maidan were a little bored with the usual routine: the stage, some appearances, music, night watch. Day after day. We decided we needed more activity.

We organized some sessions, mainly at the headquarters, on the subject of legal regulations. We were taught what to say and what not to say if someone was arrested. Where to telephone to inform the right people about a detention. What to do if we saw something illegal

and how to respond. What was and wasn’t permissible in the case of an incident involving the police, what were the limits of their powers, what the rights of the citizen were... The sessions were conducted in stages, because there were hundreds of willing participants.

Combat training was also needed. We gained some specialists – former military personnel; even former policeman and *berkutovtsy* who’d left the service because they did not agree with what was going on. Familiar with how police units worked, they taught us to stand arm in arm, to withstand blows, not to allow our people to be pulled out of their ranks. They schooled us in methods of attack and retreat – not to run, but to retreat in an organized manner: to back off with one’s face to the enemy, maintaining the formation so that nobody could be captured. If the police or Berkut were to get hold of someone, then you go forwards again, to retake and free them.

13 DECEMBER

[47]

OLENA PODOBIED-FRANKIVSKA (manager, civic activist):

Someone asked me: “Who appointed you?” But no one appoints anybody – everyone simply does what’s necessary. Everyone delegates themselves through a sense of responsibility for these masses standing beside them. This disconcerted a huge crowd of sceptics who could not grasp that I felt responsible for 30 thousand people and no one was ordering me to do it. It might be worth someone coming and giving orders – but I doubt anything would come of it.

13 DECEMBER

[47]



PHOTO: MARCELL NIMFUEHR / ANZENBERGER / FORUM

← 24 December 2013. Protestors at the Maidan warming themselves by a brazier.

SERHIY GUSOVSKY (restaurateur):

What is the Maidan today? It is the truest of city-utopias. Both because it is surrounded by defensive ramparts, but also because inside there function unwritten laws, within whose limits you can feel an absolutely free human being. You want to work – go ahead. You want to eat – please do. You're cold? Come and warm up. You're tired of sitting by the fire? Go back to work. You're tired? Go sleep. And when you wake up – we greet you kindly on the morning of a new day in an honest city. A city as primitive as it is holy. If you haven't yet been to the Maidan – come without fail. You don't have to pin on a badge or wave a banner. Just come to take a look. To be a guest in this amazing city. You'll see that it's very likely that you will want to become a citizen.

I would like to believe that today's Maidan is an embryo from which the whole of a new Ukraine will develop. Not in a month's time, or in a year. But it will develop. [...] The Maidan is an absolutely fully fledged living organism which gives notably more than it takes. This city, which fills its inhabitants not only with energy and strength, but also with a particular faith – in the triumph of justice and honesty. And it is this faith that should become the ideological foundation of the new state system.

13 DECEMBER

[45]

ROMAN ORYSHCHENKO:

[Andriy] Parubiy and [his deputy, Andriy] Levus and I are sitting on the Maidan. Someone says some dodgy types have shown up. We go out: indeed, someone is coming – in trainers, like *titushki*. Andriy Parubiy went up: "Where are you from?" – "From Lviv." – "So am I. Where exactly?"

– "Well, I live... I don't remember the name of the street."

Maybe they were told just to hang about at the Maidan, maybe to make trouble. They came in groups, three to five people – you could spot them straightaway. We kept an eye on them, as they could start a diversion. We called them *titushki-sportiki* because they dressed in a sporty way. They said: "We're on a trip to Kiev" – in adidas trainers and sweatpants?

13 DECEMBER

[47]

OLENA ZVARYCH (journalist):

The world is so small that today we have three acquaintances among the *titushki*: two are relatives of my girlfriends from Poltava, one is a friend from the sandpit. They're all unemployed. None of them wants to beat anyone up; they came to take the opportunity to earn something and they curse the government with all their might. They want to remain incognito and are ashamed of this way of earning. The fee: 500 hryvnia a day – the golden dream of provinces crushed by poverty.

Last Friday, a telephone call snatched me out of the Maidan vortex.

"Hi, this is Serhiy Karpenko. I'm in Kyiv."

"Oh, hi. Have you come for the Maidan?"

"Hey no, more of a *titushka*."

"Whaaat?!!"

"Why so alarmed?" he laughs. "Let's meet up. But not on the Maidan."

We met in a small bar. [...] I can't calm down. You'd think Serhiy was an OK guy, quick, clever. "Who haven't we got," he says. "Sportsmen, students. Plenty of scum too. Students especially dodge the TV cameras, they excused

themselves from lectures, seemingly to go to the Maidan. They're worried they'll be found out. But no one wants to fight. Why risk your mug when they pay you just to turn up?"

[...]

"But what unites you, Serhiy?"

"You should hear how they curse the government! You'd not hear that kind of language even on the Maidan.... What unites us? Cynicism. We're all cynical."

13 DECEMBER

[45]

MILA IVANOVA (journalist):

Anti-maidans [rallies organized by the authorities] differed markedly from the Maidan in that they created absolutely nothing. It was a terrible, ruinous energy. I went there and recorded a photoreportage. It was dreadful, nothing but swearing to be heard. They went about in gangs, were aggressive, truncheons in their hands – all bent on a fight.

But at the Maidan creativity flourished. People sang, made things, painted posters, there was an "artistic bar-bican" [an open-air gallery] where people read poetry at night. We had positive intentions, guided by inner needs, but when a person comes to fight and takes money for it – it's very different.

14 DECEMBER

[1]

ANTUANETTA MISHCHENKO (pianist playing at the Maidan):

I felt useless at the Maidan. I knew something important was happening in the country, but I had no way to help.

Work in the kitchen? Great, but I knew some other girl would serve the borscht better, and I'd spill it.

I'm against beating people. [...] I am for integration with Europe, it opens perspectives – but right now it's all the same. Even if people with different political views were standing here and they got beaten up, I'd be with them. [...]

When I play, people round about behave as though they've known me for ages. I feel they're really close to me. They come up, talk, listen, sing. I have a sense of community, I'm linked to my public. They even the key!

14 DECEMBER

[33]

OLEKSIY ZOLOTARIOV (sculptor):

I'd like to take part in the night watches, but I can't – I've got a problem with my leg. So every day I come to the Maidan to "swell the crowd". Like the poster which has become well-known – I'm a drop in the ocean which will change the whole country. I help with the food too, they'll bring supplies soon and we'll unload and distribute them. You can feel a community of citizens here. The building of a nation. Everyone is talking about it now, it's obvious – a society is being created here in earnest. [...]

Politicians are never going to be as society wants them. The Maidan is here to make people aware that we employ them, we pay them out of our taxes – and they have to be accountable. [...]

Obviously, we can't keep gathering at such maidans, in the end this blockade in the middle of Kyiv makes life difficult for everybody – it's a temporary sacrifice.

15 DECEMBER

[34]

MIRIAM DRAGINA (poet, journalist, civil activist)
on Facebook:

The last few days, filled with interviews with people on the Maidan, increasingly confirm: the victory has already taken place. It's not spoken of from the stands. It's not announced in the media. But somewhere, along corridors and in offices, they have understood that they have to listen, to find a beneficial way for themselves to get out of the situation.

Events slow down, then speed up again. But no one now believes that the Maidan will let itself be liquidated. [...] It teems with life. People take each other's places, even far into the night their numbers do not slip below a few thousand. The barricades remain in place and are fortified. The drunk and aggressive are screened out at entrances. Everyone has grown used to sleepless nights and two pairs of socks.[...]

The nation has woken up. This is the foundation of victory on which it will soon be possible to plant the Ukrainian flag with pride.

16 DECEMBER [7]

SERHIY MORGUNOV (photographer) on Facebook:

Almost a month ago, I went out to the Maidan with no doubts as to why I was there. I went every day, believing that I was doing the right thing. I spent many a night standing. I carried wood, swept snow, built barricades, distributed litres of coffee and tea, bought necessary goods. [...] I wrote a lot, shared my observations and experiences. I read all kinds of analyses – and then I wrote again. Throughout all those days, I lived on what was happening in the country; in my beloved city. I was often

proud of everyone who came to Maidan and sincerely sang the national anthem. I observed the birth and formation of civil society. The birth of a nation.

I watched as this society changed. People's approach to information changed, to their own words and those of others. They began to respect themselves and other people. This cannot be diminished – a revolution has taken place. A revolution within ourselves.

17 DECEMBER [7]

KONSTANTYN KHOLODOV (clergyman of the
Ukrainian Orthodox church, Kyiv patriarchate):

If they introduce a state of emergency, then I will be first to break its rules. My grandparents lived in fear, my parents too. In fact, all our ancestors lived in some kind of state of emergency. Now there is a chance to draw a line under this and people are organizing themselves as never before. I will not leave here conscious, even if it's threatened with bombardment. If you want to shoot – shoot; I'm not going to live in fear! [...]

Last night I stood at the Maidan, then I went to my parish to do a funeral and then home. I slept from four till seven, read the news, ate supper – and then back here. Three hours of sleep a day – that's not so bad. Usually it's two. Once I didn't sleep at all.

18 DECEMBER [9]

MIRIAM DRAGINA on Facebook:

Three years ago, on that same day, I was on the square in Minsk, supporting my friends and writing a report for *Korrespondent* [a Ukrainian news weekly]. Thousands

of Belarusians had gone out on the streets to protest the results of the election. The tyrant won, a battle was fought. That night, they detained 700 people, including one of the opposition candidates.

That was the first time I fled people in helmets, with truncheons, who beat people like me across the head, broke their arms, and dragged them to police vans. [...] There have been no mass protests in Minsk since that time. Many have done their time, or are still inside, many have emigrated. Everyone's mouths were shut. Gatherings of more than three people have been banned.

Today, there is a methodical attempt to introduce such a regime in my country. Using the same methods. Looking at Belarus, you can see what comes next.

19 DECEMBER [7]

ALIONA DENGA (internet marketing specialist)
on Facebook:

Yanukovych lives in each one of us. [...] Through our actions (or inaction), we've allowed that gang to come to power. It's not just about the president's seat, places in parliament, or the status of a deputy – this system has sprawled out everywhere, from the lowliest to the highest officials. Who spoils them with bribes if not us? I cannot believe that there is anyone who has never given even a small payment to an official – because they wanted to circumvent the law or make it work for them... [...]

It's important that when the Maidan is over, everyone preserves the passion inside to keep battling the system. Because the foundations of this pyramid have to be moved, not its peak.

20 DECEMBER [7]

IRENA KARPA (writer, journalist):

Fresh news from a friend in Donetsk: “[...] I was in a trolleybus with a blue-and-yellow ribbon on my bag. It's been there about a month. [...] First some lady over the age of forty began to lament loudly about the fried brains of the young, who don't want to study and don't want to work, just “go maidaning”. Other similarly life-weary types began to echo her. [...] I said nothing. The lady suddenly snatched the ribbon from my bag and began to stamp on it – treading it into the mud on the floor of the bus, the flag of my country into the half melted snow. As though her future depended on it. As if the state of Ukraine had brought her something bad. [...] I understood that I was not at home, but in some enemy country. I don't know how to cure this [...] – this gangrene which can only be amputated, before it's too late. I'd like to leave and never come back.”

21 DECEMBER [45]

From the resolution of the ALL-UKRAINIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE “MAIDAN”:

The Maidan is a constantly operating centre of protest. It is our mobilization point from which the march of the entire nation began with the aim of ridding Ukraine of its criminal occupiers. This is our Free Ukraine, a territory beyond the control of Yanukovych.

Today, the state authorities are fighting against the Ukrainian nation, this is why the whole of Ukraine must come to the Maidan, which will purge our state of Yanukovych. With this aim, as well as with a view to coordinating our further activity, deepening and extending it, we, the participants of the National Rally, resolve:

1. To establish the all-Ukrainian association “Maidan”, open to political parties, social organizations and Ukrainian citizens.
2. To approve the personnel team of the “Maidan” council [...].
3. To elect the co-chairmen of the council: Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Vitali Klitschko, Serhiy Kvit, Yuriy Lutsenko, Ruslana Lyzhychko, Oleh Tiahnybok and Yulia Tymoshenko.
4. To commission the “Maidan” council to launch a broad mobilization programme, with the aim of organizing protest against the regime in all regions of Ukraine and to coordinate protest throughout the territory of the state.

22 DECEMBER

[26]

ROMAN ORYSHCHENKO:

When it was peaceful and the grey day-to-day had resumed, Andriy Parubiy decided to make a foray into the government district. In the night, the *sotnias* were ordered to begin preparations. [...] To make it unclear how many there were, we did not number them in order. [...]

We got ready and left. At each sentry point we called: “Glory to Ukraine!” to exert psychological pressure on the *veveshniki*. We stood, did a left turn and three times: “Glory to Ukraine! Glory to Ukraine! Glory to Ukraine!” the *veveshniks* began to run, tripping over their shields and falling over – they thought it was *Samooborona* launching an assault.

23 DECEMBER

[47]

VLADYSLAV OLENCHENKO (entrepreneur, member of the Maidan Civic Council*):

The logic behind the Maidan Civic Council was straightforward, and it was based on the principle of trust. Of course there were FSB and SBU [the Russian and Ukrainian security forces] and police active at the Maidan. That’s why it was so important consciously to apply this principle: someone knows someone, two recommendations and the representative of an organization can become a member [of the Council] with a right to vote. All meetings were open, anyone could come and listen, but could not speak. All decisions were made by consensus, which was quite the phenomenon – sometimes there would be 80–90 representatives of various organizations in the hall, separate Maidan circles. As though everyone remembered what disagreement cost Ukraine in 1918. How did it end? With millions of victims of civil war and the Great Hunger, millions of victims in the Second World War. This is the bill for the fact that the leaders of that time were unprepared.

We tried not to divide the Maidan. Not to destroy it from inside, not to do anything which would be of use to Yanukovych and his gang. The most important thing was to maintain the internal integrity of Maidan – more important than finding new leaders or ousting the “trinity” from the stage. It was more important to maintain the unity of the Maidan, keeping in mind the consequences of similar events that our nation had experienced in its history.

23 DECEMBER

[47]

* An organization established on 17 December 2013 by representatives of the public who were members of associations active at the Maidan.



PHOTO: MARCELL NIMFUEHR / ANZENBERGER / FORUM

← 21 December 2013.
At the Maidan.

From reports by **ELENA SINITSYNA, IGOR BURDYGA, EMMA SOLDATOVA** and **SVITLANA KRIUKOVA**:

A kangaroo court was established to deal with two thieves who had been apprehended in the City Hall building. [...] *Samooborona* had found stolen objects in the possession of the detained, led them to the exit, ordered them to kneel and written “thief” across their foreheads. The people, angered, demanded a lynching on the spot. They forced the detained to admit their guilt in front of a microphone, on their knees, and then released them. The men got up, shaking with fear, and quickly disappeared into a subway, followed by shouts of: “Shame!” Not everyone agreed with such methods on social portals. Some were of the opinion that organizing a kangaroo court was not European. Generally, when a person is tried by the crowd, without a court’s decision – it opens the road to anarchy and lawlessness.

“Thefts begin where the idea ends and unnecessary people appear,” said an older man in a grey cap who’d stopped for a moment to see how the “people’s court” would end in the administrative building.

No doubt he has a point. As a centre of revolution, the Maidan is living out its final days in anticipation of the New Year which – it seems – will soon set the city blazing momentarily.

Maidan has lost its clear purpose and will now transform into less of a mass political camp – a tourist curiosity, but of little importance in Ukrainian life. Until another reason appears to go out onto the street.

23 DECEMBER

[25]

LERA BURLAKOVA (journalist) on Facebook:

Waiting for someone today at the Maidan, I read all the leaflets and wall newspapers within 100 metres. One said: “Nothing is lost unless everything is lost.” Amen.

24 DECEMBER

[7]

TETIANA CHORNOVOL (civic activist, journalist) in hospital, after being assaulted by “unknown perpetrators”:

The previous day, we took a drive with the boys from the Automaidan to the estates of Pshonka, Zakharchenko and Medvedchuk.* I saw straightaway that we were being followed, but we managed to lose them. That filled me with hope. I’d lost two tails – now nothing would be so terrifying, it seemed to me.

Their blows aimed to kill – particularly on the head, especially on the temples. At a certain point I felt that my nose was collapsing somewhere deep inside, disappearing under the blows. That’s the last thing that I remember.

25 DECEMBER

[17]

ANDREY KURKOV (writer) diary entry:

It has been announced that even president Viktor Yanukovich was outraged and immediately instructed the police to take all possible measures to investigate the assault on Chornovol. [...]

It’s hard to imagine Yanukovich being disturbed by a beating. After all Tetiana Chornovol was illegally entering the Mezhyhirya grounds in order to post photographs of Yanukovich’s residence on opposition websites. Tetiana completely detests Yanukovich [...] – I have

* Viktor Pshonka – procurator general, Vitaliy Zakharchenko – head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Viktor Medvedchuk – politician and oligarch, crony of Vladimir Putin. The members of the Automaidan set up pickets outside the houses of the most detested representatives of the government.

come across only negative articles by her about him and his cronies on the internet.

26 DECEMBER [18]

SERHIY VYSOTSKY (journalist) on Facebook:

If you don't understand why I carry on going to the Maidan, if you think politicians don't carry out your demands, that they scorn the Maidan and so on – watch the film of 30 November one more time. Only we can scorn the Maidan. If we stop protesting and leave. No one said it was going to be easy. Right now it's hard, and it will get harder still. But don't forget that this is not a question of politicians. It's a question of freedom.

27 DECEMBER [7]

ANDREY KURKOV diary entry:

At the Maidan, for everyone who longs for Europe and a bright future, there are free English and self-defence courses. The classes take place daily at 9:00 and 16:00 in the Trade Unions building.

Only 30 people have signed up for English. Not many. If you want to get to Europe fast, you have to step up the language learning! It would be interesting to know how many people are going to self-defence and what they teach. [...]

The cars of protestors and Automaidan members are constantly being set alight by “unknown perpetrators” throughout Ukraine. A couple of nights ago, a car was burnt out on my native Reitarskaya Street, by the house next door.

27 DECEMBER [18]

IHOR SEMYVOLOS (scholar):

I talked with representatives of the Internal Forces – they are completely sure that the Maidan will be closed before the New Year. That's what their leaders have told them: the turmoil would continue till New Year, then people would disperse for the holiday and everything would end. They really believed this.

Ever since they beat up Tetiana Chornovol – the feeling of threat has intensified. Something has now happened to shift the mood – the Automaidan excursion to Yanukovich's residence. An enormous convoy of cars and a great many people, roads full of cars going to visit him. A completely peaceful action which bolstered the strength of the Maidan. People saw how many of them there were, and the revolution goes on.

29 DECEMBER [14]

OLEKSANDR KRAVTSOV (Automaidan activist):

The trip to Mezhyhirya was a form of confrontation with the authorities; led by a convoy from the Automaidan – our cars, flags. We drove along and behind us came a mass of people from Kyiv. It was such a happy day: sunny, and that cavalcade of cars. No one expected – not even us – that two thousand cars would come. [...]

We pushed aside the Berkut Kamaz trucks. We broke through the first cordon, but the people at the second were armed. The way was truly blocked, so we organized a rally right there. I ran towards the fences [around the Yanukovich property] with a few of our people, getting within 100 metres. I saw some soldiers with automatic rifles, a fence. We wanted at least to see them – and we did.

29 DECEMBER [14]

MIRIAM DRAGINA on Facebook:

A huge convoy of cars set off for Mezhyhirya. And at the same time, the Maidan was full. [...] Once a person matures and gains self respect, a reversal of the process is likely only in rare, pathological cases. Maidan will not perish. Particularly the Maidan within.

29 DECEMBER [7]

From an appeal by the **EUROMAIDAN CIVIC SECTOR***:

Tomorrow, 30 December, we will encircle the realm of darkness.** Come to Hrushevsky Street at 12:00 (the lower entrance, from European Square). We will stand in front of the police cordon with mirrors and make them look into their own eyes. [...] They will see their faces with the words [on the mirrors]: “Lord, is that really me?”

For five weeks now the police have been defending the government district which for many people has become a realm of darkness exuding fear, aggression and anger. Maidan has resolved to surround this district with light and mirrors to deflect this aggression and give the policeman a chance to look at themselves and consider who they are protecting.

20 DECEMBER [45]

ANDRIY MIIAKOVSKY (civil activist):

I needed about two hundred mirrors and straightaway. As always, Oleh [Matsekh, civil activist] put up his own money, though there were Civic Sector funds, but the allocation had to be discussed, then settled – there wasn't time. I got the cash and at 19:00 set off for town

to find mirrors. I took a taxi from one shop with building materials to the next, trying each time to buy a hundred mirrors, but leaving with fifteen at most. I bought the cheapest square mirrors [...]. The taxi driver gave me strange looks, asking what I needed them for. “You'll see in the news,” I replied.

In the end, I bought all the mirrors in “Epicenter” stores, which belong to the Party of the Regions which supports Yanukovych. Generally speaking, we boycott the chain, but this time I had no choice but to buy “arms” from the enemy.

People were mustered by the journalist Ihor Lutsenko. We gathered at Hrushevsky Street where the police were standing, but there were no barricades. Everyone was given a mirror and was instructed to keep the peace. The coordinators had loudspeakers and were giving orders. At first, we simply stood in front of the policemen for a few minutes in complete silence. We could see they were starting to feel a bit uncomfortable. Shortly, their commander ordered them to turn their backs on us. Then our coordinators addressed them through their loudspeakers: “We're with you, we have friendly intentions.” They turned round to face us.

29–30 DECEMBER [29]

VIKTOR TEREN (writer):

I'm at the Maidan, because I've had enough – of lying, bribery, tax scams, boorishness. I've been abroad and I've seen how Poles live, or Czechs, everyone in general. I've read that when it comes to the standard of living, we're at the bottom of the scale. [...] Honestly, I'm disgusted, not to put it more rudely. And because the *berkutovtsy*

* Maidan activists' organization, proclaiming the idea of peaceful protest, established 30 November 2013 at the Mykhailovsky monastery.

** An action planned a month after the brutal suppression of the demonstration at the Maidan.

are killing me, my car's been torched, my business has been destroyed and they're threatening my wife over the phone. That's why I'm here.

The so-called opposition leaders are putting in an appearance. Most of all, I dislike the way they try to put on a show for me.

30 DECEMBER [35]

LERA BURLAKOVA on Facebook:

In the most difficult moments, one can always think: perhaps today, tomorrow, or in six months time, reality might suddenly outstrip our wildest expectations. [...] Happy New Year!

31 DECEMBER [7]

OLENA HRECHANIUK (university lecturer):

Our whole family decided to spend New Year on the Maidan. We almost always did that, but this was special. So many people! You couldn't have squeezed in a pin. I loved it, because it wasn't like previous years when everyone was smoking and drinking. There was none of that. They announced a "Maidan New Year's Prohibition". But everyone was drunk on the atmosphere, and that energy.

1 JANUARY 2014 [47]

OLEKSANDR ZAKLETSKY (photographer):

I don't know how many people came, but it must have been half a million. Everyone gathered at the Maidan and sang the carol *A new joy has come*. It was so moving, so

extraordinary and powerful – everyone's love for everyone, that desire for good – it felt like the "breath of God".

1 JANUARY [47]

YEVHENI YAKUNOV (journalist) on Facebook:

It's not a question of numbers [...]. Those 100 or 500 thousand – they were our people. [...]

Afterwards, in a packed metro carriage, singing in an excited chorus, be it the national anthem, or *Chervona ruta*, or *Zhentsy* [a Cossack song], some student turned round and confessed almost distractedly that he'd never seen so many smiling faces: "Is this really Europe? Is that really where people are so happy?"

1 JANUARY [7]

OLEKSANDR SOLONTAI (civil activist):

We celebrated the New Year under arrest at Lukianivska where the activists were held. Innocent boys were detained here. We got into the back courtyard, right under the wall of the jail. We shouted: "Glory to Ukraine!" they replied: "Glory to the heroes!" We wished them a happy new year.

1 JANUARY [47]

OSTAP KRYVDYK (political scientist, civil activist):

Maidan is a symbol of the strength of society, a place where a new country is being built, and a future court for Yanukovich. Maidan is a territory free of Ham's power – a fortress of freedom. A place of legal, medical and public protection for its citizens; there will be those whom the regime wants to imprison or banish from Ukraine

– they should always find a safe tent here.

Maidan is a university of freedom. People should come here from the whole of Ukraine, in order to learn the best methods of struggle and self-organization, in order to coordinate activities and share experiences. [...] It is a place of memory. A place where we are to be the witnesses who will initiate lustration – who will purge Ukraine of brazen officials, judges, prosecutors, police, treasury officials. Here we shall collect evidence in order to abolish the Party of the Regions as a criminal organization – to crack down on the “family” business, construct a “family tree” of Donetsk officials in power, identify everyone by name.

3 JANUARY [36]

ANDRIY PARUBIY (Maidan commander, Batkivshchyna deputy):

We are not planning any grand-scale demonstration before 8 January. [...] Tomorrow we are calling a meeting, bearing in mind that people are preparing for Christmas. At 12:00, the leaders of the Maidan Association, of political parties, social organizations and the student movement will be informed of how we intend to celebrate.

4 JANUARY [16]

SERHIY PITIK (entrepreneur, Automaidan member):

We must take part in everything that happens. And if nothing’s happening, then something has to be organized. We arranged a pilgrimage,* there were 17 of us, and 17 “Berkut” buses were brought in against us. We made it into all the news reports. That was amazing!

5 JANUARY [47]

ARSEN AVAKOV (Maidan commandant, Batkivshchyna deputy) in a radio interview:

We will ensure security during this holiday period. All the *Samooborona sotnias* are in full readiness. We do not expect anything extraordinary. [...] There is always a risk. Especially with a government as little reasonable as this, with Mr Yanukovich at its head. But – according to our “intelligence” – there is no need to be concerned about particular actions during the holiday. And after the holiday – we shall be taking further decision regarding strengthening security. [...]

We have a week of sessions in parliament ahead of us – a very tense and responsible period. This is one more reason why the authorities will not launch an assault now. I believe they will not opt to use violence.

6 JANUARY [37]

YULIA PISHTA (civil activist):

A crisis occurred at Christmas. I looked at the people who had remained at the Maidan and I felt that they were not the ones who would be ready to sacrifice themselves for the country. They’d come to get fed. When the majority of students had dispersed for the holidays, I thought I ought to be at home too. And there, everything was just the same – as though there’d never been a Maidan.

I went back. I was on my way to the centre and there was no sign that some Maidan was going on. Just the occasional passer-by with a ribbon in the national colours pinned to their bag or clothes. It was incomprehensible: silent and lifeless somehow. I thought something had to happen, or the Maidan would go out.

ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS, 7 JANUARY [47]

* Two days before Orthodox Christmas, the members of the Automaidan organized a pilgrimage to a sacred spring in the vicinity of Mezhyhirya – “for a Ukraine free of blood and tyranny”.



PHOTO: SERGEY DOLZHENKO / EPA / PAP

← Kyiv, 27 December 2013.
Anti-government demonstrators
at the Maidan barricade dressed
as Grandfather Frost and the Snow
Maiden.

OLEKSII POLEHKY (political scientist):

The main conflict in Ukraine is not geopolitical in character, or linguistic or historic – these are manifestations of “sore points”. It is above all a conflict of values; the dividing line does not run along the Dnipro or the Bug but within the consciousness of each person, in each daily action. [...] The revival of trust between citizens – this is one of the chief victories of the Maidan. [...]

A true revolution is above a revolution of consciousness. No important changes can take place in society without a change in values and motivation. And if such changes do take place – no system of government is able to stop them.

8 JANUARY [38]

DMYTRO BULATOV (leader of the Automaidan) on Facebook:

Friends! We, the citizens’ Automaidan movement, turn to you with a plea for your generous assistance! Until now, we have managed on our own and partly with the help of colleagues. But the time has come for us to turn to you, as our financial means are becoming exhausted. We continue to supply: fuel, oil, flags, stickers, tents, mobile equipment, modems, pendrives, gadgets necessary for trips to the “ghouls”, medicine, medical assistance, food, tea, internet and postal services, printing, we fix broken vehicles and cover many other costs. We do everything we can with our own hands and heads, the rest we buy. We also help the families of activists who are now serving – illegal – sentences.

Our means are finite, however, which is why we are appealing for help. [...] Beyond financial assistance, you can

help the Automaidan by: taking part in rallies; regularly or occasionally doing night duty; helping in specific tasks: finding the addresses of officials connected with the abuse of human rights in Ukraine; preparing leafletting projects; recording and editing films; providing legal assistance; feeding people, and many others. [...]

Join us! There is plenty of work for all.

8 JANUARY [4]

OLHA HALABALA (civil activist):

For us, 2015 will be the point at which a change of system occurred.* And for the politicians – a chance to gain the kind of power Yanukovych has. And here lies the difference. The Maidan is not standing so that Klitschko, Yatsenyuk or Poroshenko can come to power – because they’re not the ones who set the Berkut on people. The Maidan is standing so that no one in this country, no president, has the power in principle to order the beating of peaceful; and so that no official can carry out criminal orders against their own nation. [...]

The Maidan is standing so that everyone can feel safe. And so that the security and law enforcement bodies can become structures which deal with the safety of citizens and their property. And not be used to protect looted property and usurped prerogatives.

The Maidan is standing, so that the state can become exclusively an instrument to serve citizens without bureaucracy and theft [...].

The Maidan is standing so that a human being in this country can at least be Human. With dignity and rights that cannot be violated. After all, everyone has a right to a future.

9 JANUARY [39]

* Presidential elections were planned for that year.

INNA HRYSHCHENKO (participiant in the protest at the Kyiv court*):

I talked to the *berkutovtsy*, I asked them: “We are you standing here? Look – I’m a girl and I have to take cover from you. Look at what you’re doing, who it is you’re trying to beat up!” Some of them listened, some had open hatred in their eyes, such contempt, like some animal instinct.

Yuriy Lutsenko arrived with his wife [Irina, a Batkivshchyna deputy], people began to beg him: “Lutsenko, tell them to get out of their bus and show us their IDs, and if they don’t want to, let them take off their masks, we’ll photograph them, then we’ll find them.” He went to the first bus, they talked a long time, maybe 40 minutes. He came back very agitated. People asked: “Well?” He said nothing and then: “I don’t know if they are human, there is nothing human in them.” Then he said impulsively: “Do as you like, I wash my hands of it.”

He retreated a few metres, saying something offensive to one of the Berkut. And suddenly they flew out of the bus, lashing out at everyone in their path, it was horrible. Lutsenko ran up to stop them and he got hit as well. He was covered in blood. I had a first aid kit and I cleaned him up, but he felt ill, his eyes misted over, he fell. An ambulance was called.

10 JANUARY

[20]

YEVHEN DYKYI (psychologist, university lecturer):

It was a period of strange resistance, of de facto dual power, when Yanukovich’s regime continued throughout the country, whereas in the centre of Kyiv a territory had emerged, surrounded by snow barricades, where

the regime had no power. The absolutely autonomous, self-governing republic of Maidan.[...]

Till then it had been a fantastic experiment, a carnival of self organization. An anarchist project: a multitude of people communicating on every issue.

This is how the medical service in the Maidan emerged, which was soon better equipped and had better doctors than the state service. The terrain was much cleaner than that in which the city services operated. That’s how law enforcement – *Samooborona* – came about, which defended the Maidan region from Berkut attack and maintained internal order – drunks were caught and gently led out, pickpockets were apprehended. A university was established.

At first it was a cause for celebration – that they’d managed to create such a republic, a territory free of Yanukovich’s power. But after a month or two, the Maidan will begin to die. People will grow tired, lose interest. It’s a question, then, of whose nerve will give first.

10 JANUARY

[14]

* 10 January 2014 three defendants were given a sentence of 6 years – on false charges – of terrorist activity: an attempt to blow up the Lenin monument at Boryspol near Kiev. A group protesting the decision had gathered outside the courts.



PHOTO: BARBAROS KAYAN / LEJOURNAL/ SIPA / EAST NEWS

5

THE CHALLENGE

11–21 JANUARY 2014

Soon after Christmas, unease grows around events at the Maidan. The authorities begin to lose patience and do not enter into dialogue with the Maidan. On 16 January, the Supreme Council of Ukraine approves a package of measures significantly restricting freedom in Ukraine. Meanwhile, *Samooborona* grows in strength and now consists of around 30 *sotnias* – independent units. Given the conservative attitudes of the leaders of the opposition, the protestors themselves begin to challenge the authorities, by moving beyond the territory of the Maidan – onto Hrushevsky Street leading to the Parliament of Ukraine and the Presidential Administration building. This was a harbinger of the bloody stage of this revolution.

MYKHAILO SVYSTOVYCH (civil activist, member of Vidsich):

At a certain point, the Maidan ceased to be a controlled, homogenous organism. It became a collection of camps, each of which lived according to its own rhythm.

A united brotherhood was still standing in December. In the New Year unity still persisted, but afterwards, Maidan began to take on an increasingly menacing face.

11 JANUARY 2014 [14]

IHOR SEMYVOLOS (scholar):

Many peaceful Kyiv residents, who support neither the authorities nor the opposition, nor any of the groups standing at the Maidan, can come here without prejudice to take a look or to get involved. It's peaceful at the Maidan. It's a safe period at present in which an element of carnival prevails. The time of the carnival revolution.

There seems to be something in the air, but the people standing at Maidan don't feel threatened. It's a nice atmosphere: lots of people join in. More and more people are supporting the Maidan, they bring firewood, food; most are Kyiv residents, people from outside Kyiv have gone home for the holidays. More people arrive every day. They come for the public appearances, they come to pray – to do something together.

11 JANUARY [14]

TETIANA PUSHNOVA (journalist) on Facebook:

Every normal person felt shamed to be bribing doctors, teachers, inspectors; quietly avoiding hooligans; making excuses for bribes, that it was for the children... It was

shame that spurred this mass “coming out” of honesty – people got off their arses at long last and by taking part in the Maidan were publicly announcing: “I'm a normal human being, not an animal, like them.”

And now they (we) need be ashamed only in one case – if regardless of whether Maidan triumphs, globally or situationally, or if it fails, they (we) still go to various institutions with bribes (because it's simpler and everyone does it), [...] ignoring choices, lowering eyes, passing by injustice, even if it should take the most miserable of forms.

It's hard for me to write this, because I don't know what situation I might be called out on, sooner or later. But it's best to note it down, in order to return to it from time to time.

12 JANUARY [24]

KRISTIAN ZHEREGHI (film-maker):

Early morning, 20 degrees below. Opposite me – a revolutionary-radical, aged around 30. Everything just right – the camouflage, uniform, grim demeanour, smeared face, bulletproof vest [...] UNSO* patches – red-black-white, stout boots. He stands there, smoking. His phone rings (I'm standing alongside) [...] “Hallo. Yes, yes, on Hrushevsky. On duty, yes. Windy? [...] Yes, strong (*he frowns and flinches, shouts can be heard in the earpiece*). No, mum, I've got your scarf on underneath, I'm not cold. Yes, there's heating. By the barrels. Every half hour (*shouts in the earpiece*). Yes, I'm drinking tea (*the voice is calmer now*), with the jam you sent.”

13 JANUARY [7]

← ← On the previous page:
18 January 2013. A policeman at
the barricade.

* UNA-UNSO – extreme nationalist
Ukrainian party.



PHOTO: ROMAN PILIPEY / EPA / PAP

← 19 January 2014. One of the opposition leaders, Vitali Klitschko, pelted with an irritant substance during clashes between police and demonstrators.

KATERYNA BUTKO (political scientist, member of Automaidan):

Society has woken up. Not only in the sense that people have begun to articulate their civic position – but a lot of contributions have also been collected. A woman called from Lviv; she works at a petrol station and she and her colleagues collect petrol coupons. We met and she said to me, with apprehension in her eyes: “Please don’t worry, just take it. It’s from the WOG chain, but please take it.” It’s a “regionals” firm, which we’d been boycotting. I say it makes no difference. All petrol will come in handy, even from WOG. She was so happy I’d accepted.

We don’t keep a list of participants. New people arrive every day who take a turn to keep watch. No one makes a note of who they are – it’s a spontaneous movement. Everyone can join in.

15 JANUARY

[46]

OLENA BIDOVANETS (doctor):

It’s now or never.

I’d imagined to myself that in 10 or 12 years time, when my child was studying the history of Ukraine, she’d find a reference to this revolution and ask: “Where were you then, mum?” I realized that if I said: “Oh, I was afraid I’d lose my job” or that I was afraid of some other thing – then I’d be ashamed to look her in the eye.

15 JANUARY

[20]

VALERIY PEKAR (businessman, coordinator of the “Public Operational HQ”):

Maidan has been peaceful in character so far. We think

it’s a massive stand-off on the principle of: “who will outlast whom.” It seems neither side will pluck up the courage to exacerbate the situation – it’s more a question of patience: who has the spirit to survive.

15 JANUARY

[47]

MARTIN NYAGA (A Moldovan, musician from Chişinău):

A rumour was going round that the Maidan was going to be pacified with the help of firearms. I called my friends sitting in the McDonalds near the Maidan. “Where are you?” – “Round the corner.” – “Get over here then!” I find them: sitting, drinking coffee; they say they don’t feel like going, but they should. “Well, come on then!” As I watched, they all got up and went. It struck me that when someone fights Ukrainians, they don’t disperse – they converge.

15 JANUARY

[14]

NIKOLAY SHKREDOV (civil activist) commenting on a text predicting the dispersal of the Maidan:

The time of peaceful protest is coming to an end. The authorities have determined that the only way to save themselves is by waging war on their own nation. Except that the nation has changed – it puts the future of its children before its instinct for self-preservation.

15 JANUARY

[40]

ANDRIY PARUBIY (Samooborona commander) speaking from the Maidan stage:

I am pleased that there were so many of us at the Maidan last night. It was a night full of terror. Many Berkut

subunits approached the Maidan area. In my opinion, they were afraid to attack the Maidan only thanks to the fact that we were able to make this information public, and to send a message that we were ready for any action. This is our common victory and success, I'm sure of it. [...]

I thank everyone who was here in the night. Our numbers meant we were able to organize subunits of *Samoborona* who stood at the barricades and we were able to defend ourselves. [...] I am now asking that we mobilize for further action for tonight. I thank the people of Kyiv for their presence, for their readiness to make sacrifices. I ask you to talk to your friends: if someone didn't come to the Maidan last night, let them come tonight. [...] The more of us there are, the greater the likelihood of defending ourselves against an external assault.

16 JANUARY [2]

OLEKSIY GORDEEV (journalist):

This day will go down in Ukrainian history as "black Thursday". With the moral support of the law enforcement agencies and a large delegation supporting the Party of Regions at the meeting, the Supreme Council has adopted a package of laws, via an irregular show of hands, which radically restrict civil and political liberties in the state.*

16 JANUARY [12]

YEVHEN DYKYI (psychologist, university lecturer):

The regime lost its nerve first – when it passed completely anti-constitutional laws, depriving us of any rights and freedoms, even those which Yanukovych had not been able to take from us so far. In a single day, they took

everything that we'd achieved in the last twenty years. We returned to being a state from the Soviet era.

In such a situation, a citizen has not so much a right as a duty to take up arms to defend the constitution. From today, the situation has become unequivocal – all our steps are legal.

16 JANUARY [14]

SONYA KOSHKINA (journalist):

The editor-in-chief of [the current affairs site] Lb.ua, Oleh Bazar, and I were sitting in his office, wondering what to tell the team. Some explanation was essential. But we, people who worked with words, could find no words. One thing was certainly clear: we were without a job. Without the right to carry out our profession in Ukraine. At all. We could all switch off our computers and go home. Forever. These dictatorial laws meant that it had become impossible for independent media to function in Ukraine. It was obvious that the internet would be first on the list. And how much longer we can manage to work – a week or two – depends exclusively on time and the ingenuity of the organs of prosecution. [...] A clammy feeling of helplessness.

16 JANUARY [17]

OLEK DONIY (politician, civil activist):

I do not consider these bills to have been adopted as they were passed in a manner clearly flouting procedure. I do not consider these projects, announced as pieces of legislation and introduced with an insufficient number of votes, to constitute binding laws and they should be abolished

* A group of ten laws, accepted by Parliament, including provisions such as: a ban on the activity of unregistered media (which included all internet media) – under penalty of a fine and confiscation of materials; the intensification of sanctions for participation in illegal gatherings; the introduction of penalties for extremist activity (which can be applied to almost all political activity) – under penalty of a fine, or up to three years in prison; registering non-government organizations in receipt of funds from abroad as "foreign agents"; a ban on motorcades of more than five vehicles – under penalty of a fine or the revoking of driving licences; a ban on the wearing of masks or military style uniforms by participants in gatherings. However, the Maidan was most incensed by the introduction of a full amnesty for functionaries of enforcement agencies who committed abuses against protesters during the period 21 November–26 December.



PHOTO: ROMAN PILIPEY / EPA / PAP

← January 2014. Protestors among blazing tyres.

as quickly as possible. [...] [Members of the Party of Regions] conducted invalid voting via a show of hands because they were unable to muster the necessary majority – and in fact performed a farce. From the outset of voting till the announcement of results, not even sufficient seconds had elapsed to count 225 [the majority required].

16 JANUARY [2]

From an open letter of **UKRAINIAN INTELLECTUALS AND CIVIC ACTIVISTS TO LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION:**

The current regime has usurped power for itself and blocked all routes to a legal and democratic resolution of the socio-political conflict. The plans of the ruling regime and the Kremlin are obvious: “to purge” democracy from Ukraine and enslave it. Their [...] scenario has been confronted by the inspirational strength of the Maidan – sufficiently organized to avoid the impression of “anarchy and chaos”, but too vulnerable, lacking unified political leadership.

In these circumstances, the pursuit by you, the leaders of the opposition, of an unofficial pre-election campaign with 2015 in mind – is criminal. [...]

There should be one “General”. Not a presidential candidate, but one leader of an opposition movement against the dictatorship. Today, a moment of truth has come: either chose one leader, ensuring him the obedience of your forces, or depart the stage.

Vyacheslav Bryukhovetsky, Taras Vozniak, Yaroslav Hrytsak, Serhiy Zhadan, Yevhen Zakharov, Yosyf Zisels, Myroslav Marynovych, Oleksandr Paskhaver, Myroslav Popovych.

16 JANUARY [17]

OLEKSANDR KRAVCHUK (lawyer, civil activist):

I got back home and washed. Put on a helmet and bal-clava and set off for the Maidan. I went to make point, too bad if they stopped me. I entered the metro. The police were waiting at the entrance but none of them even approached me. The authorities say: “Anyone who wears a helmet is a criminal”, but I wasn’t afraid. If they give me 15 years, I’ll do it. The point is there is no way out. We’ve been standing at the Maidan since 21 November, from today, peaceful forms of protest have been exhausted.

16 JANUARY [47]

VALERIY PEKAR:

We could see that the leader-less formula was becoming exhausted. If a group cannot be found now on the Maidan to act in its name, things will be bad – because then the Maidan will never be able to express its will. We proposed the creation of a “circle of national confidence”, assuming that there was no one among social activists who could go onto the Maidan stage, address the whole community and be listened to. There was no leader of the calibre of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, or Lech Wałęsa. But we could try to create something like a collective leadership. Such leadership is rooted in Ukrainian national tradition – the tradition of the Cossacks or the *veche*. The time has come for it now.

16 JANUARY [47]

OKSANA PUTIATYSHNA (internet journalist) in a blog post:

It’s actually very simple – find yourself a task, since there

are so many. Go to the Maidan, to the Trade Unions building, the city hall and ask where volunteers are needed.

Approach the girls, bring them tea in the cold – and say: I'll take your place for half an hour, go get warm. [...]

The boys from the 1st *sotnia* (tent and barricades on Instytutska Street) would like homemade pierogi with potatoes. I can get potatoes, but could you make them some pierogi? [...]

A friend wrote to me: we need someone to go to the bazaar to buy warm woolen socks, gloves – people in the tents are freezing and asking for them. Can you go? [...]

You don't want to go to the Maidan? Hmm... Go the government district, flash your bare backside at the Berkut. Destabilize the power of the enemy. Or – if you're a pacifist and you think the power of evil can be civilized – conduct spiritual conversations about life with them.

17 JANUARY [45]

VOLODYMYR VIATROVYCH (historian):

We wanted the protests to be a bit jollier, somehow to show the absurdity of these laws. We called on people to organize a "helmet day" – people came with all kinds of pots on their heads, painted helmets. But it didn't change the mood, you could feel the danger.

When the leaders of the opposition got on the stage, people called: "A leader, a leader!" Klitschko stumbled over his speech and couldn't get to the end of it, Tiahnybok managed it somehow, Yatsenyuk too. Nobody said anything decent. A reasonable proposal came from Turchinov – that a parallel authoritative body should be

established in Kyiv. We'll take over Kyiv and then the rest of the country. But no one explained how this was to be done.

The main politicians were followed by people of lower rank. Including Serhiy Koba, surprisingly.

19 JANUARY [47]

SERHIY KOBA (Automaidan leadership) speaking from the Maidan stage:

We have three heads of opposition who call themselves leaders. They cannot appoint one from amongst themselves to take responsibility. Put your hand up if you want there to be one leader? (*a sea of hands*)

Let them decide, let them choose one, and we'll follow him. Raise your hand if you agree. (*a sea of hands*)

Thank you. Let them choose. And in half an hour, we will go to the Parliament and stand there. We'll stand there until all the deputies come and revoke that shameful law. Each of them has to come to the hall and revoke these laws. I repeat: if there is no leader within half an hour, we are going to the Parliament and we will stand there until we are victorious. But peacefully – I am not calling for provocation, but only for non-violent action.

19 JANUARY [17]

ZORIAN SHKIRIAK (civil activist) speaking from the Maidan stage:

Welcome "villains"! Just look at how many of us have gathered here. And that criminal gang that wants to bring us all to our knees imagines that the Ukrainian nation can be broken, can be fed the crap that they term statutes.

For the Ukrainian nation is not quick to collapse. If need be, millions of us will put on helmets and uniforms – and we'll set off to defend our one Ukraine together. [...]

Friends, this is a special moment because we have entered a road from which there is no return. Yanukovych has ceased to be president of Ukraine. The parliament has ceased to be the parliament of Ukraine. Yanukovych is a lackey of the Kremlin, who simply carries out Putin's orders, and today the latter is carrying out a plan long since prepared to encroach upon our land. I ask you: will we hand over our land to the mercy of these mini-Putins, this Kremlin horde and cryptocommunist gang which is trying to bring us to our knees, or will we resist the occupiers?!

I turn to all of you now: this is not the time for internal strife and ambitions. We will prevail only if we maintain unity. We will prevail only when each of us comes out to show that they belong to this society. Comes out to declare emphatically: "I will not carry out these criminal orders. I will act only within the limits of the constitution." We have lost our constitutional order – it was abolished on 16 January. It is our duty to restore constitutional order to Ukraine and to defend it from a greedy gang of oligarchs and criminals.

19 JANUARY

[2]

SERHIY KOBA:

The tension among us was such that we were ready to take up arms. Nevertheless, we believed that we could change the situation via peaceful means. [The Automaidan people: Serhiy] Khadazhynov, [Dmytro] Bulatov, [Oleksiy] Hrytsenko, [Serhiy] Poiarkov and I got together

to write an appeal to the pseudo-leaders of the Maidan demanding that they select one of their number – a true leader of the resistance who would be accepted by the nation. Because when the Yatsenyuk, Klitschko and Tiahnybok trio came out, people did not understand which of them was the hetman, who was the leader. We were losing hope – Maidan was held in contempt. [...]

I was full of anger, I wanted to shout. I asked politely for the chance to go up on the stage. The moderator [Yevhen] Nishchuk and his people [...] threatened to remove us from the stage by force if we didn't clear the content of our presentation with them first [...]. We warned them that we'd create a scene on stage if they didn't let us speak. I had a confrontation with Klitschko, I tried to explain to the oppositionists that they wouldn't get our support through their inaction, and we'd end up in prison or dead. Why were we wasting time, were we waiting for the enemy to consolidate their position? They said that blood could be spilt, I said it would be anyway... Then I added: "Just think for a moment – if you call on the people to head for Parliament, they'll follow you!"

Our ultimatum for one leader to be chosen was categorically rejected and they called us provocateurs. In response to this, I summoned people from the stage to go to Hrushevsky to the Parliament with the Automaidan. This was an appeal for peaceful protest. [...] And people followed us, followed as though to a last battle. We left all together, without fear, high on adrenalin. I was glad that I expressed what was stewing inside us. I had nothing to lose – according to the new "law" they could put me inside for 15 years, but they could also simply not never get me as far as the police station, like so many others.

19 JANUARY

[21]



PHOTO: ZURAB KURTSKIDZE / EPA / PAP

← 22 January 2014.
A demonstrator during clashes
with law enforcement officers.

YURIY ANDRUKHOVYCH (writer):

It seems the politicians either don't want, or are afraid to take on responsibility. Instead of making decisions, they joke. Yatsenyuk stands in front of the Maidan and says something along the lines of: "Dear people, we have a candidate to lead the protests. In a moment I'll tell you who it is. Truly the best candidate, our one and only – Ukrainian nation." The Maidan is extremely disappointed.

[...] We sit in some bar outside the Maidan – a Kyiv crowd, some opposition journalists, bloggers, independent artists, Russian-speaking cosmopolitans. Everyone has an iPhone, we're supposedly talking, analyzing, wondering what's next, but everyone's glued to their phones, following the news, because we are terribly disillusioned, disappointed, and simply angry. Someone reads out: "The Maidan *Samooborona* with Andriy Parubiy at its head and the Automaidan are trying to reach the government buildings on Hrushevsky Street where the internal forces have been stationed for several days." Such news was a relief, a catharsis: at last someone was trying to change something, *Samooborona* and Parubiy were taking action, that is, the people who had the greatest authority.

19 JANUARY [28]

ARSEN AVAKOV (Maidan commander, Batkivshchyna deputy):

A spontaneous protest on Hrushevsky Street. An outburst which the leaders of Maidan were not supporting at that moment. Nor was *Samooborona*. It was a separate, radical group which didn't obey or listen to anyone. [...] I approached those boys. They were standing separately,

a kind of unit at the very front. We called them devils, because they were black with soot. [...] They were very determined.

19 JANUARY [17]

PAVLO BRADULOV (manager, civil activist):

On the stage, the politicians were shouting: "Christ is baptized!" and the Maidan would answer: "As leader!" They even shouted when there was no one up there.

We made our way through the courtyards to European Square [which is where Hrushevsky Street begins], there was a crowd there. It was beginning to get dark, I saw Koba – he was in an orange minibus, which I hid behind because grenades were going off and there was gas. We were about 5 metres from the line where the Berkut was entering and trying to hit people. People were catching hold of the *berkutovtsy* by their arms and legs. The crush was building so we linked arms in order not to be separated.

It wasn't clear – if the Berkut were attacking or not; smoke everywhere, gas, stun grenades flying. We didn't really know what to do. People broke through a barrier at the bottom of Parkova Road and began to pull up paving stones. [...] I had never imagined till then that I would ever throw stones at anyone.

19 JANUARY [20]

ANTON PRYMUSHKO (Afghanistan war veteran, Afghan sotnia):

The police began throwing gas grenades. We were lucky they'd been lying in warehouses for quite a while – many

"The customary greeting at the feast celebrated in the Orthodox tradition in memory of Christ's baptism is: "Christ is baptised", to which the response is: "In the river Jordan."

of them didn't explode, and those which did had expired gas. It didn't really affect me, though it made several people vomit – I went round, kicking them away. [...] I gave them the finger. They flipped and twenty grenades came flying! And I'm standing there, in a bulletproof vest and capped boots, digging out those grenades.[...]

I got hit seven times that day: once in the face, once in the ear with a rubber bullet. My hands, any place that was exposed – all in bruises.

19 JANUARY [44]

ANNA VOLOKHOVA (medical student):

We were constantly on the street. Bandaging whoever needed it; the boys with shards of grenade: legs, hands, eyes. Quite a few with gas poisoning. We washed eyes and throats with spray.

There was a boy next to us with a trumpet. At one point he began to play the Ukrainian anthem and then *Lenta za lentoyu* [a Ukrainian rebel song]. The anthem sounded so sad on that trumpet, grenades exploding in the background, fireworks and the night. I looked, and there was blood and milk* on the ground. That shocked me.

19 JANUARY [20]

ANTON PRYMUSHKO:

I spotted a lost-looking girl near the Berkut bus – and headed after her. As I followed, I felt that I was moving easily somehow. I took a step and was thrown forwards to the next one. I turned round and there was a Berkut guy firing at my back from five metres away. I was wearing a bulletproof vest which is really pretty good

at stopping bullets; that's why I felt no pain, just the sensation of pushing. When he saw I was wearing a vest – he raised his gun and let rip right in my face. I managed to duck and three bullets flew past me.**

19 JANUARY [10]

MARIYA NAZAROVA (student, member of the "White Angels" Mobile Doctors Brigade):

A completely naked guy ran into the medical point in the night, covered in blood. He had one hand at his head and the other pressed to his chest. Things suddenly felt uncomfortable: why naked, in such a frost, with terrible wounds, he needed urgent assistance. He turned out to be a builder who was working with colleagues on site at the Museum courtyard. The Berkut had broken in, undressed the boy, beaten him up and thrown him onto the street. He had twelve traces of rubber bullets on his back! They were firing at him as he ran. He was in shock and had a badly smashed up head.

Then his friends ran in, dressed, but also beaten. This situation showed that the enemy had no limits, they didn't understand when to stop. If such things are happening, damaging not only human health, but also their dignity, their right to life – then you realize that it can't go on.

19/20 JANUARY [13]

SERHIY ZHADAN (poet):

There's a broadcast on the [TV] screen on the events at Hrushevsky Street. [...] Everyone is starting to say that only those sitting and watching are terrified. It's enough

→ → On the next page:
22 January 2014. Clashes with
the police.

*Milk was used to treat gas poisoning.

**On 19 January 2014, the police were firing rubber bullets.

PHOTO: ZURAB KURTSKIDZE / EPA / PAP

to get out on the street, find yourself in the crowd, feel the common warmth and the terror passes. What else are they talking about? About the criminal police, about the groups of criminals descending on Kyiv.

There's talk about the opposition. Generally in negative terms. [...] The opposition is hopeless at keeping pace with society, the politicians can't keep up with the crowd, they provoke universal exasperation and mistrust. It seemed that the Maidan was simply hindering them, that they would have calmly come to agreement with the authorities ages ago were it not for this wound-up and perpetually dissatisfied crowd.

20 JANUARY

[48]

ANDRIY CHERNIKOV (journalist) on Facebook:

All the people on Hrushevsky Street, the subscribers to [mobile networks] MTS and Kyjivstar, have received the notification: "Dear subscribers! You have been registered as a participant in a mass riot."

21 JANUARY

[7]





PHOTO: SIMONA SUPINO / AGENCJA SE / EAST NEWS

6

BREAKTHROUGH

22–29 JANUARY 2014

On 22 January Ukraine celebrates one of its most important state feasts – Unity Day. In the morning on Hrushevsky Street two Maidan defenders are shot – Serhiy Nigoyan, a Ukrainian of Armenian descent and Mykhailo Zhyznevisky, a Belarusian. The third person shot – Roman Senyk from near Lviv – dies in hospital on 25 January. The revolution spills beyond Kyiv, public administrative buildings are occupied – the seats of voivode and civic authorities. Negotiations begin between the authorities and the opposition which the Maidan cannot accept. The revolution gains momentum.

VALERIY PEKAR (businessman, coordinator of the “Public Operational HQ”):

Today was a game-changer: it’s either us or them – conventionally speaking. Either the Yanukovich regime is overthrown, or it will come to an enormous clash of forces which will end in the spilling of blood. From our point of view, all other variants on the development of events no longer come into play.

22 JANUARY 2014

[47]

SERHIY HORBENKO (orthopaedic surgeon):

At 5.30 they brought Serhiy Nigoyan to the medical point [on Hrushevsky], he was already dead. White face, glassy eyes. I understood immediately that we couldn’t help, survivors do not have such wounds: a bullet to the carotid artery, a wound to the chest plus internal bleeding. When a clergyman came up and asked if anyone could help, I said: “Yes, you can.” He began to pray. [...]

The called an ambulance and the forensic experts.

Everyone had experienced a shock. Some of the leadership were shouting not to report the death to the Maidan as people would attack the Berkut with their bare hands and there would be more victims. We doctors said they should be informed. The experts took the body away. The Maidan learnt everything.

22 JANUARY

[27]

IHOR PETROVYCH (doctor, medical point director):

Till now, they’d been bringing people with less serious wounds – injured eyes, face injuries. Many limb injuries, frostbite, burns, gas poisoning. Four people were in a very

grave condition. Two were saved, thanks to medical intervention, and were sent to hospital. But it was immediately clear that Nigoyan and [Mykhailo] Zhyznevsky, however...

We resuscitated Mykhailo in the presence of an investigative-operations group from the police criminal police department who had come to examine Nigoyan’s body. There were as many as twelve investigators – regional, city and district militia. Three criminal, three operative, three investigative and three forensic medical experts. When they left for Hrushevsky, I organized security for them – I brought in twenty people who surrounded the police, to avoid them being beaten up.

The Berkut were attacking at that point and when a few of them burst into the operating room it was the investigators who saved us. The colonel got out his ID and started shouting at the police that operational activities were taking place where were not to be disturbed.

22 JANUARY

[32]

YULIA PISHTA (civil activist):

I went home – it was one of the coldest nights. My husband stayed put with our friends. In the morning, when I was on my way to work, he called me: “They’ve killed Serhiy Nigoyan.” I said that was impossible, I couldn’t believe it. How could he be killed, were people raving mad now and killing?

At work, I looked at the news, and read that they really had killed him. At first there was no photograph or surname, just that the victim was Armenian. I said that I had to go out immediately, the director let me leave.

I’d spoken to him two or three hours before his death,

← ← On the previous page:
26 January 2014. Fighting
on Hrushevsky Street.

and now he wasn't there anymore. The shock – they'd killed someone. For me, a girl who had never known war, revolutions were ordinary meetings. And here they were killing people.

22 JANUARY [47]

VITALIY VOLODYMYROVYCH (*Samooborona member*):

That instinctive animal fear when I heard about the first death. I was in the 3rd *sotnia* together with Serhiy Ni-goyan. We did night watch on the barricades for some time. He wasn't an acquaintance or a friend, we hardly talked, but I would see him about. And now the shock that they've killed him.

22 JANUARY [1]

OLEKSANDR ZHUBRYK (member of the 4th – Cossack – *sotnia*):

In the night, they injured my head. I was lucky, in any case, as they'd been aiming for my eye, but the bullet flew past, grazing the skin. The doctors stitched up the wound quickly and neatly. I ran straight back to the barricade. We stayed there till morning.

I began to dance. The Berkut were throwing grenades at us. I danced in front of the buses which were standing – like barricades – between us and the enemy. The Cossacks had a custom of dancing the *hopak* before a battle. It gives inspiration, strength and energy. [...] They weren't familiar with that tradition, the dance annoyed them. [...]

They caught up with me and knocked me over. I felt the truncheons hitting my helmet, then I heard swearing.

I'd regain consciousness, then I'd "switch off". They pursued our lot. I remained in the area taken over by the security forces, they dragged further down Hrushevsky, to their barricades. Kept hitting me. When I came to, I heard they wanted to cut my hair.* A doctor threw herself in front of me and shouted at them not to beat me anymore or "he'll die". God was merciful. The next time I came to, I was in an ambulance.

22 JANUARY [27]

VOLODYMYR DANYLUK (teacher, civil activist):

I take off my cap and the blood pours over my glasses, my mask, runs down my chin and drips onto the snow; my head is ringing after the truncheon blows, my eyes are growing dim... And the blood is dripping, pouring onto the snow. Red-and-white snow in the centre of Kyiv has become something commonplace. The girl who is binding up my head asks me questions, soothes me – "Just don't stop talking, I need you to keep talking." The route to the medical point, the glances from a hundred sad eyes at my bloodied bandage: "How? A bullet?" [...]

This is our reality. War in the middle of Ukraine's capital, dead and wounded, hundreds of people carrying on in silence, irritated when someone calls them heroes, and all around – a storm, mingling white with red.

22 JANUARY [45]

SERHIY HORBENKO:

[At the medical point on Hrushevsky 1] I stitch up one of the fighters, needle in my hand, and our guys burst in and say: "Evacuate!" The Berkut had broken through

* Zhubryk wore his hair in the traditional Cossack *oseledets* (a long lock of hair on a shaved head).



PHOTO: JONATHAN ALPEYRIE / POLARIS / EAST NEWS

◀ January 2014. Police cordon at the Maidan.

the barricades. We took the injured and made for the door to the back courtyard. We intended to go up to the October Palace to get to Instytutaska Street but we saw loads of Berkut there. The wounded guy and I sneaked towards the Maidan, entered a gateway and came out on Hrushevsky again where our barricade was and on to Khreshchatyk. We were in time, thank God.

I had to finish the stitches [...] in a tent. There was no light, I worked by torchlight. I was glad to finish – nearly all the tents around had almost burnt down.

22 JANUARY [27]

YULIA PISHTA:

The boys from *Samooborona* have surrounded part of the Maidan behind the Trade Unions building and are turning everyone back. I turn to them: “Let me through!” And they say: “No way. No one’s going through, particularly women. We have to reinforce our positions.”

Some boys from Lviv were standing near me and they said: “We’ve got the first dead – that means we’re in it to the death. If there’s no other way, then that’s how we’ll fight.”

22 JANUARY [47]

ANNA VOLOKHOVA (medical student, nurse at the Hrushevsky Street medical point):

We were sewing up one boy’s eyebrow when Klitschko showed up with his retinue. “What’s happening here?” I’m holding the boy’s head with one hand, shouting at Klitschko. Conditions were like an operating theatre – you had to maintain sterility, so I yelled: “Everybody out please! You could at least put aprons on!” He understood

that it was a hospital and there was nothing here for him. He left.

22 JANUARY [20]

INNA SOVSUN (co-ordinator of the “Hospital sentry” initiative):

People were afraid to get into ambulances – not knowing if the police would ambush them in hospital. Our people observe what’s going on in hospitals – they know who is in which ward, who needs a lawyer, who needs medication. They tell us and we organize assistance. We have a sizeable volunteer base – about 200 people. [...]

One of the volunteers who was on duty at the hospital saw a doctor sitting crying. “I can’t take any more,” she was saying, “they’re bringing kids without eyes. My nerves are shot to pieces, I can’t work like this.”

22 JANUARY [41]

SERHIY HORBENKO:

At the medical point on Hrushevsky I understood the bestiality of our system. [...] A no-win situation had been created: if you hand over a sick person to the emergency services – the police will take them, put them behind bars, torture them. So we, the doctors, had to organize assistance on the spot.

22 JANUARY [27]

YEVHEN DYKYI (psychologist, university lecturer):

The news of the first two dead was confirmed. Towards the end of the day, we heard about Verbytsky*. That

was the final straw. From that moment, from my point of view, there was civil war in Ukraine. I acted according to the rules of war – it was over, there were neither legal nor illegal activities. There was an enemy who killed and we had the right to take appropriate steps to defend ourselves.

22 JANUARY

[14]

ANNA (coordinator, mobile medical units):

I set myself a task – to provide doctors with protection and the equipment they needed to work. I would go home and rest only when I knew I'd done everything I could. The people can't turn back now either, disperse for their homes. You'd never forgive yourself, with all those wounded bodies and souls*.[...]

When the fighting began on Hrushevsky, I came up against a problem, lack of medicine, supplies – everything necessary to save lives. Round-the clock contact with friends came in useful, they spent their whole time running round pharmacies, fetching things.

Then it turned out that the medics had sustained injuries too, there were many beaten and wounded doctors among ours. How to protect them? I started to hunt among my friends and acquaintances – we found protective gear, bike helmets, knee and elbow pads. Even a few bulletproof vests. Everything had to be sorted through friends, for there seemed to be very little support from H.Q. [...] The Automaidan helped many times. They took doctors and the wounded home as the thought of letting them go alone was too terrifying.

22 JANUARY

[32]

VITALIY UMANETS (Automaidan activist) on Facebook:

I got a text message: “Dear subscriber, you are registered as a risk-taker and the pride of the nation.” [...] People, I love you!

22 JANUARY

[7]

MYKHAILO HAVRYLUK (civil activist):

They grabbed me when I was carrying someone deafened by a grenade to one side. Suddenly the *titushki* appeared, surrounded us. The Berkut were fast on their heels. They threw me to the ground, snatched my shield away and started to beat me. They stripped me naked and forced me to kneel in the snow. Then they dragged me to the bus, shouting: “Look! We've caught Cossak Mamai.”*** One of the Berkut knocked me to the ground and they started to jump on me. Others stood to one side and took pictures “with Mamai”.

When I heard that they wanted to cut off my *oseledets*, I shielded my head with my hands. But the *berkutovtsy* dragged my hands away, holding them tight while they cut a chunk of hair with a blunt knife. Then another. Then they beat me again, rested their feet on my head, took photos of themselves. Ordered me to shout: “I love the Berkut. [...] Then they shoved me into the police van. There were a few beaten-up men in there already. One of them gave me his trousers and jacket. When they brought us to police HQ I lost consciousness. The police called an ambulance themselves.

I spent a night at the hospital. In the morning I opened my eyes, saw the door of the ward and understood that I had to get back. [...] I came out and there are our “Afghans” [the Afghan *sotnia* – Afgan war veterans]. They

* Yury Verbytsky was abducted on 21 January 2014. He was found dead in the forest, frozen and beaten to death.

** As a result of the skirmishes on Hrushevsky Street on 21 and 22 January 2014, around 1400 people were wounded, of which over a hundred ended up in hospital.

*** Ukrainian folk hero, the archetypal Cossack. Mykhailo Havryluk wore his hair in Cossack style.

called a friend with a car and gave me a lift to the Maidan. [...] My son, seeing me on TV*, sent me a text: “Dad, I’m so proud of you.”

23 JANUARY [15]

VIKTOR MARTYHENKO (cleric, press secretary for the Volodymyr-Volynsky dioceses of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Moscow patriarchate) on Facebook:

Vladika [bishop] Pavel! Please, do not speak on behalf of the entire Church.** We understand that you have financial interests [with Viktor Yanukovich] – next time simply stand up and kiss his arse. But no need to on everyone’s behalf.

23 JANUARY [7]

MYKOLA MYSHOVSKY (Roman-Catholic priest):

Even after the killing of Zhyznevsky and Nigoyan, we still tried to talk to the police. The *veveshniks* would usually explain that they had to serve a few years and then they’d get good jobs, the chance to make a career. The *berkutovtsy* said simply that this was their job, it was how they earned money. They didn’t like the analogy with prostitutes – that the latter too were simply working and the moral aspect didn’t come into it.

23 JANUARY [47]

OLEKSANDR KRAVTSOV (Automaidan activist):

When the information came through our internal network that there were smashed up cars opposite [the hospital] on Shchors Street, at first we didn’t believe it. Driving

in the direction of Pechersk [the government district] I stopped at the entrance. Then a Berkut bus came round the corner and cut me off. I stopped, and they smashed my side window and started to hammer on the outside of the car with their truncheons. I said: “I’m getting out, what’s the problem?” and I showed them that I was unarmed. When my car was completely trashed, they made me get out and threw me to the ground.

In the bus, the police said that everyone was to remember that evening as the Berkut safari night of the Automaidan.

23 JANUARY [49]

ANDRIY LENETS (Automaidan activist):

The Berkut dragged people out of their cars and beat them. They hit me about five times on my head which I was shielding with my hands. I didn’t fall over for a long time, so I got it in the face as well – they knocked out four of my teeth. When they threw us into the vehicle, a Berkut guy jumped on me and said he’d drown me in the Dnipro.

23 JANUARY [43]

OLEKSANDR KRAVTSOV:

In the police wagon, they started to mock us: “Ah, made it, have you, revolutionaries! How much are they paying you? What’s the point? Was it worth it? You’ll get 10 to 15 years – that’s how long you’ll not see your parents, your friends, your wives.” They took my outer clothes, I was wearing a sweater and scarf. In the freezing weather, without a hat, it’s minus twelve – and on my knees

* On 23 January 2014 a video appeared on the internet showing the abuse of MH.

** The bishop of the Orthodox church of the Moscow patriarchate, head of the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, during solemn prayers on Ukraine’s Day of Unity (22 January), assured the president of the Church’s full support.

in the snow. The snow was coming down, it was a beautiful night, almost like New Year's.

When they got us out of the car, they beat us again, in the face deliberately, to smash our mouths, noses. And – pathetically – they searched our pockets and whatever they found, loose change, they divided amongst themselves. They tried talking to us. It must have been a puzzle to them, to see us not just as fools in it for the money. They saw us as people of an idea that was clearly inaccessible to them.

23 JANUARY [14]

OLEKSANDRA MATVIYCHUK (civil activist):

We didn't sleep at home for some time. It's a funny story – because we were saved by the caretaker, a feisty woman. My husband is a Maidan activist, and they came to take over his office. And she simply didn't open up. She closed the door in their faces and said: "The building's only just been commissioned, no one lives here yet." And up drove a car loaded with leaflets. They asked: "And what's this?" She said: "Building materials."

24 JANUARY [46]

YELINA SLOBODIANIUK (copywriter) on Facebook:

Around 30 per cent of my friends on Facebook are Russians. [...] I try to explain them how the Maidan is getting on now. [...]

The black smoke over Khreshchatyk looked threatening, but it was only a row of burning tyres. The Maidan strictly controlled lighting and extinguishing them. All the capital's material and historic structures are intact (except for Lenin). [...]

Almost all the shops are open, including the boutique with expensive furs, situated between barricades. Banks, cafes, fast-food places, kiosks – all open. I'm writing these words in an internet café at the main post office, you can see the barricades from the windows. Everything in the city is as normal. As for the main street being closed to traffic – Khreshchatyk is closed every weekend and should have been pedestrianized long ago. In fact, it would only take a few hours to restore Kyiv to its usual state.

It's all because we from the Maidan are like you lot from Bolotnaya Square*: IQ, income and educational all above the national average. It's a revolution of Turbins against the rabble.** After two months of useless battle some rebelled and began to throw paving stones and bottles at the Berkut... I can't decide if it's foolishness or romanticism. [...]

There are now no simple sinless options to make an exist from the Maidan (where there ever?). [...]

Tomorrow, I'll come again. I very much hope that there will still be somewhere for me to come.

25 JANUARY [7]

KRISTIAN ZHEREGI (film-maker) on Facebook:

Several times now I've received threats and all kinds of suggestions by people from whom I wouldn't have it. Beginning with the question "Why are you bothering? You're not a *khokhol*.***" [...]

I love this country. I love Kyiv. It's the only city that I can call home. And I don't need to be a native Ukrainian to do so. I'm an ethnic mix, Russian-Moldovan. [...] Perhaps I can't call this country my fatherland – but I'd like to call it my home. And each man should build his home

* In May 2012 Russian oppositionists protested on this square against President Vladimir Putin. Many of them ended up with long sentences.

** The heroes of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The White Guard* (1924), representatives of the Russian intelligentsia from Tsarist times, living in Kyiv.

*** A pejorative term for a Ukrainian, used by Russians

with his own hands. And defend it if need be, by fire and sword. Or by word and deed. And that's what I'm doing.

24 JANUARY [7]

HALYNA VDOVYCHENKO (writer):

We're bound together now as never before. Our paths intersect constantly. We put our trust in each other, accept food from the hands of strangers, share clothes, money, medicine, hopes and fears. Sometimes something takes our breath away simultaneously – sometimes we sigh with relief together, when there's peace again. We worry over people we didn't know before as though they were among our nearest and dearest. We cry at the news of a death – alone and in front of people, unashamed of our emotions, and our faces are tired with lack of sleep. More and more we feel ourselves part of one whole. It is not yet a healthy organism, but it is living one, on its feet, and trying to free itself of a thousand ailments.

24 JANUARY [45]

LIUDMYLA KNOBLOKH (pensioner, Maidan volunteer):

There were around 300 *titushki*. They had a particular look: sweatpants, adidas trainers. We had a carton and two six-litre bottles. They saw and straightaway it's: "What's that you've got? Petrol?" "No," we said, "sandwiches and tea." They told us to show them. We did. They saw the sandwiches and immediately wanted to take some, but their chief came along, a man of around 65: "Don't eat it, it's poisoned, let them feed it to their Americans and Germans."

We took the carton and scuttled off. We ran across

another *titushka*. We offered him a sandwich ourselves this time and he said: "Yes, I'm really hungry." He got three sandwiches, a cup of coffee and a handful of dried apricots, and he said: "I'm not aggressive, I don't want to beat anyone up. I came because I'm out of work. Sorry. Don't go that way, because there some people down there who might beat you up."

24 JANUARY [47]

OLEKSANDR ZAKLETSKY (photographer):

On 19 January, the Berkut occupied Ukrainian House where the Maidan had its library. I took pictures of the *berkutovtsy* and *veveshnyki* stealing the furniture. [When we rebuilt the building] it turned out that they had destroyed the books as well. They tore them up, burnt them. Why? It's absurd. Stealing furniture – you can understand, but books? Only occupiers behave that way.

25 JANUARY [14]

NATALIA GARNA (musician):

When we came to restore some order in Ukrainian House, cleaning up after the Berkut, we met a journalist from Norway. He asked me, "The President has proposed talks,* why don't you agree? Isn't it good that he is proposing them?" We had to explain it all to him, but he couldn't understand. "If you don't like it, take him to court." We said: "But the courts are all corrupt, they don't function as they should in any way." "How do you mean?" It was funny – he didn't understand why we were going out on the street, why we were standing out there, why we were burning tyres.

26 JANUARY [14]

* Talks between the opposition and the government began on 23 January 2014. They were rejected by the Maidan on 25 January.

TARAS HATALYAK (lawyer, civil activist):

They bring in Mykola Pasichnyk, aged 72. I wanted to take part in his hearing, so I went along. The old man said: “I came for Unity Day, for a peaceful meeting.” The lawyer says: “And what did you bring with you?” “Three dried fish, two slices of bread and three pieces of bacon.” Apparently, he was supposed to have thrown these pieces at the Berkut. It was a joke. The judge announced a break to confer, and would announce the verdict shortly.

I predicted that Pasichnyk would remain in custody for two months, but he believed that in a moment he would be free. He was with his son and escorts. The prosecutors – a young boy and a girl, left, they simply ran away. I asked one of the escort to get an ambulance, the old man looked like he’d been beaten up – I could see the marks on his head. The escort refused. I said to the son: “Call an ambulance, there’s no telling what might happen next!” We called for an ambulance. The judge came back – gave him two months. The ambulance arrived.

27 JANUARY

[20]

DARVIN TREMOR (ad agency employee) on Facebook:

I don’t know who’ll come to power now, what the fate of this country will be, if there’ll be a rift, decentralization, or if nothing will change politically – but one thing I know for certain: that I live among good, fabulous, magical people. I know that on the Maidan, boys from Donetsk fraternized with boys from Lviv, students read proletarian poems, the far-right carried anarchists deafened by grenades off the field of battle, and Buddhist monks stood arm in arm with Orthodox believers. That is victory.

27 JANUARY

[7]

OLEKSANDRA DUBICHEVA (medical service volunteer):

Today I began to prepare a full report and it turns out that two thousand people from fourteen countries have donated money. The smallest donation was 17 hryvnia from a small town, from the Donetsk oblast curiously enough. The largest was brought to the October palace by someone I knew, the owner of an investment fund. That donation was enough to buy a defibrillator, a cardiograph and an oxygen station.

29 JANUARY

[42]

ANTONINA YURCHENKO (field hospital coordinator):

There’s a group that operates “on the surface” – that is, the coordinators. Then there are tens of people whom my fellow coordinators do not know personally and who play an important part in creating the hospital, ensuring its effectiveness. And donors, those who buy drugs, equipment, protective gear.

My trust in them is completely irrational, because until last Sunday, I didn’t know any of them personally, only virtually.

29 JANUARY

[42]

OLHA KASHPOR (journalist) on Facebook:

Today I understood what was so painful. Back then, in the very beginning, we stipulated that the revolution would be beautiful. Two months have gone by, and still we demand beauty of it. That it should need no correction, be flawless. That the barricades should become part of the architecture of the town centre. And that the snow

→ → On the next page:
25 January 2014. Protestors
on the roof of a burnt-out bus.

on the barricades – should be truly white. And that no one should put out cigarette butts in the vases of occupied buildings. That it shouldn't stink. That there should be unanimity, without mistakes.

It won't be that way.

Everyone has experienced a lot of everything, and now it's all simmering in a single pot. It's not possible.

Especially after you've seen bullet holes close up. [...]

Those who were there – day and night – without access to Facebook or hot water, it's possible that they wanted beauty even more than we did.

29 JANUARY

[24]





PHOTO: KONRAD FALĘCKI / GAZETA POLSKA

7

DECLARATION

30 JANUARY–17 FEBRUARY 2014

From the end of January, the Maidan becomes a self-contained organism – independent of the opposition. It rejects proposals for a political deal with the authorities. The repeal of the “dictatorship laws” and the dismissal of Mykola Azarov’s government do not bring about the anticipated defusion – they do not decrease a sense of threat. In the Western regions of Ukraine, state administrative buildings are occupied. In response to the increased numbers of law enforcement agencies in the capital, the Maidan unequivocally refuses to stand down. The opposition succumbs to the course of events – it demands systemic changes from the authorities and a return of the Constitution of 2004, and awaits support from the Maidan. It agitates for a march on Parliament. The Maidan is ready for any decision. The authorities also prepare themselves for an attack on Parliament.

DMYTRO OLEKSANDROVYCH (civil activist):

There was a piano at Ukrainian House. An A4 sheet hung opposite with the words: “Dear extremist! Please remember that after ten o’clock, people are sleeping”. The piano played almost all the time.

A girl was walking along Hrushevsky. There were guns going off here, explosions there, and she was distributing tea. She was wandering under gunfire, bullets, stun grenades, it’s cold, there’s a frost – pouring tea out for hours, and what’s more she said: “It’s nothing, you’re the heroes.”

Such moments can inspire great hope that we can change something. Not much has come of it so far, but here, in front of my eyes, the whole mechanism is beginning to shake.

30 JANUARY

[1]

IVAN KOZAK (member of Samooborona) speaking from the Maidan stage:

People of Ukraine, you have to fight till the very end. We should not grant the president powers which he has given to himself. He has to answer to the nation. The same applies to his ministers – they must answer for their actions. They deserve not only dismissal, but punishment. A commission should be called to examine their excesses.

The police should be a force that emerges from the people. [...] That is why we are standing here – so that the police should be on the side of the people, that it should carry out the duties assigned it by the people. We’ve seen what the Berkut have done – how many people have already died.* How many more must they kill?! Such an organization, whatever name it goes by, should be kept away from the people, and deprived of such duties.

We must create a new body in its place which will protect peaceful people, peaceful protestors – the whole nation. These overlords reproach us for occupying their buildings.** No, we did what had to be done. In dozens of regions, we have established our own offices, on the people’s mandate. Now they fear us and try to negotiate. [...]

People of Ukraine, we must fight to the end, that is until our demands are met: the release of Yulia Tymoshenko and all the students detained for taking part in the protests; until Yanukovich resigns and his henchmen are held to account.

30 JANUARY

[2]

ANDRIY PARUBIY (Samooborona commander) speaking from the Maidan stage:

Yesterday, we discussed several versions of the [“amnesty”] bill [...] In our opinion, it was unacceptable that in the version submitted by the Party of Regions, and also in the compromise version, an attempt was made to make the release of people dependent on evacuating [administrative] buildings and removing the barricades. Our position remains unchanged. We will not exchange people for premises. [...] We will not even consider such proposals. My opinion remains immutable: everyone being held should be released unconditionally.***

30 JANUARY

[2]

YULIA BABYCH (reporter) on Facebook:

I was on my way to Hrushevsky Street, to the barricades. I got there just as radio “Svoboda” arrived. The boys didn’t even know what had been approved and by whom.

← ← On the previous page:
3 February 2014. Barricade
at Hrushevsky Street.

* Four people died as a result of the clashes on Hrushevsky Street from 22 January 2014, one of whom was found killed in the forest.

** On 29 January 2014, parliament passed a bill exempting all participants arrested while demonstrating peacefully from penalties, in return for the relinquishing public administrative premises and unblocking Hrushevsky Street.

***The detainees were released and placed under house arrest. The Maidanistas only partly stuck to their ultimatum, relinquishing some of the buildings occupied and permitting the European Square to be traversed only through narrow gaps in the barricades.

When they were told they had to free up Hrushevsky Street, they were outraged: “No way! We didn’t stand here for that!” [...] I said: “And if the opposition orders it, will you leave then?” “What do we care about the opposition? That sucks! We’re not here for them! We haven’t risked our lives for them! We don’t have the moral right to back down now!”

30 JANUARY [7]

YEVHEN KUZMIENKO (journalist) on Facebook:

An old friend just wrote to me from abroad: “It’s sad to see how you’ve stopped posting about music, books, people – it’s all Maidan. It seems to me, you’ve lost yourself on that Maidan.” It’s hard to explain to such a person, that on the Maidan [...] you can find a great deal that neither books nor music can give you. Including exceptional people. And many discover themselves here.

31 JANUARY [7]

YELINA SLOBODIANIUK (copywriter) on Facebook:

What’s happening on the Maidan? History in the making, for a third month.

How can you go down in history? You simply have to come once again to the centre of Kyiv at the weekend. I promise that you’ll remember this time to the end of your life. Come here, again and again, even if you already remember every turn of the barricades. Stay in the “here and now”. It truly cleanses the mind and soul.

1 FEBRUARY [7]

VICTORIA ARBUZOVA-POWELL (TV presenter) on Facebook:

I often think of Yaroslav Honchar’s attitude. That exceptional Automaidanista who tried, in his car [on 19 January], to stop fifteen Berkut buses on the way from Mezhyhirya. The act of an ordinary person was transformed into the story of exceptional triumph, resilience and dignity. [...]

On hearing about the Berkut convoy, people fled Hrushevsky Street. Hundreds, who’d only heard about it. Yaroslav parked his car right across the road. [...] He proved that fear exists only if you’re afraid, and an authority only – if you submit to it. It doesn’t matter what casemates they’re preparing for you; if you do not voluntarily acknowledge their power over you, do not humiliate yourself, don’t run away – they have no power over you.

2 FEBRUARY [7]

ANASTASIA BEREZA (journalist) on Facebook:

The second month of the new year is beginning and I still haven’t crossed the border of either the country, or the city. [...] For the first time, I don’t feel like going anywhere, because what’s most interesting in the world is happening in my own country, on the streets of my own city. Both planned and spontaneous trips – at a time when hundreds of people have taken unpaid leave to freeze and help on the Maidan – seem like a blasphemy.

3 FEBRUARY [7]

YULIA BABYCH on Facebook:

A French journalist whom I spoke to on the Maidan: “The deputies came again today, to persuade people of the necessity of peaceful action...” “How do you know what they were saying? You don’t speak Ukrainian.” “But they always say the same thing.”

5 FEBRUARY [7]

SEVGIL MUSAYEVA (editor-in-chief of internet publication *Ukrainian Truth*):

It’s not a question of Yanukovych, changes to the constitution, dissolving parliament. It’s a matter above all of the times. For me, the greatest event of this revolution is the people. Sometimes it seems to me that – possibly – we will miss this version of ourselves. We shouldn’t forget this feeling.

5 FEBRUARY [45]

OLESIA MAMYCH (poet):

The image of the Maidan is slowly being transformed, on the one hand by threats, fear, violence, and determination on the other. Till now, I had never seen so many people seriously ready to sacrifice something important for an idea. Until the gunfire on Hrushevsky Street, no one believed that this was possible in Kyiv. [...]

An expression of this strengthening of social ties is an incredible solidarity. After my husband was arrested [Oleksandr Kravtsov, Automaidan activist], I received an unbelievable number of letters, phone calls, expressions of support. I think such a wave would not have been possible in a time of peace.

6 FEBRUARY [6]

MARIANA SAVKA (writer):

As a literary form, the Maidan [...] fits best, in my opinion, in the genre of utopia. The creation of an ideal society within an enclosed terrain – a kind of pilot model of an ideal state that has never existed. The model is based on simple and comprehensible principles: equality, justice, mutual assistance, discipline. [...] This mini-state includes political elites, but strictly controlled by the rest of society, there is an army, [...] education, culture. Another issue: this model of a state also has an external enemy. [...]

But never mind literary genres – what we need is a happy conclusion to this astonishing, unpredicable story.

6 FEBRUARY [6]

YURIY ANDREEV (civil activist) on Facebook:

Tomorrow there’s a rally. Come. Don’t stay at home, thinking, “it’ll get by” without you. It won’t! Believe me! There’ll definitely be nothing without you.

You can watch it live at home, sympathetically. But one day, Maidan might be missing just one person – you.

8 FEBRUARY [7]

VITALI KLITSCHKO (politician, leader of the opposition party UDAR), from the Maidan stage:

I want to thank each one of you for finding the strength, for not acquiescing [...] for continuing to come and show your support for those who stand here day and night, who fight for weeks and months to live in a normal country. I thank each one of you, people of Kyiv, who have come here today. Without you, many things would be impossible. [...]

Today we work to find a way out of the political and economic crisis in which the country has found itself, for which one single person is responsible, who has concentrated absolute power in his hands – Viktor Yanukovich. That is why I repeated throughout all our negotiations that we can search for all kinds of ways forward together, but there is one thing that the people demand – a complete change of power, a change in the rules of the game. [...]

I'm announcing our next steps. First, *Samooborona* should begin to function in every city, town and region. [...] Second, do not be afraid – you are Ukrainians. [...] Bring Ukrainian flags and ribbons from your homes! Let us show that we support a future for Ukraine in which everyone has a chance. Third, despite the crisis ahead of us, there is money in the budget with which the authorities fund the activities of Berkut; the only way to fight this process is a general strike. We must do everything in our power to make it a truly mass strike.

9 FEBRUARY

[2]

OLEKSANDR TURCHYNOV (politician, Baktivshchyna leader) from the Maidan stage:

Only we can defend ourselves. That is why the command of the National Resistance Headquarters (established by opposition politicians on 1 December 2013) took the decision to extend the activities of *Samooborona* beyond the limits of the Maidan – to the whole of Ukraine. The National Resistance Headquarters proposes opening *Samooborona* units in towns and regions throughout the entire country, to defend citizens against thugs and criminals. To defend human life and property.

TETIANA CHORNOVOL (journalist, civil activist), speaking from the Maidan stage:

The system is operating on all fronts. The use of force is also being weighed up as an option. [...] We've been standing a long time, it's very hard for us, each of us risks a great deal and has lot much already. Many internal conflicts have arisen among us. There are also conflicts between moderate pacifists and radical-extremists. We really do need everyone. [...] There are certain disagreements between the apolitical and the political – which is not good at all. [...] We have to be unified. A unity. We should remember this and not raise issues that divide us, but those that unite us. [...]

Our enemies are those for whom it doesn't matter. I don't understand them, but would like to ask them to remember 1933. The people who did not fight for Ukraine in 1918 – had to eat their own children in 1933. If we do nothing about those to whom it's all the same, then the machinery of repression that follows in our wake will do whatever it likes with them.

9 FEBRUARY

[2]

LERA BURLAKOVA (journalist) on Facebook:

It rained for the first few days of the Maidan. Strangers went up and held umbrellas over each other. That moved me. [...]

The first nights on Hrushevsky, when bullets and shrapnel were flying in all directions, many people lost an eye. A boy standing by the tyres, the friend of a friend, who'd turn up from time to time at city hall – took off his protective glasses and passed them to me in silence. In the darkness, he hadn't noticed that mine were hanging

around my neck, I'd taken them off to take pictures better. But the fact itself.

What will we share after a week?

11 FEBRUARY [7]

ROMAN KABACZIY (journalist):

Barely anyone breathed a sigh of relief after the bill of "16 January" was abrogated. The ease with which these documents had been accepted, like that with which they were abrogated, did not allow anyone to avoid the question: what was there to stop the deputies meeting again the day after tomorrow and voting it through once more?

12 FEBRUARY [43]

ZORIAN SHKIRIAK (civil activist):

I have a neighbour, Vadik. [...] Straightforward, honest boy, a handyman. Sometimes he helps people get something into the house, fixes something ... The only trouble is – he's an alcoholic. [...] I met him this morning when I went home to change, and he said: "Zorik, I've been looking out for you for a week. You're always over there!" "Of course," I said. "Can you give this money to the boys at the Maidan for me? I've been saving for a few weeks." And he pulls out 200 hryvnia in grubby banknotes – 2, 5, 10, 20-hryvnia notes. I was stunned. For someone who is constantly on a jag – that's really big money. [...] I think there are many more people like this.

It's going to be fine – we're going to win!

13 FEBRUARY [7]

MYKOLA KOKHANIVSKY (sotnia of the Ukrainian Nationalists" Organization):

If hostilities begin – we'll put up a fight too. If the opposition rises up – we'll join the opposition. If *Samooborona* – we'll join *Samooborona*. If the Right Sector – we'll join them. If no one begins an uprising and we grow into several *sotnias* – then we'll call it.

14 FEBRUARY [31]

OLEH MIKHNIUK (leader of the 8th – Afghan – sotnia) in a statement to the press:

We came to the Maidan to communicate to the law enforcement agencies that we will not permit the Ukrainian nation to be beaten up. [...] We are here to guard Ukraine's constitutional order. [...] We took upon ourselves the mission to arbitrate and we attempt to carry it out. [...] We have one task – the complete transformation of our system of power. We are on the side of the people. Of course we have a grudge both against the authorities and the leadership of the opposition, because no one who comes to the meetings knows anything about the agreements that are being made, and the opposition itself does not want to explain what it is doing.

We proposed forming a third force in the conciliation process, not as a party, but as observers – to inform the Ukrainian people of what was going on. This was not accepted, therefore we asked for the opportunity to turn to the Ukrainian people to put someone forward themselves to act as an observer in this process.

15 FEBRUARY [2]

VITALI KLITSCHKO, speaking from the Maidan stage:

All of us hoped for a speedy victory, however this isn't twelve rounds of a boxing match, but a marathon. The one who has most strength left, most resilience, will win. I know that we will triumph. I repeat: our certainty that we are fighting for truth, for justice, is what gives us strength – this is the most important thing. [...]

I take your criticisms on board, I listen to each one of you. I'm at the Maidan almost every day. I enter the tents, discuss with people. You criticise, make suggestions. [...] I understand that everyone – including me – wants to see more action. I would like to emphasise, however, that I do not want an escalation of conflict to lead to further victims. [...]

I know that all of you are asking: “How much longer do we need to keep coming? How much longer do we need to stand here?” We must endure. They are just waiting for us to lose heart and walk away from the Maidan. We will not walk away.

16 FEBRUARY

[2]

OLEKSANDR KRAVTSOV (Automaidan activist) speaking from the Maidan stage:

“Glory to Ukraine!” – these were the first words we heard when the police wagon drove into the Lukyanivska detention centre. I don't know who said it – a guard or a police officer – but the spirit of the Maidan drove in there with us. [...]

When we found out about the vote on the bill concerning hostages, I tried to talk to the other prisoners that I met in the corridors – Maidanistas and Automaidanistas. Nestor Dydyk was there, Oleksiy Salyga, Ihor Mysiak, Dmytro Moskalets, Serhiy Volodko and others, they all

put the case clearly and unequivocally: we do not wish to be hostages who will be exchanged in return for breaking off a months-long battle. They said: “We don't want to be inside – but not so that we can leave and go home, but only so that we can return here, to the Maidan and continue our protest.”*

Apart from the Maidan people, also being held in custody [...] without a court sentence are businessmen who did not pay a bribe, or private entrepreneurs whose business someone wanted to take. If we accept this deal, who will free them? We need organic change – changes to the legal system and to the law enforcement agencies. Unfairly tried ourselves, and seeing similar injustice affecting other prisoners, we are aware that [...] we should remain here for as long as it takes for this state to change completely. A change which must encompass everything – from traffic cops to courts which can detain any citizen of Ukraine without grounds.

There is one paradox which is beyond my comprehension. The Berkut beat us, pulled us out of cars; we were humiliated, forced to stand in freezing conditions for hours. This was the work of the police, of the authorities which were supposed to protect us. And the first people to keep up our spirits when we found ourselves in custody were criminals, sharing their tea and food with us, giving us warm blankets. So who are the thugs in this country?

16 FEBRUARY

[2]

PAVLO BRADULOV (manager, civic activist):

If something seems to be going wrong, we'll meet at the Maidan. We wrote in Facebook groups that if they

* Oleksandr Kravtsov and the Kyiv Maidanistas were released on the basis of an appeal court judgement of 5 February 2014.

start to limit communications, disconnecting the internet, the electricity supply – in any unclear situation, we will gather at the Maidan. If something bothers you about the government – you go out on the Maidan, it's the final resort.

This is the voice of the nation, a litmus test. If everything in the country is fine – then nothing happens. But if something is going on, people can come out on the Maidan and become that voice.

16 FEBRUARY

[20]

OLEZIA MAMYCH (wife of Oleksandr Kravtsov) speaking from the Maidan stage:

It's hard to act wisely, when the hostage is a beloved person and all the negotiations run straight through your heart. Two fears are battling inside me. The first is the fear of losing my husband again, because it's happened once and I know all too well how hard things are then. The second is the fear that they will demand greater concessions from us than we are in a position to make. That we abandon the Maidan, and that we cannot do.

If those police officers are not brought to justice, the once who lied straight to my face, if that little prosecutor isn't brought to justice, who – at his age – dares groundlessly to accuse the father of two children, if those *berkutovtsy* who pulled my husband out onto the snow, without warm clothes, threw him to his knees and destroyed our car are not punished... They might let him out, but it doesn't mean that in a couple of days they won't catch him again round some corner. I believe that we are capable of standing a long time yet on the Maidan, that we have the strength.

I'd like to turn to the leaders of the opposition. I know that many people express their grievances against you, that a great deal is said about wasted opportunities; but if God has placed you at the head of this movement, it means that you ought to possess the potential to react wisely and opportunely – and not to give up. I know, nothing is won without great personal sacrifices. I ask you to consider, in a spare moment, what you yourself could give, what would cost you – as a gift in the cause of victory. And it's not about pre-election polls or jobs. Please don't give in to those temptations... (*a storm of applause*) [...] Many people on this square give something: one gives his life, a second his freedom, a third gives a car, a fourth their health. If any of you should find enough motivation within you to sacrifice something important, I think then God will give you strength, to carry out everything successfully.

16 FEBRUARY

[2]

OLEH TIAHNYBOK (politician, leader of the nationalist "Svoboda") from the Maidan stage:

I turn above all to the residents of Kyiv, but also to people from the regions of Ukraine... On Tuesday [18 February] at 8am here, on the Maidan, we are forming a rally and walking to the parliament. And we must hold up that parliament, urge it to return the rule of law and justice. On Tuesday, the Supreme Council will discuss all our demands.

Four years ago, Yanukovich took up the office of president according to the constitution of 2004. When he seized power, he abolished the latter via non-constitutional means and reinstated the constitution of 1996,

→ → On the next page:
1 February 2014. Hrushevsky
Street.

according to which the president has wider powers. And yet he was elected while another constitution was in force! The 1996 constitution must be annulled and the order of 2004 restored.

16 FEBRUARY [2]

ARSENIY YATSENYUK (politician, Batkivshchyna activist) from the Maidan stage:

Enough of words. Actions are needed. No more secret agreements in the office of the speaker of parliament. We go out into the hall and vote openly – who is for Ukraine, and who is against. This is our reply to the regime. [...] On Tuesday – to parliament. On Tuesday, we set off to fight for our rights. Victory is ours!

16 FEBRUARY [2]

YULIA PISHTA (civil activist):

Parubiy says from the stage that we have to head for the Parliament. I did a post on Facebook: “Friends, don’t go! They’ll be armed!”

They’ve shipped in masses of *titushki* – that’s the first thing. Secondly – we already saw the numbers of Berkut back on Hrushevsky Street [19 January]. I could not grasp at all how they could lead ordinary people into that. It was a real shock for me!

17 FEBRUARY [47]





PHOTO: ICOR KOVALENKO / EPA / PAP

8

CONFRONTATION

18–19 FEBRUARY 2014

On Tuesday 18 February 2014, the final, bloodiest chapter of Maidan begins. In the morning, 20 thousand protestors set off in the direction of parliament, demanding the reinstatement of the 2004 constitution. The authorities send police units out against the demonstrators. The march is quickly transformed into a typical battle – with truncheons, paving stones, Molotov cocktails, and also firearms with rubber ammunition. People die in the clashes. In the afternoon, the coordinator of the Maidan voluntary medical service, Olha Bohomolets, reports that three participants were killed by the use of firearms with live ammunition. The conflict results in 25 dead, including several police, and hundreds of wounded. The authorities direct an ultimatum to the Maidan: if the centre of the capital is not vacated – the police will launch a final assault on the Maidan barricades.

YURKO ZHURAVEL (cartoonist):

Today I arrived with a further batch of my work, an exhibition of my caricatures have been on display at the Maidan since January, but we added more drawings. We found out that a “peaceful march” was in the offing. Even the name wasn’t quite to my liking, a bit like a “peaceful attack”.

18 FEBRUARY 2014

[14]

YEVHEN ZHEREBETSKY (expert on security matters):

We were a bit late. It was a sunny day. People were walking along, singing.

And then it began – cars were set on fire at the corner of Shovkovychna and Instytutska Street. In the park, there were police on one side, *titushki* on the other. Our lot with shields were throwing stones – grenades from the other side. I had to calm down my son who’d gone there to throw things without a helmet.

18 FEBRUARY

[46]

YURIY LUKANOV (journalist):

At about 10:10 I went to the Supreme Council session where they were to consider a return to the constitution of 2004. This could turn out to be a very important decision, fundamental to resolving the crisis, since it was the heavy-handed annulment of this constitution via the political force of Viktor Yanukovich that had given him massive plenipotentiary powers and licence. On the previous day, the chief of *Samooborona*, Andriy Parubiy, had called on people to march peacefully on parliament.

Coming out of the metro at Instytutska Street I heard explosions from the direction of parliament. Almost immediately I saw two rebels leading an injured man. He must have been wounded in the leg, because he was hopping. “The Berkut are throwing grenades and our side are replying with stones,” he said.

18 FEBRUARY

[14]

ANATOLIY KARABADZHAK (civil activist):

I understood that the peaceful revolution against Yanukovich would be ineffective. And that sooner or later we would have to use force. Now at last the people were showing their strength. We had no weapons, only our bare hands. Then we found some sticks, and paving stones of course. And I took a shield from a *veveshnik*.

18 FEBRUARY

[46]

ANTON MIKOV (civil activist):

A grenade hit me in the leg. It wasn’t my first grenade, I’d already come into contact with them and knew that their striking distance was about 1.5 metres. I realized that in a minute I’d lose my face at best, and my head at worst. All I could do was press my head down to my rib cage, shield myself with my helmet and cover my eyes with my hand. I don’t know if I managed to move my hand – the next moment I felt as though someone had whacked me with a plank with all their might. That feeling of the explosion. I realized I could see – that was good, but I had no fingers and my hand was a bloody pulp.

18 FEBRUARY

[14]

← ← On the previous page:
18 February 2014. A protestor
beside a burning car.

OLENA HRECHANIUK (university lecturer):

One of the Berkut was running right alongside firing from a pneumatic weapon. I became hysterical. Someone running beside me said: “Pull yourself together! Don’t cry – run! Fast!” We ran almost as far as the Arsenal metro station.

People everywhere. Someone was shouting: “Why are you running? You have to stop, fight back!” The boys started pushing the women, to make us run. Meanwhile they started to shove parked cars to hold up the Berkut somehow who were approaching at a run.

18 FEBRUARY [47]

YURIY LUKANOV:

On the approach to the turning into Shovkovychna Street [...] loads of people were breaking up the pavement. Not only rebels in camouflage with shields, but ordinary people, in their normal clothes. Even older women. “I can’t do it myself, so I can at least help my children,” one of them said. People formed a chain and handed cobblestones along in the direction of battle. [...]

The Berkut came out from behind trucks on Instytut-ska and began the attack. [...]

I was taking pictures. [...] One of the Berkut asked: “You’re a journalist?” “Yes,” I replied. “Why haven’t you got a helmet then?” I said I was on my way to the parliament and you don’t wear helmets there. He asked me to approach the wall of the building. There were things lying there lost by the maidanistas during the clashes. Mainly shields, helmets, truncheons, protective goggles. He took one of the helmets and gave it to me – but there was blood inside. I said I wouldn’t wear it. He found me another, I put it on.

18 FEBRUARY [14]

OLEZIA STRATIENKO (civil activist):

I found myself by the wall of the building where the army were on the roof: snipers and the ones with grenades. I tried to run to the other side, but the grenades came down – so back I went. I was scared one would rip my hand off. I called on my phone for someone to throw me a helmet or get me out of there somehow. Serhiy went to the guys at *Samooborona* – one of them had this massive police shield – and he said: “Give me the shield, I need to fetch someone out.” And the guy wouldn’t give it to him, he just said: “I’ll do it myself.” It’s understandable, he doesn’t want to part with a shield like that. Who knows what would happen to it and it was all he had. Shielding us both, he began to lead me along the wall, past the door where the Berkut were. We were going past when suddenly he fell down, holding the shield. I didn’t understand how things were in the middle of battle – that the blood doesn’t flow immediately. At first, I didn’t know why he’d fallen at all. He tried to get up, then fell down again. That was how he saved me: we were covering ourselves with the same shield – he was covering me and got wounded.

18 FEBRUARY [14]

ANTON MUSIK (history student, Samooborona member):

I ran a few metres and felt I’d been struck hard in the back. I fell over and couldn’t understand what was happening. I managed to get my right hand free of the shield so that they wouldn’t break it. And then they began to lay into me, beat me a long time, professionally – maybe five minutes. They broke two fingers on my left hand, two ribs, my jaw, the tendon in my leg. I heard: “Get up, you bastard!”

I tried to get up and I felt that my leg wasn't working. And the guy said: "Why are you sitting there, get up!" "I can't, you did this yourselves and now I can't get up." "Well let's give you a hand then."

And then they said: "Get in the van, we've had enough of you." I got inside and then I feel the firm grip of a hand on my wrist. I turn – and there's Oleh Tiahnybok next to the police wagon. He'd come to get us out of there.

18 FEBRUARY

[47]

VLADYSLAV VLASOV (lawyer):

I'd only just managed to hide when the police burst in and it began. They were beating so hard. People were howling like animals. They ordered them to descend the stairs on their knees. One of our lot said: "I can't, I can't see through the blood," and they were yelling: "On your knees, on your knees!" And still they carried on beating.

After half an hour, it calmed down, I breathed again. One of them said: "Check one last time and we're off." They switched on a torch and then they saw me: "Get out!" The abuse was flying. I climbed out. I looked and there were two police officers. "On your knees!" "What knees? I can't, I've got an artificial leg."

I was lucky I hadn't stumbled into the main blood-bath, then it wouldn't have mattered – artificial limb or not, they beat everyone. This way – it was just me and those two. One of them said: "You take him, I'll be off." We went out on the stairs, and they were covered in blood. So much blood! He said: "Go into the yard, there's a gate. Go through onto Hrushevsky and get lost."

18 FEBRUARY

[46]

KATERYNA BOLSHAKOVA (civil activist, Red Cross worker):

A Berkut grenade hit me in the back. I was almost the last one out, I was leading a 75-year-old woman away from Instytutska Street. I was carrying a decent strong canvas backpack. Only the right strap and burnt base were left. If it hadn't been for the backpack, there would have been no me either.

Shielding and supporting the old lady, I stood against the wall, then under a tree on the pavement, meanwhile the *berkutovtsy* were running alongside us and... they beat everyone so hard, whoever they could reach. Men, women, nurses, journalists. Several times they raised their truncheons right at us and shouted straight in our faces: "I'll kill you, bitch" and I simply looked calmly into their eyes and for some reason they dropped their truncheons. Then one of the Berkut with a more human look about him led me and the woman to the nearest gate under cover of his shield. There were about 30 people there already [...]. An old man was lying on the ground and two *berkutovtsy* were hitting him with truncheons. Another two men were covered in blood, with head wounds.

After a few minutes, the Berkut ran off further hunting. We were left with a guy with a broken skull and three with concussion. A sea of blood, I'm not exaggerating. Leg injuries on top of that, smashed fingers – because people shielded their heads with their hands. Luckily another girl from the Red Cross had saved a first aid bag. We bandaged the ones who were bleeding, gave a few injections and hid in the gateway.

18 FEBRUARY

[45]



PHOTO: OLEG PETRASUYK / EPA / PAP

← 18 February 2014. Police unit on the attack.

VOLODYMYR POGORILY (head of the Maidan psychological service):

I always came to the Maidan after work – at about 14:00. I'd go to the Trade Unions building where our main centre was at that time. This time, I heard a racket – they were bringing in officers from the internal forces who they had taken prisoner. The crowd were shouting, demanding they be punished. I ordered the captives to be led into a room to avoid a lynching. Like all doctors, we were supposed to remain neutral, free of prejudice. They were given civilian clothes and the members of our group began to talk with them immediately. [...] They were ministry of the interior officers from Zaporozhzhia.

I was shocked by their way of thinking. They said they had sworn allegiance to the president and they served him, and when there was a new president – they would submit to him. [...] I replied: “You’ve sworn allegiance to the Ukrainian nation, not to a president! And if the new president pisses us off, we’ll go the Maidan again!”

18 FEBRUARY

[13]

YEVHEN LUKANOV (chairman, Ukrainian Officers' Union):

An ambulance drove up and [Mykola] Polishchuk [a neurosurgeon] ran up to it. Next to the [medical centre in the] Officers' House lay a slightly wounded Berkut guy on a stretcher. Polishchuk ran up to the emergency doctor and shouted: “Hurry, people are dying!” But then general [Oleksandr] Kuzmuk [former minister of defence] came up and said: “Take this one” – and the ambulance takes the Berkut guy who's been wounded in the backside. Slightly wounded. Polishchuk shouted at him from the ambulance: “You're breaking

the Hippocratic oath! You're not a doctor, you're a sadist!” to which Kuzmuk replied: “What are you doing! My people are dying! They have to be taken out taken out of here! They're the ones that need saving!” The doors slam and the ambulance drives away.

18 FEBRUARY

[46]

WLADYSLAV VLASOV:

They brought a bloodied *titushka*. The police who were standing alongside when he got hit pushed him in the direction of the Maidan people – so that they would have to help him. They had their own doctors, but they shoved him aside. One of the Maidanistas ran up to this *titushka* and hit him. And people yelled: “What are you doing? Don't behave like them!”

18 FEBRUARY

[46]

YEVHEN DYKYI (psychologist, university lecturer):

I saw a group of people advancing in a very organized way. I recognized them by their odd caps – it was the Afghan *sotnia*. I decided it would be best to go towards them, because even if we had to retreat last, it would be better to do it with people who kept in formation and didn't panic or stampede.

We even tried to stop the Berkut as they were attacking on Arsenalna Street. We made a barricade out of buses and trolleybuses we'd stopped on the street. We tipped them over. The barricade would have been effective if we could have set it on fire, but we didn't have even one cocktail. It was obvious that we wouldn't be able to hold onto it – we had to retreat further.

18 FEBRUARY

[14]

SERHYI KLIMENKO (cameraman):

We found a high wall in order to get a better view of the situation. Our helmets were marked “Press” and “Channel 5”. I stood with the camera, Azad [Safarov, journalist] had the microphone. We thought they’d run past us and we would record it. But the Berkut [...] turned deliberately in our direction, because we were clearly standing to one side. They surrounded us and began knocking us down. I don’t know how many there were because they appeared from every direction with their truncheons raised. They snatched off my helmet, surrounded Azad, beat me on the legs and arms, forced me to the ground and made me raise my arms.

The last thing I managed to see was them smashing my camera with their truncheons. One of them set off gas right in my face. I also remember Azad shouting: “Don’t touch us, we’re from the press!” “Oh, press are you?” and the Berkut guy whacked him with all his might on the head with his fist. They smashed his microphone with a truncheon and broke his hand. I was better off. I’d curled into a foetal position. They hit me along the back most, and the body, but didn’t get the most sensitive places. They set gas off in my eyes, kept beating me, and then the man in black, colonel Asaveliuk* as it turns out – gave the order: “Enough, take them out.”

They pulled us down from the parapet, with no camera or microphone now. They chained us and dragged us in the direction of Kriposny Lane where the onternal forces and “paddy wagons” were. A Berkut guy was leading me and he said: [...] “You can tell your people that we knocked you about because you’re from Channel 5 and make us look like shit.”

18 FEBRUARY

[45]

OLHA ZHUK (literary scholar):

Some of the *berkutovtsy* came out to show us that this was it for us, they gestured towards their crotches, taunted us. We stood there anyway. Beside us, grandmas were handing out borscht and porridge from cauldrons, girls were distributing milk and water with lemon. And suddenly, the Berkut moved on the people. With automatic rifles, truncheons, grenades. We ran en masse in the direction of the Maidan. There were over 5 thousand people. [...] Everyone ran who could. People trampled each other, I could feel the breath of the police on my back, the whistle of bullets and truncheons. I fell over. Smashed my knees. One was bleeding, the other swelled up. [...] Some boy lifted me up, took me by the arm and shouted: “Faster!” He led me to the barricades. No one was defending them. People couldn’t get through the narrow entrance gap quickly enough, the Berkut were beating everyone left at the end.

I jumped onto a rubbish dump near the October Palace. There was a steep drop there of several metres. I had a choice – jump (and with my luck, break a leg) or say goodbye to my kidneys thanks to the truncheons. I chose the drop. I jumped down onto plastic bottles and that’s what saved my ankles. In tears, blood and mud, I ploughed my way to the Maidan.

18 FEBRUARY

[45]

IHOR GULYI (civil activist):

They couldn’t get me with their truncheons because I had my own and deflected their blows. So they caught me by the jacket, grabbed hold of it, knocked me over and started to hit me wherever they could. My helmet cracked.

* Serhyi Asaveliuk from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Internal Forces was one of the chiefs of the forces suppressing the protests on the Maidan. He was held responsible for the deaths of Maidan participants.

They hit me with their shields, kicked me and struck my head with something sharp. Then they put a gun to my buttock and fired. The doctor told me that there were at least fifteen rubber pellets, small as peas, and then the powder and particles from the cartridge. But luckily none of it got into the bone.

They didn't hold back with the beating – they carried on until I stopped moving. The final blow was so powerful that my body stopped reacting. I was conscious, but I couldn't understand: was I dying, what was happening to me. I was completely paralyzed.

Then some medic ran up, a Red Cross volunteer. When he started trying to lift me, I saw his helmet with its medicinal symbol, and then a policeman behind him who knocked the helmet from his head and began to beat him. I don't know what happened to him. [...] After a while, a woman ran up [...]: "Sonny, try your hardest, just a little towards us, closer to the Maidan."

18 FEBRUARY [44]

OLENA HRECHANIUK:

The speaker on the stage called for the women to leave the Maidan. The Berkut had demanded that we vacate the Maidan, otherwise they would attack. I didn't want to go anywhere, I wanted to be here. I didn't know how I could help, but to leave at such a moment? I believed we had to maintain the crowd to make them afraid of us, to let them see how many of us there were, that we wouldn't be going anywhere – that we would stand there to the end.

18 FEBRUARY [47]

YULIA PISHTA (civil activist):

They closed the metro and I couldn't get to the Maidan. By some miracle I got as far as Dorohozhychi [a district of Kyiv] and here everything in the direction of Maidan: Lukianovka, Artema Street – everything was at a standstill. I got a call: "We have wounded, bring meds." I went from Dorohozhychi to Lukianovka on foot. I went into a chemist. I was supposed to buy dressings, pain relief, bandages, tablets, cotton wool, pads to stem the blood. The shopkeeper asked: "Is this all for the Maidan?" "Yes." And he gave me a 50 per cent discount – he bought half with his own money. When I was leaving, he called "Glory to Ukraine!" and I replied "Glory to our heroes!"

18 FEBRUARY [47]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

We were returning to the Maidan. If they'd beaten us then they would have dispersed us, but they announced an ultimatum – we were to vacate the Maidan by 18:00.

We were convinced that if they were going to break up the Maidan then we ought at least to fight for it hard enough to ensure the revolution would continue afterwards. That it would spread throughout the country as a result.

18 FEBRUARY [14]

YEVHEN NISHCHUK (hosting from the Maidan stage):

Fellow citizens, I turn to the whole of Ukraine. When is the time to be together if not now? Find any route possible! We are notifying the residents of Kyiv that all metro stations are closed, but there is transport – there are drivers

who are volunteering to drive people here. Here all together, here on this stage – the deputies of the opposition forces, all of us together with the people – must endure and retaliate in the face of this criminal government. [...]

You check the internet and receive texts telling you not to come to the Maidan. If our numbers grow every five minutes, then that is a guarantee that we will sustain the battle for our freedom and repel this gang. You can get here. If someone wants to, they can find a way. The bigger the pressure all around, the better they will understand that this moment cannot be stopped... We cannot forgive ourselves that there are more dead, that we have a mass of wounded people, that they have opened fire. So come, ignore those stupid texts.

18 FEBRUARY

[2]

VOLODYMYR POGORILY:

The storming of the Maidan began. When they began to carry in the wounded, we thought we were morally prepared for it. But not on that level, not with those wounds. From the very beginning these were not isolated incidents, the boys carried them in and they kept coming and coming and coming. Soon we realized that we couldn't cope. Every medical station on the Maidan was busy. [...]

We were short of surgeons. On the third floor [of the Trade Unions building] where people had been sleeping till then, I organized a medical station for the slightly injured. Then a surgical unit was set up on the ground floor. [...] I removed rubber bullets with a scalpel, cleaned eyes affected by gas, removed shrapnel. I helped as a normal doctor, not a psychiatrist.

18 FEBRUARY

[13]

SVITLANA ZARIPOVA (university lecturer):

We were standing practically under the column itself, barricades were going up, tyres were burning, water was pouring, Molotov cocktails were flying. And suddenly I felt that I was no heroine. I wanted to take off, I wasn't ready. It was a painfully unpleasant discovery, that I – an adult – was such a coward. Of course, I explained to my girlfriend that the men had asked women to stay away from the fighting, that we were hindering here, not helping, so it would be better to go look after the wounded in the Mykhailovsky monastery. I knew, however, that it was fear.

18 FEBRUARY

[13]

OLEH YURCHENKO (Samoobrona, 4th sotnia):

We got a grup together, about ten from our *sotnia*, the rest from others. I took the ones who could walk, some had to be supported, some carried. The deputies [Oleh Tiahnybok and Oleksandr Sych] led us out along Parkova Road. We reached the Dynamo stadium, onto Hrushevsky – and from there we got to the hospital. They took some people immediately in the ambulances that were on duty. [...]

The doctors helped us straightaway. I let the boys through, because I was still on my feet, I could walk. They were sewing up Sashka Kovalov's face, somebody else was getting stitches too, right on the spot. Finally I pulled off my trousers and the doctor went: "Oho!" The wounds weren't big, but deep. They'd grazed an artery, there was a lot of blood. He decided to stitch me up, but because it was deep he gave me an injection of Novocain. He'd done the upper wound, just begun on the lower one – when suddenly the assault began.

We evacuated together with the hospital. I put on my trousers, grabbed my things and they said: “We’ll carry you.” I said: “What, 90 kilos – no, I’ll walk.” And I hobbled along, barely dragging my leg, and here you had to run. We got to the Maidan. [...] On the square where the “Afghans” and other military were, the veterans, various organizations, the doctor led me to one of the tents. He stitched up the second wound and by the time he was finishing the neighbouring tent was already in flames.

18 FEBRUARY

[47]

HANNA SKLONNA (medical service activist):

A man came up to me. It was clear he’d been on the front line. His face was all black, only his great blue eyes stood out. He asked if it was possible to speak to a psychologist. Though I have no background in psychology, I had done some crisis intervention training and decided to help him. He began to tell me in a shaking voice, that he’d lost contact with his wife on the Maidan and hadn’t been able to get through to her for three hours; that he didn’t know what had happened. He said he didn’t want to live. He was from the *sotnia* which had led the fighting and ten of his comrades had died, and he wanted to be there too, where it was most dangerous – he wanted to die. The one thing that kept him alive – was the desire to know what had happened to his wife. “If she’s dead – I have nothing to live for.”

I tried to calm him down – I said: “Let’s give it an hour.” I asked him to come back after that time and not to take any sudden, rash steps in the meantime – it’s possible his wife’s phone had simply run out of battery and she was safe. He said: “All right, I’ll come, will you be here?”

“I will,” I said. Unfortunately, an hour later a fire broke out in our building [the Trade Unions building] and we had to evacuate.

18 FEBRUARY

[49]

MARIYA BOROVYK (medical student):

It felt like being in a film, as though I was seeing myself from the side. I don’t remember faces, only wounds – we had to staunch the blood. And eyes – we had to bathe them with thermal water after contact with gas. There was no fear.

They were carrying a boy with his stomach torn apart. We couldn’t save him. There were many like that. It was different with torn-off limbs, if there’s a doctor – they can apply pressure and the person will live. There were assistants working alongside me – they weren’t doctors, but helped like doctors. One applied stitches, another sewed up wounds without anaesthetic, it had run out. They were shouting that the Trade Unions building was on fire and the evacuation would begin any minute. People left in five minutes, security brought the meds. Pillars of smoke were gushing out of the windows. On the fifth or sixth floor there was a man on the windowsill – he wasn’t wounded but afraid to jump onto the tent canvas stretched below.

18 FEBRUARY

[11]

TARAS SEMUSHCHAK (coordinator, medical help centre):

When the first floor of the Trade Unions building went up in flames, I was putting on bandages on the ground

floor. The security people were opening windows so that there would be less smoke. The Berkut were already out there. They'd brought a Berkut sniper who had a wounded face from a firework. Our doctors began to sew up his face. I stopped them because there was no time. I suggested they put on a bandage to stem the blood and call an ambulance. We could have left him in the Trade Unions building. He was so wounded he wouldn't have got away and would have gone up in flames. I understood we were saving the enemy. I felt like a traitor to the revolution.

18 FEBRUARY [11]

DMYTRO PRYMAK (business analyst):

That night I learnt how to make Molotov cocktails. We burnt all the rubbish as well. Because fire was what really stopped the Berkut.

18 FEBRUARY [20]

OLEKSANDR D. (civil activist):

At around 23:00, armoured personnel carriers hit our barricades – three of them. One from the Instytutska and one from the Hrushevsky Street side but our barricades there simply don't allow for manoeuvre. They drove up, looked, and left.

They chose those places that had been thrown together. The carriers hit the barricades at speed, but they tilted and people began to throw cocktails underneath them. It was narrow, hard for two carriers to manoeuvre. They were bombarded with those cocktails. I don't know what happened to the drivers.

18 FEBRUARY [1]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

The armoured vehicles had been waiting at Pechersk [the government district] for a month. We knew that when the order finally came to disperse the Maidan they would use them. OK! We prepared ourselves for this, we had a batch of special cocktails. Not only petrol with oil – we added aluminium filings, which resulted in a much higher burning temperature. A carrier like that didn't have a chance.

18 FEBRUARY [14]

MARTIN NYAGA (a musician from Chişinău):

The battle continued, you could see the other side and they looked pretty impressive – like a great dragon with shining scales. They had black, shining helmets. On the left, the Trade Unions building was in flames. I don't know what they poured there, because it wasn't Molotov cocktails – it burnt for hours. Total apocalypse.

There were firearms by then. Not many, mostly hunting rifles. Everyone brought what they could. I threw stones in their direction, I don't know if they hit the mark or not. It lasted maybe a few minutes. Then some guy who got hit with gas pushed a shield at me because he was backing out. He said: "Take the shield, idiot!" So now I had a shield. Later I gave it to someone else, it was passed around.

A breakthrough moment was when all the bridges were on fire – when the armoured car drove into our line of defence and for the first time I threw a stone straight at them. That was a final act of choosing a side. That moment that you couldn't step back and say: "Actually, I'm from Moldova, so I'll be off now." You were involved!

19 FEBRUARY [14]



PHOTO: SERGEY DOLZHENKO / EPA / PAP

← 18 February 2014. Police clashes with demonstrators.

OLEKSIY FILANOVSKY (marketing director):

When the Berkut moved forwards – with the water cannon – it became clear that the defence would only be successful if the tyres were burning. The line of defence was very weak, the number of injured was huge, and everyone had to work – even those who weren't psychologically ready for it.

In the night, we started to run out of tyres. They were collected from all the neighbouring barricades. Then we organized ourselves to transport them. The transport police were out with automatic firearms already. Some people were afraid and didn't want to go with us. I understood that. They killed one boy right in front of me. We stood by the cars, debating what to do – suddenly there were shots. So we got into the cars and away. It was the first time I'd experienced gunfire – it was burning like at the cinema or a rifle range. I think we did what had to be done – thanks to the tyres we maintained the line of defence. After losing the barricade on Instytutskaya, it was impossible to carry on with our bare hands alone.

19 FEBRUARY

[20]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

The first rays of hope came at one in the morning when we understood that the “firewall” – stretching from the Trade Unions building – was standing. There was no line of barricades, they'd collapsed, but the line of fire was just as before. Then it occurred to us that maybe we were overestimating the enemy. Maybe they weren't that strong.

19 FEBRUARY

[14]

OLEKSANDR NEVIDOMY (student from Kirovohrad):

They pushed us right to the borders of the Maidan and towards morning we extended our territory. At the very bottom, near the “Globus” shopping centre, we made a “tortoise” formation. Boys and grown men. There were about 30 or 40 of us. [...] Those around the edges held out their shields firmly front of them and to the sides. Others lifted theirs up. We began to move slowly. We'd take a few paces – and then crouch; a few more paces – and stop. It's not easy to move in a “tortoise”. [...]

Sometimes the boys, who couldn't take the tension, would say: “I'm tired, can I swap with someone.” But you've got to keep yourself in check and feel the shoulder of your companion – you can't get hysterical, fall over, your voice mustn't tremble, because then you let down the whole group. That's how we made our way. They started to fire at us – everything struck the shields, but we felt every blow in our fingers. A few paces – and we'd crouch. Metre by metre we regained our area. Then suddenly one of the boys very quietly began: “Ukraine has not yet died...” [...] We all clenched our sticks and fists harder, snatched up stones.

I suddenly felt so strong! Not because I was walking along with a truncheon, but because I was with friends – and because it was for freedom.

19 FEBRUARY

[13]

VADYM MYKOLAYOVYCH (civil activist):

When we pelted them with cocktails and stones, they retreated. They were not actively attacking – you got the impression that they had lost the passion for it, that they themselves didn't want to. There was a kind

of inertia in the attack. I felt the Maidan would withstand till morning.

There was a section of the anthem I didn't know. That night I learnt: "The Black Sea will smile, grandfather Dni-pro will rejoice. Fate will be transformed in our Ukraine." I'm embarrassed, but I didn't know it before.

19 FEBRUARY

[1]

MARTIN NYAGA:

We got into some courtyard. There was some Styrofoam – that was great, molotovs work better if you can add some. So we gleefully started to collect all this Styrofoam and we found three tyres, massive ones. They were frozen into the ground. We started to dig them out with sticks, like prehistoric people. One of them was completely covered in shit and I got all smeared in it. I stank – a girl friend pulled out a damp handkerchief and started to clean it off me. She's a pianist. I said to my friend: "Here we are, from good families, and we're wallowing in this shit. And we're really happy."

19 FEBRUARY

[14]

OLEH YURCHENKO:

We had one aim – to withstand the onslaught for as long as possible. The government forces counted on being able to "put on a bit of pressure and they'll all scatter". And they got the opposite reaction. People kept coming and coming. [...]

We had no contact with headquarters, there was no contact between *sotnias*. [...] The first task that [Oleksandr] Turkhynov set us – was to hold out for the first night. Because, as he explained, before long the international

community would actively begin to respond to events, soon things would become hard for all those Yanukovyches. We had to get through the night, so that they didn't destroy us immediately. Otherwise we would lose everything that had happened here.

That task we managed to fulfill. We resisted for the first night. We burnt everything we had. It was obvious that the only way to stop them was with fire, we had no other means to hand. Our shields and truncheons were trivial, especially when they started on us with water cannons, armoured vehicles... We held on. All the palletes and wood that we had beside the tents, the blankets, sometimes quite new ones, covers, clothes people brought – we threw everything flammable onto the fire. In this way we survived the first night.

19 FEBRUARY

[47]

KATERYNA KUVITA (civil activist, member of the Automaidan):

At home, I organized a one-person coordination point. I didn't sleep for several days and never left my computer. I gave instructions where to go, what to take. Via the internet and phone, I had to direct ambulances and buses coming from Lviv. They wouldn't let them through, but we had routes worked out – through forests and villages. Everything happened remotely.

When the Trade Unions building went up in flames – and I'd spent a lot of time there, so I knew all the regular people – I was watching TV and I didn't know if they were alive. I'd call every few minutes... Every day I'd send a text with a single word: "Checking", and they'd reply: "Alive." [...]

Without iPhones – there'd be no revolution! And without Facebook... It began with Facebook, everything functioned through simple coordination via Facebook. A massive role! [...] And without Twitter it would have been downright impossible – when the situation is changing every five minutes, something new is happening; you could exchange information at once, instantly.

19 FEBRUARY [44]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

In the morning, it sank in that we were prevailing. It was difficult to believe. We finally understood that we were winning when the first buses from other oblasts starting getting through. It turned out that the route to Kyiv was clear. Reinforcements were reaching us. We'd stood our ground!

19 FEBRUARY [14]

VALERIY HLADUNETS (one of the leaders on the Maidan stage):

It's most beautiful when morning comes. When the physical light breaks through the darkness – then you have the impression that good will overcome evil. Every morning. Every dawn. Especially at the most difficult times, like now.

19 FEBRUARY [46]

IRA TSILYK (writer):

A friend, a marvellous surgeon, one of the doctors who operated all night, [...] told me today that without the volunteers they would not have scraped through. [...] I wasn't with them myself in the night, but I spent

the whole day in the hospital kitchen, it was as though I'd spent a short lifetime there, full of special impressions. All those boys, broken, swollen, purple with bruises, who are ashamed of their catheters and bare legs, lying even in the corridors, staring at the ceiling, embarrassed when they're urged to eat something... All those aunties, grannies, girls who stream to the hospital with homemade food, made with such love – all the broth with meatballs, borscht, stuffed cabbage, cake, pureed soups, carefully wrapped in towels and newspaper to keep them warm... Those silent volunteers, carefully cleaning the blood from stretchers... [...]

That note to an unknown recipient, slipped by some woman into a package of puree with cutlets: "Dear sonny! I wish you a speedy recovery. Thank you for your courage. Enjoy!"

This endless surrealism. This tenderness. This fear. This tiredness. This adulthood. Each day we are older, so very much older than the people we were yesterday.

19 FEBRUARY [45]

OLEH VYNOGRADOV (doctor):

Tania was sewing some red stripes cut from some old skirt onto my white shirt, to make a red cross – on the front and back. In fact, she made two such shirts: one for me and one for herself. We are doctors – she is a dentist and I'm a surgeon. I'd decided to respond to the appeal to come to the Maidan. In the night they'd burnt down the Trade Unions building, the Berkut were getting closer to the stage from which the appeal for help was made. [...]

A girl was standing in front of me [on the bus], seventeen, maybe eighteen years old. Her blue eyes, like the sea

in the morning, clear, naive, still childish eyes looked at me differently, with a kind of alarm, or maybe rather with understanding of everything, and her face...shone with a strange light. “Are you going to the Maidan?” she whispered, looking at the red cross sewn on my shirt through my unbuttoned jacket. “Yes,” I answered loudly to show that I did not intend to be afraid of anything or anyone.

At that moment the bus stopped and the doors opened. “I can’t myself,” she whispered, “I have a small child. I’ve put 100 hryvnia in your pocket, please give it to them, at the Maidan.”

19 FEBRUARY

[44]

PETRO ZHUK (clergyman, rector of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church seminary):

One of our seminarians called and said: “My brother is in a difficult situation...” He happened to be near the Mariinsky Park when they were dispersing our people and beating them. They saved themselves any way they could, they ran to the top of one of the houses and blocked the door leading to the attic. From there they could see how boys were being chased in the park, and the ones caught in stairways were dragged out and beaten on the asphalt. [...]

We tried calling them. The brother of our seminarian picked up and said: “We’re still here, but they’re searching the houses, what shall we do?” I told them to run down and take a side route in the direction of the Dnipro and find the stations of the cross. Below the Askold’s Tomb there are crosses set in the ground – a way of the cross, with steps going down. I said: “Find one of the crosses and go down. We’ll pick you up.”

Then we relaxed, happy, that the boys were going to get out of that house. We drove as far as Naberezhna, did a U-turn across a double white line and our two cars were stopped by the traffic police. I ran out and said: “We’re hurrying to a funeral, we have to organize everything.” [...] He waved us on – and we continued. My friend was becoming nervous: “Father, that’s not very nice. We lied to them.” And I said: “Why? We’re organizing Viktor Yanukovych’s funeral, after all.”

19 FEBRUARY

[47]

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO (politician, Batkivshchyna deputy):

The hospital at the Trade Unions Building was evacuated to the Mykhailovsky cathedral. We went to see how the operation theatre was being organized. [...] In the far corner of the cloister courtyard, under a tree, lay the dead. There were four of them. Somebody asked for them to be photographed so that they could be identified. That was not pleasant, but what could I do – I agreed. And this person pulls one of the bodies to one side: “Not this one.” “Why not?” “That’s my father. I’ve a pregnant wife at home, a family. It’s better they don’t know. I have to prepare them myself.” [...]

He pulled his father to one side, and we took the photographs. The wasted faces, one boy’s hand had been ripped off, it was lying separately. I was taking photographs, listening to the man and I had the feeling that the universe was falling to bits inside my head. I thought to myself: how to put this world back together? How long will it take us to be normal people again?

19 FEBRUARY

[17]



PHOTO: MAXIM SHIPENKOV / EPA / PAP

← 19 February 2014. The Maidan in flames. Flares fired by protestors explode right in front of a police unit.

IVAN SYDOR (deacon, lecturer, Orthodox church seminary, Kyiv patriarchate):

I'd never seen a person who hadn't died a natural death. I've been to funerals, I've sung in my time in the Mykhailovsky monastery choir, but this was something completely different. Those whom I saw now were still very young. The boy with the ripped off hand: he lay there, his hand next to him. He didn't even look 20.

The brain wouldn't take it in, you didn't want to believe it.

19 FEBRUARY [47]

IGOR BURDYGA (reporter):

It's hard to carry corpses. Physically hard. [...] The wounded are easier. [...] Unfortunately, one can't choose who to carry. Now we carry anything as it flies, everything they bring to the cathedral – in cars, on motorbikes, bikes, pushchairs, they bring stuff in bags, backpacks, stretchers, sheets. If you could chose, I'd certainly chose medicine. Then you're doing something to save lives, without any direct contact. [...]

I certainly didn't chose corpses – I simply took over a stretcher from a boy stumbling with exhaustion and carried it. And it was only after about 10 metres that I noticed that we were transporting our “passenger” feet first, that his face was covered, and that someone was constantly trying to arrange his arms across his body. Somewhere on that body, in a pocket, a mobile is beeping the whole time. I wonder if I'll ever be able to listen to that banal *Für Elise* ever again? [...]

I carry my more-or-less quarter of a stretcher as far as I can. First – with a final hope – to the improvised

operating theatre, then – without hope – to the improvised morgue. Everything here is improvised. Even this corpse – the improvisation of a not long since living human being. [...]

I go out of the gate. They've brought someone again. “Hey, what've you got? Let's have them...”

19 FEBRUARY [45]

ANTON ZAYATS (civil activist):

It was as though everything depended on people's enthusiasm. This was particularly evident when they carried in the wounded. There were some who didn't even have helmets. I don't understand why they headed out there. They were ordinary people like me, only braver.

They started mustering their forces, forming new units, rebuilding old ones. Some kind of organization got going. On the stage the first politician appeared at five or six o'clock in the evening. There hadn't been anyone since morning who could say what came next from the stage – or what was happening at all. The only formation was via social media.

29 FEBRUARY [20]



PHOTO: SERGEY DOLZHENKO / EPA / PAP

9

THE FINALE

20–22 FEBRUARY 2014

20 February 2014 goes down in Ukrainian history as “black Thursday”. The night passes reasonably peacefully – the ceasefire announced by the authorities continues. Tyres are burning, there are scattered incidents. Unrest begins before 9:00, when the crowd attacks the Berkut as it retreats from the Maidan. The first live shots are fired – the insurgents now have weapons. Regular police sniper fire follows which continues until 13:00. 50 people die on the spot. The authorities’ next step is to consent to the return of the 2004 constitution – as stated in negotiations with the opposition – and to early presidential and parliamentary elections (in December 2014). The Maiden rejects the proposal.

ANDRIY TKACHENKO

(leader of the Dniepropetrovsk Berkut):

On 19 February, we were given the order to go immediately to Kyiv. Ironically – the buses were completely unsuitable and broke down several times along the way. We reached the Maidan in the early evening. We parked near the upper entrance to the Khreshchatyk metro station, on Olhinska Street. The whole of the Maidan was in flames. They put us on duty from five till eight in the morning on Instytutska Street, behind the column. When our watch was over, others came and we stood a bit higher up. After six, they started to fire at us from the conservatory. A few of my men were wounded. I was sure that the shots were coming from there. [...] I telephoned Andriy Shevchenko and informed him what was happening. He said he would tell Parubiy and the latter sent some boys from the Maidan to check.

20 FEBRUARY 2014

[17]

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO (politician,
Batkivshchyna deputy):

I'd met Tkachenko a few weeks earlier. I was on duty at the Maidan and decided to go into "Mordor" – the side of Hrushevsky Street under police control. I found their leader and proposed we should exchange telephone numbers – in case of a provocation. This was Tkachenko. At that point there was a truce on Hrushevsky and neither we nor the police wanted it broken by some provocation or misunderstanding. That number was not needed either that night or the next – until the morning of 20 February.

Tkachenko called and said: "Your lot are finring. If you don't stop them, there'll be trouble." There was

a categorical ban on the use of firearms on the Maidan. It would be taken advantage of 100 per cent as a pretext to launch an armed assault. [...]

I admit that it could have been a maidanista at the conservatory, some self-styled nationalist "messiah". It could have been. In theory. But I am convinced that it was a provocation.

20 FEBURARY

[17]

ANDRIY MALKIV (member of Samooborona):

At half past seven in the morning, we did a round of Khreshchatyk. Kyiv was already awake. There was a feeling of anxiety in the air. People were milling about. Half an hour later we reached the Maidan.

The Berkut had surrounded the Maidan from the side of the column and European Square. The barricades were on fire. Grenades were flying in our direction, and we were responding unstintingly with Molotov cocktails. From the stage, they were exhorting people to keep the fires around Maidan going – it protected us against attack. But there was nothing left to burn – we were running out of tyres, almost everything had been burnt, including personal things, clothes, blankets. The boys and I stood at the monument to the Founder of Kyiv. Some were throwing paving stones, others threw cocktails, still others were preparing them; but it's hard to throw them by hand. They brought homemade "cannons" – steel pipes with a gas balloon. You throw the bottle down the pipe, light it, and the cocktail flies 5–70 metres.

As soon as he boy directing this saw that as a result of hitting a few *berkutovtsy*, the Berkut line was broken. I heard "Forward!" – and then everyone hurled themselves

← ← On the previous page:
20 February 2014. Protestor
uses a slingshot in clashes with
government forces on the Maidan.

across the barricade. The fear had disappeared completely. How else to explain a thousand people running with truncheons against automatic weapons?

20 FEBRUARY

[47]

OLEH SAVARYN (civil activist):

The counter-attack began. [...] And the others began to run away. Some of us had hunting rifles or other weapons of that style, and the other side knew they'd seized warehouses with weapons in Lviv. They were strong when they were standing there armed against people with truncheons and stones. But when they started to shoot back, they scattered. The boys ran after them, and further on the snipers were waiting...

20 FEBRUARY

[5]

OLEKSANDR NEVIDOMY (student from Kirovohrad):

A whole crowd of our people came running to the October Palace and routed the internal forces soldiers stationed there. Then I ran along the street with ten men. We split into two groups: four of us on the left and six running to the right. They had a portable barrier to screen themselves, and we had shields. Three of us held them straight ahead and I shielded them from above. We moved fast, but carefully. Shots were audible, but faraway somehow. Some local skirmishes were going on beyond the trees. We didn't feel any in serious danger.

We glanced to the sides – we seemed to be in control of the situation. Suddenly, I thought I'd spotted a sniper. Somewhere on a building, in camouflage – in a mask with slits for the eyes and mouth. Not a woolen one

like the ones you can buy at the bazaar on a Sunday, but a professional one, fitting the face closely. I thought then he was way off and couldn't do anything to us with a smoothbore rifle. [...]

I turned to my friends and then one of them fell down beside me, howling with pain. Then I realized – the bullets were real, and the sniper I'd seen was a professional. I bent down, cover us both with the shield and started pulling him along. The next bullet hit the shield. It went straight through and hit the pavement. Later, I understood that he was aiming at the middle of the shield, thinking that I was on my own and he'd get me in the ribcage or stomach. But because there were two of us – the expected target wasn't in the middle.

After covering a few metres I glanced at the wounded man and realized that I wasn't going to be able to help him. At the same second, a second bullet penetrated the shield and hit me in the hand. I felt a dull pain at once. [...] My hand dropped helpless. I couldn't hold up the shield, and I had one thought in my head: "Run!" and that's what I did. It wasn't panic [...] – my body seemed to summon itself together in a moment and switched to autopilot. I had one mission – to run, escape from the spot in which they were killing.

20 FEBRUARY

[13]

OLEKSANDR PRUDKO (doctor, organizer of the October Palace medical centre):

We spent the night at the Mykhailovsky monastery. I slept inside the church, under the pulpit, or whatever it's called – I was woken by singing. I opened my eyes, and three clergy were praying over me. I tried to get up and

the priest said very politely: “Apologies, we are in the middle of a service, but please rest.”

Yurko and I got up and headed for the Maidan to hand out masks to the boys on the barricades and workman’s gloves, whatever people wanted. Something for the throat, for coughing. We went to supplement our stocks and suddenly there was a shout: “Paramedic! Paramedic!” I looked round – they were carrying someone. One with a wound to the head, then a second with injured legs, then a third...

20 FEBRUARY [47]

VOLODYMYR HOLODNIUK (civil activist):

At that time, my son was in the 19th *sotnia* which had been broken up [18 February] at the Mariinsky Park. After that, six people were left – including him. He boasted to me: “Don’t worry, Dad, I’m lucky.”

When the first biggest daredevil headed up the hill along Instytutska, they ran into an area that was under sniper fire. There was no Berkut at that point, they’d vanished.

All of us then then, me too, were standing face to face with death. I watched as people died. But at that point, I didn’t think what might happen to me at all. We tried to screen someone with a shield, to pull aside an injured person. No one thought about themselves then. Just as my Ustym didn’t think about it. [...] And there was a real battle out there.

20 FEBRUARY [49]

VALERIY FISUN (retired serviceman):

Opposite the Hotel Ukraina someone fell against me – I’d been running behind him. He fell into my arms. I knelt down and tried to help him, to stop the bleeding. I started to drag him away from there. Then I heard and felt a blow to my side. I was wearing a bulletproof vest – two bullets had hit me.

I was still pulling the other guy down the street. There are Doctors by the stage. I asked: “How is he?” and the doctor said: “Another 10-15 minutes.” And he [Serhiy Kemsy] really was dying, in my arms, of blood loss.

I turned around and went up the hill. I brought back four more bodies.

20 FEBRUARY [47]

PAVLO DIOKIN (student from Lviv):

We saw our friend, Ihor Florcko, dragging Serhiy [Trapezun] who was wounded. It was terrifying, but something inside didn’t let you retreat... We picked up the shields – even though we knew the bullets could penetrate them – and hid underneath them. A boy was running towards us who also wanted to take cover... He was two metres away from us when they killed him – a bullet to the head. Another eight people were lying motionless in front of us. Shouts, hysteria... You could see it was a real war. Ihor Halushka began to screen a doctor with his shield so that he could save one of the fighters. I thought we wouldn’t get out alive from that barricade. I looked in the other direction, an older man was tying rope round the legs of someone who’d been shot and pulling him up the hill towards the hotel. If I hadn’t run over to help my conscience would have tormented me forever. I ran over.

20 FEBRUARY [21]

VOLODYMYR HONCHAROVSKY (worker):

I was dead tired and I'd come to my tent to change. I'd barely wiped my face and lay down when I heard the sudden explosion of a grenade – very powerful, as though it had exploded right by my ear. There was another boy with me – the two of us leapt up and ran out. We didn't ask questions, we just ran for it, seeing that our lot were being shunted back behind the October Palace. [...] When I saw how they shot some young boy with a bullet to the head it was as though I lost my mind. I knew only thing: my job was to get the bodies out of there. Dead or alive – it didn't matter. I dragged two out – they were alive. Then I went back for the next two – I knew one of them was dead.

I was mowed down and I fell – I tried to move, but my legs refused. I started to pray. Then I pulled my phone out of its case and phoned my mum: "Mum, I'm wounded, please forgive me for everything, I love you. Sorry..." I hung up. My mum knows that I like pranks, she thought I was fooling around. [...] I'd been pulling along a wounded person when a bullet hit me in the back, in my spine. Whoever was firing thought he'd finish me off, he got me in the right arm as well. [...] I thank God there was a boy who wasn't afraid either and ran to get me as well. He was short, I don't know how he managed to lift me. He ran up and asked:

- What's up?
- I can't feel my legs – I answered.
- I'm going to drag you by the legs, OK?
- Let's go.
- Are you wearing a safety vest? – he asked. – It's going to be along cobbles.

He shuffled me right to the Hotel Ukraina.*

20 LUTEGO

[44]

ANNA VOLOKHOVA (medical student):

It was worst at the Hotel Ukraina. There were no surgeons, not tables, only a few volunteers – 10 or 20 people. And the small amount of medication that we'd managed to bring. A great many people were lying there – with every kind of bullet wound. Corpses lying beside the living. Legs, heads, rib cages, hands, fingers ripped away, everything imaginable. They were trying to revive some man, unsuccessfully. They started to arrange the corpses under the stairs.

20 FEBRUARY

[20]

MYKHAILO SVYSTOVYCH (civil activist, member of the organisation "Vidsich"):

Why don't they run away? I know why we don't run away – we've been through it all, been here since the beginning, we're already dogged. But all these people – for whom it's the first such protest in their lives? I don't know or understand why. They were evidently so embittered, so accustomed to violence – it's like war, you gradually get used to it and you're not afraid. These people had lost their fear.

20 FEBRUARY

[14]

VOLODYMYR HOLODNIUK:

I think their aim was to shoot the boldest, the bravest. To frighten the rest. But it turned out that it wasn't possible just to shoot down those daredevils, because the next lot followed and the next. They started reinforcing the barricades on the October Palace side. It was then that my son's phone stopped answering. They called me to ask if he was with me. They said: "There's a rumour on the internet

* Volodymyr Honcharovsky was saved by Mykola Pankiv, who died that same day.

that Ustym is dead.” Then I left the field of battle and began to search for my son. I ran to the statue where there were some dead lying. Every sheet was harder to lift and to look. It was heartbreaking. Every time I prayed it wouldn’t be him. Then I ran to the city hall – I didn’t find him. He wasn’t by the Lechitic Gate either. I checked at the Mykhailovsky monastery, at Ukraine House – my son was not there either. It was then that they called me, that his body was at the Hotel Ukraina. That was the most difficult moment – when I heard that. My friends helped me to get there, because all my strength had drained away. I still can’t believe that my child is no longer here. [...]

Everyone said that Ustym looked after everyone around him at the barricades. To avoid panic he asked that if danger was imminent they should shout: “The sky’s falling!” That was to alert him to the threat. “The sky’s falling!” will forever ring in my head. Because it fell on him. And he will hold it up for us.

20 FEBRUARY

[49]

GILEAD KROATON (blogger):

Dying is not as terrible as waiting to die when you know death’s coming not in some hazy future but in a second or two. [...]

It’s terrible to watch a person decide to sprint from tree to tree and fall face up, twisting their arms awkwardly beneath them. It’s terrible to see bullets hammering into trees, showering splinters that fly painfully into faces. It’s terrible under gunfire to drag the bodies of the dead or wounded, with whom only five minutes earlier we were running to attack, wooden truncheons in our hands. It’s terrible to realize that all around is full of death, that it really is war. [...]

When our group stumbled into the firing zone, naturally we were afraid, till our knees shook, till we were hiccupping, shitting ourselves, but still we pressed forwards, two metres a minute. [...] I made it – a tree turned out to be wide and I managed and standing firmly, one hand on my chest (holding a shield with the other), I found myself relatively safe.

And all around was apocalypse. The rattle of automatic weapons, doctors running with no cover, without helmets, cries cutting across each other, distant sirens, the clatter of barricades we were forwards, flipping tyres over (so that the smoke from them would make a barrier between us and the people wielding automatic weapons, some burned, but the smoke – as I recall – didn’t blow towards them, but to the left a little and back), the knock of metal, as in previous, less bloody battles, the thin whine of ricochets – all of this almost drove me out of my wits.

[...] But ignoring all this – we proceeded. Defenceless. Frightened. Confused. Bloody. Dirty. But we went on. People were falling to the ground. I saw a boy in a motorbike helmet running across the road and he almost reached the hideout. Almost. I saw people fall like lightning (a bullet must have hit them in the head and death was instant), and others who fell as though in slow motion (quietly crouching, their heads dropping onto their chests, slumping unhurriedly sideways).

20 FEBRUARY

[45]

ANDRIY MALKIV:

On the slope by the October Palace I saw some boys leading a Berkut guy, shouting, “We’ve captured a sniper!” They were carrying weapons. They were hitting him

as they lead him. I called to my colleague that we had to defend him – we weren't animals like them. We have to try them, not beat them. We ran up to shield him. He was taken to the stage where the "Afghans" took him.

I left the stage and my phone rang. My father. I answered and heard a frightened voice: "You're alive, son, not wounded?" I said I was fine, I was alive. And then I heard: "They've killed Andriyko! Dyhdalovich! Did you see him?" I began to scream terribly. I said I'd call back. I ran to HQ, rang round my people, then on to my chief, handed on my tasks and ran to search for my uncle. At the post office – there was no one who looked like Andriy. City hall – no one there either. They told us that some people had been taken to the Mykhailovsky cathedral. We ran over there and looked – they were unloading two ambulances, laying out the dead. The second one was my uncle.

I sat down and called my father and said, it's true – I've found him. All I heard was crying. I'd never heard my father cry before. I phoned my mother, my wife, but I couldn't say anything – I was hysterical. I kept crying like a child, mumbling about a sniper that we'd saved – that it was surely him who'd killed Andriy. And I protected that murderer. I hated life then.

20 FEBRUARY

[47]

YURIY ANDRUKHOVYCH (writer):

It was hardest for Yulia [Votcher]. She was a volunteer from Vinnitsa. All those months of Maidan, all those days and nights, working in the medical centre. That day she was responsible for the telephones. All the mobiles of the casualties were brought to her. There was a long

row of them – right in front of her eyes. She had to answer calls for those who were no longer there. She looked with horror at all those silent Nokias and Samsungs. Then they started to ring, one after another. The most terrible sight was the word "Mum" showing up on the screen.

20 FEBRUARY

[48]

YULIA VOTCHER (volunteer, Maidan medical service):

I was on duty, on the hot line at the Mykhailovsky cathedral refectory. I had three phones, they rang a million times. Someone came up, gave me a box, and there were another three phones. He said: "You're going to be answering." Then they brought another one. "They belong to the boys who've died."

– Lord, why me?

– You're older. You'll find the words.

Soon enough, one of them began to ring. I took the phone and went outside, there were loads of people inside, it was crowded, noisy. I pressed the button almost automatically – not that I was ready to say anything – I hear: "Nazar! (*a mum looking for her son*) Nazar, Nazarchyk! Why aren't you saying anything?" I sat straight down on the ground. [...]

That first death is embedded in my heart, it entered my life forever. At that moment, I was ready to shoot. I'd never met this Nazar. He was the youngest child to die on the Maidan.* [...]

I saw so many wounded people and not a single one said: "What the hell do I need this for? Why did I come?" Not one.

20 FEBRUARY

[47]

* Nazar Voytovych, died aged 17.



PHOTO: ALEXEY FURMAN / EPA / PAP

← 21 February 2014.
Demonstrators attempt to break through a police cordon to reach the government buildings.

YEVHEN DYKYI (psychologist, university lecturer):

In fact, at that moment the positions of the Maidan and those three idiots on the stage finally diverged. After the shooting snipers that morning, no compromise was possible with Yanukovych. A decisive civil war broke out. We were heading for victory or for death, and our political leaders still kept hanging about in Yanukovych's anterooms and attempting to talk. They didn't actually represent us any more.

20 FEBRUARY

[14]

TATA KEPLER (producer, screenwriter) on Facebook:

I'm just going to leave everything here. These last three days. Today. The ambulances, pharmacies, doctors, cathedral, medicine, streets, faces, stairs, squares, barricades. I felt as though my knees couldn't bend any more. We were sorting an endless stream of medicine in the Mykhailovsky cathedral. Men and women brought what they could – from whole crates to handfuls of painkillers, which they held in their trembling old hands.

At a certain moment I turned my head and saw that a doctor from surgery was watching me. We looked at each other and without a word we stretched out our arms to each other. We stood embracing for five minutes and in that hug there was so much love, pain, grief, understanding, hope. And more – extraordinary boundless strength. A strength that obliterates fear.

And then Khreshchatyk again and it was: "Please take a mask, maybe a damp handkerchief, maybe you need something?" And the voice of the priest. And the crowd.

I saw four of them. On stretchers. Lying right on the ground. When I saw the shapes covered by a sheet,

I wanted to howl. The women were screaming, the men were crying, the tears made clear bright streaks on their black faces, sooty with smoke. And someone lit a candle, someone shouted: "Quiet!" and it seemed at that moment that the whole world was silent. And then cutting through the silence: "Glory to the heroes! Eternal glory!" In the midst of those cries, they were loaded into the ambulances and taken away. I couldn't stop myself, I cried my eyes out when the ambulance drove away and a man in a red jacket put his arms around me and said: "Enough tears, we'll avenge them, and you still have masks to hand out. Who'll take them from someone crying so hard?"

And there were people with black hands and bright eyes, in bike and battle helmets, with or without truncheons. When you're standing in the middle of it all, when you see the first barricade burn – you don't feel fear. No fear at all. You're driven by the desire for truth and not just you, you realize, but everyone, absolutely everyone you meet on your path. Everyone is important and indispensable. [...] People build barricades, treat people, distribute food, patrol, show their concern, helping and doing all kinds of things every day, whatever they could, and it was an awful lot.

21 FEBRUARY

[7]

ANDRIY NEPOSEDOV (cameraman):

I dropped in at the Hotel Ukraina, [...] and the producer told me that the Foreign Ministers [Polish – Radosław Sikorski, German – Frank-Walter Steinmeier and representing the French foreign minister – Eric Fournier] were at the President's administration. Yanukovych was supposedly there and apparently wanted to receive them

again. [...] I put on a protective vest and helmet and dashed along Liuteranska Street. They'd closed the other roads as they said there were snipers. I went out on the corner and someone shouted: "Halt!" I was startled and stood by the wall. And suddenly two bullets flew past my head – "pop, pop". [...]

There were three cordons next to the Administration building. First the Donetsk Berkut. Frankly, I was stunned when they let me through: there were trucks standing there, barricades behind them, embrasures in the barricades and beside each embrasure a sniper with a rifle; maybe six or seven. Rifles, grenade launchers, guns – they had everything. A second cordon stood before the entrance to the President's Administration – that was the Luhansk Berkut. They were swarming everywhere. [...]

I personally filmed Yanukovych, staring at his pen. I could see that everything was swimming before his eyes. He fixed his eyes on the paper, his hand was shaking. Somebody had to come up behind him and show him where he was to sign. He was holding the pen, his hand was all over the place and he couldn't focus on the right spot. Everyone had signed,* and he couldn't. Then he pulled himself together a bit, focused for a second, and with an angry "scrrrratch", he signed, threw down the pen and left.

An hour later we came out of the President's Administration and – not a single police officer. Deserted. And in the middle of that big square, a woman with a massive broom, in an orange cleaner's tabard [...]: "Well fuck them. Left mess and crap everywhere – take a broom to the lot of 'em!" she swept away.

21 FEBRUARY

[44]

YURIY ANDRUKHOVYCH:

[Kyiv] had gone terribly dark – pavements, walls, trees, faces. It seemed that black dust had eaten so deeply into their features, fissures and wounds, that it could never be washed away. As if the miners of Donbas had suddenly emerged onto the Maidan en masse, straight from the pits, unwashed after their shifts, but in camouflage for some unknown reason and in completely un-mining-like helmets.

Yes, fire. It was fire that burnt through everything it could reach. Fire, smoke, ash, wind and soot. Fire, which burnt the last bridges for compromise.

21 FEBRUARY

[48]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

In the evening, we were ready to invade the Maidan stage – by force, if need be – and declare no more compromises, no conversations. War until victory! It turned out that there were more groups such as ours. In the end, this role fell to Volodya Parasiuk. He went out onto the stage and voiced everything that we wanted to say.

21 FEBRUARY

[14]

VOLODYMYR PARASIUK (sotnia member) on the Maidan stage, speaking after the representative of the parliamentary opposition:

Our whole *sotnia* has come! We're not just some organization, we are the Ukrainian people, here to defend its rights! We're not from any sector, we're not from the *Samooborona* forces, we're simply a fighting hundred! I want to tell you that we, ordinary people, have this to

* The agreement with the President of Ukraine initiating a return to the constitution of 2004, early elections in December 2014, and an investigation into the use of violence against the people of the Maidan was signed by three of the opposition leaders: Vitali Klitschko, Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Oleh Tyahnybok and three representatives from the European Union – from France, Poland, and Germany.

say to our politicians, standing behind me [Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Vitali Klitschko, Oleh Tiahnybok]: “No Yanukovych – none – is going to remain president for the whole year! He’s to get out by tomorrow, by ten o’clock!” We’ve given the politicians the chance to be the ministers and presidents of the future! And they won’t fulfill this one condition – to make that thug beat it! [...] I don’t believe in these difficult political processes they’re talking about! 77 people have given their lives, and here are they, making contracts! Please: support this cause – I speak on behalf of my *sotnia*, of my father who is a part of it and has travelled to get here. If tomorrow by ten you do not request that Yanukovych resign, we will launch an armed assault! I swear to you!”

21 FEBRUARY

[21]

BOHDANA BABYCH (journalist):

I head for the Parliament, turn the corner, I look down Bankova Street – the guys with automatic weapons have gone. What’s this? I come closer – everyone’s gone. Closer still – there’s no security at all by the President’s Administration. Shock. It starts to sink in, that Yanukovich has probably fled.

I climb over the fence. I go inside and begin a live broadcast – straight to camera: “Yanukovych has fled! At last! Fled like a rat!”* I say that today we took over the President’s Administration, tomorrow we will take Mezhyhirya. I shout into the ether. Euphoria!

21 FEBRUARY

[46]

YURIY ANDRUKHOVYCH:

I almost died of happiness. Dmytro rang in the morning and suggested a trip to the Mezhyhirya residence.

[...] Mezhyhirya stood open and without protection – with all its legendary ostriches, camels, Greek ruins, exotic plants and birds, paintings stolen from museums, golden loaves** and toilet seats, and all the goods they didn’t have time (didn’t want) to take. And without Yanukovych.

Yanukovych had fled?! The revolution had triumphed?!

It took all my strength to calm my delirious heart, ready to burst at any second, and swallowed paranormal doses of corvalol. It would have been unjust and inappropriate of it to refuse cooperation on such a day.

22 FEBRUARY

[14]

YEVHEN DYKYI:

A phone call: “Boys, the situation has changed. Our intelligence is reporting that the government district is empty, it has to be guarded so that people don’t start spontaneously looting.” We understood first that this was the final victory, and secondly – that now we had to switch from the role of combatant to that of policeman. For the first four hours we were the ones guarding Yanukovych’s gold.

They transferred us to his hunting residence Sukholuchchya. We were aghast at the vulgarity. Such crazy amounts of money thrown around with no taste. A four-metre plasma screen in the lavatory, right opposite the toilet. When you looked it, the thought hit you: it was for this they were killing people?

22 FEBRUARY

[14]

→ → On the next page:
22 February 2014.

* Viktor Yanukovych left Kyiv on 21 February 2014 after 22:00.

** A loaf of lifesize golden bread, among other things, was found in Yanukovych’s luxury residence.

OLEKSIY FILANOVSKY (marketing director):

Politics is not the battle of good against evil; it hides within itself a million tones and shades. There was no room for politics here. This was a battle between good and evil.

22 FEBRUARY [20]

YULIA ORLOVA (ethnologist) in her diary:

Black earth... Red earth. The people knelt down and cried. I wanted to kiss this earth, to lie down on it, absorbing all that pain – and to cry and cry and cry...

But there are creatures that take snaps of themselves against the background of barricades and death. I can't call them human beings.

22 FEBRUARY [22]

NATALIA YERYOMENKO (journalist, poet):

Ironically, everything began with our desire to become Europeans. Ironically, we were distinguished from Europeans by the very un-European trait (among others) of forgetfulness. The inability to build an unbroken line of historical memory, the breaking and forgetting of experiences. And the one who absorbs the lessons of history weakly, remains for another year. History gives a second chance to the ones who waste their opportunity to become European.

It worked somehow the previous time. This time, the price of our ignorance turned out to be too high. This isn't victory, it is just a chance. One more. Everything that has happened should be fixed in our memory. This time (fingers crossed) – for ever. [...] There won't be another chance like it. We won't survive another one.

22 FEBRUARY [45]



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COVER PHOTO 24 January 2014. Riots on Hrushevsky Street.

Photo: Agata Grzybowska / Agencja Gazeta

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