

Interview with Lyubomyr Petrenko (L.P.). Interviewer: Olesya Yaremchuk (O.Y.). Place of record: Lviv.

O.Y.: I would like to start with the Revolution on the Granite and the question as what were its causes? What did people talk about at home back then? Were there protest moods before the 1990s?

L.P.: The Soviet regime was spoken about very cautiously. I can recall that I started to listen to “enemy’s” voices when I was twelve. We had a tube receiver at home then, and my father would leave it on in his room (he might have done it purposefully or accidentally). I would come in, listened to music programmes at first, and later on to political ones. In that way I was filled in with the information that would come, so to speak from the free world. Besides, we often had people come by our home, and we went over to people’s homes as well (my parents always took me along). There were relevant discussions on the Ukrainian issue or democratic values. Maybe, not so much in the political aspect, as rather in the political-cultural aspect. This is how I was formed. Of course, like within most Lviv families, there was skepticism to all that was Soviet and communist. Our family did not differ much from ordinary Galician families.

History

Soviet Union

Influences

Media (radio)

Influences

Family

Topics about politics and culture, being discussed by adults

O.Y.: Was anyone in your family taken to Siberia or other camps?

L.P.: My mother’s family was taken out to Karelia for a certain period of time. Without any reasons. After the war, they were “sent out”. “To be sent out” meant that the punishment was not so terrible. My father was in concentration camps, as most captives who came from Germany. People had to go through “filtration”. They were forced to labour in Chukotka first, and later at the reconstruction of the Donbas mines. Nothing else was more horrible.

History

Soviet deportations

Nazi repressions

O.Y.: Perhaps the people who returned from the camps viewed communism totally different.

L.P.: Apparently so. Very many had suffered from it.

O.Y.: You remember that in your teen age you could listen to the topics that were being discussed by the adults. How different was the story spoken of at home from the officially declared narrative?

L.P.: It was different in many instances. My father was a pro-national communist. There were borotbists (Fighters) at a certain point in Ukraine. My granddad was borotbist. I did not know it before. My father told me about that. My family comes from the East of Ukraine, my father came from the Poltava Region, and my mother came from the Khmelnytskyi Region. My granddad was a free kozak in Petlyura's army. When the army was defeated, he got somehow influenced by the communist propaganda. At that time "Ukrainian communist party", as a branch of the official communist party, was formed. Its members were called "ukapists" or borotbists. Those were the 1920s, the revival period, the silver period in Ukrainian literature. They were all apprehended soon after. Those were ideas of the Executed Revival. On the one hand, they believed in communism, on the other, in the Ukrainian nation. Such a combination. My father would adhere to that course for a long time. Both, in his writings, and in his daily life. Good illustration for this was Moky, the main character of Mykola Kulish' "Myna Mazaylo", who supported the idea of ukrainization (Ukrainian nation) on the one hand, and protested against Petliurism (Symon Petlyura's ideas). Such attitudes prevailed at that time.

History

Symon
Petliura's army

Ukrainian
communist
party (1918-
1920)

Borotbists

Ukapists

O.Y.: You said that your parents came from the East, how did your family get to the West then?

L.P.: My father began to write while being in the concentration camp, and afterwards when he laboured in the Donbas mines. Later he was sent to the West to work for a newspaper. At first it

was in Brody. After the war the authorities wanted to take over the information space, that was empty after the withdrawal retreat of the Poles, Germans and so on. They began to form new media and a new cultural system, the system of intellectuals. People from the East were invited here to help fill the niche. My father worked for the Brody newspaper, later he entered the Department of Journalism (at the University). My mother graduated from the Medical College in Odesa, and also came here for employment. She studied journalism in the Correspondent Department. That way they met.

O.Y.: You said that your father had sober view on communism. What was his reaction to the first moves before the Revolution on the Granite?

L.P.: Absolutely positive. In that communist-nationalist dichotomy he preferred nationalism. A national revival was something he strived for. Perhaps not most dramatically. I believe he would have been satisfied with the Ukrainian autonomy or some kind of an arrangement where the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian traditions could function. As far as the political matters were concerned, he was not interested in them, which explains why he did not think of them that much; he did not visualize them.

O.Y.: You are saying that there he had people with whom he had ties and communication, can you mention their names?

L.P.: For the most part they were artists, writers, composers, and actors. Fedir Strygun, Yevhen Beznisko, Vitaliy Roztalniy, Myroslav Skoryk, Stanislaw Lyudkevych, to name a few.

O.Y.: Can you tell me if your family had communication with the priests?

L.P.: No, we didn't. My mother was more religious, she was Catholic so she would go to the Cathedral or St Antoni Roman Catholic Church. My father began to go to church in late years, yet not on a regular basis. It was somewhat late for him to become a practicing Christian.

O.Y.: What was popular to read at that time?

L.P.: Pavlo Zagrebelniy, for instance. In 1988 Oles Honchar's "Cathedral" was published. There were writings from the 1920s starting with Mykola Kulish and finishing with Mykola Khvylyoviy.

O.Y.: Can you share your story? Who was the first person that you met how did you join that group of people?

L.P.: Roughly speaking, I joined that group by the mere fact of my birth. My parents brought me into that environment. My parents were friends with the Horyns (Mykhailo and Olha Horyns were Ukrainian dissidents, and human rights activists – comment by the author) and it was because of them.

O.Y.: Can you name the reasons that led to the protests?

L.P.: It is nowadays that some people tell fables that in the Soviet Union life was great and complain that such a "great country was broken". In fact, all who can recall their past life without rosy glasses, realize that it was a rich country as a state, as the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) rated second or third after the United States and Japan, but in reality the living conditions for

History

Soviet Union

ordinary people were very bad. On the one hand, people were kept ignorant of what was happening in the world and how other nations lived in Western countries, or even in the countries of the so-called socialist democracy. For instance, I experienced a real shock when for the first time we went abroad to Germany in 1980. My father was invited there as a political prisoner. The German Socialist Party invited him to visit “places of fame”.

It was a cultural shock for all of us. We saw the way people lived there, for us it was a paradise on the earth. Clean trains, everything was tidy, the selection of goods in a store was beyond comprehension. Yet, on the other hand, everybody had TV aerials. We had TV aerials tuned towards Poland; they had aerials tuned towards West Germany. We could see what was it like over there. We could see the gap between our country and the GDR, and a three times bigger gap between our country and the FRG. Therefore, the first reason for the protest were the bad material conditions and attempts to improve them.

The second reason, was democratic rights. Few could tolerate that there were taboo topics, that the war was altered by the truth as described in George Orwell.

The third reason was the desire to freely cross the border. When we were applying for a visa for the second time in 1987, and I was of full age already, I had to get a dozen of references validated. I had to pass three commissions, one of the Party, one of the Komsomol, and something else. Besides, we had to leave in our internal passports in order to be able to go abroad. We were issued international passports, but upon our returning, we had to exchange them for our internal passports. Keeping the international passport on hand was not permitted – God forbid, as an idea to go abroad might strike your head any time.

The fourth reason was, in principle – people got sick and tired of the system in the Soviet Union. Those were the incentives.

O.Y.: Can you tell me about the foundation of the Student Brotherhood? You mentioned you were student at the Polytechnic Institute. How that group was being formed? How was Student Brotherhood was established?

Influences

Visit to
Germany in
1980's

Revolution on the Granite

Motivations

Bad material
conditions

Democratic
rights

L.P.: The idea of the foundation was conceived at the Department of Journalism of the Lviv University. There were two ambitious fellows, Volodymyr Pankeyev (he passed away 6 years ago, he had held the position of the deputy editor in chief of the newspaper “Day”) and Oleh Kuzan (he does some kind of business now). Yurko Loban was also with them. They began to develop this idea. It was by chance that I met them at the end of 1988. It was the tipping point, the time when the protests started in Lviv. At first they took place in front of the Franko statue. Later the protests were prohibited so people would gather in small groups. Then, the decision was made to form an active core group that would invite people to the “apartments”. To put it bluntly, the point was to select individuals by “face control” with the purpose to create the initiative group which would form the National Front. Later it was named the “National Movement”.

Actors

“National Movement”

Andriy Salyuk
Markiyan
Ivashchyshyn

I met Kuzan and Pankeyev in one of such apartments. They said: “We are building the Student Brotherhood”. Then I thought: “Super, great idea!”. I brought the idea to the Polytechnic Institute. There it was picked up instantly. By Andriy Salyuk, for instance. I did not know yet about Marek Ivashchyshyn then. But one day soon after, when I was sticking ads all over with the appeal to get assembled, Ivashchyshyn showed up with some fellows from other departments. In that way, the core group of the Student Brotherhood was formed at the Polytechnic Institute. We held our constituent assembly, and the movement began to expand. At the early stage, when the movement existed only within the Department of Journalism, it seemed to have been operating like some clandestine elite club, where there were preconditions for it to become widespread. It was at the Polytechnic Institute where the movement started. It all seemed to work out – at the Medical Institute, the Forestry Institute, and the Polytechnic Institute. By May 1989 it turned into a widespread student movement.

History

Student Brotherhood in Lviv

Actors

Volodymyr
Pankeyev
Oleh Kuzan
Yurko Loban

O.Y.: You are saying that there were separate groups, but at the same time, the general meeting of all those brotherhoods.

History

Student Brotherhood in Lviv

L.P.: I am not sure if the constituent assembly was held in other institutes. At the Polytechnic Institute they founded the Regional Student Brotherhood at once, and later on under the cover of the Regional Student Brotherhood they began to assemble meetings in other institutes.

You mentioned the first protests were held in 1988. What were they protesting against?

L.P. The very first mass rally occurred spontaneously. Its purpose was to create some kind of “Fellowship of the Ukrainian Language”. It was just a cultural movement. We tried to present it without any political implications or ambitions. That we wanted create a society which would support the Ukrainian language. Nothing of the anti-Soviet kind.

That took place around the 20th-21st of June 1988. I don’t remember exactly. Everybody assembled for the constituent meeting in the Builders’ Community Center. There was a gate before the stairs of the building which turned out to be locked. The communist authorities got fearful and ordered to lock the gate, even though it had never been locked before. Everybody realized that it was a provocation. ”Oh yeah?”, everybody got irritated and we moved to the Franko statute for a rally. At that point to declare one’s thoughts out loud was quite astounding. And the thoughts were quite daring.

O.Y.: What slogans were uttered at that first piquet?

L.P.: For the Ukrainian language and to place a monument to Taras Shevchenko. At those times there was a tricky formula – Lenin’s national policy. Everything could be read out from Lenin’s works. Even that the Ukrainian state could exist, which became free from the imprisonment of Russia’s nations. Those words could also be found in Lenin’s works. We used that, in particular, with the purpose to carry forward the idea of an independent Ukrainian state.

O.Y.: It was the cultural environment that played a very important role in the Revolution on the Granite. The caroling with Nativity play, performances, or actions, can you recall anything of that?

Revolution on the Granite

L.P.: As to the Nativity play, I remember very well that the militia was ordered to catch the performers, bring them to the police stations and keep them there at least for while. That was in practice up until 1988. We already were not afraid to walk on the streets. We knew that the democratic movement was there. There was the Theater Company called "Aim", the "Ukrainian Language association". It was possible to hold the constituent conference in December 1988. In February 1989 I also participated in an all-Ukrainian constituent conference. This shows that an organization that was an alternative to the communist party was created. Even though it was clearly a cultural organization, no one was asking for anything more. The main thing was that people could rely on it in their activities. That was a very strong incentive to keep going.

History

People's Movement of Ukraine Constituent conference in February 1989

The constituent conference of the "National Movement" was held at the Assembly Hall of the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute in September 1989. There was a political background already in existence. There was the Ukrainian Helsinki Union, which turned into the Ukrainian Democratic Party in 1990. Then, other parties were created, the Democratic Party in 1990 (writers Volodymyr Yavorivskiy and Dmytro Pavlychko initiated that). It was already possible to find some party framework. The political monopoly of the communist party collapsed, although it was stated in Article #6 of the Constitution that the communist party was the only legal party in the country.

As to the cultural surrounding, its role can be defined as the key. It was important to realise that the Ukrainian culture was not a marginal culture. That was forced to be imbedded into our heads all the time. Then Ukrainian rock music emerged, the Theater-Cabaret "Ne Zhurys" (Don't Worry) emerged... the Festival "Vyvykh" (Contortion) emerged...etc.

O.Y.: Can you say what was your role in the Student Brotherhood and in the Revolution on the Granite. What did you do?

History

Student Brotherhood in Lviv

L.P.: I was a member of the Board of the Student Brotherhood. Since the Student Brotherhood was not the only foundation, there were also other organizations, like “Ukrayinska Spilka” (“Ukrainian Union”) or “Nova Khvylya” (“New Wave”) in Odesa, the idea of the confederation of Ukrainian students came up to unite them under one umbrella. I was elected a co-chair from the Western Region. The most absurd was that fact that Vyacheslav Pikhovshek was the co-chair from the Central Region. But that conference did not work.

O.Y.: Vyacheslav Pikhovshek is said to have leaked the information on hunger strike.

L.P.: He was known to be the KGB agent already in 1988, when the Hromada (Community) society was founded in Kyiv. There was a joke: “Pikhovshek is a snitch. Ahaha”. He would sometime speak about himself in this way as well, “But I snitch”. We tried to avoid that in our conversations. Sometimes we asked one another: “Is that guy a snitch? What about that one?”. In the Soviet Union everybody was scared of informers. Eventually, we decided to quit suspecting everybody. Until somebody exposed himself, we would not take him for a snitch.

O.Y.: What were your expectations of the first protests that you organised?

L.P.: The first protests were directed at the attempts to influence the system of education. It was for teaching in the Ukrainian language. Over the 5 years of study at the Institute I did not have a single lecture in the Ukrainian language. We were told that the reason for that were the foreign students who studied there – they did not speak Ukrainian. There were students from Bulgaria, Hungary. That is why the lectures were delivered in Russian, and we had to put up with that. We also required for the Western system of teaching where students can choose a course. We wanted the trade union had to be different from what it was. We required for the system of student protection to be completely changed. Also, we insisted that the komsomol should no longer exist

because it was a political organisation. That is officially they would exist as komsomol circles. There were 5 individuals at the Polytechnika who “were on the pay rate”. So, one of the requirements was to expel the “first sections” from the institutes. Those were the KGB branches in the institutes.

Among early protests another one was held in 1989, before the election to the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union. Ivan Drach was running as a candidate, though his participation in the election was not at all desirable for the authorities. And during the procedure of the candidate validation at the Polytechnika we stood outside the Assembly Hall and were shouting out loud in support for Drach. There were several thousand people there.

His name was crossed out from the list. Then we came up with an idea how to disrupt the election. We spread the appeal that no one would show up for the election. That would result in a recognition of the election to be invalid. At that time there was no system of election forging yet. Only 30 per cent showed up, so the re-election was ordered.

O.Y.: When you organized the protests were you looking at the protests that had taken place in Poland or the Czech Republic for instance? Or maybe you looked deeply into the Ukrainian history, to the Cossacks?

L.P.: We would not think about the situation behind the border that much as we did not have enough information. We did look back to the Cossack times, of course. The book by Dmytro Yavornytskyi on the Cossack history became very popular just at that time. All people began to buy books on the history of Ukraine. They started to publish books by Mykola Arkas and Mykhailo Hrushevskiy.

In regards to the Cossacks period – the concepts of the constitution, election, free country, rights and freedoms were of great importance to us.

History

Parliamentary election in Ukrainian SRR in 1990

History

Cossack times

We used to play Cossacks. There are pictures where the whole Student Brotherhood society wore Cossacks outfits.

O.Y.: Now moving closer to the events that took place in the 1990s, to the hunger strikes, can you share with me what you remember of that period and what was your part there?

L.P.: To be honest, I was among the few who were against the hunger strike. Already at that time I was interested in international relations and began to study the history of protests. I understood that starvation was not the method to promote our ideas. When do we have to resort to hunger strike? For instance, in a case when your supporters have been put under arrest and you demand their release. Or there was some other type of injustice and there is no other way of showing protest but to starve. When the goal is to change the social system and to regenerate it, starvation does not seem to work. You starve for what sake? To starve so that Moscow would separate Ukraine from its empire? Or to free the prime minister?

Starvation could work out in very particular situations. In this case it did not make any sense. However, because the decision to go on a hunger strike had been made, my part was to organize the students' march from Lviv to Kyiv. Later when the "Voice of America" offered me a job, staying in Kyiv I already worked as a reporter, covering the hunger strike. Personally, I did not starve. I have to admit being wrong. Though, I still adhere to believe that those requirements should not have been brought forward by a hunger strike. However, the impact it had in the country stirred up the society. The hunger strike showed to people that it was possible to fight for your rights. It demonstrated that there were people who were ready to give their lives for that. Because hunger strike meant that you starve to death. Besides, as it turned out there were numerous people in other regions of Ukraine who stood in favour of the collapse of the Soviet Union, in favour of the national idea, and the democratic freedoms. They would come to the Maidan, brought money for those who starved for the cause, provided support in other ways. There were a lot of intelligent people among those who came to the Maidan. It was the demonstration of power. It was the proof to living Ukrainian democratic idea which could transform into something bigger. We realised that it was possible to form a separate state.

Revolution on the Granite

Forms of protest

Hunger strike

Forms of protest

Students' march from Lviv to Kyiv

Activity

Organizational support

Motivations

Democratic rights

National idea

Actors

People

Place

Independence Square in Kyiv

Activity

Supplies (money)

O.Y.: How did your parents take that?

L.P.: My parents were not much into politics, still – on the other hand – they supported my activities. They did not support starvation. As which mother or father would support their child to be starving?

O.Y.: How do you assess the organisation of the piquet? How was it all coordinated?

L.P.: No one knew what would come out of it all. At first the students in Kyiv did not support starvation. It was later on that Oleksandr Doniy perceived “Well, starving is a very good thing, we have to join immediately and even preside it”. The student activists in Kyiv turned out not to be ready for that. In fact, Lviv imposed the hunger strike to them. It was the charismatic Marek Ivashshyshyn who made the Kyiv activists join. At that time the communist power would not take the risk to disperse the camp. Kravchuk could have been realising that he could somehow take advantage of what was happening. It is hard to say what the motifs of the Ukrainian communist authorities were. Thus, they did not dare to disperse the camp. They sent provokers there, but the camp withstood it.

Some demands of those on the hunger strike were met. Therefore, we could loosely regard the hunger strike to have been successful.

O.Y.: Did you report on it in the media?

Actors

Oleksandr
Doniy

Student
activists

Markiyan
Ivashchysyn

Leonid
Kravchuk

Forms of protest

Putting
tents

Activity

Information support

(report to
„Voice of
America”)

L.P.: Yes. My godfather lived in Kyiv, so I would come back home in the evening, there were telephone calls from Voice of America, and I would report to them over the phone, and then the information would go on air.

O.Y.: I also have a question to you regarding your professional formation as a journalist. You mentioned that you began to study international relations and the history of protests. Why made you find interest in that?

L.P.: When I was in school I was interested in studying history. However, at a certain moment I got interested in technology and that brought me to the Faculty of the Semiconductor and Electronic Appliances, where I met Andriy Salyuk. Apart from that, with the change, the national revival started in the country, and I started to read everything that was published. Starting with “Ogonyok” (“Small flame”) where interesting historical revelation of Stalinism or the French Revolution were published. I was enthusiastic about reading everything on the world history that was legally published. Also, I engaged in taking photos and cinematography. When I worked for the “Voice of America”, I decided to enter the Department of Journalism at the University, and I joined the correspondent department. Later I moved to international journalism.

In 1997 I was invited by “Deutsche Welle” for a training. The idea of opening a Ukrainian editorial office came up just then.

O.Y.: Can you recall any symbolic moments from the Revolution on the Granite?

L.P.: It is difficult to single something out. The famous march was held on the last Sunday of the revolution. It was marked by its mass demonstration. The impression was that a million people walked through Hryshchivskiy Street. That was the first mass walk in Kyiv. The Revolution gave the

Influences

Education

Published materials about world history, photos and cinematography

Revolution on the Granite

Forms of protest

March

Mass demonstration

Place

Hrushevskogo street in Kyiv

whole country an impetus to move in a particular direction; it brought people on the Maidan closer together. Because in reality only 10% of the people starved. The rest formed masses.

O.Y.: What do you think was won and the lost by the Revolution on the Granite?

L.P.: What it won was that the communist system was challenged and the symbolic victory was achieved. As it was declared that authorities would meet the demands. Actually, later those demands came to naught. In reality, the demands were not fulfilled. I talked to many people later on. We discussed the point that if the hunger strike had been held in 1991, when independence was declared, with the demand to hold election to the new Parliament instead of to the USSR, the outcome would have been quite different.

O.Y.: If the protest had not taken place, would independence have been won?

L.P.: Again, it's difficult to say so.

O.Y.: How strong do you think was the impact of the protests on independence declaration?

L.P.: I believe that the impact was very strong. Because people stopped being fearful. Earlier in Lviv the idea of independence was talked about, but not distinctly. After the protests it was made very clear – we needed independence.

O.Y.: What do you think, to what degree, that revolution was “western”? Can it be ascribed to Lviv?

L.P.: Definitely, in the early stage. It was Lviv in particular that organized everything. But soon people from all regions joined. Therefore, the western factor began to get loosen.

Actors

Lviv residents

People from all of the regions of Ukraine

O.Y.: What about the next protests, for instance “Ukraine without Kutchma” or the “Tax Maidan”? How much they relied on the first revolution?

L.P.: In 1992 another hunger strike was held, but it wasn’t so widespread. By the way, the weather was just great during the first hunger strike. There were outstanding episodes of dancing there. There are photos on which the protestors were dancing surrounded by the militia. I did not quite understand what exactly the protesters demanded during the second hunger strike. The prime minister was dismissed, but his position was taken by Kuchma.

Revolution on the Granite

Orange Revolution

Place

Germany

Activity

Organizational support (organization of small „maidans”)

Information support (spread the information)

The Revolution on the Granite has become a symbol. Recently, I got to meet with my Polish colleagues and they said to me: “We began to take you seriously after the Revolution on the Granite. As Ukraine has demonstrated its capability to defend itself, and achieve something.

Actors

Spokesperson from the German Parliament

O.Y.: What actions did you take part in after the Revolution on the Granite?

The representatives from “Christian-Democratic Union”)

External solidarity

Wearing symbolic things (orange scarves)

L.P.: At the time of the of the Orange Revolution I was in Germany working for “Deutsche Welle”. I realized that it was one thing was to be present at the Maidan and another thing was to be able to help professionally. Sometimes it is even more important. I helped in the organization of small “maidans” in Germany, coordinated their actions, and contacted Ukrainian groups. There were Germans who were ready to support Ukrainians.

We worked two shifts at “Deutsche Welle” so that we could receive information and translate it into German. The most interesting material was sent to the general editorial office to be published in many languages, as it was a very hot topic. I remember the spokesperson from the German Parliament coming to our office. The representatives of the Christian-Democratic Union wore orange scarves. There it was pronounced that “Ukrainian editorial office of the ‘Deutsche Welle’ have done a lot of good stuff”. I was pleasantly surprised that our work was praised.

O.Y.: Who do you think is responsible for the political decisions during the Orange Revolution, and who was its leader?

L.P.: Now it is difficult to single out who lobbied this or that decision. A lot of decisions were pushed through by Poroshenko on the one side and Tymoshenko on the other side, and she had the ability to play well in the backroom discussions.

Actors

Petro
Poroshenko?

Yulia
Tymoshenko

O.Y.: What was the role of the richest Ukrainians in the Orange Revolution?

L.P.: Undoubtedly, very essential. Defining, in fact. The Orange Revolution, like other transformations, was built on certain influences. The revolution could be held, and it could have come to naught, if there had been no particular political wing that would ensure the Parliament political span. And that political wing at that time undoubtedly relied on certain oligarchy groups, which pushed their interests through Parliament decisions.

Actors

The oligarchs

Orange Revolution

O.Y.: What do you think were the main goals of the Orange Revolution?

Motivations

Desire for European
integration

L.P.: First and foremost to choose the western way of development. We can have long discussions on what tax system should be like, or what are the media system or the government functions, but definitely, if we choose the western vector of development, then sooner or later, the West will make us accept their rules of the game. Their rules are openness, honest competition, fighting corruption. If we choose the West, we agree with those main principles of western democracy.

O.Y.: How can you assess the engagement of foreign politicians into the regulation of the situation in Ukraine then? Speaking of Adamkus or Kwasniewski, for instance?

L.P.: Absolutely positive. It was plain to see that those were the people who were considerate to the situation in Ukraine and they wished that their countries bordered with a democratic state. Because stability of the Kuchma's way was very doubtful, as in any moment a revolution similar to the Latvian one could break up, where the dictator would be executed. Only the Orange Revolution ensured a steady system on all levels. The politicians, who promoted a steady development, and not the one stage development, understood that stability in Ukraine is the only guarantee to stability on the Eastern borders of the European Union. Kwasniewski understood that, as did the heads of the Baltic states and the main players of the Western system – the Chancellor of Germany, the President of France or America. Therefore, they all tried to support the offshoots that appeared after Orange Revolution.

O.Y.: Did you feel any disappointment after Orange Revolution?

L.P.: No, I didn't. It was clear to me what was possible to achieve. Myroslav Marynovych once prompted me the difference between the western and the eastern approach to power. He said to me, "Look here, in the eastern system there is a tsar, who impersonates power on earth and above". He is good by any means, and only some officials might be bad. We are inclined to believe in a good

Western solidarity

Concern

Supporting the offshoots after Orange revolution

Actors

Aleksander Kwasniewski

Heads of the Baltic countries

Chancellor of Germany
Gerhard Schroder

President of France Jacques Chirac

President of United States

tsar, but know that a man is fundamentally sinful. Therefore, it requires creating a system of laws and traditions that would allow precluding power abuse. This makes all the difference. That is why, when we choose the western system, we care more about the legislations and not about the person to be the head of the country.

O.Y.: Was the political system changed at least partly as a result of the Orange Revolution?

L.P.: Absolutely. After the Orange Revolution Ukraine became a better country. The society became more experienced, more aware of what it really wanted from the system, from itself and from the top leadership. On the other side, the government got better, at least in the aspect of moving closer to the West. It became more open. Though we understand that it has never become fully open. It cannot happen at once. It takes generations to change priorities, habits. Systems have to be changed. So far we are on the way to what we really want to see in leadership. In my opinion, the step back with electing Yanukovich after the Orange Revolution has brought some positive side as an experience. It has demonstrated to the people in the Eastern Ukraine, "You have elected your Yanukovich, so what? Has he done any good? Nothing at all. He kept stealing even more". We have to consider changing the system, and not the person in leadership.

**Orange
Revolution**

Outcomes

O.Y.: What caused the outbreak of the social protests in 2013?

L.P.: The western way of development was blocked. And, actually that's the beauty of the Euromaidan. It reacted to the renunciation for entering a better, more transparent, more humane world. Even despite understanding that joining the eastern world would bring us more wealth for a while. On the one hand, the country leadership wanted to take the western vector of development away from us, on the other hand, we realized that Yanukovich wanted to ensure his long-term reign. As then he wouldn't have had to respond to the reaction and requirements from the West. In

**Revolution of
Dignity**

Motivations

Western way of
development

Authoritarianis
m

Actors

Victor

particular power usurpation. Though, I believe, Maidan should have come about in 2010, when the constitutional coup was effectuated, and Yanukovych was allowed to usurp power.

O.Y.: When I asked you about Orange Revolution you also spoke about the aspiration for the western system. Similar comments were heard during the Euromaidan. So, it is not about the change in power, but about Ukraine's development strategy?

L.P.: Absolutely.

O.Y.: Did you take part in the Euromaidan? If so, what was your part in it?

L.P.: Only in Lviv. I couldn't go to Kyiv because of my children. And because of my job. We, the media, felt as if we were on the forefront. There were many handicaps that emerged for electronic media. Massive attacks and hacking were started. Our site had been blocked several times (that is zaxid.net – comment of the author). One didn't have to go to Kyiv to find oneself in the swirl of the fight.

We did patrolling the streets or blocked "internal troops" buses to depart for Kyiv.

O.Y.: I have asked already about communication with the priests during the Revolution on the Granite. And what do you think was the role of the clergy during the Euromaidan?

L.P.: A human strives for spiritual support. In the 1990s the national revival was very much related to a religious revival. As a counter-proposal to the communist ideology. It was surely important then. When a priest support is available, it motivates to keep on fighting.

Place

Lviv

Activity

Self-defence
(Patrolling
the streets,
blocking
„internal
troops”
buses)

External solidarity

Priests support

O.Y.: What do you think of the other countries politics during the Euromaidan?

**External
solidarity**

L.P.: In principle, rather positive, as Germany demonstrated its active support, as well as the United States. These are the main players of the Western scene. The Poles showed that they were active supporters too. There is no reason to complain that someone under-fulfilled their task. We have to understand that there are limits in providing support.

Demonstrating support

Actors

Germany

Events

O.Y.: Which point, in your opinion, was the crucial moment of the Euromaidan?

Deaths of participants on Feb 20th

L.P.: February 20th. Then, on the one hand, it was clear that the revolution had succeeded, and on the other hand, people were killed. The reporters and cameramen deserved huge respect for the fact that they provided coverage of what was happening there on the Maidan in real time, when in fact, the whole squadrons of internal troops soldiers surrendered. It became clear that the system was falling apart.

Actors

Reporters and cameramen

Actors

Internal troops soldiers

O.Y.: In your opinion, were other revolutions of the 20th century important for the participants of these revolutions? Or other momentums in the history of Ukraine?

History

Mykhailo Hrushevsky reign (1917-1918)

L.P.: Absolutely. While in the Student Brotherhood we would wonder what had been going on in the Central Council, how the leadership was formed when Hrushevskiy was President or Vynnychenko. What was happening in Lviv in 1918 when Vitovskiy raised the flag? How the government body was formed under Petrushevych reign? That is, we did not look up to Poland or the Czech Republic for inspiration, but to our history, what happened in Ukraine. We wanted to reinforce our actions with ideas of the past, what had taken place earlier.

Volodymyr Vynnychenko reign (1918-1919)

November Uprising in Lviv, 1918

Yevhen Petrushevych reign (1918-1919)

O.Y.: What was the protesters' attitude to the Soviet power and the Russia's imperial role?

L.P.: It was absolutely negative. It was taken as the "prison for nations" and we had to get rid of it. The expression by Mykola Khvylyoviy, "Away from Moscow!" became popular again.

O.Y.: How do you think oligarchy in Ukraine affects the political situation now?

L.P.: Regrettably, in the most direct way. Though, there are effective regulations that circumscribe their influence. That is why the law on electronic declaration was protracted for so long. Because it ensures transparency. Transparency is the main enemy of the oligarchy.

O.Y.: If speaking about the stratum of the society which organised the revolutions, who are those people? Who do you think is the propeller for protests?

L.P.: During the Revolution on the Granite it was the student circles. Later we were supported by the Narodniy Rukh (People's Movement). Speaking of the Orange Revolution, there were more developed oppositional parties. Yushchenko could have combined forces of all oppositional parties around himself.

The civil society is formed by such protests. It is important to control those in power and keep the awareness that they can be replaced at any moment. The civil society is the most important. Who has won the election is not so important.

**Revolution on
the Granite**

Actors

Students

People's
Movement of
Ukraine

**Orange
Revolution**

Actors

Political
opposition

Victor
Yushchenko