

Interview with Vladimir Derkach (V.D.), Interviewer: Vitaliy Ovcharenko (V.O.), Place of record: Kyiv.

V.O.: Please, introduce yourself.

V.D.: Derkach Vladimir Grigorievich. I am 64 years old. I was born, grew up and got married in Donetsk. There are my grandchildren and great grandchildren. My great-granddaughter will be 2.5 years old. It happened so that they are there and I am here...

Family
Donetsk

V.O.: Vladimir Grigorievich, what events in your life led you to participating in public life?

V.D.: It was Chernobyl that has changed everything for me. It was a symbolic point. It showed the whole decay of the previous system. It demonstrated the attitude of the system toward people. So many people had an exorbitant dose of radiation during the elimination of the accident in 1986! Then I started thinking about it and reading forbidden books. And gradually I found out that not everything was so good in our kingdom, our country.

Influences
History
Chernobyl explosion

V.O.: What topics did you discuss in your family during the Soviet times? Did you talk about politics?

V.D.: I worked at the Gorky mine. To get to work would take me about an hour or two. During this commute I was reading "Pravda", and on my way home "Izvestia". With my wife we were very busy: we had three children; my wife often went on business trips. We weren't interested in politics and, to be honest, we believed in a bright future. We believed in the fairy tales of Grandpa Lenin. I was convinced that I had to work honestly and not to steal. The whole idea of communism was interesting...

Influences
Soviet press

Communist ideology

V.O.: Do you remember your grandparents?

Family
Grandmother

V.D.: I remember my maternal grandmother. She was born in 1907 and worked in a kolkhoz (a collective farm in the former Soviet Union). My grandmother's family had bulls, horses and a mowing machine — they were considered to be of a middle social class. At some time they were forced to go to the mines because they could have been dispossessed and exiled. Those who worked and wanted to live well were considered to be enemies. My father from the Vinnytsa region doesn't remember my grandfather — he was 3 years old when his father died.

Influences
Family
Father
Vinnytsia

Family
Grandfather

V.O.: How did your family come to the Donetsk region?

Mother
Luhansk

V.D.: After the war it was difficult to live in a kolkhoz. My mother's dad, my grandfather, perished during the war. There were three children and they should have studied somewhere, got a profession, and earned money. There were factory schools earlier. My mother moved and finished one of them in the Lugansk region. Then they were sent to the post-war Donetsk to build new buildings and rebuild the old ones.

Father
Vinnytsia
Donetsk

And my father is from the Vinnitsa region. It was an area of grains, however there was nothing to eat. That is why he would come to Donetsk to buy bread there. Then he would return to Vinnytsa and sell it there. Donetsk is where my parents met each other.

V.O.: What was the social class of your family?

Family
Laborers

V.D.: My parents were laborers.

V.O.: Did any historical events in Ukraine inspired you to become engaged in public activities?

Influences
Solzhenitsyn
Ukrainian
Insurgent
Army

V.D.: Everything comes with age, with the information you learn, read and comprehend. I have read Solzhenitsyn — the history of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. And I thought that, damn, we were taught something wrong at the university.

Influences
Communist
Party History
Soviet

V.O.: Were there any differences between the official history of Ukraine and that you were talking about at home?

V.D.: All of us have been brought up on the history of the CPSU (Communist Party). We were studying and passing exams in it. And our children have been brought up by pioneers and the Leninists. I really believed that if we didn't steal and worked hard then our country would become the example for others.

V.O.: In the Soviet times did you communicate with the priests?

V.D.: No, but my children were baptized. And it was in the Soviet period.

V.O.: So it wasn't illegal?

V.D.: Why not? Legal.

V.O.: How do you evaluate the role religion played on the society in the Soviet times?

V.D.: We were tried to be convinced that all of us are atheists and that there was no God. We were so young... We believed what our leaders and teachers told us. And our neighbors were in the clandestine sect of Mormons even in the Soviet period. The Mormons is a very harsh sect. They were hiding somewhere, gathering and arranging their evenings. But it was their private business. In my opinion, religion is a private business in general. Somebody goes to a rabbi, another — to a mullah or a cleric.

Influences
Religion

V.O.: Was that something to be persecuted about?

V.D.: Yes, it was. It was forbidden, but it wasn't something to be killed for or exiled.

V.O.: Did you have normal relations with them?

V.D.: Yes, they were normal people, but they lived a life by their own rules. My neighbor Sasha was a great turner.

V.O.: Do you remember the books or people of those times that you were inspired and influenced by?

V.D.: There wasn't a book that seriously flipped my mind, but some of them led me to think about. In one book titled "Methodical Manual of Donetsk Higher Military-Political School" I read for the first time that the apologists of communism are against the scientific communism, against Grandpa Lenin. Even then it was samizdat and films. It was scary to take a book in hands. The risk was imprisonment.

Influences
Books

V.O.: Did you participate in the protests in 1990s?

V.D.: I was not an active participant of those events. At that time I worked in the Gorky mine and I can say that even before the 1990s there was the miners' discontent. At that time Yuriy Borisovich Gryaduschy was the boss of our section. I was working at the 4th section on the Gorky mine in 1983 or 1984. And one day two shifts of miners didn't come to work. I was a Party member and I was shocked thinking that wow people have really opposed the authorities! A lot of people, obkom (regional committee) have gathered, but the situation was very easy. The conflict happened because of the differences in wages. It was the first miners' protest that I remember.

Forms of protest
Miners protest

V.O.: Have they achieved what they wanted?

V.D.: Yes, the problem has been solved.

V.O.: Let's go back to the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Please, tell me about the miners' protests.

V.D.: I didn't participate in them.

V.O.: And did your colleagues participate in it?

V.D.: Yes, they did. Boldarev, Gunchenko, Smoryachkov... They were there... We also were coming to the Regional State Administration. But then I didn't understand the position of Boldarev, Gunchenko, Smoryachkov who were leading the protests at the mine: "Stop the extraction, close everything!". It's possible to close the extraction, it will stand for a week or two and after this it will be run over. The equipment will stay there and it will have to chop the new extraction. So it wasn't the right decision. The drift should have been maintained in a good working condition. The protests begin and end and then the usual manufacturing process begins again. And for this it is necessary to do something.

Actors

Miners
Boldarev
Gunchenko
Smoryachkov
Regional State
Administration

V.O.: Was the miners' protest just economical or there were also political demands?

Forms of protest

Political
demands
Economical
demands

V.D.: During the protests political demands also began to emerge. At that time the authorities were really scared. I remember my relatives — my uncle, my aunt and my sister — came to us. I met them at the train station and got them to the Regional State Administration. They were really shocked. They were from the countryside and they didn't understand what they had seen. How were people demanding something from the Regional Council chairman, from the first secretary of the Regional Party Committee?

V.O.: And what did they demand?

V.D.: If I'm not mistaken they demanded longer vacation, higher salaries. And their demands had been fulfilled. But the most interesting is that some of the 1989 protesters are active even now. Viktor Trifonov is now at the Ministry of Coal Industry with the bandage "I'm starving".

Forms of protest

Demands

Actors

Viktor
Trifonow

V.O.: Did you participate in the protests in independent Ukraine?

V.D.: No, I didn't.

V.O.: Did you hear about the Revolution on Granite?

**Revolution on
Granite**

V.D.: Maybe I heard something on the news. The one thing I remember is Doniy's face. I remember that the students were protesting...

Actors
Oles Doniy
Students

V.O.: What was attitude to those events did the people from the miner region have?

V.D.: They were indifferent to that. It was a region where people were more interested in everyday problems.

Actors
People's
Movement of
Ukraine
Ukrainian Rukh

V.O.: Was there a connection with the People's Movement of Ukraine (Ukrainian Rukh)?

V.D.: Yes, there was. I was acquainted with Viacheslav Chernovil personally. We met at some of the demonstrations organized by the Chernobyl victims near the Cabinet of Ministers. A group of Ukrainian-speaking people came to us and we were talking and exchanging phone numbers. Later we met several times in Kyiv...

Viacheslav
Chernovil

History
Chernobyl

V.O.: What did you talk about with Viacheslav Chernovil?

V.D.: He was very interested in the people's opinion about independence. At those times it was difficult to say something about it... As for me, my motherland is Ukraine, it's my country. If we became independent that would be good, so let's continue working and building further. At that time it was strange for me this Ukrainian language, all this discussions.... Muscovites... commies...

Motivations
Chernobyl
victims
organization

V.O.: Did your participation in Chernobyl victims' demonstration lead you to participation in later protests?

V.D.: Working for an organization of Chernobyl victims made us search for the ways and means of our rights' protections. Somebody from "Rukh" told us: "Boys, learn and remember that the Constitution is the basic law". And he was right. At the Chernobyl victims' demonstrations and in courts where we were fighting for protection of our rights we based our demands on the Constitution. We should thank them for that. We were learning from them although we were already in our 40s.

V.O.: From what did you take the example as how to hold a rally?

Activity
Organizing rallies

V.D.: Everything came with experience. We were learning ourselves, particularly from our mistakes. After every action we were discussing what was wrong.

V.O.: You said that you looked at "Rukh" and learned from them...

Influences
People's Movement of Ukraine
Ukrainian Rukh

V.D.: The People's Movement of Ukraine was a very powerful movement at that time. Among all politicians I think that exactly Viacheslav Chernovil was send by God to become a president. He wasn't an oligarch, he was pro-Ukrainian and he believed that Ukraine could be developed.

Actors
Viacheslav Chernovil

V.O.: Did you participate in the protests "Ukraine without Kuchma"?

Events
"Ukraine without Kuchma"
Donetsk

V.D.: When they were in Donetsk, we joined the protests. If I'm not mistaken, then we came to the Regional State Administration. We shouted "Away with Kuchma", because we also had our claims to him as the Chernobyl victims were offended very much.

V.O.: Did many people from Donetsk participate in that rally?

Forms of protest
Rally

V.D.: Yes, there were many people.

V.O.: In general, was the protest “Ukraine without Kuchma” endorsed in Donetsk?

V.D.: Not by everybody. Some were indifferent, others supported Kuchma. At that time he was elected for the second presidential term. He has come to Donetsk and communicated with the directors of mines, including Baranov and promised them something. That is why all the mines’ workers voted for Kuchma.

V.O.: Did you participate in the Orange Revolution?

V.D.: No, I didn’t.

V.O.: But did you support it?

V.D.: Yes, it was necessary to change our country. Most of all I liked that “we are going to Europe” and that “the thief should sit in jail” (laughing). It’s another tale. We were listening to it even in 2014.

V.O.: Did many people from Donetsk endorse the Orange Revolution?

V.D.: I had acquaintances that participated in the protests at the Maidan and they also had a member certificate — it’s just a show off. Very funny, as for me.

V.O.: Were there a lot of miners among the supporters of the Revolution?

V.D.: I am not sure about that. I didn’t work in a mine at that period.

V.O.: And what about Chornobyl victims? Were they among the protesters?

Actors

Leonid
Kuchma
Directors of
mines

Orange Revolution

Donetsk

Protests on
Maidan

Actors

Miners

Chernobyl
victims

Leonid
Kuchma
Viktor
Yanukovich
Party of
Regions

V.D.: Yes, they were. But the Chornobyl victims from Donetsk were focused on Kuchma and Yanukovych. The Party of Regions had already emerged at that time and we were asked to join it. It was very cunningly of them to develop a brand of “The Party of Regions”: they convinced people that rich regions = rich country. It seemed that everything was good, but who directed all of that? The bandits...

V.O.: At that time did the Chornobyl victims’ protests take place in Donetsk?

V.D.: They were. A lot of them. They were while Zviagilskiy was in charge and after that at Yanukovych’s time. In Donetsk, at that time, two groups of Chornobyl victims were created. All of us were called the “Chernobyl Union of Ukraine”, but we had different visions and interpretations of the laws and their implementation. I was among those who were called “seditious”. But those who were fed up with the authorities they are in Donetsk even now. One “prodigy” went to Russia and got a medal there, and this year this bastard has showed up at the Ukrainian House to get a medal from Ukraine!

V.O.: Who is it?

V.D.: It is Vladimir Nikolaevich Trubnikov, a former partorg (a Party organizer). He was one of the permanent heads of the Chernobyl victims in Donetsk region. Supported by the authorities they had a lot of privileges. They were welcomed in all of the cabinets and knew that they could count on support. But they didn’t protect the rights of the victims of Chornobyl and it is a fact!

There was Tsevmat (he is already dead) — a former chairman of Voroshilov “Chernobyl Union of Ukraine”. Thanks to him a protest Chornobyl movement in Donetsk and in the entire Ukraine was started. Then we got the regulatory documents and then it was the first demonstration of protest. Lukianchenko was the chairman of the city council. We came out then — me, Volodya Populiaev, Puchkov, Ivan Andryushkin and two other boys. We went to streets on December 14th and April 26th, with banners. Mine had it written: “Chernobyl victims are not the slaves!”

Events

Chernobyl victims’ protests
Dontesk

Actors

“Chernobyl Union of Ukraine

Actors

Vladimir Trubnikov

Chernobyl victims

“Chernobyl Union of Ukraine”

V.O.: And how many people participated in those protests?

Activity

Paid protests

V.D.: It depended. Usually they were brought and paid money for that. And after that at the time of independent Ukraine a group of people gathered — it was in 1990s, if I'm not mistaken. There was Nikolai Goncharov in the Kuibyshev district. There were six of us and we created a regional organization called "Chornobyl. Unity". We based our demands on the rules of law.

Actors

"Chernobyl.
Unity"
Nikolai
Goncharov

V.O.: And who was giving you money?

Actors

Vladimir
Trubnikov

V.D.: Trubnikov. How it was handled — I don't know.

V.O.: But where did they take money from? What did they pay people for and where people were brought from?

V.D.: It was very simple. Every Chornobyl organization is sponsored, even now. Sponsorship is in cash but how it was handled then — it's another question.

Activity

Sponsorship

V.O.: So, it is wrong to say that it was a protest for the rights? They were just bought?

V.D.: No, it was like making a foam when it grows up and up and then it is needed to bring it down. So the action was held and to whom the demands were directed? To Governor. And what was the result? Nothing.

V.O.: You have launched your own organization. How many actions did it hold? Were they linked with "Chernobyl Union of Ukraine"?

V.D.: We were holding our actions by ourselves.

V.O.: Did you prefer to be more ideological?

V.D.: Yes.

V.O.: And how many people participated in those actions?

V.D.: Not enough. For example, one hundred or one hundred and a half people from the region. First of all, it was said that we were idiots. In 1997 it was the first powerful action near the Pension Fund. Then more than 20 people started a hunger strike. A former Minister of Labor and Social Policy Michail Papiev came there. Also the head of the regional Pension Fund Yakimenko arrived. At the meeting there I was with Baranova, Goncharov, Puchkov. We decided that it was necessary to go to the courts to have them judge us. And we did it. Then 80 per cent of people in the Donetsk region, through the court, got their rights to get pensions based on legitimate reasons.

Events

Protest actions
at Pension
Fund

Forms of protest

Hunger strike
Actors
People from
the region
Michail Papiev

V.O.: Please, tell me about the demonstrations when you protested against the Pension Fund. What were the reasons for that?

V.D.: Michael Papiev clearly hinted that it was necessary to go to court and did it. In the law about Chernobyl everything is twisted. But earlier it could have been easily seen that there were four parts concerning pension payments, their amounts and information about the sources of financing. In part one of article 54 of the law it is declared that the pension for the survivor and the disability pension are calculated based on the salary for the work in the Exclusion Zone. But, at the same time, in 1997 the Verkhovna Rada adopted a law on state standards and a living wage. It's a fact that the Cabinet of Ministers has not made amendments to specialized laws, but the question isn't about it.

Motivations

Chernobyl
victims
pensions

In the budget for the year 1997 had it written in one line that a living wage for those who lost earning capacity is about 600 or 700 hryvnas. It means that if we were at the same place and did the same work and I was a deputy head of a section and you were a locksmith we would get a different salary. We could have the same disability group and the same percentage, but your

pension would be about 300 hryvnas and mine — 600. And in the 4th part it said that in all cases it should be no less than 6-8-10 living wages for people who lost their earning capacity. The “Chernobyl Union of Ukraine” tried to divide 1986, 1989 and 1987, but I was arguing: “What is the difference whether it was in 1941 or in 1945 when a man lost his leg?” The action of 2011 started from the jealousy within the Cabinet of Ministry because pensions for Chernobyl victims was around 4, 5, 7 thousand hryvnas. The mood of some deputies and generals was spoiled by that. People were receiving “letters of happiness” from the Pension Fund with a request to write an application for a calculation of a pension from their salary. We were telling everybody not to go and not to write. After that, by a chance, we were able to get the document of the Pension Fund and according to it they wanted to pay pensions since August 2011 not based on a court’s decision, but based on a salary. We went with that document to Shishansky and he told us: “Where did you get it?”. We said: “We have found it. So that’s why we’ve come to you to figure it out”. In November we gathered near the regional Pension Fund and began dialogue with them about their non-execution of courts’ decisions. Pensions were paid to everybody, based on the 12/10 decree. If to read a paragraph one of it attentively, it becomes clear that the pension for a survivor and a disability pension are calculated from the salary for accident elimination in Chornobyl at will. As I have already said Veselova and Mateichenko at the Cabinet of Ministers didn’t execute the decrees of the Cabmin.

V.O.: How did the protests end?

V.D.: One person — Gennadiy Ivanovich Konoplev — was killed while a tent was being demolished. It was terrible and creepy. After that another tent was constructed. But on December 12th some people just ended a hunger strike because of the privileges that were promised them. Goncharov is a rare b*tch. He betrayed and killed people’s hope that something could be finished. We were threatened by the Security Service of Ukraine and we were told that our families could have problems. And then it happened that Goncharov must have talked to Kirsha. Andrew was a Deputy Governor responsible for communications with law enforcement authorities. They must have been discussing how to

Events

Protest actions
at Pension
Fund
Death of
Gennadiy
Konoplev

Forms of protest

Putting tents
Hunger strike

Actors

Nikolai
Goncharov
OSCE
Yulia
 Tymoshenko

Events

Demolition of
tents

Actors

Security
Service of
Ukraine

Events

Demolition of
tents

finish all of that. But I had met Volynets before it. He had promised that when the OSCE representative come to Tymoshenko in Kharkiv he would come from Kharkiv to us in Donetsk. Our phones might have been bugged but when that OSCE representative came to Tymoshenko in Kharkiv, the authorities have bought that demonstration of protests for a million hryvnas to pay all the demonstrators. Then Nikolai Goncharov said on video that everybody was satisfied with the 12/10 decree and that the demonstration was over.

**Revolution of
Dignity**

V.O.: Who killed Konoplev?

V.D.: He was trampled when the tent was being demolished and when carbon monoxide gas was spreading. He was over 70 years old. Maybe, he died of heart problems... I don't know. Officially, in the death certificate it is indicated that the cause was pneumonia. We asked his son Sasha not to bury him until an independent autopsy is undertaken. But he didn't want to listen to us. Deputy Governor Fomin and the Security Service of Ukraine worker were around him all the time. One of them gave him a cigarette, another — a cigarette lighter. Eventually, Konoplev was buried, without an autopsy.

Motivations

Actors
Party of
Regions

V.O.: Who demolished your tent camp?

Viktor
Yanukovych

V.D.: I don't know.

V.O.: Was it the police?

V.D.: Those who did it were dressed in black...

V.O.: Did the police interfere when you were standing there?

Actors
Evidence
Demolition of
Nikola Azarov
Cleaning up
Zakharenko

V.D.: For the first time, when the assault took place, it was so quick that we didn't understand how everything had happened. There was a tent and they had demolished it and put on the KAMAZ vehicle. The second time, when Gonharov said that the demonstration

was over, the Communal Services workers were shouting that they should clean up garbage. The result of their work could be seen even on the next day. The end. We have p*ssed away that demonstration.

V.O.: Did you participate in the Euromaidan?

V.D.: Yes, I did. Periodically, I was coming to the Maidan including the period when the tough actions started. On the 17th I came from Kharkiv where I had been at a labor trade event. When I saw that everything had started, I took my Hyundai and at 12.30 I was here. At that time the Trade Unions buildings started burning.

V.O.: What were, in your opinion, the reasons of the Euromaidan protests?

V.D.: The reason was that white and blue had already been over the top. They similarly to Tatar-Mongol yoke were embedding their protégé even in Western Ukraine. They brought their specialists (tax specialists, prosecutors, judges) from Donetsk and employed them around the entire Ukraine. They were just plundering the country. During Yanukovych's presidency the cost of the dollar was 5 hryvnas and everybody was shouting that it was very good and they were satisfied. But the fact was that the country was being plundered.

V.O.: Do you think it was possible to solve that political crisis without protests?

V.D.: Yes, I think it was and it was very easy. The problem of Yanukovych was his cowardice. When there was a tariff Maidan in Kyiv, they, together with Azarov, agreed to reach out to people. But when the students were beaten in 2013.... I believed that Yanukovych was smart enough and that he would sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. But after that fear, money and something else had played their roles. If Yanukovych had come to the Maidan then, when thousands of people were standing here, if he had expelled Azarov with shame for his fairytales telling about the Euro-integration, if he had fired Zakharchenko for his abuses of

authority, then people would have pecked on Yanukovych fairytales and he would have governed the county for a long time.

V.O.: What were you doing at the Maidan?

V.D.: We were standing on the barricades, keeping guard. I remember particularly well February 20th. It was just madness. When together with guys we were going through the Institutskaya Street a lot of people had already been killed there. There were brains on the pavement.

With my friend I was sitting near the granite shelters. A bullet had passed through his hand. I thought he would die. A specific smell of blood and coldness... After I had pulled him out from there, doctors took him away. I thought that Pasha had already been killed but then I found him in hospital №17. It turned out that he had been rescued. It was very scary when you don't understand who was shot and from where.

Now I rarely go there, because it's very hard to be there again. People were so enthusiastic; they were coming out to the Maidan and didn't know fear. They had shields from the plywood. Could they save a life?

And on February 21st the city was likely to die out. There was oppressive silence everywhere. We were carrying icons and paintings from the Ukrainian House then. Early in the morning one woman came with trembling hands. She showed us her certificate and said that she was a director or a deputy director of the Ukrainian House. She asked to save the most valuable things, because "Berkut" was plundering everything. And the revolutionists plundered too. I don't want to generalize, but there were a lot of b*tches. Someone stole a hand drier from a toilet...

V.O.: Was the Maidan well organized?

V.D.: I assess it as a properly organized. There was good food. The volunteers were so consolidated and they did everything on a high level. But I remember when we came to the Maidan in January it turned out that the students had gone back home. It was Christmas.

**Revolution of
Dignity**

Activities
Keeping watch
on barricades

Events
Death of
participants

Activities
Plundering

**Revolution of
Dignity**
Maidan
organization
Actors
Volunteers

Guys from western Ukraine also went back to their homes. It became really scary that Maidan would over.

V.O.: How did your family react to your participation in the Euromaidan?

V.D.: My relatives were afraid. My wife and the middle daughter understood me. They took it to heart. The eldest and youngest daughter didn't understand what was going on. It was something fearful for them.

V.D.: In your opinion, what were the roles of religion, art and, maybe, the history of Ukraine during the Maidan's events?

V.D.: Big thanks to priests, especially to the Greek Catholics. The Church encouraged all Ukrainians to protect their dignity! Those that talked about it were very important.

V.O.: Did the history of Ukraine inspire the protesters?

V.D.: No... It's my own opinion, but I can be wrong... I think people were fighting to protect their dignity and the future of their children and grandchildren. This is what has united them!

V.O.: What was the role of the media, the Internet during the Euromaidan protests?

V.D.: Their role was invaluable... There were so many media representatives that it was difficult to understand from which countries they were from...

V.O.: How do you assess the policy of other countries regarding Ukraine during the Maidan?

Actors

Ukrainian
Greek Catholic
Church

Motivations

Preserving
dignity
Future of next
generations

Actors

Journalists

External solidarity

Europe
America

Revolution of Dignity

Outcomes

Influences

Leaders

Actors

Vlacheslav
Chernovil

V.D.: There was a real support both from the European and American sides. Thanks to them for their understanding of the idea behind the people who gathered at the Maidan.

V.O.: What was your biggest disappointment after the Euromaidan?

V.D.: It was our withdrawal from Debaltsevo. It was a real offense, pain and a lack of understanding of what our government was doing and thinking about.

V.O.: What events taking place in the last period of the USSR had an impact on the protests that took place in Ukraine after 1991 year?

V.D.: After the collapse of the Soviet Union such leaders as Viacheslav Chernovil emerged. They emerged not only in Ukraine, but also in Belarus and Russia. However, they have disappeared somewhere later. And again the thieves have come to power.

Motivations
Corruption

V.O.: What was the attitude of the Euromaidan's protesters towards Soviet legacy and Russia?

V.D.: There was no attitude. People understood that they should move away from the ideology of the Communist Party, forget it. I remember how the Lenin monument was demolished at the Bessarabskaya Square. They were tearing down everything possible. We should have done it even 1991. We should have adopted a law on decommunisation already then.

Events
Lenin's
monument
demolition
Place
Bessarabskaya
Square

V.O.: Does Ukraine have an oligarchy now?

Actors
Oligarchy
Petro
Poroshenko
Volodymyr
Groysman
Internal Policy
Attitude
towards
miners and
Chernobyl
victims

V.D.: Yes and it is very impudent! It is Poroshenko, his Prime Minister. What the Maidan declared hasn't been done yet. The Maidan was protesting against oligarchic authority. But it happened so that the same people are governing the country now. For example, the Ministries — only the heads of departments have been changed. Ok, maybe the ministers

have also been changed. But the attitude to the miners, to the Chornobyl victims is the same as it was in the Kuchma and Yanukovych times!

V.O.: Could you compare the course and the importance of the protests in Ukraine after 1991? Maybe, there were some tendencies, regularities?

V.D.: As one classic said: "Social being determines consciousness". The more ineffective the authorities are, the bigger risks for social riots.

V.O.: Did the participation in previous protests motivate you to participate in next demonstrations?

V.D.: Of course. Every demonstration is an experience. You feel it; you can foresee the situation without making mistakes. But the mistakes are an integral part of protests, because our opponents are not idiots either. They are taught as how to slow down the demonstration, how to split it. This is what happened with Rukh: it got split.

Motivations

Participation in previous protests
Motivations
Empathy for protesters

V.O.: What was people's motivation to participate in the protests? And why some of them didn't do it?

Revolution of dignity

Aims

V.D.: In some of them a heart aches for the people, for the kids. The others are more interested in observing the protests on TV with a cup of tea. But the active part of the society has always been there!

Emotions

Hopelessness
Dignity

V.O.: Who were the protesters during the Euromaidan? What aim did they have?

V.D.: People were in such hopelessness... They feel it even now, because they don't understand what is going on. The main push was the beating of the students. When I saw it on TV I couldn't stay home and not go there. Everybody who didn't agree with the authorities came to the Maidan. Everybody who had dignity...

Events

Maidan
ATO
Anti-Terrorist
Operation

V.O.: What is the role of the regular protests for the evolution of the Ukrainian society?

V.D.: Everything and everybody has been filtered through those events — the Maidan, ATO and all that is taking place right now. It's like a natural selection. All the putridity has come out. It is clear now who is who.