

Interview with Markiyan Prokhasko (MP). Interviewer: Olesya Yaremchuk (OY). Place of Record: Lviv.

OY: Could you recall what the topics of conversations at your home when you were young? Was the resistance to the communist regime (politics, everyday life, issues of survival) discussed there? Do you remember any particular conversations with your grandfather and grandmother, with your parents?

MP: Yes, of course, such topics were discussed at our home. In general, it happened so that in our family we were lucky enough to remember our past and ancestors. Therefore, already from childhood I heard the most of the family stories. There was, among others, about the resistance to the totalitarian regime – however, it is important to remember here, that the resistance is a very wide concept. For example, to live in a different way than is required by the communist state is also a way of resistance. How to do that? Perhaps, first of all you shall do it internally: the things you think about, you talk about, how you act in everyday situations and so forth. I mean that the resistance is not only the armed underground.

By the way, speaking of the underground, of course I've heard the stories about the fact that it was prohibited to celebrate Easter, not to mention the underground character of our entire church. All weddings and baptisms were held in the underground, and those stories were full of various interesting details about clergy and nuns who have had totally different professions, but still continued to hold church services in underground. But, actually, to celebrate Easter in spite of all the discomforts and dangers created by such a state as the USSR – this is a part of everyday practical resistance to the totalitarian regime. In childhood I was even curious to go through it, to secretly do something that is not allowed. I think I even used to recall these childhood reflections of mine when the real possibility and danger appeared in the country where all sorts of underground would be necessary. Specifically, the moment when the so-called legislation of the 16th of January was almost implemented. And only the possibility to ban doing, in fact, innocent things, makes visible the monstrosity of such a regime, its absurdity. Already in an older age I found out more also about my mother's parents. Both of them, as far as I understood from their

conversations, weren't able to perform the professional activities they wanted. Because of "nationalistic", in other words – just Ukrainian – views, they were restricted citizens. Both of them didn't have right to teach at the university, so they were teachers at school.

Regarding some particular stories about the Soviet reality, most of them I have heard from my father and from my grandmother – his mother. My grandmother is a chronicler, and she used to tell me what could be called oral-micro history: lots and lots of small facts, of ordinary and extraordinary stories of different people who belonged to our family or who were in some way related to it. Some had before 1939 gone to Soviet Ukraine and was shot there, someone had fought for Ukraine, someone fled to the West, some went to the Soviet army as a medical volunteer, some were evicted, someone was in prison, and some were still alive. Having such a palette, which wasn't taught in a school-like way but in a lively manner, actually, the stories about friends or relatives are being told, you have higher chance to perceive history as an incredible, though sometimes horrible, web of destinies. As of my father – he, perhaps, is a phenomenologist. If he would be a historian – and he wouldn't be a bad historian if he would become the one – then his articles and works, perhaps, would be primarily conceptual. He used to talk about the Soviet reality less than my grandmother, but he would catch the thread, which he would start to continue, and then it would turn out, that this thread permeates a variety of topics and aspects of the past. For example, the topic of the All-Union Organization to Combat Smuggling. Which smugglers are in the USSR? The concentration camps and the supporters of Lenin. In contrast, there was nothing about this neither in school nor in mass media, and this also changes the imagination about past. All these details make the volume of history larger. Therefore, from grandmother's stories I – as I now believe – have learned much more about the terrible twists and turns, and from father's stories – about the absurdity, which, nonetheless, if I wouldn't have had emotional attachment both to our land and to our people in general, would be not just a regret for the history of our country, but simply a very interesting material for reflection.

OY: Did the official history of Ukraine differ from what you have heard at home?

MP: Roughly speaking – no, it didn't. Grandmother's vision was more consistent with the one in school, in other words – with the state vision of the history of Ukraine. However, it's also important to pay attention here to the fact that I lived and studied in Western Ukraine, and both my teachers and my family have still more or less the same historical memory. According to this memory, we – Ukrainians – did everything well, but everyone was constantly attacking us – and this is true. But my father's vision was more consistent with what I have learned already at the history faculty – many nuances and interesting facts. And what is more important is human nature. Perhaps, if Ukrainians could, they would also attack and oppress someone, but Ukraine had to constantly fight for its existence, so, of course, there was no issue about a strong state which would, apart from this, also try to seize something.

OY: Did someone in your family suffer from the totalitarian communist regime?

MP: First who comes to my mind, and who were also the closest ones in that time and in family connections, are my great-grandmother and my grandfather, and also their family. That is, for example, great-grandmother's sister, and their father. So, my great-grandfather is believed to be lost somewhere in the war. But in the neighborhood where my great-grandmother lived, in the forest, there supposedly was an insurgent with the same name. Supposedly for this reason my great-grandmother was taken away together with my still small grandfather. Accordingly, this entire story about their exile, this injustice, and also sometimes absurdity becomes tangible, when you are already told about this at school. Because when you do not have at least some contact to what you hear, this becomes abstract for you. When the teacher tells you how someone at a certain time because of something could be taken to Siberia – then everything becomes real because this is what happened to your relatives which you, moreover, remember.

My grandmother, the one, who actually told me the most, in school was in the same class with my grandfather. One day, the military came and took my little grandfather. They were deported, their property was taken. In deportation, my great-grandmother was married for the second time, and after rehabilitation they returned to Ivano-Frankivsk area, and since my childhood I love the house in which they lived almost until the end of their lives. There, in the kitchen, an old picture of this house is hanged, and it is visible, that it used to be in bad condition. I can compare it then and

now. In other words, yes – when there are stories about past, some material traces – then it stresses the history very much, it makes history alive.

OY: Which books were read at your home, what music was listened?

MP: Well, among all the topics, this one I wasn't particularly curious about – which books were read at home. There were plenty of books printed before 1939, that is, before the Soviets came, at our home. In other words, these were the dangerous books. When I was still little, these books were placed in a special niche hidden behind the cabinets. Already later on they were finally taken out from there. But apart from the literature, which is possible to call anti-Soviet, of course, there was plenty of ordinary books – many of World and Ukrainian classics, which used to be published with huge circulations in the USSR. But I believe that the most important for our conversation literature is such a sort of door-wells: legal editions, for example, or translations of some urgent texts, which in one way or another pushed to understanding the fact that Western values of culture, freedom, thought are better, if to compare them to the Soviet. Why? Because of the fact, that Soviet Union, of course, was built on ideology. The ideology was based on limitation of thought. If this would have been changed to the wideness of thought, then the ideology would not withstand. After all, some Western literature washed out the soil from under the pillars of the USSR, I believe.

OY: Do you remember some stories in your family about the Revolution on Granite?

MP: Yes, I remember. The brightest and most urgent in terms of fate, is the statement of the fact that when the students who participated in the Revolution on Granite were summoned for negotiations in the cabinet, they were told that there is no chance for independent Ukraine. And then, after some time, the very same people who were in power blamed the same students in their betrayal of Ukraine, in the same or similar cabinets. Only with this story alone is transmitted, so to say, the trouble of our independence: it's independence with conditions. In fact, it is an epic of incredible proportions. The story how, secretly and yet for all to see, in the very heart of a free state appeared the rotten core of the old regime.

OY: In what way was your father involved in this revolution?

MP: He was in Kyiv. He said that he was standing guard. That is, when the main part was protesting, sleeping and so on, he was among those who guarded them, especially at night. But I believe that I very poorly explained what he was actually was doing. Because, when I was at the Maidan [the most recent one, editor's note], I did many things, but if I were to speak about it roughly, then it would be say: "I was there, I stood there, I walked there, I wrote". But this, perhaps, is not even a half of the entire experience.

OY: How do you remember the period of the Orange revolution? Were you, as a pupil, involved in the protests? Which emotions did it evoke in you?

In fact, emotions are a very important component of this question. There were plenty of emotions, the entire spectrum of them: starting with admiration and hope, and up through outrage. It seemed back then, that it was very long, but it lasted less than one month. I didn't go to Kyiv even though I wanted. I was still young, so my parents didn't take me there. In their place I wouldn't take myself either, because in such situations you are more afraid for someone else. I went for the protests in Lviv, even though they seemed less important to me. Perhaps, this is true, that the most important is Kyiv. On the other hand, nationwide protests indicate their mass character and also are catalyst of the situation. I mean the rejection of protests and hostility towards them in a part of the country.

I remember the Orange Revolution. I have some more or less clear understanding of all those processes now, but I don't remember all the small facts and events very well. Although just at that time I began to keep a diary and I was a chronicler for myself, I recorded everything that happened on this or that day. I thought that everything would change. In other words, I was, of course, "connected" to the social matrix and I also believed that everything will happen at once. I can now explain this with age. However, in fact, after the last revolution I also thought at first, that finally everything will change, but now, at least, there is no such huge disappointment

because, perhaps, not so many people think that the changes will occur with the wave of a magic wand. There was no sort of initiatives for everything after that revolution, and now there are such initiatives and this is good. On the other hand, it is important not to stop on this because small initiatives improve everything, but operate according to the principle that “we win back from our country what should already belong to us”. But the essence of the state still remains the same old: it is necessary to fight with the state for obvious things.

However, I’m not disappointed with the fact that the Orange Revolution took place. It is difficult to imagine, how we would survive the Revolution of Dignity, if we wouldn’t have had at least this previous experience. Back then everyone was worried that there would be tanks, suppression, but in comparison to the last revolution everything was gentle back then. But the most important in all our revolutions, perhaps, is our understanding of freedom. As a Ukrainian, I want us to have everything organized, and I am nervous because of a certain mess. But as a person with an education in history I have a little ironic attitude to all this. Here, it has always been like it is. When there were Russians, perhaps, it was just little bit more ridiculous, when the Poles were – perhaps, it was just a little bit less ridiculous, but in general it was more or less the same Slavic style. For some reason, we needed some German occupants to clean up the mess in the area around the station which we always have quite disgusting. Taking into consideration such factors, I understand that since we always have had a mess, then we will probably always have corruption as well. It is so because the corruption is not in the authorities – it is because the authorities are a part of our society. It finally turns out that corruption is, perhaps, not a mess, but a part of the order of our country. If you don’t like it – go away and this is what many people do. Or, be patient and complicate your life, trying to oppose it.

On the other hand, perhaps, the discrepancy between the law and practice is also a part of freedom? If you will take it away, there will be less freedom. I haven’t been in many places abroad, but where the order is higher, there is obviously less freedom: in Austria, Germany and Belarus. And where the freedom is in the air, for example, in Italy and in France, there is less order and there is less wealth. (However, Belarus is more organized, but we cannot speak of wealth there).

By the way, when I was in Belarus, my friends from there told me that our freedom is incredible, they did not just simply admire it. I had an impression that when they speak about our freedom, and above all about the Revolution of Dignity, and at that moment they look at us as heroes which came down from the pages of an epic tale – just because of the fact that we are Ukrainians. And in such a moment, when you see, how you are evaluated from the outside, you understand that it was worth it – to make these revolutions which didn't yet give the effect which we would like. Yet, we made this loud statement that we “will not allow”. What exactly we will not allow is a longer conversation. But, still, already twice we did so.

As for disappointments and the belief in the fact that everything has to naturally happen by itself, then I once discussed with my uncle the dipping of the bread in the remnants of souse, and cleaning the plate with such manner: what is more cultural – to clean the souse with bread during the lunch or to leave the plate dirty? He said something which I took very much to my heart: “To clean it with bread, because culture is always making an effort”. And the same is with a “better life”: in order to have it, it's necessary to always and constantly make efforts. Finally, it is some kind of universal law on a global scale. After all, they say, that evil wins when the good isn't active. In order for the good to act, and the evil to disappear – people have to constantly make effort, constantly, because otherwise it can become too late.

OY: Did, in your view, the events of the Orange Revolution lead to a change of political systems in Ukraine, or to partial change or, perhaps, if to take into consideration the result of the Presidential elections of 2010, it strengthened the oligarchy?

MP: Unfortunately, I don't feel myself competent to discuss this. There is a stereotype that humanities and social sciences are weak and this is because of the fact that each of us believes that he or she is an expert on all the social issues. But still, I will say several things. First of all, as far as I know, people in the key positions were changed to “Orange” ones, but this is normal also for the “example” of democracy – the United States. What is not normal at all, is the “Colored foxes”. The fact, that any president puts his people everywhere – this is correct, because with this the state



politics and the state as an entity will keep the pile. But what is not normal is the fact that those politicians come from political forces of other politicians; and when the president leaves his post, then all those people move to another party which may have completely different political visions. Such a system demonstrates the fact that we do not have principles in our political sphere, for example, that I am left, that I am centrist, that I am for the increase of force, I am for recovery of ecology, and I'm for the development of alternative energies. In other words, people there are not supporters of something or fighters for some changes – they are there just there in order to be there. If someone takes me to a party – he takes me to the party and I will do all that is necessary. And this is our political system – to be in politics and not to have any principles. If some social-democrat, after the disappearance of the party, went to the right wing because there, roughly speaking, was a vacancy during the elections – this is not politics at all, but just “placements”, and this didn't change anything.

But two important positive aspects come to my mind: first, the lack of tightening the screws. We, of course, don't know what would happen if history would have developed differently. We know what level Yanukovich went being president. What if in 2004, after all, he became our president – the elections were falsified. If the Ukrainians swallowed this, all subsequent elections would be formal and Yanukovich - we already know what he is by his nature. On the other hand, at that moment we weren't yet ready for such a level of our rights' defense as it was in 2014. And since Yanukovich was able to sell his skin and for his reign he was able, for example, to sell himself together with entire country to the same Russia, then there would have already been no freedom. Perhaps, not everyone needs freedom. After all, I don't have the right to speak of freedom as a universal value. Once I had a chance to have a discussion with people from Sloviansk on a train. I don't already mention the fact that they asked me how much did I earn at the Maidan, but to our arguments about freedom a guy answered: “But what do you need this freedom for? If you don't like something – come home and curse quietly at your dog. What matters is to have beer and a duck on Sunday”.

Taking into consideration the fact that those people didn't vote for Yanukovich either, but had somewhat different views on life than we did, I have often thought of the fact that it must be very



difficult then for people with different views from ours to understand the events of the Maidan. Actually, the fact that we sacrificed the stability of the dollar and the price for a duck for such abstract garbage as “freedom” – for them it is a catastrophe. Perhaps they have their full right – basing exclusively on their vision of the world - to consider us, as they used to say, "mentally ill with Maidan”.

Another good thing which comes to my mind is the fact that after Yushchenko came to the position of President of Ukraine, all elections since were recognized by the international community as fair. Whom did we choose – this is another issue. But after all, the pretext of the Orange Revolution was precisely the falsification of the second round of elections. In other words, we achieved what we wanted as a priority: we gave the pullback and we carried out elections again, and honestly. And one more thing is that under Yushchenko most of people lived better than before that and after that. Many economic indicators increased and they still continued to grow under the next authorities. Apart from that, for example, the fact that the victims of Holodomor and of other repressions were commemorated is precisely the achievement of Yushchenko. This brought historical memory to another level. Before, a part of people used to discuss Holodomor, but now, finally, the entire country recalled it. This is important even not because of the fact that I’m Ukrainian, but because of the fact that it happened, and it is just wrong to say that it didn’t happen. After all, people died.

OY: What motivated you to go for the protests in 2013?

MP: I didn't really wish to do that because who wants to stay awake, freeze and so on? However, it was interesting but only this factor, of course, wouldn't be enough to go for the protests for longer than 2-3 days. It's hard to say precisely, what exactly forced me to do that... I definitely remember the feeling that all this, perhaps, will not lead to anything - this feeling was present even before the dispersal and therefore when everything started to dissolve. In spite of that, I knew that I have to, because I independently decided for myself, to be at the Maidan. Even if all this would have absolutely no effect. It is the same when you try to sort trash, even though it also will not lead to any changes - a world is drowning in garbage and one person like me makes little

difference. There was just a feeling that this is right. And hence, it is necessary because I believe so. In the name of fairness, in the name of the fact that one person cannot decide the fate of the nation; in the name of the fact that we are not cattle as Yanukovych used to think of us already back in 2004.

OY: How do you remember the early days, when the protests just began? With what people did you interact at that time?

MP: The first days didn't promise anything, but suddenly everything started and it became evident that it will grow in scale. I was in Lviv. I'm very punctilious - to the extent that sometimes I don't want to go somewhere if I was late for the beginning. This applied both to university classes, to public lectures, and to revolutions - a stupid feature of mine. I lived in Sykhiv (a relatively distant sleeping neighborhood in Lviv) with the guys from my university. A friend of mine - Alexander Makhnety - always sat in the networks back then, followed everything. He entered my room and said they came out for protests in Kyiv, they came out in Lviv – and let's go. And so, we went from Sykhiv to the city center on bicycles somewhere a little later than 11pm. We spent some time there, there was high spirits, but however, of course, there was nothing special. Then for a few days we used to come at night, together with other guys. It was a strange feeling because we supposedly guarded something there, walked around the square where the monument of Taras Shevchenko is. At the same time, we expected that all these actions can be dispersed. There was a constant tension.

Very surprising and frustrating was the fact that already in the early days, the disputes began for who is in charge between the self-declared leaders of the Lviv Maidan. After all, they didn't go out there like we used to go out from the UCU in style of "let's go out to express the protest", or from other universities, or like just some separate people with friends, by themselves. All sorts of youth movements and organizations which, in principle, were, perhaps, patriotic, and all this, had come out. However, they were - because of their form - imbued by the same spirit as our entire state. I've heard conversations like: "Who are you with? Because we are under those, under this

party, and we - under that one". So, some 4 or 5 leaders went to the "Tower of merchants" to speak about "their" business. And I and Oleksandr went to Kyiv the next day.

My impressions were depressing – on the European Square were more flags of political parties than people; of course, I'm joking, but still... Very few people were there. By the evening more people came, and this was already somehow more encouraging. We stayed overnight and so we came every night for about a week. Somehow, it became more and more enthusiastic. Although I knew back then that nothing would come out of all this, but I wasn't able to afford myself *not* to be at the Maidan. The night before the dispersal, together with Oleksandr, we came to the conclusion that this is the end of the protest, he went to Lviv and I was able to remain for the holiday at my father's friends, and already in a little lighter mode to continue going to protest, so I thought to stay at least for one-two more days.

Then was the night of the dispersal – when the "Berkut" came at the Maidan from different sides and everyone got used to the fact that they were trying to scare off the protesters. At first, I was a bit concerned, but in reality I thought that nothing would happen. Since it was my seventh night in a row at the Maidan and I was already quite exhausted and I tried my best to stay there for some time, but I very much wanted to rest, so at 2am I went to my father's friends and I fell asleep.

In the morning I had more than 40 missed calls. They didn't wake me up and I was told everything later on and, of course, I was shocked. I went to the Maidan, there were thousands of people, and then it all began. But at those early days I interacted with different people. There were a few fellows from the University. There were my father's comrades - architects. There were people of my age from different parts of the country. There were some guys and girls from Donetsk - I definitely memorized it, despite the fact that all of us live in the platitude of imagination. Of course, peers from Donetsk aroused more interest than peers, for example, from Ternopil. There were also older people. Actually, I had an idea of recording some small comments of different people. But then I didn't have time...

OY: Why did you decide to go to Kyiv?

MP: It seemed to me that all the most important developments would take place there. In some way this is what was going on, indeed. Although even more important, perhaps, was the struggle of the people in Kharkiv, Dnipro and other cities. Because it is pretty easy to fight for European values in Lviv. However, Lviv also should not be underestimated, because, as my university mate said back then (I don't cite it verbatim), "Lviv gives the impetus, and Kyiv pulls it out". Lviv, Frankivsk, and Ternopil really give a huge impetus and then a lot of people from there - despite the fact that there is a "reliable back", go to Kyiv. But without the Kyiv residents it would probably be much more difficult to achieve anything.

OY: Tell us what happened the day of beating the students. What preceded this?

MP: There was a feeling that everything is in decline. On the day of the beating quite a few people remained on the Maidan. Maybe that's why they wanted to finish them off? Who knows. The effect occurred in the opposite, as we all know.

OY: Do you think that it was possible to resolve the political crisis in a different way than the actions of protest on the Maidan? Was it possible for the protests at the Maidan to be finished differently without bloodshed (for example, with the agreement of Yanukovich with the opposition)? Were the leaders of the protests prone to the agreement?

MP: It's a difficult question. The question is what we consider a political crisis. In general, we can say that the political crisis in Ukraine is permanent. But if you take it for a "0" on the scale of conventional political situation, then it really was a crisis. Another question is - what is the resolution of the political crisis? In general, the dispersal of the Maidan, the adoption of laws such as the laws of the 16th of January, the pacification of the people and the "normalization of the situation" – this also is a resolution of the political crisis if the goal is the compromising of the public disturbance. If to understand the crisis as "something that goes beyond the scope of the usual and ordinary." In other words, it depends on the point of view.

Related to this, you can also say that the protests themselves were the political crisis. Because what kind of crisis was prior to the protest actions? The fact, that Yanukovich didn't sign the Association Agreement with the EU? Isn't so that the authorities constantly do something which the public doesn't like? Therefore, this is not the crisis. Unless it is a permanent crisis, actually. The protest actions became a catalyst for the fact that the system was rotten. And the rotten system is the crisis situation, indeed. This permanent crisis could have been resolved with the long and diligent work of the government and society. But the government wasn't moving in that direction at all and then it "burst", and the people actually came out to show their discontent. But there were plenty of such discontents in our country, of various actions and protests. So, this is also not the crisis. When Yanukovich dispersed the Maidan - this became proof of how far he went and to how dangerous the situation became in the field of civic freedoms/concentration of power in the hands of one person. And this is already a crisis.

And then, many more people came out in order to prevent this crisis from getting bigger, to stop the lawlessness. And now, if to understand this moment as the crisis, then it was possible to solve this only in a few ways. It is obvious that each of the ways could have multiple scenarios, but the ways themselves were only a few:

1. To disperse everyone and to tighten the repressions. This option was also possible. It could have been more or less bloody.
2. The Maidan could take the power. That, fortunately, happened. This option could have been more or less bloody. It was bloody to that extent to which it was. It could have been less harsh but it also could have been tougher. After all, we didn't exclude the possibility that the tanks would be used in the action. Wasn't it so?
3. There could have been an agreement between the government and the protesters. It could be more or less effective, more or less efficient and more profitable for one or the other. I think that an agreement would have been a bad option. But if to choose between the tanks and the agreement - of course, the agreement. But now we see what happened, and I believe that the agreement would smudge everything. It could be formal, people would have left the protests, but the real power would remain in the hands of Yanukovich. Perhaps, he would even never ask forgiveness for the beatings.

4. Another option could be the invasion of foreign troops. We do not know whether under slightly different circumstances Yanukovich would get an idea to invite - as the "legitimate president" - for example, Russian forces. And then they would have "legitimately" made order there. After all, in Syria they are also legitimately and with the permission of the international community. But now the countries which, so to speak, also deal with the issue of Syria, do not know what to do with those Russians.

I think that the opposition was actually ready to negotiate. The protesters were not. But the opposition was scared. The protesters spoke about either/or: either a normal country without Yanukovich, who embodied in himself the fact that the authorities can severely beat its citizens for using their constitutional right to protest; or an abnormal state where it will be even worse. The opposition politicians themselves are from this system and even if, as the opposition, they have fewer opportunities than if they were in power, but, apparently, they did not want to tease the unbridled Yanukovich because they had something to lose, and in case of a crackdown, their rights would have never suffered as much as the rights of "ordinary citizens".

OY: What precisely did you do at Maidan? Did you have some responsibilities?

MP: I was there. I tried to be there when there were less people. The organization was good, and I have not seen a situation when people were lacking anything: to maintain the fire, to prepare meals or some other such thing. Instead, I was doing what I more or less know how to do: I wrote a lot. First of all, I wrote on the social networks. I wrote about all sorts of facts that I saw with my own eyes, different observations. Honestly, I never thought that it will particularly help anyone, but I did it at that level which was available for me. If I would have my own site, I would be writing there. However, it turned out that a lot of people follow it. Several hundred people from different parts of the country added me as a friend on Facebook. Finally, the Maidan is the sum of all those small and not very substantial individually cases. It's just like water: one drop by itself doesn't decide anything, but what about the sea?

In general, I felt myself as a free radical. I discovered in myself that I do not feel comfortable when I'm restricted, for example, in the possibility of movement. I once thought that I wanted to

become a priest. But I realized that I am able to do something important only without being pushed by duty, while inclusion in the hierarchy depresses me. If I had to go in Mariinsky Park and to count the number of the internal troops buses or if I had to make sandwiches? Although in no way I oppose these functions. Mine, perhaps, is less important. But I felt “at ease” with it.

OY: How would you evaluate the self-organization at the Maidan?

Very good. I am outraged by the fact that it was said about the Maidan that it was chaos or disorder or just some gathering. I share the thought that if this would happen in a more "civilized country" then there - if two million people would come out - then everything, I'm sorry, would be demolished to hell overnight. The cars would be burned, the shops would be broken. In Kyiv, actually, nobody forced the cafes to allow hundreds of people to use their toilets. Nobody said anything; everything was as it was just as an everyday thing. The self-organized were providing food and clothing, heating, security and defense. Nobody was forced to do anything, for every need the number of volunteers was provided which was required. Therefore, everyone could do whatever he himself thought to be necessary. There was a place for such "lazybones" as photographers, journalists, writers, who recorded, reflected, discussed. There was a place for prayer, for hymn, for songs. Such an ideal state.

OY: How did your family/relatives/friends react to the fact, that you took the decision to take part in the protests?

MP: They were worried. But that was expected. I mean, first of all, everyone perceived is as "this is how it has to be". In the situation that was beyond the ordinary, my trips to Maidan, which generally were going out beyond the ordinary even in normal circumstances, were perceived as a normal behavior in those particular circumstances. My dad used to come to Kyiv, we were at Maidan together. My mother was in Lviv, she used to send me warm clothes with a bus. My peers, friends, my girlfriend were at the Maidan, and in those circumstances that occurred all this became commonplace. By the way, I tried to take to the Maidan nothing that was unnecessary. So, exactly - when there was a chance to pass clothes to me, they passed it. My friends took me to



their place and fed me - I almost did not eat at the Maidan, except a couple of sandwiches and tea perhaps, since there were people who had no one else in Kyiv and they had no alternative for food.

OY: Who would you say was the enemy/opponent during the protests?

MP: Lies and cruelty. Of course, everyone has the right not to want to go to the EU, or to protect Yanukovych, or to do something else like that. But I was struck by the hatred in the eyes of some of the so-called anti-Maidan activists. Also I, of course, was very much angered by the brutality with which the authorities allowed themselves to beat, often defenseless, people. After that, the authorities said, that it was Maidan activists who were violent. This is like saying that the black is white, and white is black. There is such an expression in Ukraine: to spit in the face and to say that it's God's dew. Ukrainians many times received a splendid spit in their faces and then were told that they are stupid because they don't understand that this was done for their benefit. Therefore, you realize that the attitude towards Ukrainians were worse than my attitude to a gadfly which you are sorry to kill even when you hurt bitten by it.

OY: What, in your opinion, was the role played by religion/art at Maidan?

MP: A very important role, and the main thing is that this role was organic. With age, I am more and more convinced that neither religion nor art is something just optional. I will explain. In general, I believe that things like science, art or faith are, in fact, irreplaceable, fundamental and very important for the individual and for the country. But I mean that someone can have a different opinion, and we cannot force this person to believe this. However, in the post-Soviet space there is often something like this when a society or government follows some supposedly canonical thoughts that somehow do not foresee an alternative. And this is, after all, the limitation of freedom. And those manifestations of freedom are not dangerous, because they do not lead to anarchy or disorder, but they simply lead to discord and tolerance.

And here at the Maidan nobody said that it is necessary, for example, to perform some kind of a norm and to invite artists and to make sure that they are equally represented from all regions, no more than three photographers from one region. Something in the spirit of community centers of culture, of unions and centralized actions. Everything was just the way art should be: whoever wanted created whatever he or she wanted. Someone who did not want to get involved - was not involved, but had nothing against it. Someone wanted to pray, others didn't. There was no coercion. And, perhaps, before and after the Maidan, some people never went to church. But precisely at the Maidan they had the need for this. And this helped those and the other people. Therefore, the presence, the activity and manifestations of art and religion at the Maidan, I think, were, again, such as they could be in the perfect state - without being conducted by some District Council or Commission on issues of culture or religion. Everything was organic, in its place, sincerely.

OY: What was the role of mass media and social networks during the protests on the Maidan?

MP: It's difficult for me to say. Social networks were the wires of our conventional machinery. They gave the course to all our thoughts and emotions - impulses that were able to be spread. Twitter and Facebook played an important role, although the impulses were different. There were also hysterical and false impulses, there were depressive ones, but that was the spectrum and it is normal in such situations. The impulses that led to the victory of the Maidan prevailed there too. It is obvious that it was prevailing among the people, and this is why it led to the victory.

In terms of mass media, it is even harder to say. A significant part of them showed what was happening. Several prominent media seemed to "follow the line" of the ruling party for a long time. But in general, with the help of mass media it was possible to understand what was happening –equally important was to be willing to understand it. Somehow recently I spoke with one man. He has relatives in Russia, intellectuals and all that. They say that in Lviv they are slaughtering Russian-speakers. My acquaintance asks, then why is this not on the internet? Such things for sure would be on the internet, there would be all sorts of videos. So, that Russian says:

"The US State Department blocks the satellites". So, this is how the videos of how Russian-speakers are slaughtered in Lviv do not reach the net. And what can one say here?

OY: How do you evaluate the policies of other states in relation to Ukraine before and during the Euromaidan?

MP: Nobody owes us anything. In the sense, that no one is obliged to help us, or to even sympathize. Russia owes us, because Russia always interfered in our affairs, during the Maidan and after. And there is nothing to speak about here. Apart from Russia, I have some questions to the states that guaranteed our security, having signed the Budapest Memorandum. If this were merely some abstract promise, let's say, "Yes, yes, we guarantee", then it also would not be something significant or worthwhile. But that was a specific exchange: we have given away the third largest nuclear arsenal for these guarantees. On the other hand, I don't grieve too much about nuclear weapons. I do not consider it to be a good instrument for solving the problems. But I'm talking about justice. Although as a historian I also treat this with understanding and irony - the fact, that there is no justice and the one who is stronger is always right. Therefore, we must be strong, and this, until now, we still manage.

Also very important is the following - even though it doesn't apply directly to politics - the fact that we became interesting, that we became more in focus on the map of the world, we have ceased to be a part of Russia in the minds of many nations. Under other circumstances this was possible to be achieved after years and even decades - taking into consideration the sluggish situation in the country back then.

OY: How did you imagine the result of the protests? What was your biggest disappointment and what positively surprised you after the protests were finished?

MP: I imagined that everything would change because to power would come the people who will completely change everything. But this didn't happen and this has been greatest disappointment. Subsequently, two things became clear. First of all, it wasn't possible to change everything radically and completely because, if it was possible, it means everyone wanted it for a long time

already and this in turn means that since it was wanted, it would have happened long ago. That is, it turns out to be a paradox.

It was not changed all at once because of the fact that a part of the people did not want any changes at all, a part was indifferent, a part didn't join and participate much, a part imitated, a part just used it, a part wanted some changes, but did not know how because they didn't have an opportunity to implement something like this before. And so, a small percentage remains. It is considerable, it is growing, but still lacks the power to change everything at once. So, it is not surprising that everything happened like this - it is even normal, if to think that way. It could happen so and, most probably, it would have happened so in other countries as well, not only in Ukraine.

On the other hand, there are very many positive changes. We have not become a pocket state, we have not become a dictatorship, our country was not torn into several parts, but continued with the separation from the former mother country - Russia. Many entrepreneurs shifted to the European market and started to do something better than before, cinema began to develop, the music industry began to boom, stereotypes of some parts of the country about the others started to vanish, many initiatives appeared, we have not defaulted, and much more. Of course, a part of all this is unfinished and half-hearted and for the most part we did not even begin to tackle yet. But so what? If not everything is done, then it was better not to start all this and to live with Yanukovich? To be sorry now? It's nonsense.

OY: Which moment of the protests of 2013/2014 do you believe to be the turning point?

MP: It's a wide and open question. Because of this, I will reply the following: in my life, it was the moment when I went to Kyiv, because if I had not gone, I would not feel it as I felt, I would not have lived all of this fully. But in general for the country, there were many turning points and the fact that I will highlight and name one of them - it will have no value for anyone because I am a drop in the ocean.