

Interview with Andriy Kulykov (AK). Interviewer: Tanya Kovtynovich (TK). Place of record: Kyiv.

TK: The first question: what would you tell about yourself with accents on some very important events that shaped you as a person?

AK: Andriy Kulykov was born in 1957 in Kyiv in a family of state employees. It is a Russian speaking family from the generation of my great grandfather, but my grandmother who was also Russian speaking and had Russian education worked for a Ukrainian radio. She was the first female anchor with a Ukrainian radio who had a rank of an honored artist of the republic. Thanks to that fact my grandmother had a lot of books and her place was often visited by other anchors who also worked for the Ukrainian radio. Thus, since my childhood I was engaged in the Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian language. My parents never made any obstacles, though they had never assisted too much either. And nevertheless... well. And it happened that in my class in a Russian speaking school, I was among the few who knew Ukrainian from the young age, and it was something that determined my life in many ways.

After the 8th grade I changed school to the Ukrainian one which deepened my participation in all this processes. I joined such a group where in our class there was a son of Mykola Rudnyk, a son of Dmytro Stelmah, sons and daughters of other less known, but not less important Ukrainian writers and figures. Shortly speaking, it is one thing to find out about Mykola Rudenko from some kind of publications and it is completely different thing to come to school in the morning and to hear that Velera's father was arrested once again. I think, this inclination to the Ukrainian culture, Ukrainian language and the understanding of the feeling of the injustice from the young age that you could see towards national politics in the Soviet Union, especially in Ukraine, has left an imprint. In fact, I agreed with nearly everything in the system. The planned economics – yes, the one party system – yes, the class war and the necessity to strangle classes' enemies – yes (as much I understood it), but in regards to the national question no one agreed, that was even the reason why they did not want to accept me to the Komsomol. Well, I did not want that much either.

The way I was accepted to the Komsomol it is another story. Well... I had a chance in the 10th grade to read "The Aray's sword" by Ivan Bilyk, it was a friend who gave me that. I was obliged

to return it after having read it. I liked the book a lot, especially the afterword. I subscribed to the historical library that was situated, as we knew, in the Planetarium, and not in.... And I was going there and asking for “Aray’s sword” and every time I had been given the response that someone was reading it. It lasted for four years.

And every time I was ascertained how many ways there were, that there could be a book that was not mentioned, and it did not exist, and a book that was in the stocks, but somebody was always reading it.

There was another very interesting story, when I was in school no. 92, the one that I graduated from; there were two incidents of fire, in order to close one of the two Ukrainian schools in Kyiv in the central part. School no. 117 stayed on the Engels’s street, Luteranska today, and from the Lenin’s street (Bohdan Khmelnytskyi) the school no. 102 had to be closed. They set up two incidents of fire and under the pretext that it was dangerous for children to study there – they closed it. Now it is the Museum of Literature. But I graduated from it one year before it was closed, and now I do not really remember, I think it was before I came there, there was another withdrawal of banned books from the schools’ libraries. So, the workers and teachers of school no. 92 did not destroy those books, they put them in the yard of the tower block. I lived next to the school, and everyone could take them... That is how we saved those books. I went there and found the Russian edition of the “Little Soviet Encyclopedia” that was published in 1934 and another that was published in 1939. I took three volumes of the first one and four of the second. I started to compare those texts.

Firstly, that was the history textbook. Here is a person who is a hero of the 1939 revolution on the same page is either glued, or darkened or there is another article in its place. It was also interesting that in the 1934 edition there was an article “Ukraine” and “Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic” I read that part of the story and was impressed, because for the first time I encountered in the Soviet literature the following statement: “In 1654, as a result of the plot of the high-ranking Cossacks and tsarism Ukraine got into colonial dependence.... (not) under the colonial supremacy of Russia”. In the Soviet Union, it was impossible to imagine that in 1970...

On the one hand it encouraged in me some socialistic sympathies that became a proof that even under Soviet power, or socialism, it was possible to write what was true to my mind. On the other hand it forced me feel something even stronger than what was happening at that time. Well...

Then, there were studies at the faculty of international law at the Kyiv university with a lot of foreigners. I cannot say that they influenced us a lot, but as there were foreigners – we did not have such a classes as scientific atheism, even the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was called the history of the Soviet society and it was taught differently.

The education was in Russian, because there were foreigners, but I took it as a forced break, after the graduation I found a job that was related to the Ukrainian and English languages – it was the newspaper called “News from Ukraine”, a propaganda outlet. The only positive thing about this newspaper was that there were no Soviet patterns, but there were others. Somewhere around 1985-1986 I started to enjoy the advantages of the Soviet way of life, the only thing I never scolded was the Ukrainian bourgeois way of life, because, and I repeat it, even now I am still a supporter of some social ideas, with some aspects I could not agree.

Moreover, after I graduated from the university I could not find a job and I started a PhD and the title of my thesis was “The critical analysis of the Soviet centers in the area of national relations in USSR” something like this As I could not find a job I was very serious about writing a thesis, but when I got access to special archives and read what those Soviet centers wrote I understood that I could not criticize them. Nearly everything they wrote in this field matched my way of thinking. That is why I wrote one bad article – that was not right. And in order not to complicate the situation for my supervisor I abandoned this PhD. Because I could not defend myself with those cannons, and write what I was thinking at that time... I was not so brave to take the risk. And then... Somewhere around 1986 we made, out of the propaganda newspaper, an informational newspaper. It was easier for us because we were writing in English and we were not that oppressed. However there was censorship, but the party agency, KGB – no. Plus, we had a very small circle of devoted readers in Kyiv, among the intelligentsia, who knew English, who could read it... Obviously, there were subjects that we did not talk about before in the “Literary Ukraine”. But we needed to keep in mind that there was a bigger pressure on them and on others because they were much more dangerous than us. Then there was the Society of the Ukrainian language. I was among the founders, in fact the only ethnical Russian, and I am proud of it and I tell it every time that it was me who insisted that it should not be the Society of the Native language, but the Society of the Ukrainian language. Because I believe that a native language is somehow biological, and when we are talking about language, not only in the Ukrainian context,

you need to know that the language gives the right of choice. And the Ukrainian language is important for that country, as Belarusian for Belarus, and Czech for the Czech Republic, because Ukrainian is the language of the country and then the people choose their native language. For me the Ukrainian language did not become a native language, but it became the language of choice. For me it is much more important than the question of native language. I was a member of the communist party.

TK: At what time precisely?

AK: I will tell you... you know... It was the peak of stagnation 1982. I became a candidate and then a member. And I do not hide that I did it also in thinking about my career. There is no doubt. I did not go to the communist party to explode it from the inside. I had a very interesting conversation with my father. My father was a senior lecturer at the Kyiv Institute of Engineers of Civil Aviation, and as a person with Russian roots, who fought in war for 8 years, well 3 years in the war and 5 years he served afterwards; as a person who got then to the civil aviation he did not have to know or use Ukrainian. We argued sometimes about it. But once he told me: "Do you know, son, why I am not a member of the communist party?" (and it would have been very useful for him, he would become a professor right away). "No," I said, "Why not, father?" "Well, imagine that it is 1944, the front spreads from the White until the Black Sea (he served as a mechanic of ground service of planes in the regiment of assault aircrafts) and we are listening to the appeal from the Council of the Information Bureau, and every morning, or evening, we are told, that on this front the Red Army destroyed, in fierce battles, 100 planes and lost only four, and our regiment on that day did not get back five and ten crews. Well," he said, "from that moment I said to myself that I do not want to have anything in common with people who lie like that". I think that it is a very typical story for a lot of people who did not reject the country, but who rejected the solid collaboration with the system. This story influenced a lot in a way how I work as a journalist. That is the index for me how the lies can knock out potential supporters and make if not enemies out of them then at least create a passive resistance. Well... Then, I was recruited by the BBC; since 1992 I was working there. It gave me a lot as far as the understanding of technologies of journalism, plus technologies that were technical, but also the techniques of

collecting and writing of materials. And it gave me a lot of inspiration, because when I came there I was ascertained that the principles and methods for which my colleagues in Ukraine and I were fighting for, those methods were working, they exist and it was clear that it needed a lot of time and efforts. It meant that in Ukraine we were taking the right path. Then I came back and worked for TV, I was fired twice from the leading position with the TSN on 1+1, then I lost one more time my job that I had with the TV. With 1+1 I lost my job due to the political motives, while the New channel that was just the change of the owner. At the moment of despair I got once again an invitation to come to work in England, I worked there for five years, then I came back to Ukraine when I still was an employee of the BBC and I worked here for two years. Then came the time to go back, I did not want to, I was looking for a good working place to stay. And then there was an invitation from ICTV to work for the “Freedom of Speech”, I took it with joy and worked there for nine years. But I was attracted by the radio...And in 2013 there were two people who came to see me nearly at the same time with an interval in three days and who said that it is necessary to make a radio. I thought that this coincidence was not for nothing, as I really know the radio very well. I said: “Yes, we need it...”. We gathered in the summer 2013, not it is the summer of 2016, nearly three years earlier, but we managed to create a real mass media outlet, which is visible on the Ukrainian mainstream, plus we started without money, without any political or business support. Well, for me it is one of the manifestations that people who really know what they want, and who are hardworking and who have certain knowledge and skills can do, in their country or in another country, something and achieve something.

TK: I want to go back a little bit to the previous periods, when you were talking about your father and that moment when he told you about his distrust towards the system. Was it a solitary situation in your family or there was a dissonance with the system in your family, or you were growing up with the sense of harmony with everything around you?

AK: Well, I was always preoccupied by this national question, plus not only in the case of Ukraine. I was reading a lot on this subject. There was one very important event. When I was 13 years old, my grandmother asked me to come close to the radio receiver to listen to a very beautiful language that I did not hear before. She switched on to Minsk and I heard the Belarusian

literary radio language, I fell in love with it instantly and then I started to read Belarusian. In our family we had an interesting situation, I did not have any of my grandfathers and my substitute grandfather was the husband of my aunt, she was the sister of my father, and by the way he was a Jew – Jakov Abramovitch Smolenskiy. Thus, from the young age I was close to this culture, even though he was a lay Jew. I did not know anyone like him, but I think that there were people like him. All of his relatives were exterminated during the war, he was at war, he was a very kind person. Plus, I have never thought about him as Jew, but as a grandpa Jasha. And my grandmother Nina lived in the communal apartment with two neighbours who were Jews – Genia Gavrilovna and Faina Mahailovna. I remember as in the Taras Shevchenko Park there were people talking Yiddish. I remember a scene, it was 1973 there was a war (*illegibly*) on the heights, next to the metro station Khreschatyk there was a man with a Jewish appearance. He was buying a newspaper and someone insulted him and he reacted very aggressively. But before that I had a very instructive story. My friend whom I had at the Russian speaking school Pasha Jurowski, well Pasha is Pasha, Jurowski is Jurowski, at that time I did not know that it was a Jewish surname, we were friends. And once we got together at a summer camp. The first day there is gathering of questionnaires' information. And they ask the boy who is 11 or 10 year: "Nationality?" Pasha says: "A Jew". And I said just because my relatives were Jews: "Pasha, you are a Jew?" And there was a pain in his eyes: "Yes, I am a Jew. You will not be friends with me anymore?" We repaired this situation very quickly. But that was one of those little incidents.

My grandfather, the father of my father, he was director of a defense industry enterprise, plus he was a red director. In 1936 and 1937 he was sent to Spain, he was putting in order the defense industry of the republican Spain, he came back with the order of the red star and before the war he was arrested and sent to the camp as a spy, Franko's spy. Though he did not confess, as there was nothing to confess, in November 1941 he was let out because there was a demand for professionals... he was appointed to a certain position, but he was never a director, only a deputy director. I found out this story only in 1980. So, there were some moments... My father criticized the Soviet system quite openly, he has his favorite exordium, and we lived where now the metro station Teatralna is located, he took a string bag and said: "I am going to brother Volodia". And once when I was little I told my father: "But you do not have a brother?" And he said: "All people

are brothers, Volodymyr Shcherbytsky is also our brother”. He was going to the best grocery store on Lypki...

TK: And what about religion, what kind of education did you have?

AK: Nothing. There was no religion education. I had such an impression that even my grandmothers, I repeat that I do not remember my grandfathers, and I suppose that the father of my father was not religious either. I do not remember one of my grandmothers praying or going to church, and I do not talk about my parents. There was no religion education, but they did not impose atheism either. It was a neutral atmosphere.

TK: And when you went to England for the first time, did you have such a thing that you escaped the Soviet system?

AK: No, it was 1992. It was not a Soviet system any more. I was even surprised by something that seemed to me much more disciplined compared to the orders that we had. Well, we did not have school uniforms, and there all boys and girls were going to school in a certain uniform. We could buy alcohol when and where we wanted, and there you could do it during certain hours. Once again it was such a period of depression for me that is why I went there. Well, and the work was lucrative and interesting... it was not only an opportunity to improve my material situation, it was also an opportunity to help my father and my brother, and other relatives. No, I did not have such a feeling. The feeling of liberation was in 1988-1989, when everything was happening with my participation.

TK: Let us pass to our revolutions, and as I understood you left in 1992, but in 1991 during the events that led to the independence of Ukraine, you were here. What do you remember from that moment, what did you do at that time? Was it related to your professional activity?

AK: I was writing all the time about what was happening in Ukraine. I remember that nearly a year, it was maybe 1989 or 1990, at that time Leonid Kravchuk was working at the Central

Committee of the Communist Party, and he said something that in Lviv nationalism rose its head. After that I went to Lviv to assist at a large meeting of the People's Movement of Ukraine (*Rukh*) in front of the university and I prepared a reportage that it was totally normal. People spoke up about this and that. At that time were working quite well. At the same time I was taking part in political life. I say that the Society of Ukrainian language at that time was a political activity. I was the member of the constituent congress of the People's Movement, moreover I was a member of an interesting organization called the People's Union Perestroika's Assistance. It was organized at the same time as the People's Movement, there was a difference of one week, I think that the People's Union Perestroika's Assistance was first but I do not really remember. And then there was a voluntary dissolution, they did not want to bother the People's Movement and its members entered... Oleksiy Haran was the organizer and a few other — Oleksandr Yemets was in the People's Union Perestroika's Assistance, Oleksandr Zarianov, etc. I suggested my candidature myself on the first alternative elections to Verkhovna Rada and I was on the 6th place out of 7 in our district. It was very useful and interesting, I did not have any doubts, because I knew that it was an experiment and I could persuade people that it was possible to do and that we need to do it. And then there was a mistake, I became popular, in Kyiv at least.... That was the elections for the congress of the People's deputies of the USSR, and then there were other elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. I was nominated by several work collectives. In one it did not turn out well, in another one it did not turn out well, in the railway district it was fine for the first time. And my mistake was that I believed that I am able to win. In reality, I could not win at that time, there was a very interesting situation with Hryhorij Omelczenko and general Duhovny, but there I went through this failure worse that I should. But I was chosen to the Rada of Lenin's district. Then we renamed the Lenin's district to Starokyivskyi, it took us a long time to choose the head of the Rada. We had supporters from the People's Movement, supporters from the Communist Party, and there were also those in the middle. It was a very interesting story. At that time there was this Revolution on Granite. And I remember that we took a decision to offer material assistance to those students who participated in the hunger strike and also we gave them some blankets and medicine.

TK: Anyway, you were an active participant of the social and political life, even in opposition. If we take into consideration People's Movement or this Revolution on Granite, what was this Revolution like? Was it a logical moment of the previous events or was it an accidental occurrence, what do you think?

I think that it is a very logical phenomenon. Then young people especially, and the majority of them, in my opinion, were supporters of leftish ideas, or left by intuition, who wanted to adapt the events. And they decided ... yes I respect them a lot for what they were. They went out, they took a risk, they showed that they are not indifferent, some of them did not listen to their communist leaders, some of them did not listen to their nationalistic leaders. By the way, they were a very interesting mix of people, they were from different groups, but they were united as citizens, they wanted to move this Ukraine as citizens. That is why I think that it should have happened, maybe not in such a form, but this little group of young people should have done something, they should have starved on Granite or they should have raised the Ukrainian flag in front of the Verhovna Rada or even they should have seized a little arsenal of weapons. Something like, what was his name... Brown who raised the rebel in the USA and he had 12 or 13 people who... I guess it was this kind of action.

TK: Those revolutions, did it accelerate the processes that started to happen after? And should we call them revolutions?

AK: Yes, they accelerated, but to my mind none of the three revolutions was a real revolution. It is possible to use this title to make it more attractive. A revolution, to my mind, was the whole process that took place in the Soviet Union, and as a part of this process all other processes that took place in all republics. Ukrainian revolution originated from the People's Movement and then other movements and finally gaining independence – that is the real revolution. Because, by the way, as a result of it, I am not a Marxist, a lot of mass media got changed, owners were changed and also the way of production. And the Revolution on Granite was only an episode. Approximately, as we are talking about... It was not without a reason that Lenin talked about the

October coup d'état, and not the Big October social revolution, because those ten days they were only episodes and the Revolution was much longer.

TK: Let us move to the Orange Revolution. How do you remember it? Where were you then and what was your attitude towards these events?

AK: At that time I was working in London, I was on a business trip to Ukraine. I should have prepared a few materials about Ukraine and then go back to London, but at that time protests and demonstrations broke out. I called and said: "Leave me here, I will talk about it". And I was going on the air every day in Ukrainian, Russian and English and I was talking about what was happening here. There were difficult moments, when.... There were supporters of the Orange and those of white and blue, and you would go among them to do your work and everyone tries to put you on their side and you want to, but you cannot. And then it means that: "You are a betrayer...." Indeed, it was a very good lesson. What was especially interesting for me when I went there... generally I was working on the Maidan, it is understandable, but we also went to the Central Election Commission of Ukraine. Once I found myself next to the Central Election Commission of Ukraine and I see there are people from the 1989 and 1990 – Yura Sahno, Valera Moshkovskiy, etc. Now they are already forgotten, but in late 1980s they were very known, at least in Kyiv. And they were there one more time. In fact it became apparent also during the Revolution of Dignity, when people who were active in late 1980s, and those from the Orange Revolution, they found themselves there as well. I remember that at that time I froze off the big toe on my right leg, because really there was a live transmission every hour or even half an hour. You are on the Maidan, then you enter the metro station Teatralna in order to warm up, my daughter was saving my toe with onions.

TK: If you recall those impressions that you had at that time, did you have a sensation that there were some cardinal changes?

AK: There was hope, there was sensation...Speaking the truth there was optimism, maybe I even unjustly perception of the side that I called the Kuchma's side. I was painting them in the color

that was more back... but in reality I have never trusted Yuschenko. Because I remembered very well that letter which he signed... where he compared those who protested against Kuchma with fascists. But there were a lot of interesting people in that group and a lot of very simple people who really wanted some changes. As I knew from my previous experience that an initiative of ordinary people can lead to real improvements. I sympathized with the Orange Revolution, sometimes it was really painful for me, because I could not express myself completely on the subject due to my professional obligations. And the hope was big.

TK: Do you remember, at that time when you were working for the media, did you communicate with politicians? And what impressions did they make on you?

AK: At that time no, I was working among people, I was preparing reports from the event's place, and I love it more. And the leaders did not appear often on the Maidan. It was not the same as in 2013-2014. At that time I was working and I saw nearly everyone, and I interviewed them, there were very interesting moments.

TK: And from today's position who among the political leaders or from the opposition or maybe among those who got the power, who decided on the destiny of that revolution?

AK: I have no evidence but by analyzing the situation I think that there was some kind of agreement between the circles around Kuchma and Yuschenko. About the fact that power will be in some way or another... well, this agreement would not come into being instantly... that it will be passed to Yuschenko and his group under the circumstances that Kuchma and his people would not be persecuted. I think that it was that way, I do not know who really decided among them, but let us say that my cursory acquaintance with Kuchma persuaded me that he is cleverer than we think.

TK: Please, tell me, the Orange Revolution was very populous, a lot of people came out spontaneously, what was their motive, why did they come in such large numbers?

AK: First, and I think it incited the Revolution of Dignity as well, was that the people's opinion was despised. Secondly, for a long time Ukrainians did nothing together and there was an opportunity. I think that in both revolutions the main reason was the initiative of the masses; these were masses of people, rebel masses, etc. The organizational factor was present, but it played the secondary role. In general, these were the civil sentiments of Ukrainians. Finally, millions of Ukrainians had a common affair to do, plus it was related not to the liquidation of the old regime, but to the formation of a new one. Suddenly there was this hope and one of my friends when Kuchma was coming to the power, especially during the elections where he overpowered Kravchuk, he said: "I have an impression that something gray is coming". Of course, it was an allusion to "Hard to be God" by brother Strugatsky, but I think that for a certain time such grayness was associated in the society with Kuchma and his surroundings. Well, they were giving certain reasons for that. And then suddenly it was not for nothing that it was Orange, bright, and people got the desire to color their world and everyone had a different approach. That is why I think that it was alive.

TK: Tell me, please, you communicated with a lot of foreigners, and probably it was for the first time that foreign politicians interfered in our affairs. What do you think: what role did they play in those negotiations, and in how the revolution ended?

AK: After all I think that they played a secondary role, not the second role, but secondary. And in general everything was decided between the Ukrainian clans, and the larger participation of Russians than that of the Western participants. I think that in that case and in the case of 2013-2014 Ukrainians decided on their own about destiny, but unfortunately on the grounds of false information. They thought they were doing one thing and that they were leading to power one person, but in reality they were in self-deception. Moreover, they did not foresee the consequences of the lifting to power, especially in 2013-2014. It seems to me that if after the Orange Revolution the change of government happened under an implicit agreement, in 2013-2014 it would be impossible to change of government under such agreement, it was disrupted and I think, I have two theses: firstly, the confrontation on Maidan could have been stopped and the opposition could have displaced Yanukovich in a democratic way – elections, all that was needed

was to work more assiduously than they were ready. Secondly, the overthrow of Yanukovych at that time was profitable for Russia. Especially at that time. In principle, the whole situation was provoked by Russia, beginning in the summer of 2013.

TK: We nearly moved our last Revolution. As it is much longer than the previous ones, and you were in Kyiv at that time and engaged in journalism, but also in some way in politics, tell me, please, how you did you become engaged in these events and how did it continue?

AK: When it was known that the association agreement would not be signed and there was the turn of 180 degrees, I went to Maidan without any Facebook and I decided to come out at the metro station Instytutska and go down in order to see what was happening. On my way there was a group from STB and they recorded a comment on the subject: "what is happening". I gave a completely false appraisal because I thought that in that way Yanukovych wanted to lift Azarov. At that time there was a big opposition to Azarov, including in the Party of Regions, and he was powerful himself and also he got a lot of supporters. Well, anyway, the fact that they refused the association agreement with the lips of Azarov could have been used to make him guilty of everything and put as the head of the government someone more modern, etc. And I thought that this could have been the case. And then we started. At that time we were not on air like Hromadske radio, firstly we started to gather the voices of participants, one or two hours before the beating, when it was said as if the action had ended, I recorded at that time, it is hard to recall, Butusov and Nayem and a few other people. And there was also Poroshenko, but I do not remember if I recorded him, it seems to me that he was standing there and I recorded something but not on purpose. And then I left, put it on the Internet and went to sleep. And in the morning my student, Ivan Senipal, from Mariupol called me. It was when I woke up that there were several missed calls from him, after that situation I did not put my phone on silent mode for a long time, I called him back: "Vania, what is it?" and he said: "I am next to the St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, such a thing happened..." That was how I found about this dispersal. Well, it should have happened sooner or later. And we continued to work and then a very interesting moment came that is for me one of the expressions of people's union. On the 1st of December I was invited to the Pedagogical Museum in the Teachers' House to be a moderator of an important

academic event “The blowing of Ukrainian culture”, and I went there because there were important people, Evgen Sverstiyuk was there and others...of course, I took my recorder, so I could record Sverstiyuk. And, patriarch Filaret.... And there were so many people, and I wanted to talk to everyone, but I already promised... And finally it finished, half of guests did not come, because they went to Maidan. When I came out I got a call from Kyrylo Lukerenko, he said: “Europe+ offers us a wave”. They were our friends, rather his friends, my acquaintances also knew a few people from Europe+ Lilia Burkovska and Denys Kubriak. They were driving the car to their entertaining radio and they listened to different radio stations and they understood that nothing was happening in Ukraine. It was just like: Hi from Troieshchyna, we have good weather... And they got the feeling that something should be done, but they did not have the experience, they had a radio wave. And they knew that we had the experience, but not the radio wave. And it was one of the examples how we should unite our efforts. They called and said: “Are you ready to go on air?” Kyrylo said: “We are ready”. Well, and in 40 minutes I, as I was wearing a jacket and with a tie, was sitting in front of the microphone and we started.... We called it “Euromaidan online” – there were four to six hours of online broadcast from the semi-basement studio in a restaurant on the Shota Rustaveli Street. We invited people from the Maidan and sometimes the Anti-maidan, it was a very interesting and intensive work, and of course Europe+ was taking the risk, the National Council gave us one or two reprimands because we abused their licence right, because it was them who should have music and entertainment programmes, and suddenly they had this... We also started to play music because there were a lot of performers on Maidan, and I suggested creating a column “The Voices of Maidan”. We invited them to the studio, they played and sang songs. Then there was a little break, because, of course, when we got on this wave their advertiser started saying: “What is it?” and it was clear that their income was reduced, it caused them losses, and we really took a break on Christmas... Because people really struggled financially, then we came back to them. At that time they moved to Tatarka, but on the whole we were working on Shaota Rustaveli Street. In general, I was working as a journalist, especially as a reporter from Hromadske radio. “The Freedom of Speech” stayed. We, I think, were doing a very useful thing there, I think, but it was something very organized, because we started it long time ago, and that was our initiative, a very risky one. It was risky not in a sense that... everyone could be hurt, but it was risky that a lot of efforts were spent and it could lead to

nowhere. But we knew what we were doing. And then once.... We had this column “The Voices of Maidan”, Kyrylo started it, and then I thought, where were the voices of Anti-maidan? And I went to Aniti-maidan, and not right away, but I managed to come in, I did the same thing there. I questioned without comments and we put it on the Internet and suddenly there was the record-breaking number of listening. And it was very demonstrative, our audience was from Maidan, but it was important for them to hear what other people think. Then we went there a few more times.

TK: What impression did you have from what people were saying when you went there?

AK: I had different impressions, I am more than sure that certain people who were on Anti-maidan were there sincerely, they were protecting their understanding of what Ukraine should be. And I respect those people a lot. But there were also scums, what I can say. And those who just wanted to earn money. I remember it was 14th of February when someone announced creation of the antifascist front that would fight against foreign invaders and occupants on the Ukrainian territory... Well, everything was in Russian. And then I went on Anti-maidan with a question: “There is such initiative, who do you think Myhailo Dopkin was talking about?” Some told me to get lost, some people started to seriously answer my question, one man said: “He was talking about himself, I know him, I have been living there for 20 years”. And I said: “And are you ready for that?” “Yes, of course, Misha Dopkin...” There were different people, let us say teachers, but also farmers from Hersonschyna, they were there not for money. It is clear that they were paid for the transport, but still not everyone could afford that. And there were scums, of course, you can do nothing about it.

I was impressed that you come to them and say: “Why are you here?” “We protect Ukraine (mainly in Russian) from fascists and from those and others...” “And where did you see fascists?” They: “There, on Maidan”. “Did you talk to them?” “No, we did not talk to them”. “Why?” “What sense does it make to talk to them?” And then it was a pity if you hear the same thing but from those on Maidan. But there were more people who wanted to talk to people of the Anti-maidan. But there were also people who were saying: “They are all bad men...”

Well, I can tell you two more stories. We were working and it was very interesting when you come to the Trade Unions Building, there was a briefing of Yatsenyuk, then one of Klychko, and

then there was a little cabinet and there was Zhvania sitting. “What are you doing here?” “I am sitting here for quite some time”. And no one knows about it. Or you can meet Poroshenko there who was very decisive and full of revolution heat. And Yatsenyuk... To tell the truth; I liked Yatsenyuk and Poroshenko on those days. And even though I was skeptical and I did not share the feeling that the nature of this Maidan was different, I was still thinking that maybe this time they were sincere.

TK: You mean politicians?

AK: Yes, yes. When I was observing them I was thinking that how in such an environment you could have some hidden plans. I do not think that this Maidan was very different from the previous one. Everything that was on that Maidan was on the previous one we just did not see it on time. And revolution forces did not generate propaganda as it was in 2013-2014. The self-organization was on the Orange Maidan, self-sacrifice was on the Orange Maidan, and people in Kyiv in the same way... I saw everything with my own eyes. But this time much more attention was paid to propaganda.

TK: You have already started to talk about the difference between those two Maidans. After all the last one transformed into a confrontation and there were a lot of victims, this step... it happened because the agreement was not made on time? Why people started to use the extreme methods? Because life is the most valuable thing, no one thought that Ukrainian are able to do such a thing.

AK: When we say no one or everyone we fall into a sin, yes?

TK: Yes.

AK: Ukrainians are able, we have examples in history. Ukrainians are able to do self-burning, and they are able to do cruel things towards others. The self-burning that takes place somewhere on the hill or on Khreschatyk it is not the smallest act, but... Very often we create the myths for

ourselves, firstly, there was the Soviet ideology that was teaching us that Ukrainians are a nation without the state. Then we started saying in a response to that that the Ukrainian statehood takes its origin not even in the Kievan Rus', but we went to Troy and so on. Why, here we should determine the definition of people. If under the definition people we think about those who were on Maidan, that means that they were forced to violence, but on Maidan there were also those.... Till this day I do not know if they were agent provocateurs or just big revolution enthusiasts who were interested in violence. But I think that the main guilt for the deaths and violence is on the shoulders of the government. Though on the other hand, let us imagine, let us recall that in 2004 the territory of fighting actions was a bit like this, and this time it grew up. We have episodes of titushky attacks, when they attacked in the suburbs and so on. Materially, the armed confrontation continues for three months and no one does anything. There are thousands of soldiers and policemen around and there is a desire to destroy Maidan elementary. And if there is a desire from the other side – there is the sewer system, roofs, connected courts... urban war, you can go around and take them in the rear. But they did not do this. Partly I connect it to the relations between the government and the opposition, partly to the fact that in reality people did not want to... but I think that both sides had the opportunity to solve the conflict like a wildfire if they had the desire. There were two situations that were very symbolic for me. One of them.... On one of the barricades I met two farmers from Bobrynets Raion: one of them became famous in the whole country – Victor Chmelenko, the Hero of Ukraine, and the other – Oleksiy Tsokolov. They were so different, Victor was thin and serious all the time and Oleksiy was tall and smiled all the time. I made two interviews with Oleksiy for our radio and with Victor, even though we saw each other several times, I was always thinking next time, next time. And he was not like Oleksiy, to talk to Victor I had to prepare better. And it seems to me on 19th February... it was the time when those shooting started and we decided to do a programme on the “Freedom of Speech” ... Well, it was not often that we wanted to reach out, but that was the situation where we should have reached out to someone in order to stop all this. We started to prepare it in the morning, and suddenly there is Oleksiy calling and he said that Victor died. I remember that I went on air with the news, but it was difficult to talk because of tears and instead of the written text I said that we were called and Victor Chmelenko died, he did not have weapons in his hands, it is true, we know that he had not.

He died in the hands of his friend. It showed me that if you want to do something, do not put it aside because you can lose something very precious, that another person would lose as well.

With Oleksiy we are still friends. Another story is mysterious. Here everything is clear... and there was such a story, it is the famous helmet of Chmelenko or the helmet with the emblem of the EU, it was lost when he was transported from the battlefield. And then Oleksiy found it, it was with one of the demobilized soldiers from the war in Donbas. This helmet was in war after Victor's death and then this man took it with him, it seems to me, to Carpathian Ruthenia. And the man whom he covered with his body is still alive. He did not want it, he wanted to take him away, but it turned that Victor covered him.

In one of the first three days of the shooting I went there to prepare reports for Hromandske radio. I was walking down Khreschatyk at that time I was preparing some reports in English. I remember that I was recording in English what I was seeing around me and when I reached the post I met Vladyslava Osmak who was a nurse the whole night. I asked her a few questions. And then there was a man with a hidden face: "Go away, because they will shoot one more time". I said: "How do you know?" and he said: "I know, I am military" "What corps are you from?" I asked. "Special operations" "What side are you from?" I asked. "I am from the other side, but now I am here".

And there were shooting that day. And there was still this question.... "from the other side, but I am here"? This was the man who should have been there but came here to notify us or was he one of the agents. For me it was very demonstrative. I think that there are still a lot of things that we should find out or that we will never find out.

TK: Is it important to know the truth about Maidan and what was happening there?

AK: For me it is not a question, it is important to know because it is also our protection for the future, and our maybe not hope, but the probability that the mistakes will not be committed again. I still think that the whole situation with the overthrow of Yanukovych was made by Russian special forces because it was important for Russia that it happened that way, not through peaceful elections, not even through the agreement, but to give to the whole process an image of violence, an image of threat for the Russian-speaking citizens. Well, how would Russia justify this

intervention if Yanukovych would be left in power? That is why I think that when the war started in the summer of 2013, they.... We talk a lot about it.

TK: If we take all three revolutions, what is the Russian influence in those processes, and how this side influenced their results?

AK: I think that the first revolution was completely against the interests of Russia and the Russian government was not so KGBish and FSBish at that time, in order to react to those action on time, there was still an important influence of people who supported Gorbachev. By the way, Gorbachev, I respect him a lot, except his opinion on the national union questions, because he could not realize, that the USSR – it is the prison of nations and not something else. That is why the first revolution... We can say that Russia was defending even if she was the aggressor, we know it, or it was Moscow that attacked. Well, Moscow and Russia – I think it is it. The second revolution. Well, there was the Russian footstep, but the paradox, to my mind, was in the fact that Kuchma who very often was if not a Ukrainian nationalist, but an independentist, and he was very often considered, by Russia as well, as a pro-Russian agent. And as it turned out then it was not true. I remember I myself laughed because of this title “Ukraine is not Russia”, I thought: to whom did you announce such a news? And then I was persuaded that in Ukraine and abroad a lot of people still did not realize that. But in 2013 Putin and his circle were not as strong and quite in peace with the West, and did not intervene in Ukrainian affairs. And in 2013-2014 the Empire moved on to attack. Before that there was a funny war in Georgia. Chechnya was pacified. There are all the motives, but not enough of increments. And no matter what they say that Russia does not need Donbas, I think that as a territory and as a symbol that Russia is able to widen, it is needed to the Kremlin and also for the pride of a lot of Russians. It is bad to do such generalizations but I think that for the nations that grew up in imperial spirit it is important to make sure that they are still powerful. And what can persuade better if not increments of territories. By the way, in Georgia there was no formal increment and in Abkhazia and South Ossetia they are like independent countries. But here is Crimea that is really occupied and there is Donbas... well a part of Donbas, plus they do not recognize that there are Russian troops, but they do not object the presence of Russians there. Let them call them volunteers, but nevertheless it is

the increment of a territory that is why I think that it was people's movement, I am more than sure. That was a people's rebellion, this is true... I absolutely agree with that. The way Russian special forces use it... I do not say that they For example, I think that there was a moment during Christmas when the opposition showed its ability to be strong, it was a very beautiful moment, in order to put ourselves on good positions with flags, in order to win in elections. It was possible. Well, but it seems to me that someone was not brave enough, and they decided that the further resistance, I do not know what plan they had... But that the further resistance would be useful... Well, maybe that is me who had a sense of inferiority or something like that. I, from my own experience, yes, as someone who came from the surroundings, I am sure that Russia is big, and Ukraine is poor. And whatever you do.... Well, of course, there are people.... In Soviet times we had a lot of relatives next to Moscow and in Leningrad – they were more peaceful.

TK: Tell me please, if there was a change of system in one of these three revolutions?

AK: Well, formally there was a change of government. There was no change of system, well as I see the Revolution on Granite as a bright episode of the general revolution.... Yes, if we expand it to revolution that caused the end of the Soviet Union then yes change happened, but in the Orange Revolution there was only a formal change of government, and unfortunately in this revolution the change was also formal. Well, what can I say... what happened indeed.... Well, one more time, when it is said.... What thesis do we have? That as a result of Maidan the Ukrainian nation was formed. I think that it is absolutely not right, because Maidan was possible, and the previous Maidan was possible and even those 1980s were possible because the Ukrainian nation had existed already. It existed even in Soviet times, it did not embrace so many people as it does now, but as a result of all three revolution there was an increasing number of people who identify themselves with the Ukrainian political nation. But it is obvious that Ukraine would not have gained independence, if there was no Ukrainian nation. In the public conscious that is oriented to socialism, I suppose that the majority, but Ukrainians – we want to be socialists, but still Ukrainians, or Ukrainians and socialists. Then, it is obvious... changes happen. That is what happened, but there were no cardinal changes. Well, still I do see a lot of positive in the fact that the number of Ukrainians on the Ukrainian territory is bigger – this is very positive. And it is very

important to continue to manage all these ethno-cultural questions. The problem is interesting; indeed, I will show you an example. Once in Lviv, in the 1980s I went there when I was writing about the People's Movement. In the café, or a bar, I heard a man and a woman saying something good in Russian about the Ukrainian culture. That was how I met Sergiy Sorokin who founded in Lviv at that time the Society of the Friends of the Ukrainian language, he was known by some writers. I said to him: "Join us..." "No" And here is a very interesting thing. We could be friends, but join one another and be dissolved with a risk – no. On the one hand I can understand such a position. Here we should really agree, by the way it was question about the mother tongue, the language of choice, if a culture that is made not by the Ukrainian language is still Ukrainian. I think that it can be, but a lot of people think not. And what can we do here, I do not know.

TK: Do you think that the roots of Ukrainian protests in the period of independence are in Ukrainian revolution of the years 1917-20?

AK: I was not there at that time so I cannot say something. Here I am talking about something that I observed. And yes, the sixtiers they do not represent the Ukrainian nation. It can be unscientific, but the question is in the quantity. In 1917-20 there was quantity, then this quantity was artificially reduced... And to bring three months of Maidan to the creation of a Ukrainian nation, I think it is the same as doing for us an unworthy service.

TK: And what about future, how do you see it? All these movements were they together or separated? What can we expect next?

AK: I think that the Orange Maidan and the Maidan of Dignity are related. And the Maidan of Dignity arose from the previous experience, and even from that mechanic memory that a lot of Ukrainians had. If we talk about the student Maidan, it is different, it is not that related. Even me, who supports ideologically the fact that the students wanted to receive financial help, I was thinking it was the right thing to do. It was so unusual. It seemed to me that maybe there were some other... It was only after that when I realized that they were doing the right thing. But as their actions were not very broadened, the Orange Maidan did not have its roots in it. It does not

even have its roots in Maidan “Ukraine against Kuchma”. Well, there is a relation because the Orange Maidan was also somehow against Kuchma, but it was more for Yushchenko. I think that the Orange Revolution was more for than against. In the Maidan of Dignity there were more against than for, and in the end everything became against. I am not saying that was not constrictive at all. And yes, this Maidan had its roots in the Orange one. As its successes and its traps in which those who got the victory on the Maidan found themselves.

What is waiting us in the future? There will be an aggravation of the confrontation with Russia. Unfortunately, there a lot of unclear things about what will be happening within the society. I think that in Ukraine we are now short on liberal movements, and that is why the left movement develops in Ukraine.

I think that Russia will not leave us alone. And I think that it is important to say even if you hear it from me or if you understand yourself. We need to realize that the problems in Ukraine would be bigger if not these Ukrainian patriots who were in the Donetsk and Luhansk region and who took the whole stroke on themselves. And it was in Kharkiv, if we take the mainland part, where the Russian flag was raised and the situation was very dangerous. And at that time it was Donetsk and Luhansk that should have fallen – they stocked and there was passive and the active opposition. It is the first thing, and the second the fact that they did not take part in anti-Ukrainian movement. And then Russia saw that they could not do that attack with this wide front. By the way, when in Kharkiv they drove the occupants away, then there went people from the Euromaidan, then they were also driven out. They threw the agents from the seven regions; they took the cardinal advantage in Luhansk and Donetsk region. And what happened, happened. But those few months and even weeks they gave a lot. Otherwise their troops would be in the West. I am sure about that. At the same time I know that the government.... Maybe that was a reason, I do not know. Maybe they were defrauded as they had special forces but they really did not come to help to the pro-Ukrainian troops that were in Donbas. I just know people, I was in Donetsk and Mariupol in April and May. If people needed someone to come they were asking Kyiv, so they could show that we did not leave you. Unfortunately, it did not happen.

TK: And do you have a positive view of the events and the further development?

AK: In general it is positive. I am sure that the common sense that we gained will win; the initiative from the bottom will win. I was saying it during the last Maidan that in order not to do as it was last time – people brought good boys and girls to power and thought that they will do everything for them. Unfortunately, nearly the same thing happened, but now a lot more people went to power with their own initiative. They are not very liked there, but they go and they do what they need to. But this is still not enough. And also, the Marxist past makes us left behind. At his time Symonenko Petro said that the Orange revolution was the revolution of millionaires and billionaires. The people's movement was not the movement of millionaires but it was those people who used the fruits. And we allowed for it. But we have gained the experience and we will win one day, Ukraine will be well, and more people will raise.

TK: Thank you, let's hope.