

The interview with YuliaTychkivska (Y.T.). Interviewer:Anna Kotaleichuk (A.K.). Place of record: Kyiv.

AK: At the beginning I would like to ask you to introduce yourself and briefly say some basic information about yourself: where are you from, how old are you, what is your name?

Influences
Place of
origin - Lviv

YT: My name is Yulia Tychkivska, I used to be Kocherhan. I come from Lviv. That is, I was born and I attended the school in Lviv. For over a decade already, as it turns out, I live in Kyiv - after I moved here to study at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy where I graduated Bachelor's and Master degrees with awards of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The specialization is economics.

AK: And how old are you?

YT: I am twenty-seven years old.

AK: I see.

YT: Married. I have a son, seven months.

AK: I would like to say for the beginning, in order to ask you to tell me about the environment in which you grew up. Who and what had formed you? And what has contributed to the fact that you became such a proactive citizen?

Influences
Family

YT: Well, I think that one of the most important factors which have influenced my formation is my family. These are my relatives. I am from such a patriotic, Christian family. It is not uncommon in Lviv. But it's something that gave me a certain basis, such a value component. And the very important thing is that I am from a large family – we are nine children in the family. From one mom and from one dad! And I look at my younger siblings... That is, I am the second among the nine, and I look at my junior siblings and I understand that the proactive ones are them! (smiles). Because they have all that baggage, all this experience that we have accumulated -

the older ones. And we pass this to them much faster. In other words, I already form them. And it cherishes such people who are independent, who are able to cope, and who take the initiative. A big family - this is a very cool experience! It was not always easy, when we were small, because there always were different things, even like competition and so on. But, thanks to our wise parents all of us are very good friends between each other, and I believe that it was a very, very good experience. In other words, it came from the family. Those approaches which we had which were cultivated by the parents, they were democratic principles. We didn't have tyranny, we didn't have any kind of authoritarianism... we had a possibility to realize ourselves. Well, obviously, I was for example obliged to go to piano classes even when I was already hating them - already for six or seven years. But in many other issues we were "free to choose. My brother was going for Judo, I was going to PLAST [Plast National Scout Organization of Ukraine]. I rode on a snowboard from my early years. I think that it was an important base which laid the foundation of my values because I believe that a lot of things are being formed already in the very youngest age.

Influences

Plast
National
Scouts
Organization

Then was school ... I changed quite a few schools in Lviv. I had communication with different people. And a very important next step of my formation (if we are talking precisely about the formation of personality) - this was PLAST. Because this is also such a patriotic national organization which has this core: Ukraine - God - ability to manage. And this is a great experience which is accumulated by different scouting organizations. The best of this experience, practices are transferred to young children. The camps, when you spend a few weeks in the Carpathians and cook the food for yourself and you are only eight [years old - the note by AK], you make everything on this on cauldrons, you build tents, some facilities - it trains the spirit and it prepares you for life somehow positively. At that moment, perhaps, nobody is aware of this. Now it is possible to wisely analyze that scouting was an important experience for me.

Well, and then it was of course Mohylyanka [Kyiv-Mohyla academy - note by AK]. It is the values of freedom, of democracy, of dignity. In other words it's cool that in the Academy we have always been the people with dignity, we always had our own opinions and we were able to assert our opinions. If you know more, you look higher, you look above, like from some kind of a "pilot view", and then you understand that this is quite rare. Since even compared to the other

universities, this is not such "common knowledge", this is not a default, by default, that you, as a student, are taken seriously, that you are listened to, that you are heard. So, yes. Starting probably with my coming to Kyiv, to the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy - there my formation has begun. I was very happy to have very cool people - the mentors in my life. Throughout my entire career path.

AK: Whom exactly? Whom could you mention [among the mentors]?

YT: Well, it was already later, but one of such the most, probably, important for me - this was Kakha Bendukidze. When I worked with him while helping to Pavlo Sheremeta. Pavlo Sheremeta was for me such a very powerful, so to say, teacher. Such a ... sometimes it was not easy, but they were extremely useful, I believe, almost three years. There were people from business, I am probably not going to name them. That is, there was one woman who was a serious HR in a large corporation which was helping me. In other words, I understood this mechanism, it's important - it is the books or not the books - but I always in my environment look for the people from whom I can learn and who would be able to help me in difficult decisions. That is, taking into consideration the fact that I always have this feeling that "I'm not good enough to do this job, seriously. I'm too young, I don't have enough experience" [the whole phrase was initially in English - note by translator], and to, well, somehow, my internal, I don't know ... uncertainty, perhaps even to eliminate, that is to decrease, I'm always looking for strong people who are an authority for me. I just ask them for advice when I have any doubts. Volodymyr Fedorin. He is another person....

Influences

Kakha
Bendukidze
Pavlo
Sheremeta

Influences

Volodymyr
Fedorin

AK: Fedorin?

YT: Yes. He is the founding editor of *Forbes* in Ukraine, he is the founder of *Forbes*. He is an extremely deep person, a Russian, who arrived in Ukraine, and was given citizenship. Well, he was born in Odesa. So, yes. This mechanism that you ... Well, it is really cool when you ask people for help and for advice. Because there are a lot of difficult situations and I don't believe that one head can solve everything. When you have multiple opinions, then it helps you to look somehow "out of the box", to look sometimes even at yourself from another side. And it's a very

cool reflection, when you are always in such a tempo, you constantly run, and then there is this possibility to hear something different and to rethink and to say: "Hmm, maybe indeed it doesn't look the way I am already myself used to thinking? And maybe I shall take a look at it from a different point of view?" So, yes. These people - they have a big impact, my mentors.

AK: How much had your experience in PLAST... First of all, how long did it last? And, secondly, how did it help you afterwards in the implementation of all these projects of yours, and then actually during the revolution? This experience of PLAST - what does it give?

YT: Well, the key thing which I found out for myself... the key thing is the ability to cope by myself. This skill in a fashionable manner could be called "crisis management". In other words, this is the ability to cope, to deal with a situation by yourself. There are difficult situations: you can sit down and cry, you can sit down and blame everyone, shouting: "This is unfair!", or you can do something. Probably this was some kind of my own perception, but it tempers me. It tempers the spirit and the body. The key thing is to be prepared for different things in life, different situations. I was in PLAST from the time I was six or seven years old, maybe even earlier, so I was still small at that time. I wasn't such an active member of PLAST after I moved to Kyiv. But still, there was about ten years. In other words, it was a long period of time. And I learnt the ability to communicate with people! The ability to make joint projects, of reaching certain goals. There is a system of self-motivation there, you are reach new levels and well this is this kind of a babble, but still I believe that such skills have great value. In other words, I am not talking here about the encyclopedic knowledge, which is not really that valuable now, but I am speaking about personal development actually. Yes, skills [says same word firstly in Ukrainian, then repeats it in English - note by translator].

AK: And your ideas about the state, the politics, about who is who, and what is right, and what is wrong - how was this formed?

YT: PLAST - this was giving me... Family, PLAST - they gave patriotism, but I cannot say that they gave too much of an understanding of how everything happens, of what politics is. There are

Influences

Learning
The Internship
program in
Parliament

probably two important things here. First is the fact that I was participating in an internship program – I don't remember what the first of the two was, but it was happening more or less simultaneously – during my third or fourth year at the academy. I got to an internship program in the Parliament. I passed... this program is financed by USAID which is already for many years there. For one year I worked at the Ministry of Economy as an intern. And this was my first very painful experience of understanding public service. Well, it was a shock! I worked, I went even to the Cabinet of Ministers and I have saw these people, the carpets! On our third floor they were selling nylons [nylon tights - note by AK]. Three men were following me who, you know, the tie was in such a position, because they had such big bellies! Yes, and it's not a joke! It was real, and it stressful. Before that, I myself even didn't really understand, to be honest, what the economy is, but I was walking and telling everyone: "I will work at the ministry... as the minister of economy!" Well, it is, you know, such maximalism of some sort. And then I got into this, and I understood: "Come on! I do not wish to work here!" It's horrible! And when you see, when you work with the colleagues, when among seven people no one knows how to use Excel: they make the databases exclusively in Word! You come as an intern, a student - and you teach many people to a lot of basic things. This was the first understanding I had of public service [in Ukraine]. The second important thing which started my formation of political views - I have also participated in a school of a young politician which was organized at the time by the Foundation for Support of Reforms in Ukraine. It was Igor Gryniv (he doesn't have the best reputation right now). But he was conducting the project in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Well, the essence of this was the following: they were inviting politicians, explaining how politics work and they gave certain ideological understanding of what is classical liberalism, what is democracy, so yes, those things. And it laid such a foundation in me, it made interested to learn more, to dive into this topic. I was invited to organize projects at this foundation, at the Foundation for Support of Reforms in Ukraine. These are still the same reforms, I mean it was created back by Pynzenyk [Viktor Pynzenyk - note by AK] very many years ago. This is how I organized the Liberty Camp - the first in Ukraine - which was based on the values of freedom. God, it was so long ago! ... It seems like a hundred years! (laughs). So, yes. It's a summer camp for students. It was also supported financially by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. And then all of this so much truly ... Well, there was some luck! So I say, there probably are no great recipes for success and well, you

Influences

Atlas
network

Influences

Learning
School of a
young
politician

can think up something like yeah, I'm cool, I'm such and such But actually, in fact, there are a lot of accidents that just affect your life. The head, the executive director of this foundation where I worked, (where I managed the projects) - he didn't know English very well. By the way, he is the Deputy Minister at the moment! (laughs). He says: "Yul, we are invited here to one program to America, for study. Would you like to go?" I thought: "Hmm, I have never been to America! I shall go".

And this is how I found myself in the Atlas network. It's like a "libertarian think tank," in the good sense of the word. This organization "promotes freedom around the world". They have many projects in Africa and in the Arab world. In other words, this is a network of people – like "freedom fighters", people having in mind economic freedom. And I got there, and I started to be interested more in the issues of classical liberalism, as it is called in Europe, or "libertarianism" - this is the American approach. The approach surrounds the value of freedom. This includes the Austrian School of Economics, Hayek, Mises, Friedman [Friedrich August von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman - note by AK]. And this brought to the state in which my views are now, since, talking of any kind of political vision and in general of the development of the economy, I support exactly this particular ideology: a "free market economy. I believe that a state cannot be super-successful when it is so monopolist. To put it shortly: I believe that obviously there has to be the rule of law and the state should have an important role, but not a large role. It must act as an administrator, a regulator, but the maximum deregulation should be there. That is the maximum of the function that now performs the state - they have to be, let's say, given to the market. And I am convinced that it will be much more efficient and much better for the country. And the experience of Ukraine is just a very bright example of the fact that it is really so. Because we see our education, we see our "free" medicine, and it is a disaster. I was looking at how much it costs to us, I understand that each person pays for the same service about three times. And it would have been cheaper to have insurance and to choose where you want to go, in which hospital you want to go... And the same about education. I am convinced that the government should not give these scholarships. This is a very big issue now: to give the state orders at the universities. There should be a rating, there should be the best, the most talented - they should receive scholarships and the student receives... The student has to choose to which university he wants to

Influences
The Liberty
Summer
Camp for
students

go. It stimulates competition, it encourages universities to become better. And "to be attractive," and fight for a student not as it is now. It is just parasitic organizations, absolutely uncompetitive, which do not create any value, while at the same time they just waste, they claim great resources.

AK: You said [to me before the interview - a note by AK] that you were partially involved already in the Orange Revolution. What kind of involvement was that? Do you remember how old were you at that time? And how did you come there? What was your motivation back then?

YT: I believe I was in the eighth grade. So we were pretty young. I was probably around fourteen years old. But since I was from Lviv, and Lviv is such a great patriotic center. And we were all with ribbons, we followed it on TV. And my parents finally decided to go to Kyiv. Because they felt that this is something big going on there, and they took me with them. I remember this as today: a big bus, picking up a bunch of people on our way. And this feeling, when you go from Lviv to Kyiv on the highway, and there is a fireplace in every village and people meet us with cars on the way to the Maidan! Well, maybe I myself, you know, idealized it because it was a long time ago, but it was for me like "Wow"! I remember how we arrived ... Well, it was the role of the parents. Nobody would allow me to come here by myself. And it was not very conscious back then. I had a clear understanding that something was not working, in other words, that something wrong was happening in the state. But such a detailed analysis... let's say, I didn't have a full understanding of "usurpation", "corruption", "oligarchs", that Kuchma stayed too long, Gongadze's murder - in other words, I didn't have such a whole picture at that moment. But there was an inner feeling that "something was definitely wrong". Something has to be changed. And it probably was such an experience. And already with the second revolution it was already completely different! It was already our revolution. We were making it, and it was very conscious.

AK: When did you first come out?

YT: I was there in the very first day when Mustafa [Nayyem] wrote his post. I guess it was on the 26th, right?

Orange revolution

Places

Lviv

Villages

Actors

Yulia's Parents

People

Activity

Wearing

patriotic

ribbons

Moving to Kyiv

Emotions

Enthusiasm

Motivations

Desire for

changes

Actors

Mustafa Nayem

Revolution of Dignity

AK: On the 21st. [of November 2013 - note by AK]

YT: Yes, on 21st. We were there in that evening.

AK: Why? What was the motivation? What were you driven by at that moment?

YT: Well, the key, I believe... I don't want to generalize, but it seems to me that it wasn't even the issue of European integration. Here was the issue of the fact that the people want one thing and the state doesn't listen! The state, the representatives delegated by the people - they do not listen and they do their own things. Then this moment, the signing of the association agreement which didn't happen - this was like the last straw. Somehow it touched me personally. The European Union is in the first place, it seems to me, a value choice. Yes, Ukraine has to be on its own, but there is some vector and there is the issue of values. Either you accept these European values or you accept the non-European values. For me it is in such a context. Once again this gesture for me was the understanding that our president had decided to go in the direction of Russia, which was absolutely unacceptable, it absolutely didn't correspond to the expectations of the country. And so this particular point when the people weren't listened to – this was the impulse. Well, and Mustafa, who wrote his post. There was no serious understanding, once again. It is just like Kakha [Bendukidze] liked to say that Columbus, if he would have lived until old age, he would have told that he specially planned to discover these particular new lands, but not the others! (smiles). But well, that's why now we can fantasize like this too...

I have a good friend - Ira Nemyrovych. She is now Lytovchenko, she is from Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, too. We are, so to say, an active brigade, that both of us are always ready after the first call. Somewhere under the Central Election Commission we... No, not under the Central Election Commission... There were some problems with the elections in the Shevchenko district - we went there as well! In other words, we are civil society fighters. And she says: "So, let's go!", and I say: "Yeah let's go!" We even stopped by the McDrive to take some coffee... and there was no such an understanding that it will be a revolution in such a format. And after that (after the first day), I was coming there in the evenings. I worked in the day and in evenings I came to the

Motivations

Desire to be listened to

Western Influences

EU Association Agreement

Actors

Students

Events

Beating of students

Emotions

Injustice

Actors

The President
People
The authorities

Events

March of Millions

Actors

Iryna Nemyrovych-Lytovchenko (Yulia's friend)

Maidan. There were a lot of people from the academy, a lot of students. But all of this, still, was not so serious. It only became so after the beating [of students]... it was such a very strong "shift" for me, I just cried for the whole morning after that! Such feelings, like an appeal to the values! That, really, it cannot be like this! This is unfair! I don't want our country to be like this. It was generally emotionally transmitted! After that we started an active, effective action. Not just to show up, but to do real work. And there was the first march then - the March of Millions. It was a very cool experience, because the day before we gathered with friends and we were discussing: "What if people will not come?" And we say: "But let's call to people!"

Actors

Oleksiy
Malytsky
Roman
Tychkivskyy

Oleksiy Malytsky was at our home back then. Who else was there? Roman I guess was as well! [Roman Tychkivskyy, Yulia's husband - note by AK]. Somebody else was there... So we just sit in the evening and call around to people from the academy, to our friends: "Will you come to the Maidan?" And one says: "No". The people from Kyiv-Mohyla Academy! The second says - no, a third... And we are like: "Damn, something has to be done". And then we started to contact, to write... I don't remember, there was some unknown organization, I don't even remember the name... And they say: "We have a possibility... We have a possibility... We have some printed leaflets". And so we met, a total of 15 people in the evening before the march of millions. We took leaflets and we went to the subway to distribute these leaflets. I have never done such things before in my life! We walked in the wagons... we were distributing it among the people. I tell them: "Come tomorrow! It is very important! Come tomorrow!" People were jumping away from us! Someone there was throwing it back at me [these leaflets]. And then ... all of this was so emotional... For half of the night we were distributing these damn, I am sorry, leaflets. And in the morning you come to Shevchenko [the building of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv - note by AK], and you realize that a bulk of the people is coming, from all sides. People are coming from all the directions, and very many of them. And there was this type of: "Wow!" So, yes. And when this mass of people gathered, well, somehow the understanding came that the physical presence is important. So, yes. For me it was probably such a discovery that it is important to be at the Maidan physically, if we want something. That it's not enough to even just come after the job. If there will be no people who stand and make this pressure, this public pressure - there will be no changes. We decided that we have to stand, that we should manage our

Actors

People

Emotions

Enthusiasm

Places

Read building
of Taras
Shevchenko
National
University in
Kyiv

Activity

Being at
Maidan
physically

time effectively and I have gathered ... I was working at the Kyiv School of Economics then. At my own peril... Well, it is obvious that Sheremeta was the president, and he had supported this. I gathered different friends of mine, activists. Very different people: both Roman Zinchenko who was involved in TEDx, and Nadiyka Pereviznyk (she worked, I believe, in the restaurant business). I invited Sashko Polozhynsky, because he had already appeared with the active position back then. I invited Mykola Davydyuk who has even released a book now, he is a good political scientist. And just friends. Who else was there? Many people, there are pictures, it's possible to check. And we met. We made such a strategic session at our KSE [Kyiv School of Economics - note by AK]: on what to do, where to move. Our motto was: "To keep the Maidan". Yes, it's Sashko Polozhyk [Polozhynsky] probably said that. That we have to keep the Maidan. In other words, the discussion was ongoing in the context over how to maintain the Maidan. Malytsky was there. Malytsky suggested three actions back then, a "Maidan hour". We printed out something... And for several days... and every day we had such meetings: we discussed, we thought what to do.

AK: In which period was that?

YT: We shall look through the dates...

AK: So, this was already after the beating of students...

YT: After. It was the beginning of December.

AK: The beginning of December.

YT: Well, or something like 28th of November, I guess. Maybe no, for sure the beginning of December. Because on the 6th [of December - note by AK] we launched the "Open University of Maidan". At the very beginning we thought it up and created the name... We found our role to create the coordination center. Because at the first days at Maidan, already after the march of millions, we stood at the Maidan, there was a large number of people, and there was total chaos. There were the days, when there were so many sandwiches that it was possible to simply build a

Activity

Strategic session at Kyiv School of Economics meetings

Activity

Open University of Maidan
Creating informational-coordination center „Not-Evil Maidan”
Building barricades

Events

Poisoning of protesters with gas

Actors

Roman Zinchenko
Nadiya Pereviznyk
Oleksandr Polozhynsky
Mykola Davydyuk

Actors

Volunteers

Places

The House of Trade Unions
Kyiv City State Administration

barricade out of them there. Then people started to bring milk, because they began to poison with gas. There was so much of milk that it started to get spoiled. We decided that we will be a coordination center which will direct people and help. Here comes a volunteer... You come to Maidan - and you don't know what to do. And we direct you. If you would like to deal with medicine - you go there, to the House of Trade Unions. If you would like to make sandwiches - you go to Kyiv City State Administration, the headquarters. To inform people who live at Maidan. Communication didn't work well, and we were such a hub. Then Ruslan, I don't remember his surname, joined us. We were making a newspaper called "Voice of Maidan", we were distributing it. And we called this our informational-coordination center "Ne ZLYi Maidan" [NON-EVil Maidan].

AK: How did you think up this phrase, which is ambiguous actually?

YT: Five meanings... Three meanings are very important. That is, the first one is: "not angry", because we are "peaceful", we are "peaceful, not evil". The second one is: "Do not drain!" - "do not drain us", don't lose this opportunity. This is an important opportunity! Well, to the government as well, to these three... erm... "leaders" of it, like: "Don't drain the Maidan!" And the third one is the threat: "Do not make the Maidan angry!", because we can stand for ourselves, and we are serious about it. Here, three people... or five people just sat and thought and how? And how can you call it? And the idea, so to say, the copyright of the name itself - there was actually Mykola, whom I just recalled, Davyde... Davydyuk? Davydyuk. Well, it's a brilliant name, I believe. And then we...

AK: And what was your role in this process?

YT: I was a coordinator. In other words, I was gathering my friends. And it was all getting built. Oh, my Tychkivskyy! He has a meeting here as well...

(pause in the recording)

Activity

Medicine care
Obtaining
Supplies (food)
Information
support
Making a
newspaper
„Voice of
Maidan”

Activity

Self-defence

The Actors

Mykola
Davydyuk

Actors

Yulia Tychkivska

Activity

Coordination
support

(the end of the first part of the recording)

(continuation of the interview)

AK: Then let us continue. So. A coordinator... And here we will continue. So, about the role. About the role and the responsibilities.

YT: So, I was the coordinator. I gathered all these people and I created a Facebook chat, and I was gathering them in School, at the Kyiv School of Economics. Then I involved also Igor Posypayko, I just wrote to him on Facebook, and he started to get involved, to come, to have some ideas, to bring something. So, yes. And it started to work somehow. Then I started to actively communicate with Pekar. Valeriy Pekar. They already had their own separate team, they were called some sort of headquarters or something like this. And we started to cooperate with them too. And then actually, being at the Maidan, we saw the content of what was happening on the general scene. And it was a bit depressive. Just next to us there was the Kyiv Student Council - SRK it was called. And we realized that it is necessary to create content. In several places the idea of holding lectures was born. It was Aspen, Olesya Zhulynska was involved in it. But they conducted [the lectures] somewhere there at the Institute of Literature on the European square. In other words, [they] were categorically against doing this on the street because there are speakers! How come? Such respected people, how come they will speak on the street! Well, in other words it is OK, it's cool. We helped them at the beginning. There was also... the initiative ... (recalls)... the initiative of someone else. I don't remember who else was saying something there. But a lot of people talked [about it]. We decided: OK, let's do this. And we have started, I think, on the sixth [6th of December 2013 - note by AK]. Just somewhere with the Democratic Alliance, with a gramophone [she means the megaphone - note by AK], without a stage, without anything. Pavlo Sheremeta conducted his lecture first, since KSE - the Kyiv School of Economy - it helped actively, it was involved. In other words, we had a lot of professors, who are, well, in particular Olena Nizalova, I personally don't have very good relations with her, but at some point when we were already in the process of creating this initiative, she wrote somewhere there in the news teller: "Let's deliver

Activity

Information support
Organisational support

Places

Kyiv School of Economics
Kyiv Student Council

Actors

Igor Posypayko
Valeriy Pekar
Olesya Zhulynska

Actors

Democratic Alliance
Kyiv School of Economy
Pavlo Sheremeta
Professors
Olena Nizalova

Activity

Open University of Maidan (lectures)

lectures!". So, yes. In other words, there was this initiative, there were these ideas. And the school supported them, our colleagues supported them and they helped in every possible way.

AK: What were the tasks, what was the goal in all this?

YT: Well, our mission, as we formulated it back then, it is still relevant. That is: to ensure the revolution not only at Maidan, physically, but to ensure it in the minds of the people, in other words, the intellectual revolution. That's why we wanted... Well, I should just dig through the documents. We had three directions of people which we were inviting there. There are very different people, who are successful, experienced, who shared their experience, their knowledge. Sometimes it was... Often it had been topics of reform, of change. Often there were topics which had no touched reforms at all, for example, how to build a career path or about health care - very diverse topics! But we managed to integrate an unrealistic number of intelligent people, professors with Western education, top businessmen and public figures. We were inviting those who were ready to share - knowledge, information and their own experience.

We have a very long story of how we found a donor. There came a person - an entrepreneur from Odesa. He transferred resources to Sashko Polozhynsky and to me. And when we were given this money to, well, erm, help us to something... I say: "Let's do this, let's put up a platform so that it will become more civilized". And for three days we weren't able to bring it, because we were not allowed, this our GAZelle. We held negotiations with this militia. And there was Sashko Sysovs'kyi (which afterwards, by the way, went to the ATO zone), our friend, and Roman Ivasyshyn - they wrote me an SMS at 6am: "We were able to agree about this!" I don't know how they managed to convince them, still. It was already 3 or 4 at night. This GAZelle... These cars were just changing in order to bring this platform, well, the constructions themselves. It was a huge problem. Roma [Ivasyshyn] is also from Kyiv--Mohyla Academy.

AK: I know. We know each other.

Actors

Intelligent people
Professors
Businessmen
Public figures
Entrepreneur from Odessa
Oleksandr Polozhynsky
Oleksander Sysovs'kyi
Roman Ivasyshyn

Activity

Negotiations with militia

YT: I see. And so, they have helped, and in the morning we have this platform near the Lach Gates. And Polozhynsky calls to me and straightaway says: "Yulya! What are you doing with me? Everyone here calls me already "titushky", as we are constructing an alternative stage! That we are the provocateurs!" He says: "I am known here!" And Polozhynsky, really, almost for the entire day until we printed out the well-known banners there, he stood and just with the fact that he is at least little bit...

AK: By his authority?

YT: Yes! A recognizable person. He was telling everyone: "No, not "titushky"! We are making a university here!" It was somehow like this, because of him... He also hated my university, my idea (smiles). So, yes. And we set the stage and we began to organize the lectures. Then people started to join. This was perhaps the biggest geniality of the Maidan, in the fact that it was all working by itself. I don't know the moment when, for example, Oleksandr Starodubtsev, who is now in ProZorro, and Ostap Stasiv joined there. I remember our meeting when they say: "We are from the graduates of KMBS [KMBS - Kyiv-Mohyla Business School - note by AK], we would like to make the university with you, let us help you". Since that time not only I was involved, Roman helped me as well. Roman calls himself a "manager" ... but there was a lot of work: to set up generators, to close the stage, to organize the security and so on.

I was fully engaged in the teaching curriculum, in the work with all the speakers. It was a lot of work indeed! We were doing 8 - 9 lectures a day - and this was so much work. Plus promotion, so we printed a poster. Again, I didn't do it all alone. The posters were made by a person whom I never even met, and who came to me afterwards for an interview at the Kyiv School of Economics, around half a year after that, and says: "Well, actually, I was making the posters for the Open University of Maidan" And I just broke out in tears! Yegor Vlasenko - he studies in Sweden now, well, he is a wonderful person. And all of this worked like this. Then Starodubtsev Sashko and Ostap Stasiv joined, and I am so... I believe that we five, no ... four of us! We were the founders, so to speak, of already a large "Open University of the Maidan" which still lives on. I had an active role during the Maidan - I was coordinating all of this, until I was completely

Actors

Oleksandr
Starodubtsev
Ostap Stasiv

Activity

Mutual help

Actors

Yegor
Vlasenko

exhausted. And then Ostap picked up the story there and he is now engaged in the "Open University of Maidan" online. The initiative which we were able to establish on the Maidan is still alive.

AK: How do you evaluate for yourself, which were the key events of the Maidan for you, which ones are unforgettable, which were influencing you and which had affected all of us?

Emotions

Pride

YT: Well, you can speak about the first day for example, you can speak about the day of the beating. I believe that it was such the most powerful moment. And the "March of the millions". It's a moment when you are proud of your people! You are proud that you see so many people, older people, who came out, who care. For me this in particular was such a very emotional moment. And then there were many days that were similar to each other, because there was a lot of work. I found this field where I could be useful and I'm there, as I have always said: "We have to work hard!" - and so, I worked hard there. (smiles). So and when there were already those armed clashes, this of course... these are the first deaths, this is Nigoyan who stood just next to us - next to the University - I mean there was his place.

Events

Armed clashes
Death of
Serhiy
Nigoyan

AK: The University was at the Ukrainian House?

Places

Lash Gates
Ukrainian
House

YT: No, it was next to the Lach Gates. The stage was there for the first one month and a half. And then we moved to the Ukrainian House. So, yes. Already in February, which was just bloody. There was probably no such a day that... Well, I mean, you constantly lived with crazy stress and in the expectation of the unknown. In other words, this moment - is such a condition which I believe the majority of Ukrainians were experiencing - that you are afraid to open Pravda [the news web page "Ukrayinska Pravda" - note by AK], because there might be again something with red caps lock [the headlines of the most important news in the feed of the web page they used to write with caps lock and with red color - note by AK], and... And you just don't even want to know.

Emotions

Fear

AK: Tell me, please... sorry, just one second...

(checking the recorder)

AK: Tell me please, so for you: how did you imagine yourself the result of this whole process, the result of the protests, and did you have, perhaps, any kind of disappointment? Or what kind of emotions did you have? And what are they now, and here already following the results after three years?

YT: No, I have absolutely no disappointment. The expectations which I had, well, frankly speaking, I didn't believe until the end (there were such moments) that we will be able to achieve the resignation of the president. And with the Maidan activists - we very often used to sit and speak: how is that? What kind of legitimate path? We were developing ... and, God, we were generating such things that it is just! Anyone will envy! That is to create some kind of district councils in order to make the impeachment of the president. We were thinking up such a ways how it should have been... It's Valeriy Pekar who coordinated all this, and his role was great, really. He was so desperately trying to do something. Then again with Valeriy we made a project, where we created a petition, the "Voice of Maidan", we collected various activists. And we were running with Roman and collecting the signatures of the members of the group... (recalls) Some date of "November" or "December"... [the initiative group "First of December - note by AK], there are several of them... There is Huzar...

AK: The "First of December".

YT: "First of December", ok. So, yes. So, yes, there were no big expectations, the main thing was just to be listened to. Somewhere internally, I wanted to change everything. But a clear picture, honestly - I didn't have one. Now you can analyze and I think that it was a fantastic phenomenon - the Maidan. And it was very correct and it changed all of us, it changed the society! And now the results are not very positive but they are in the long run, I believe, important. It is just difficult to speak right now about any measurable advantages. You can hear a lot of skepticism. Here is still

Revolution of Dignity Events

The resignation of the President

Actors

Valeriy Pekar

Activity

Creating a petition „The Voice of Maidan”

Events

1st of December

Revolution of Dignity

Outcomes

all the same corruption; the bandits still steal, well, the gas still has become more expensive. Yes! But, well, you have to be critically minded and to understand that Jesus Christ couldn't come after that, unfortunately, and to make everything super. This is our job! And the key discovery for us, Ukrainians, has to be the fact that after all that we cannot give up and quit. We have to control the state all the time while we are in this transitional stage. And we have to get involved. We have to take responsibility. There are such people in power as we have because of the fact that we are not there. And we are cool, so clean, with the white gloves - because of the fact that there is shit, I am sorry. So, how will we go get dirty? If we, the critical masses, will not get dirty and to change the rules of the game, then it is silly to expect anything. We are voting for the same people because there are no new ones. Yes? And we are voting for the same people, and we want different results. Without changing something nothing will change! I don't know who said this quote: "by changing nothing, nothing changes." And I think that this is the key.

But, at the same time everyone has to be effective in the place where he is. If you understand that you bring much bigger values in the business, play fair, do honest, pure business, and it will be only better for the country than if you will be a ridiculous politician who would be unhappy, and all around will be unhappy. So, that's why the emotions are positive. We have learned a lot. It seems to me that it was like such a super intense schooling for the entire country, which added us like 10-15 years. And we, who came out there as kind of students, we really... I don't know... it is difficult to measure. Many people turned gray! Because it is such a very powerful lesson. And as the result of this, the civil society became more mature, the society which is far from perfect but which exists and which, I believe, will play an important role. In addition, the uniqueness [of the Maidan] about which a few people speak, according to me is the fact that not only we are learning from the world - we have something to teach the world. This is a phenomenal result of the resignation of the president, the change... Taking into consideration the fact that we were completely peaceful. Peaceful! Until the moment when the authorities stepped in. It is a great lesson for the world, because there are still a lot of countries which require these changes. We see Turkey, we see Egypt. We see the same in Hong Kong! Malaysia, has such problems. And we have the "success story" - in the sense that we were able to unite, to prove that not "my own house is at the edge", that we care about it, and to make this Maidan. It's a fantastic phenomenon! When

you see top businessmen, billionaires in their helmets with bits on the Maidan, all the intellectuals... These jokes about... These are not just jokes! This is reality, when people come to us to the Informational center of Maidan... there comes a man and gives us 10,000 dollars: "Because I trust you". God, that kind of money! And then we order large quantities of printed materials, we then ordered the stage. That is the cost, of course! But the trust, the trust was there! It is probably our strongest side that we mobilized at a critical moment.

AK: So, to summarize - the fact that Ukrainians came out to the Maidan, to the revolution when they want to change something in the country. In fact, we can say that this is already the third such a protest action that takes place on the Maidan, that this is such a third Ukrainian revolution. Is it such our characteristic that as soon as we don't like something - we go out to the Maidan? Is it a Ukrainian feature? Or what is it?

UT: No. It seems to me that - no. I believe that the problem is in the fact that the civilized mechanisms do not work. The key thing, the task of democracy is to ensure honest and transparent elections and conflict-free change of government. This is the greatest achievement. As soon as there is a moment – it was twice. I don't know much about the Revolution on the granite, but I believe it was important to speak here with Yaroslav Rushchishin, do you know him? [Yaroslav Rushchishin at the beginning of 1990s was the head of the Student fraternity of the Lviv trade-economic institute, one of the organizers of the Student hunger strike at the Maidan of Independence - note by AK].

Emotions
Trust

AK: Yes.

YT: I mean these are people who did it. But about these two [revolutions] - it was the resistance. And this is not a feature of us as a people. On the contrary, it is a good indication that we don't drop our arms. And if we cannot defend it through the courts, if we cannot influence the change of system by a civilized way, if I may say so, then we do what we can. And it is phenomenal! It is very positive! I believe that we will be able to build normal institutions which will ensure an adequately honest election process; if we will build an adequate justice system - these are the

basic things - law enforcement agencies, the army, which will carry out its functions. Nothing is perfect, but there is a framework. And if we will build all these - there will be no need to make Maidans. There will be no need to gather for manifestations because of the fact that someone is unlawfully judged or on the contrary, that someone is not judged. These institutions do not operate, these institutes do not work. And while they do not work, we have to use everything which we are able to use. That's why Ukrainians are great here.

AK: thank you very much for the conversation.