

**Interview with Mykola Volynko (MV), a chairman of the Independent Miners Union of Donbas. In 1989 he was one of the presidents of the Donetsk Strike Committee. Interviewer: Vitalii Ovcharenko (VO). Place of record: Donetsk.**

VO: Please, tell me about the most important periods of your life.

MV: The most important period in my life was a participation in a strike in 1989 when I was delegated to become a member of the Donetsk City Strike Committee. We had in our management three mines where around 12 thousands miners worked. They unanimously voted for me. The Donetsk Strike Committee was very authoritative in the Soviet Union at that time.

**Influences**  
Participation  
Donetsk City  
Strike  
Committee

VO: Tell me, please, about those events.

MV: In those days the strike had already started and our management was among the first who came to the Regional Party Committee. And after that workers of all mines (we had 21 mines and mine managements, so in total there were 27 mines in Donetsk) gathered. When we were going to the “White House” there was a police cordon. General Nedrygaylo stood up and said: “Guys I am ordered to disperse you and if it’s needed even shoot. But I won’t do that”. He addressed to the police and said: “Make way!”

**History**  
Miner Strike  
in 1989

We went to the Regional Party Committee and saw that the microphones had already been on the square, and men were running in their suits. As it turned out they were the secretaries of Komsomol (an organization for communist youth in the former Soviet Union) mines, and the District Committees. They said that they were of the strike committee. We drove them out, but it came to blows.

After that workers of other mines began to come. Each mine delegated 2-3 representatives. From our mines there were 6 persons. When our demands had been signed (by a Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the USSR Ryabiev and by Poberezhnik and Alexei Bokarev from our side) the State Public Group was created to control the implementation of resolution No. 608. I had already been delegated then and became a member of that group. It was a “liberated” group with the preservation of all benefits. So I had an opportunity not to work in

**History**  
Soviet Union  
**Actors**  
Ryabiev

the mine but the length of work continued to be calculated. I didn't want any gossip so I decided to refuse that privilege and handed a written statement about that to the chairman of the Commission, Ryabiev, in Moscow.

VO: What topics were discussed in your family? Was it politics, or everyday life? Did your family had oppositional views? Tell me, please about your family...

MV: My father, may he rest in peace, experienced Holodomor in Kuban. He was a little child at that time, but he remembered it and told us all about that. My mother, may she also rest in peace, experienced the Holodomor of 1947 year in Western Ukraine. Both of those famines were artificial. At that time we didn't understand that we were being destroyed as a nation.

As my father said (and my grandfather confirmed that) we were of a Cossack blood. But it isn't officially confirmed... They told me that there was a Cossack named Olynko. After the 1929 census letters "V", "D" and "G" were added to the surnames of our family. They wanted us to forget our family history in such a way. Now I will tell my grandchildren about it. I want them to remember that they tried to wipe us out, but here we are now!

VO: What from the history of Ukraine have inspired you the most?

MV: Historical facts and books. I have a lot of historical books. Books collection of Ivan Le... I have a great library at home. Michael Staritskiy's books... Shevchenko's "Kobzar". It is both Ukrainian and Russian books. I can read and write in Ukrainian, but, unfortunately, I don't speak Ukrainian well. However my mother came from the Western Ukraine. And the specific nature of my work now makes me spend time among Russian-speaking people more. It is necessary to admit that Donbas has being consciously russified. Everything has been done to separate Donbas. And it's, unfortunately, because of our national patriots' connivance.

In 1994 I spoke to "The People's Movement of Ukraine" (Narodnyi Rukh Ukrainy) fraction in Verkhovna Rada. Among others there were Viacheslav Chornovol and Stepan Khmara. And even then I said that we should pay attention on Donbas. It was necessary to do everything we can to keep Donbas as a part of Ukraine. "Yes, of course..." – everybody nodded and that was all.

## Influences

Family

## History

Holodomor in  
Kuban and  
Western  
Ukraine

## Influences

Historical  
Book and  
"Kobzar"

## Actors

"Rukh"  
V. Chornovol  
S. Khmara



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3R PROJECT

College of Europe  
Natolin Campus

ul. Nowoursynowska 84  
PL-02-797 Warsaw, Poland

Phone: +48 22 54 59 401  
Email: [3r.natolin@coleurope.eu](mailto:3r.natolin@coleurope.eu)

VO: Did the interpretation of Ukraine's history in your family differed from the official version?

MV: Yes, it did. Especially when my father has told me about the Holodomor, I was shocked: "Why was it not mentioned in history? Why was it not indicated anywhere?" My father told me what had happened. There were so many victims! My father said that at that time there were cases of cannibalism.

When I returned from the army, my father had already come back to Krasnodar because of the health problems. I came to him and we visited our relatives. We were sitting and viewing photos. On one of them there was a young woman with two little boys. I asked: "Who are they?". She answered: "They were your uncles". I asked where are they? Did they die during the war? But she didn't say anything... When we got out my father said: "Do you remember that photo? Those two boys were eaten during the famine...". I said: "What was the famine? Father, are you OK?". And my Dad told me the whole story with the scary facts.

**Influence**  
Memory  
of  
Holodomor  
in  
Kuban

VO: What was your family's life in the Soviet times?

MV: We lived like ordinary people. I come from a workers' family. My wife has a secondary technical education; she has finished a technical college. We lived normally: home-work-family; home-work-family... Vacation... By the way, in Soviet times there were no opportunities to go abroad freely as we can do it now. Even Bulgaria was difficult to go to, only through connections.

**Influence**  
Family  
Profession

VO: Do you have any photos from the Soviet times?

MV: Yes, I do. But they are on the occupied territory.

VO: Did you communicate with priests in the USSR? What was their role?

MV: To be honest it was just during Easter. I began to go to the church after the USSR had collapsed. But then I understood the whole essence of the Moscow Patriarchate... In Donetsk at that time there were just 1-2 churches of the Kyiv Patriarchate. A powerful propaganda

machine instilled in people the thought that churches of the Kyiv Patriarchate were the dissenters. And we have been told all the time that Russians are our elder brothers.

It is now when, thank God, it has begun to be explained that when the Kievan Rus' was Christianized there were a swamp in Moscow. And since 2014 when I saw that the Moscow Patriarchate was campaigning for Victor Fedorovich Yanukovych I have stopped attending this church. Since then I have begun to help Derkach with building a church of the Kiev Patriarchate in a proletarian area. An interesting fact: when we started working on our church representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate began shouting: "We won't let you do this!". They were brawling everywhere... And I said: "Priest Pavel, let's do it! I will give you a flag of our Labour Union. And let's see what will happen next." A few days later I saw that the flag of our Labor Union was above the chapel and Pavel was smiling. I said: "What's up?". He explained: "When they saw the flag they were confused. They asked if it was a flag of the Independent Miners' Union of Donbas". "And what did you say?" "I said "yes". The next day there was a silence and nobody dared to appear near the chapel.

VO: Did you read the Samizdat press?

MV: In general the Samizdat appeared since the beginning of the Perestroika. The works of Lev Razgon were very popular as well the book titled "Deti Arbata" ("The Arbat's children"). I have read all of them. But it was the years of 1986-1987 when the samizdat became more accessible. Until 85 it was almost impossible to get them.

VO: What do you remember about the Perestroika, about the late 1980s and early 1990s?

MV: At the beginning of the Perestroika there was a famous "Uzbek case". The case was conducted by Gdlian and Ivanov. They were in the public eye. I had to meet them. For the first time we talked for about 10 minutes. They were famous and when the strikes began their representatives came to us. One of them gave me the list of 10 people that worked in the Dlian team. I remember how I came to him in hotel "Russia" and introduced myself. Then I showed him that list. He asked: "What is it?" I answered: "One man gave me this list and said that all these people worked on you". He said: "Second. Seventh. Forget about the rest". I said: "I understand". He indicated who from the list it was good to work with.

**History**  
Kievan  
Rus'  
Christen  
a

**Activity**  
Building  
church f  
Kievan  
-

**Influences**  
Samizdat  
literature

**History**  
"Uzbek Cas  
provided T.  
Gdlian and  
Ivanov

We met in a year after that again. He introduced me to Ivanov. They were people who were breaking the backbone of the Communist Party mafia. For me it was a pleasure to meet them.

VO: What were the reasons of the miners' protests that you participated in?

MV V: In the years 1985-1986 there was more publicity. We began to get more information about work conditions abroad. When I was working in a State Public Commission, I learned the principles of work of labour unions. I was really surprised that the February revolution had been organized by labour unions. But we were told that it was a bourgeois revolution. The fact is that it was the labour unions who have brought people out into the streets and overthrew the king. There was a working group of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) and Artem Sergeev wasn't a Bolshevik, but a Unionist. Until 1929 we had had labour unions as they were in the rest of the world. But in 1929 Stalin gave them power to share apartments, resort stays. The labour unions should not do it.

In 1984 we were doing overwork for 2 to 3 days to support the English miners. And when the strike started in 1989 in one interview I was asked: "What would you like to wish the English miners?" I said: "I just want to know whether our money reached the hands of the striking English miners". They were surprised: "What money are you talking about?". "All those mines in Soviet Union were working for to help English miners!" That interview was published and I was invited to go to England. It was me and Yuri Boldyrev who were invited. By the way, he later became a deputy of the Party of Regions. He has turned out to be a gone man.

So when in England I was going from a mine to a mine I asked their workers what labour unions meant to them. How did the unions help them, whether they offered resort stays...? But they couldn't understand what I was talking about. And when they eventually understood, they started to laugh out loud. They said: "Why do we need the Labour Union that shares and takes away? The Labour Union should protect us. It should ensure that we have good salaries and good safety conditions.

**Influence**  
Access to  
information  
in  
Glasnost'  
Perestroika  
a

**History**  
February  
Revolution

**History**  
Miner Strike  
England in  
1984  
**Events**  
Overdues to  
help English  
miners  
**Actors**  
Yuri Boldyrev

**Influence**  
Visit to  
England  
Meeting with  
English  
workers and  
Labor Union

**Influence**  
Perestroika  
Glasnost'  
**History**  
Strikes in  
Severouralsk,  
Vorkuta  
and  
Lidievka  
(Dontsk)

What is a labour union? Its aim is to monitor the situation and to interfere in a timely manner to prevent a failure of production. It is the legacy of Valentin Plekhanov from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

VO: What were the preconditions of the miners' strike?

MV: Perestroika, publicity and other things had started. And we began to understand that we were paid too little. There was a secret order in the Soviet Union not to pay more than thousand rubles for work on the flat seams of mines. In March of 1989 miners in Severouralsk and partly in Vorkuta began to strike. In Donetsk it was mine Lidievka. Those were the days of back payments. And even when the salary were paid they were too small. In general, the protesters were fighting for decent working conditions and good wages.

By the way in 1989 the delegation of Polish miners, members of Polish "Solidarity" visited us. They gave us watches and pennants... And when the occupation had already begun, I had a watch from Polish "Solidarity" in my cabinet. Everybody was surprised that it had been so long that I was storing it. And even now the watch is in a cache, it is hidden. It is waiting for its time. And we will free it together with Donbas.

At that time a lot of people would come from different countries - both journalists and labour unionists. And it was memorable. When I was introduced to them as a chairman of the Donetsk Strike Committee, they asked: "Are you a Ukrainian Lech Walesa?" I answered: "No, but I am a Ukrainian Volynko!". Although it was a pleasant comparison.

VO: Did you participate in the first miners' protest? When did it take place in Donetsk?

MV: The first massive miners' protest took place in July 18th of 1989 year. And that protest became my ticket to life.

VO: How many people it gathered?

MV: There were 27 mines in Donetsk and it gathered around 50 thousands miners.

VO: Did you have any connections with Rukh (the People's Movement of Ukraine)?

**Influence**  
Visitors  
Journalists  
Labor  
unionists

**History**  
Massive  
miner  
protest in  
Donetsk  
July 18<sup>th</sup>  
1989

**Actors**  
Ukrainian  
Rukh/Pe  
ple's  
Moveme  
t of  
Ukraine



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College of Europe  
Natolin Campus

ul. Nowoursynowska 84  
PL-02-797 Warsaw, Poland

Phone: +48 22 54 55  
Email: [3r.natolin@ce](mailto:3r.natolin@ce)

MV: No, we didn't. There were attempts of the representatives, who... In other words, they tried to demonstrate that "I speak Ukrainian unlike you, lumpens...". It was repulsive. It was disgusting in the beginning and then I understood that they were consciously doing this to alienate people of Donbas from Ukraine.

VO: But I don't understand the reasons why would Rukh want to alienate them.

MV: If you want to be heard and understood you don't need to emphasize how smart you are and that your companion is stupid. That he is an idiot... Nobody likes to hear that. Moreover, there was counter-propaganda... and an abruption...

VO: Did you communicate with Chornovol?

MV: Yes, I had to. When we came for picketing of Verkhovna Rada, he came out to us. And so did Simonenko. Simonenko talked for about 45 minutes about how bad the bourgeoisie was. I stood up and said: "Peter Nikolaevich, we have five thousand people. Give us an order us and we'll destroy Verkhovna Rada". One had to see how nervous he became. "Excuse me. My break has ended and I need to go" - he run out. After that I asked people: "Do you remember what he was talking about?" They answered "No". I continued: "So now you understand who the communists are?"

I had to keep in touch with Chornovol. He gave a speech to the miners and after his speech I thought about the year 1994. I spoke to a Rukh fraction in the parliament. If you want to win and at that time you speak Ukrainian as I do it in Russian... It was a bad idea to emphasize on your significance. And I asked them also not to do it. Their representatives did everything to begin an abruption.

VO: For how long did the miners' protests continue?

MV: Massive and powerful protest took place until the USSR collapsed. Then they were organized until 1995 and even 1997. One of our strikes led Zviagilskiy Yefim Leonidovich to power and there is no need to hide this fact. I was in Verkhovna Rada when he was pronouncing his speech. He asked for a resolution of Verkhovna Rada to sell a strategic reserve of aviation kerosene and to use that money to pay the debts to miners. That resolution was

**Forms of protest**  
**Picket of Verkhovna Rada**

**Actors**  
P. Symonenko  
V. Chornovol

**History**  
Miner Strike 1995 and 1997  
**Actors**  
Y. Zviagilskiy



passed. And over time he was alleged of stealing money. However, the debts had been paid to the miners. And when BBC asked me that question I said that it was necessary to tell the truth. I said: “I am an observer”. And Davy Arkadiev asked: “Do you mean a witness?”. I replied: “No, in this country witnesses are killed first. I am an observer. I saw how it was voted on”.

VO: How many protests took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s?

MV: Around two a year, excluding local protests.

VO: What were the political demands? Were articulated they during miners’ protests?

MV: The first political demand was put forward in 1989 by the miners from Vorkuta. It was crazy for us. They demanded to remove article 6 from the Constitution which clearly indicated that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union played a leading role. We were shocked by that. And after that, in March-April of 1990, there were strikes throughout the whole USSR. We were on strike for 2 months. By the way, I directed the groups of agitators. Only I knew what mine would go on strike on the next day. Teams were set up to go around the whole Donbas but they obeyed only me. After that I was invited by the Australian government.

**History**  
Miner  
protests

VO: And when did the Ukrainian miners begin to put forward political demands?

MV: It was almost right after Ukraine became independent.

VO: So before independence the Donetsk miners did not have any political demands?

MV: March of 1990. We organized an economic strike that turned into a political one. We demanded the resignation of the Cabinet of Ministers. But it was still the USSR. By the way, a historical fact: on March 2nd 1990 we were near the “White House” in Donetsk. We demanded there a resignation of the Regional Party Committee. (I wasn’t a member of the Communist Party. And we never had commies in our family. Only a distant relative — my father’s uncle had to join the CPSU to become a director).

**Motivations**  
Political  
demand  
Demand the  
resignation  
of the Cabine  
of Minister  
Remove from  
the  
Constitution  
of USSR the  
Article 6th



My friends-activists came back to mine Glybokaya, burned their party membership cards and raised a blue and yellow flag above the mine. It was March 2nd 1990. Valera Katrukha did it. He lives in Severodonetsk, but I have quarreled with him.

VO: Was the miners' attitude to the Independence of Ukraine positive at that time?

MV: I said and I continue to say that we got our Independence too easy. We didn't understand anything. At that time the central authority and the opposition the Rukh paid too little attention to Donbas. Now we understand a lot and we are fighting for our independence. By the way, a lot of members of our labor union participated in both: the first and the second Maidan.

**Internal Policy**  
Attitude toward Donbas

VO: So, their attitude was, in general, normal?

MV: They normally reacted to that fact.

VO: What do you know about the Granite Revolution?

MV: I know about it, in particular, from communication with its representatives. Those students came to us and for several times they stayed for a night at my home.

VO: Why did they come? What were their aims?

MV: They were coordinating with the Donetsk students. Two boys came. I remember one of them. It was Zhenya with red hair. I forgot his surname. We met in Kyiv later. They needed support. So we agreed that they would be working with students and if anything happened they could count on our Strike Committee. The Strike Committee was in front of the main entrance of Donetsk Polytechnic Institute. So we were meeting almost every evening...

**Revolution of the Granite Activity**

Affirmation of support, if it be necessary

**Actors**

Donetsk's students

VO: Why wasn't there the unity? United protests?

MV: Because a lot was done to prevent it. The aim was not to build a civil society even in the 1990s. We are from Donetsk and we knew that many people vote for democrats. So why at every election there were 5-7% votes for "Batkivshchyna"? I thought that it was a kind of

**Internal Policy**  
Division of Ukraine between political



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3R PROJECT

College of Europe  
Natolin Campus

ul. Nowoursynowska 84  
PL-02-797 Warsaw, Poland

Phone: +48 22 500 10 10  
Email: [3r.natolin@collegeofeurope.eu](mailto:3r.natolin@collegeofeurope.eu)

rigging. But one more time: if there was dishonesty why didn't the opposition say anything? Later, after conversations with representatives of the opposition, I understood why.

In the early 1990s Ukraine was secretly divided between different party leaders. The East, Donbas, Kharkiv region, Crimea, Odesa - these parts were secretly given to communists, socialists and later regionals. So there were three leading parties. And Vitrenko joined them... The center and western Ukraine were given to others. Matching everything I've said we see a sad picture. And it hurt very much when we, the patriots, asked to provide us with weapons, but it hasn't been done!

VO: You said that an association of Strike Committee and the Granite Revolution activists was prevented. By whom?

MV: Not only by the authorities, but also by those patriots of ours. Secretly...

VO: Where did you get the idea of demonstration formats during the miners' strikes? Was that your own idea?

MV: It was chaos at the beginning but later we were learning.

VO: Learning from what?

MV: Our own mistakes. We had an experience of a week or a month while other countries were learning the same for decades... We shouldn't have been deceived. But when they actually lied to us we rejected everyone and everything.

VO: Do you remember some symbolical moments of the times of miners' protests?

MV: Yes, it's the moment when my murder was attempted. I then drew the conclusion that it was possible to steal a lot of money during the strikes. How? In the early 1990s it was very popular to get a loan. Even the director of a mine could do that. Such a loan had been taken and after that came the pay period for salaries and loan installments. They said that Kyiv didn't give them money. So what to do? Begin a strike.

**Motivation**  
Corruption

**Activity**  
Interview for  
press about  
stealing  
money  
during strike



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College of Europe  
Natolin Campus

ul. Nowoursynowska 84  
PL-02-797 Warsaw, Poland

Phone: +48 22 54  
Email: [3r.natolin@ce.europa.eu](mailto:3r.natolin@ce.europa.eu)

**Events**  
Attempt of  
murder

And in 1996 the mine administration of Oktyabrskoe went on strike. I was interviewed for a newspaper “Gorod” (“City”) where I explained the scheme of how it was possible to steal money during strikes. Demands were formulated that consisted of 20 points. But what people read in the article is usually just the beginning and the ending. The middle is often skipped out. At the beginning there were points of payment of wages, revision and accident prevention. At the end it was indicated that in the case of non-execution the responsibility lied on the State. And in the middle there was a tricky point: the write-off of all loans and debts.

The next day after the article had been published there was an attempt to kill me. There were six masked men. They pulled me out the car. I survived thanks to the driver as when they were beating me he directed the car at them and they run away.

VO: Did you participate in “Ukraine without Kuchma”?

MV: No, I didn’t. We didn’t participate in this protest action because there was no explanatory work. Some participated individually, on their own, but it was not massive...

VO: And did you participate in the Orange Revolution?

MV: It was decided to go to Maidan because there were repressions against the supporters of Independence and Ukraine's integrity.

VO: So did you go to Maidan at that time?

MV: No, I did not. I had to stay and keep abreast of situation here.

VO: There is a myth that the miners didn’t support the Orange Revolution. Is it true?

MV: In the early 1990s it couldn’t be seen, but in the early 2000 it became understood that there was serious work undertaken against our Independence. Our miners supported Maidan and went there, but secretly.

VO: Did you participate in Euromaidan?

**Orange  
Revolution**

**Actors**  
Miners  
**Motivations**  
Fight for  
Independence

**Revolution of  
Dignity  
Events**  
Beating up  
students  
**Motivations**  
Stop  
lawlessness



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College of Europe  
Natolin Campus

ul. Nowoursynowska 84  
PL-02-797 Warsaw, Poland

Phone: +48 22 5  
Email: [3r.natolin@ce.europa.eu](mailto:3r.natolin@ce.europa.eu)

MV: The day after the students had been beaten up our labour union declared our readiness to appeal to miners and other companies for help in stopping that lawlessness. There was an attempt to pressure me for that. But you know that it doesn't work with me.

VO: Who did try to do it?

MV: The authorities. "We'll do everything possible to wipe out your labour union", they said. They frightened me with bandits. We experienced it during the election in 2012. The bandits told us then: "We are crazy, but your people are even crazier than us".

VO: Was it at that time when you were a candidate of the opposition party, right?

MV: Yes, you're right.

VO: What party was that?

MV: "Batkivshchyna". Opposition...

VO: In your opinion, what were the causes of the Euromaidan protests?

MV: Everybody wants to live well. In time of Internet and mobile connection everyone can see how one could live and they dreamt about a better life. A lot of Ukrainians have been abroad. I also want to live better. I want that the European laws are applied in Ukraine. But I want to build my own country and no other countries can tell us what to do — neither Russia, nor the West. That is why there are some moments unacceptable for us.

VO: Do you think it was possible to end this political crisis in December or January in a non-violent way?

MV: We have to take again into consideration the fact that Ukraine has been secretly divided. And this political crisis (but it was rather a political weakness of our opposition leaders) didn't define anything. Even if they had agreed with Yanukovich, the Ukrainians wouldn't have left the Maidan. People didn't want to live in such a mess anymore. Even now there is a war (for

**Motivation**  
Bring change  
to the country

**Actors**  
V. Yanukovich  
**Russia's Policy**  
War  
**Internal Politics**  
Divide people  
between  
political  
leaders  
**Motivations**  
Weakness of  
opposition

the authorities it is ATO, but we consider it to be a war). Russian occupiers are not fighting with the government, but with the nation. And the nation can't be defeated!

VO: Did you go to Kyiv during the Euromaidan? What were your responsibilities?

MV: I had a responsibility to stay and keep abreast of the situation here. But our colleagues were on the Maidan. I had to deliver a speech in the mine Trudovskaya and then I had already known how many miners were on the Maidan. And even then the talk already started that there were just lazy people on the Maidan. But I explained: "I know those people and they are not lazy!".

After that people from Torez came here and spread a rumor that there would be wage delay because money was going to be spent on Maidan's repair. People believed in that lie and then I called the general manager who said: "What?! It's a lie. I haven't ordered that".

VO: Were there conflict situations between the Maidan and anti-Maidan supporters?

MV: There were lots of them! And the labour unions were engaged in that. And the payments were done through labor unions.

VO: Are you talking about the anti-Maidan?

MV: Yes! Euromaidan wasn't sponsored. People were going there paying with their own money. I know some people who went to Kyiv by their own car, left it on the outskirts of the city and went to the Maidan.

However, both the anti-Maidan and separatist demonstrations on March 13 got sponsored. I was informed that even from Makeevugol five buses of miners were sent... And a pro-Russian rally...

VO: Why did the miners support that? Why year after year they voted for the same people?

MV: Because they were told that otherwise they would lose their jobs. And let's return again to year 1994. Our national patriots, our democrats, did not pay paid enough attention to Donbas.

**Internal Policy**

**Events**  
Conflicts between Maidan and Anti-Maidan

Events  
Anti-Maidan

**Events**  
Counter-demonstrations

**Motivation**  
Fear of losing job

VO: Did you attend the Donetsk Maidan?

MV: Of course! What was the most shocking for me was that maximum 100 people came there. At the same time I just counted in Kyiv at least 300 leaders of the Donetsk Euromaidan...

**Activity**  
Maidan in  
Donetsk

VO: What was the most memorable in the Donetsk Euromaidan for you?

MV: The fact that more and more titushkas (bandits) were coming. And people's indifference to their destiny was growing up and up. When the war started I had a conversation with the internally displaced people: "Are you trying to find out who is guilty? Do you blame Kyiv for this? It is us who are guilty of what's happening now. We did not want to protect ourselves when it was necessary!" It should have been seen... even men were crying...

**Events**  
Provocation  
Titushki

VO: Who during the Euromaidan protests was your enemy or rival?

MV: The government. But the main enemy was the indifference of our people to their own destiny. That was all.

**Motivation**  
State as  
enemy  
**Emotions**  
Indifference  
of other  
people

VO: What was the role of the Internet and media during the protests?

MV: On the one hand they had a great importance. On the other hand the role of Internet especially Russian one had a negative impact on Donbas and was directed against the Euromaidan. People that had power did everything to fight with patriotism, to make people feel tiredness and apathy to everything. And now we have no civil society here.

**Russia's Policy**  
Propaganda

**Emotions**  
Tiredness

VO: What do you think about other countries' policy towards Ukraine before and during the EuroMaidan?

MV: There was a support from the West and a denial among CIS countries. The latter knew that Ukraine wanted to live in democratic conditions and that was not beneficial for them.

**External solidarity**  
Solidarity with  
protesters of  
the West  
Negation from  
the CIS  
countries



College of Europe  
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

3R PROJECT

College of Europe  
Natolin Campus

ul. Nowoursynowska 84  
PL-02-797 Warsaw, Poland

Phone: +48 22 638 40 00  
Email: [3r.natolin@ce.europa.eu](mailto:3r.natolin@ce.europa.eu)

VO: What is your main disappointment after the Euromaidan?

MV: In general, there are almost no new people among the authorities here...We don't see reforms nor changes, but an increase in prices of electricity and everything else. Remember Maidan, when Yanucovich escaped. How much time passed until a new Cabinet of Ministers was elected? Around two weeks... For what? They were waiting for the true activists to go back home. And after that they came out and said: "So, here we are!". They are a knit team...

**Revolution of  
Dignity  
Outcomes**

VO: So, briefly speaking, the main disappointment is the lack of new people in the government?

MV: Of course. This is the first problem. Second, there is the absence of implemented reforms. You know, why it is necessary to raise electricity prices when we use the same old and worn out equipment. We should spend money for buying new ones. Instead of reforms, we've got rising prices and ineffective politics regarding the country's aggressor. And Russia hasn't been officially admitted as an aggressor.

VO: In your opinion, what was the decisive moment of Euromaidan?

MV: It is scary to talk about. It's uniquely a moment when the shooting began. People were ready for everything at that time. And "to make an agreement" didn't work. But as I know they were preparing to negotiate with Yanukovych that he'd give them an opportunity to govern the country and they would lead people away from the Maidan.

**Events  
Shooting  
Emotions  
Lack of fear**

VO: Were you in Donetsk when the shooting took place on the Maidan?

MV: I was going from mine to mine until I went into hiding. From early April some cars were keeping a watch near my house. They were looking for me and I decided to hide. I was living for three days in one flat and then in other...

**Internal  
Policy/Russian  
Policy  
Threatening  
Following**

VO: How did the miners react on the shooting on the Maidan?



MV: There was an understanding in February on 18th-20th that Yanukovych was a bastard and people had been killed, but then... Russian TV, Internet won and people began resenting about the Euromaidan.

**Russia`s Pol**  
Propagand

At the mine Trudovskaya one man (he later became a deputy director) shouted: "I will kill those banderovites". I replied: "So, fire out! Who do you want to start with? I can be the first! I am a banderovite because I support my country. But if you begin, then a war will begin".

**Emotions**  
Rage

Unfortunately, Russian propaganda has won on the left bank of Ukraine. What can be done now? Where are now the providers of cable television? They aren't on the occupied territory. And Russian cable television works even on the liberated territory. There is no need to set these towers now.

VO: Is it necessary to ban putting up satellites?

MV: Yes. But there should be a resolution of the authorities for that.

VO: Is it right to say that the majority of miners, unfortunately, support illegal formations?

MV: It's difficult to say for sure. But before the war they had a wage of 8 thousand hryvnas. Now they are paid around 8 thousands of rubles, which is 4 thousands hryvnas. So the difference is big. However, the powerful propaganda works here...

VO: Were the previous revolutions important for Ukrainians involved in the EuroMaidan? Or other historical events?

MV: Not in Donbas.

VO: What events of the late period of the USSR influenced the further protests? Maybe, it was Chornobyl or the economic deterioration, publicity, something else?

MV: All these factors together. Because of publicity we could see and understand more.

**Influences**  
Chernobyl  
Economic  
decline  
Publicity

VO: What was the attitude of protesters towards the legacy of the Soviet period and the imperial role of Russia?

MV: At that time we didn't think about that. An imperial role... I experienced the attitude of Russians toward us myself. They think that we are subhuman and Russian is a superman.

VO: Even in the early 1990s?

MV: Yes. I have seen this attitude all my life. Even when I served in the military, I was faced with such an attitude. But they were frightened if you said that you were from Donbas.

VO: In the army with whom did the Ukrainians communicate more? With Russians or Ukrainians? Was there a fraternity?

MV: Secretly there was a Donbas fraternity.

VO: Did you communicate with western Ukrainians?

MV: Of course. But they were a little introverted.

VO: What organisations in the Ukrainian history (for example Rukh) have influenced the development of the civil society and propelled protests in Ukraine?

MV: Once again the agitators, who were here and introduced themselves as representatives of "Rukh", were doing everything to begin abruption of Donbas. Consciously or not...

VO: And what about other organisations?

MV: Also anarchists came to us. There were a lot of different representatives in Donbas.

VO: Are there oligarchs in Ukraine now?

MV: The reason is in the lack of political will of the country's leadership. If there was political will and if the laws worked there wouldn't be an oligarchy. And we don't have such a political will so it is not the fault of the oligarchs.

VO: What was the role of corruption in the protests in Ukraine? What is the situation with corruption in Ukraine?

MV: Corruption has been present in Ukraine since 1917. In the Soviet times corruption was also here. We helped to develop it ourselves! We are used to thank a person for the work he/she has done, but it is their responsibility to do that! And we buy them a piece of chocolate or a bottle of cognac. And once again, we don't have a civil society. We don't have the middle class. There are just the wealthiest and the poorest in Ukraine.

**Internal Police**  
Corruption

VO: Could you compare the course and the importance of the protests that took place in Ukraine after 1991? Are there any tendencies?

MV: We have had only one tendency - there is no civil society in Ukraine. Every labour union, every party tries to demonstrate that they're the best. And it's all. If we only had a society that would make the authorities implement real reforms, fight with corruption...

VO: How did people know how to protest? What were the most effective forms of protest?

MV: It is an interesting fact that if today stopping production is an effective tool, tomorrow the authority will learn how to fight with it. We should look for new methods. There are enough forms of protest! The only necessary thing is the willingness of people to live better and continue till the end. Unfortunately, in Ukraine the majority say: "So, you can go and do it and I will come later to criticise you". The result is war. It is because of people's indifference.

VO: Did the participation in previous protests motivate you to participate in later ones?

MV: The work of the labour unions is a permanent struggle, a protest. What was the motivation? Once we have won and achieved something, then we should save it.

**Motivation**  
Achieving  
new goals

VO: But some people from your city don't participate in demonstrations. Why?

MV: You know, the nation protests, but the population wins the election. And, unfortunately, delaying with the solving of these problems causes the self-doubt. That is why many people prefer drinking coffee while someone else is fighting for a better country. To change our country we need to change the legislation and people's mindsets.

VO: Who did the protesters and the authority count on?

MV: We counted on the awareness of the workers. And the authority relied on the repressions and on those whom they could frighten. They hired bandits, to beat and kill... A lot of people have suffered from that.

VO: Who were the protesters?

MV: In the 1970s, 80s, 90s the miners were the best educated working class. They had good wages at that time. And now we can't find even a professional combine driver. Everything has been damaged. Earlier there were times when people's awareness was very strong...

VO: What was the role of the latest protest for the evolution of the Ukrainian society?

MV: Every demonstration and every protest has a particular impact. People learn something new. Some of them became apathetic because of the defeat; others considered it to be a chance for findings new ways. So, as we see in Ukraine, there are two opposite views. Those who want to stay there they dream about the Soviet Union. But I want us to live in a dignified democratic country!