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War Heats Up Near Mariupol



Ukrainian soldiers of the volunteer Donbas Battalion check an anti-tank machine gun in the village of Shyrokyne, 10 kilometers east Mariupol along the Azov Sea on April 15. (Anastasia Vlasova)

BY ALLISON QUINN
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SHYROKYNE, Ukraine – As the cease-fire in eastern Ukraine remains such in name only, international monitors have shifted their focus to the Donetsk Oblast village of Shyrokyne, where fighting between Russian-

backed insurgents and Ukrainian forces has intensified in recent weeks.

Shyrokyne, a key step for Russian forces to capture the Azov Sea port city of Mariupol only 10 kilometers to the west, has been all but obliterated in heavy fighting during the last two months.

A visit to the area on April 16

revealed an eerie ghost town littered with debris and shrapnel, home after home destroyed by shelling. Remaining residents of the village complained of shelling on an almost daily basis. But on the visit, only the sound of animals crying for food could be heard. Many of the pets were abandoned by owners who fled for their lives.

Out of 1,000 residents, only about 34 remain – many of them elderly and unable to leave. They all live in homes that have lost ceilings or walls to shelling. Many of them stay in their basements for fear of further attacks.

“Where would I go?” said an elderly woman named Darya, who was too afraid to give her surname. “I → 16

Critics see conflicts in Poroshenko business ties

BY OLENA GORDIENKO
GORDIENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

Petro Poroshenko's business success since becoming president in June has provided fodder to his critics, fueled Russian propaganda and, some fear, compromised his judgement.

An April 7 disclosure of his officially reported income for 2014 shows a sevenfold jump over 2013. His banking assets doubled in 2014, according to reports, and his Roshen confectionary empire has swelled its retail network despite falling sales.

Yet in a time of war and hardship, some Ukrainians are not happy that a billionaire president is doing so well while other businesses are crumbling along with the economy.

“It wouldn't be such a con- → 10

Top investigator says Interpol's inaction thwarts cases against Yanukovych allies

BY OLEG SUKHOV
AND MARIANA ANTONOVYCH

Ukrainian authorities cannot try many of former President Viktor Yanukovych's allies due to Interpol's refusal to put them on a wanted list and technicalities in Ukraine's law on trials in absentia, Serhiy Horbatiuk, the prosecutor in charge of the investigations, told the Kyiv Post.

Investigations have also been impeded by the complicated ownership structure of assets of Yanukovych allies, police failure to collect evidence during the 2013-2014 EuroMaidan Revolution and the flight of high-ranking officials from Ukraine who are now abroad.

Critics say, however, that these are just lame excuses for stalling murder and corruption cases against Yanukovych and his associates, particularly probes into the slayings → 11

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5 years, 3 presidents, 1 revolution: Motsyk reflects on his time as ambassador to US

BY BRIAN BONNER
BONNER@KYIVPOST.COM

Oleksandr Motsyk, Ukraine's ambassador to the United States, went from defending President Viktor Yanukovich to attacking him the next day.

Such was the life of a Ukrainian diplomat serving abroad after the EuroMaidan Revolution drove Yanukovich from power on Feb. 22, 2014. Oleksandr Turchynov took over as interim president until June 7, when Petro Poroshenko was inaugurated as president.

Motsyk, who is leaving on April 25 after nearly five years in Washington, D.C., said he and others in the diplomatic corps were forced to set aside their personal feelings about Yanukovich to do their jobs.

"Diplomats and ambassadors were working for their country and the Ukrainian people," Motsyk said.

As for his personal feelings, Motsyk said he lost faith in Yanukovich almost "from the very beginning" of the fugitive ex-leader's term in office, which started on Feb. 25, 2010. Motsyk was appointed to the American post four months later. He said he knew his nation was heading down the wrong path once Yanukovich started persecuting his defeated rival, ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who spent more than two years in prison on

trumped-up political charges before being freed once Yanukovich fled.

Motsyk remained in power under Yanukovich, he said, because "I am a career diplomat, not a political appointee. I wasn't close to him." But Yanukovich made his job harder. "It was quite difficult. The task of the ambassador is to develop relations. When there are such problems in our own country, then it's really not good."

As for his assessment of Yanukovich, Motsyk has spelled that out in op-eds, speeches and testimony before Congress. He believes that Yanukovich is guilty of ordering the murders of EuroMaidan Revolution demonstrators in the winter of 2014. More than 100 people were killed then.

He also noted that many in Ukraine's diplomatic corps started criticizing events before Yanukovich fled, starting after the Nov. 30, 2014, police beatings of student demonstrators and after the Feb. 20 murders of scores of demonstrators, two days before Yanukovich escaped to Russia.

"He made a crime against the Ukrainian people," Motsyk said. "Someday he will be brought to justice. At least people in Ukraine hope for that."

Valeriy Chaly, the deputy head of President Petro Poroshenko's administration, is expected to become Motsyk's replacement.

"Mr. Chaly is a very good choice," Motsyk said. "I wish him the best every success in his very important mission. The United States is very important for us, and the most important country in the world, if you talk about the security and the future of Ukraine."

Perhaps the highest priority for the next ambassador to Ukraine is to persuade U.S. President Barack Obama to provide Ukraine with lethal defensive weapons and more aid to help prevail against Russia's war in the eastern Donbas.

"We need lethal weapons in order to defend our land," Motsyk said.

He said that the United States and Great Britain, as signatories of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum along with Russia, have special responsibilities "to bring peace to Ukraine and secure its territorial integrity." Under the memorandum, Ukraine surren-



After nearly five years as Ukraine's ambassador to America, Oleksandr Motsyk is being reassigned to make way for Valeriy Chaly, a top aide to President Petro Poroshenko. Motsyk was appointed by ousted President Viktor Yanukovich. Now he believes he's guilty of murder. (usa.mfa.gov.ua)

dered its nuclear weapons arsenal – then the world's third largest – in exchange for security guarantees. "Our contribution to European and world security was a huge one," he said.

Motsyk's performance has been getting mixed reviews. But some of his critics have not had the courage to be quoted by name. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty recently quoted an unnamed senior U.S. Senate aide as saying that Motsyk and his staff were not active enough.

"Well, I think it's not fair, we are very active in Washington, D.C., in the embassy. We are in permanent contact on a daily basis with Congress, the State Department, the White House, thinks tanks," Motsyk said.

Vasyl Filipchuk, a political analyst who spent more than 15 years in Ukraine's Foreign Ministry, said the problem is not so much Motsyk, but the highly politicized nature of Ukraine's foreign service coupled with pressure on diplomats not to make waves during the revolution.

After the Yanukovich-controlled parliament passed the so-called dictator laws on Jan. 16 that curtailed free

speech and assembly, "no diplomat could continue to be loyal" to the president, Filipchuk said. Yet few broke openly because it would be detrimental to their careers. "If you are too active and strong, you will most likely be thrown out of the system, even if the government changes and you prove to be right," Filipchuk said. During the three months between the start of the revolution and Yanukovich's exit, he said that many in the diplomatic corps chose to "wait and see who will be the winner."

Filipchuk said that Motsyk "has always been considered as one of the best Ukrainian diplomats. He's worked in Turkey, in Poland and in other places ... To say he was strong and achieved something, it would also be an exaggeration."

As for Chaly, Filipchuk said: "He's active. He is a good public speaker. He has legitimacy. He has a political position which he never changed. He has access to the president. He understands his role and, after being so long with Poroshenko, he has freedom of action."

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Valeriy Chaly (razumkov.org.ua)

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Murders of two journalists, ex-lawmaker spook Kyiv

BY OLGA RUDENKO
AND OLEG SUKHOV

The atmosphere was spooky in Kyiv on April 16 as news broke about the murder of a third prominent person in four days.

Two of the victims, ex-lawmaker Oleh Kalashnikov and journalist-writer Oles Buzina, were known for their strong criticism of Ukraine's pro-Western political leadership. Both favored closer relations with Russia.

They were shot dead within a 24-hour time span: the first late on April 15, the second at 2 p.m. on April 16.

A third victim, journalist Serhiy Sukhobok, worked for pro-Ukrainian publications. He was killed on April 13.

News of the assassination-style killings further rattled a capital already shaken by increasingly frequent bomb threats that have routinely shut down underground subway stations.

The murders of Kalashnikov, a former political ally of ousted former President Viktor Yanukovich, and Buzina have been alternately blamed on nationalists from both the Russian and Ukrainian sides. They follow a chain of recent suspected suicides by former allies of Yanukovich, who fled to Russia on Feb. 22, 2014, after feeling power at the height of last year's EuroMaidan Revolution.

Speculation has grown that the murders and reported suicides are somehow linked to the fugitive ex-leader's role in stoking protests to counter the EuroMaidan Revolution.

Buzina was shot with a TT pistol in the head and body in the courtyard of his apartment building, said Oleksandr Tereshchuk, head of Kyiv's police department, as cited by Ukrainian newspaper Segodnya. The killers were in a dark blue Ford Focus car with either a Latvian or Belarusian license plate, Anton Gerashchenko, a member of parliament and a former aide to the interior minister, said on Facebook.

The main version considered by investigators is Buzina's professional career, Tereshchuk said.

Buzina's murder follows a scandal involving his January-March tenure this year as editor-in-chief of Kyiv's Segodnya daily newspaper, which is owned by Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest man. Buzina claimed superiors prohibited him from criticizing President Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.



Oleh Kalashnikov (R) walks past a camp of Yulia Tymoshenko's supporters on Khreshchaty Street on Aug. 7, 2011, after the arrest of the former prime minister on politically motivated charges that sent her to prison for more than two years. Kalashnikov, a supporter of ousted President Viktor Yanukovich, organized anti-Tymoshenko protests. (Ukratfoto)

Gerashchenko wrote that Buzina's murder could have been ordered by Russia. "These murders (of Buzina and Kalashnikov) are similar," he said. "I don't rule out that these murders were organized by Russian intelligence agencies to create an atmosphere of terror and hysteria in Kyiv."

Another version is that Buzina and Kalashnikov were killed to prevent them from giving testimony in the case against pro-Yanukovich henchmen, the so-called "titushki," who are accused of assaulting and even killing EuroMaidan protesters.

"It seems like the shooting of witnesses in the Anti-Maidan case continues," Gerashchenko speculated.

But Serhiy Horbatiyuk, head of the special investigations department of the Prosecutor General's Office, told the Kyiv Post that Buzina was not a witness in the Anti-Maidan cases and had no links to them.

Viktoria Syumar, a lawmaker with the prime minister's People's Front party, linked the murder to Russia's preparations for a 70-year anniversary of its victory in World War II on May 9.

"This parade of political assassinations is not accidental," she wrote on Facebook. "It's not just an attempt to settle scores, it's a special operation that will be used to wage a political and information war and to escalate the situation before Victory Day on May 9."

Russian commentators and analysts, on the other hand, have blamed the murder on Ukrainian nationalists.

Buzina could have been killed either by Russian intelligence agencies to escalate the situation or by Ukrainian radicals as revenge for his political position, Viktoria Svitlova, an acquaintance of Buzina who used to work with him at the Kievskie Vedomosti newspaper, told the Kyiv Post.

A 45-year-old native of Kyiv, Buzina was widely known for his sympathies for Russia and loathing for Ukrainian nationalism.

In the 2012 parliamentary election Buzina ran as a candidate of the Russian Bloc, a pro-Russian party. He

has also featured in political talk shows on Russian television and wrote a book lambasting Ukraine's most famous poet and national bard, Taras Shevchenko.

Kalashnikov was shot dead outside the door to his Kyiv apartment.

The 52-year-old former parliament deputy representing the pro-Yanukovich Party of Regions in 2006-2007 was best known as the organizer of rallies that the party itself, at times, tried to distance itself from.

In 2011, he organized incessant loudspeaker protests against former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Yanukovich's political rival, when she was on trial on politically motivated charges. For months, recordings of him reciting slogans slamming Tymoshenko were played daily on Kyiv's main street, Khreshchatyck.

Tymoshenko served more than two years in prison on trumped-up political charges before being freed once Yanukovich left power.

During last year's revolution, Kalashnikov was seen giving speeches at the AntiMaidan camp glorifying Yanukovich and slamming the EuroMaidan participants by calling them "hysterical" and "driven by drugs." When asked about AntiMaidan during his last interview for the 1+1 TV Channel in early March, he said he "never did anything illegal."

He never held an official position after 2007, when his parliament term ended. In 2006, he was caught up in scandal when he attacked a television



Serhiy Sukhobok (Courtesy)

cameraman for recording him, receiving public condemnation even from his fellow Party of Regions politicians.

In recent months Kalashnikov had been preparing a World War II commemoration rally for Victory Day on May 9. According to his wife, he was killed when returning home from the printing house where he oversaw the production of leaflets for the event.

Russian and Ukrainian opposition media have focused on Kalashnikov's war memorial activity as a motive for his killing. In February Kalashnikov claimed was threatened after placing flowers on a World War II memorial.

Buzina was an opponent → 9



Police experts examine the body of prominent journalist Oles Buzina, 45, after he was shot to death in Kyiv on April 16. (AFP)

Editorials

Mean streets

Kyiv's streets are getting meaner by the day, a predictable byproduct of more than a year of revolution and war in Ukraine.

Three of the latest victims of assassination are: Oles Buzina, the former chief editor of Segodnya newspaper, killed on April 16 with a TT pistol in the courtyard of his apartment building; former lawmaker Oleh Kalashnikov, killed outside the door of his apartment building on April 15; and journalist Serhiy Sukhobok, who worked for pro-Ukrainian publications, was killed on April 13.

The killings – combined with terrorist threats that have shut down metro stations for brief periods in recent days – are fueling speculation, including by Anton Gerashchenko, a member of Ukraine's Parliament and a former aide to the interior minister.

The murders of Buzina and Kalashnikov "are similar," Gerashchenko said. "I don't rule out that these murders were organized by Russian intelligence agencies to create an atmosphere of terror and hysteria in Kyiv."

Buzina was criticized for his anti-Ukrainian views and claims to have left his job last month as editor-in-chief of Segodnya, the largest circulation newspaper in the nation, because he was not allowed to criticize the current Ukrainian government.

Kalashnikov angered people for his incessant recordings on Kyiv's Khreshchatyk Street in support of then-President Viktor Yanukovich's political persecution of ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. He also was involved in organizing demonstrations to counter the EuroMaidan Revolution, which toppled Yanukovich on Feb. 22, 2014.

We know less about Sukhobok, only that he was known for his pro-Ukrainian views.

Whatever the facts, we hope that investigators and politicians drop the speculation and devote their energies to solving these crimes.

With all the bloodshed during revolution and war, violence that has claimed more than 6,000 lives and counting, the only way to stop the vicious cycle of hatred and murder is for successful investigations, prosecutions and trials of those responsible for the killings and those who ordered the deaths.

Decent salaries

In government ministry after ministry, common threads exist: The work force is bloated and excessive, with hundreds of thousands more employees than necessary. Yet they are all grossly underpaid. This leaves the public servant with three choices: live in poverty, find a corporate or rich sponsor, or become corrupt by finding a service to provide that requires a bribe.

All are bad options and explain why government performance is so poor and government officials are so untrusted.

Ukraine's 450 members of parliament are in the same situation. Their net salary of Hr 4,900 is only \$200 a month. How exactly does this help fight corruption? To the contrary, such meager salaries invite corruption and service that is not in the public interest, but rather in the interest of private sponsors and backers.

The nation finally showed that it is starting to understand the problem. President Petro Poroshenko has named 35-year-old Artem Sytnyk as the first head of the newly established national Anti-Corruption Bureau. Sytnyk will head a 700-member agency that ostensibly has full law enforcement powers to investigate anybody, including the president, for suspected crimes.

And, in a sharp break from tradition, Ukraine's government is touting his salary – Hr 60,900 or \$2,800. That's a start.

But a better, yet more painful, alternative is to establish a higher minimum salary for all government employees at liveable wages and commensurate with responsibilities. But the tradeoff will be the massive layoff of layers of unneeded and inefficient employees, whose removal from the government payroll needs to be cushioned with severance packages of several months of salaries.

It's tough medicine, but the current practice of overstaffing government agencies and paying low salaries is a failure proven throughout Ukraine's nearly 24 years of national independence.

Ukraine's Parliament should get the same tough love. The nation could function well with a legislative body half of the current size of 450 members and start by paying each, say, \$2,500 per month – a liveable wage anywhere in this country.

Yet lawmakers continue to fear that, by raising their salaries, they will risk the wrath of the public.

This is where leadership from the president and international community must step in. This nation needs quick results, an accountable government workforce and public service that commands respect. Today, Ukraine is getting what it is paying for – not much.

NEWS ITEM: Kremlin officials said on April 14 that Russia will go to international courts if Ukraine fails to repay the \$3 billion that Russia loaned to Ukraine in 2013 through eurobonds.



NEWS ITEM: Arseniy Pavlov, a soldier and Russian citizen leading the Kremlin's war against eastern Ukraine, has told the Kyiv Post in a recorded interview that he killed 15 Ukrainian prisoners of war.



NEWS ITEM: On April 14 former lawmaker Andriy Pavlovskiy started a rumor that lawmakers had quietly tripled their salaries. The claim sparked a flurry of populist denials by lawmakers and a discussion of what they should earn. Parliament Speaker Volodymyr Groisman made clear that already dismal monthly salaries will remain at about Hr 4,900 after taxes. That's just over \$200. The low official salaries only encourage lawmakers to supplement their income through graft, many critics believe.

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In rejecting Soviet era, Ukraine moves ahead



ALEXEI BAYER

In 1917, the old Russian Empire took a sudden turn from reality and entered the realm of fantasy.

For 300 years before that, ever since Descartes declared “I think therefore I am,” European thought had been formulating a rational view of the world. It broke away from the medieval idea of miracles and random divine intervention into the affairs of men and began exploring causal relationships between natural and social phenomena. In other words, it gave up alchemy, with its search for spontaneous transformation of matter into gold, and shifted to reason and science as drivers of human development. The rational view entailed slowly understanding how nature works and using this learning in the service of progress.

Vladimir Lenin's Bolsheviks, on the other hand, became determined to reshape nature – human nature as well as society and the world around us – along what they believed to be more rational and efficient lines. They deployed science and reason for unrealistic, quasi-religious ends: they claimed that a new form of social organization would bring about quick and miraculous results in the form of happy, fulfilling life for each and every individual and unprecedented economic prosperity for all.

Lenin was, to use his famous characterization by British science fiction writer H.G. Wells, the Dreamer in the Kremlin, but it was Josef Stalin who set out to build the earthly Garden of Eden. Like all faiths, communism vastly exaggerated its claims. Pretty soon, when the supposedly foolproof system designed by Marx and Lenin failed to provide expected results, it resorted to shameless lies. The reality in Stalin's Soviet Union was imprisonment and execution of entire social groups and classes, destruction of rural life, slave labor and widespread fear, but Soviet propaganda presented a picture of rapid industrialization, universal prosperity and boundless happiness.

The government not only painted a never-never-land picture, but encouraged Soviet citizens to believe that everything is possible, that nothing will stand in the way of the Soviet miracle, certainly not reality. Can Donbass miner Alexei Stakhanov exceed the daily coal production norm by 13,000 percent? Sure he can, because he is a Soviet miner.

It was no surprise that Stalin banned genetics, labeling it a “bourgeois pseudoscience”. Genetics imposed natural limits on the Soviet dream, whereas official Soviet biology, championed by a demented charlatan Trofim Lysenko, promised unheard-of miracles for Soviet agriculture. Never mind that the Soviet Union became a major importer of grains by that 1970s, its agricultural production having been dealt a mortal blow by collectivization and harebrained experimentation.

The pompous “Enthusiasts’ March,” a song from the 1940 film “The Lighted Path”, put it best: “Hail to you, the land of heroes, dreamers and scientists! We brook no obstacles on land or at sea.”

It took the Soviet people more than 70 years to wake up from this dream and to understand the dreadful reality of communism. The country emerged from the Soviet experience unhappy, traumatized and impoverished; by the end, life in the Soviet Union became a humiliating struggle for a modicum of material comfort. The outcome was all the more galling since the West, taking one boring but rational step at a time, created true prosperity and a society of plenty. Exhausted by chasing a Utopia, Soviets craved Western consumer goods and, especially, technologically advanced products such as cars, video players and personal computers.

The 1990s were an unhappy decade of comng



Activists wave a flare while standing at the foot of Vladimir Lenin's statue on Kharkiv's central square on Sept 28. Ukrainian nationalists, supported by a cheering crowd, tore down Vladimir Lenin's statue in Kharkiv on Sept. 28. Ukrainian lawmakers have declared a ban on Soviet and Nazi ideologies and their symbols. (AFP)

→ **Ukraine is finally starting to climb out of a century-long hole dug by Soviet illusions**

to terms with reality. But then a miracle did happen: by accident of fate, Russia's vast territory contained lots of oil and gas and the rapidly growing world economy was willing to pay lots of dollars for those resources. All of a sudden, Russia woke up to unprecedented prosperity, with quality Western goods and food products filling its store shelves. True, the oil rent was distributed very unequally and unfairly, but it trickled down from those who were near the trough to those further away. It was a version of communism: from each according to his abilities, to each according to his political connections.

Unlike those stupid Latvians and Poles, Russians didn't have to settle for the role Europe's poor relations, toil for low wages or go to London to wait tables. And so belief in miracles returned with a vengeance and the tenuous link with reality which Russian society began to reestablish after the collapse of the Soviet Union snapped once again after 2000.

It is extraordinary how readily Russian society has returned to the unreality of the Soviet era. The TV set shows Russian viewers an alternative world which has nothing at all to do with the rational one that exists for everyone else. It is a world in which America is desperate to get its grubby hands on Russian natural resources and fears Russia's economic resurgence, in which Washington uses Ukraine to aim a dagger at the heart of Russia, having first established a neonazi

regime in Kyiv, and in which Ukrainian Wafen-SS storm-troopers crucify Russian-speaking boys and enslave peace-loving citizens of Novorossia.

Many observers marvel at the way Russian news broadcasts have completely dispensed with news from Russia proper, having devoted their time exclusively to Ukraine. Actually, this distorted news about Ukraine is in fact news about Russia. The news is that Russia has once again departed from reality.

This is where all that nostalgia for the Soviet Union comes from, as well as the newly found respect for Stalin, the creator of the original dream. The unreality is what the 450 members of the State Duma busy themselves with, passing one cretinous law after another. The unreality is the true meaning of the import substitution drive.

It is a world where everything is possible. The Second Moscow Watch Factory can create a Russian iPhone, Russia can colonize the moon in a few short years and thousands of Great Patriotic War veterans can descend on Moscow streets on May 9 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory, even though most of them are in their late sixties. It is a land of miracles in which every Potemkin village can come to life and where deception spewing out of every television set is magnified by the viewers' willingness to deceive themselves.

Like Stalin, who probably came to believe in the glowing image of his country painted by

his own propaganda, Putin is not just out of touch with reality, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel suggested last year, but he is more deeply sunk into the world of fantasy than any of his citizens. That's because his information is limited to what his underlings tell him, and they tell him only what he wants to hear. And so Putin's policy moves reinforce Russia's flight into the outer space. Putin declares an embargo on food products from the European Union because in his alternative world Russia is a major market for European farmers. In the real world, European Union food exports to Russia amount to a few billion euros a year - a statistical error for Europe's gross domestic product which measures more than 14 trillion euros.

When Ukraine declared Soviet ideology to be equivalent to Nazism and banned it along with its symbols, Russian propagandists hit the ceiling. They have every right to be outraged. After gaining its independence in 1991, Ukraine, along with Russia, spent a quarter of a century in the post-communist twilight zone. It didn't have Russia's natural resources, and so it was much poorer, getting mere crumbs from Russia's table. Now, by emphatically rejecting communism, Ukraine has declared that it is never going to join Russia in its lonely space flight. The Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's Parliament, essentially said that Ukraine has finally gotten rid of communist-era illusions, embraced the harsh reality of the modern world and is now willing to work slowly and painfully, in order to climb out of a hole into which nearly a century of communism has put it.

It was a difficult decision, but certainly a very rational one.

Alexei Bayer is a New York-based economist and writer. His detective novel, *Murder at the Dacha*, set in the U.S.S.R. in the 1960s, was published in 2013.

Human Resources

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Job market stacked in employers' favor

BY ILYA TIMTCHENKO
TIMTCHENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

The war has tilted the labor market sharply in favor of Ukrainian employers, who see no need to raise salaries despite the crippling effects of the hryvnia's devaluation (down roughly 60 percent against the dollar in the last 15 months) and inflation.

The conditions make life hard for wage earners and even harder for the jobless.

Andriy, a 31-year-old network operations engineer, said his paycheck has taken a serious hit in the last year because of devaluation. He refused to have his last name published because his company's policy prohibits employees from talking publicly about their wages.

His monthly salary, pegged to the hryvnia, now comes to less than 50 percent of his required monthly mortgage payment, a loan pegged to the U.S. dollar. He's now looking for extra income, but it will be some time before employees like him have the upper hand.

"Now is a great time for employers because lots of people are out there in

the market," says Andriy Krivokorytov, the head of Brain Search International Ukraine, an outsourcing company.

"Now you have 10 really good candidates who really want this job," he says. "It gives the employer the advantage to bargain the best deal."

Job seekers with three years or more experience have an advantage in getting hired over recent graduates,

since companies are not willing to pay additional costs for educating newcomers, says Ruslana Berezovskaya, a research specialist at hh.ua, a leading Ukrainian human resources think tank.

Yet overall, the tight labor market will only get worse. In 2014, 10 percent of jobs in Ukraine were eliminated, according to hh.ua. →7

Spring Kyiv Post Employment Fair matches employers with job seekers

BY SANDRA MACKENZIE

More than a dozen companies have already signed up to showcase career opportunities at this year's Kyiv Post Employment Fair, which will take place on May 16 at the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce offices at 33 Velyka Zhytomyrska Street.

The event will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with presentations and seminars beginning at 10:30 a.m. Entry is Hr 25 per person.

Although the pace of recruitment remains slow amid Ukraine's recession and war, many companies are still on the lookout for talented graduates and experienced professionals.

Business sectors to be represented include retail, charity, finance and education.

A program of speakers has yet to be finalized.

Sectors such as information technology outsourcing continue to grow despite the economic trouble, but competition remains fierce.

English-language skills give job seek-

ers a big advantage as Ukraine turns increasingly towards Europe

Although only the third most popular language in Ukraine, after Ukrainian and Russian, English is fast becoming an essential skill for several companies.

"All our training is in English, so it's a must for us," said ProCredit Bank Training and Personnel Development Specialist Kateryna Babichuk.

Ilona Vorobets, a public relations and marketing specialist at Kyiv School of Economics, said that it's a struggle to find qualified applicants with proficient English.

"Very few people combine a good knowledge of the profession and a good level of English – we need all that in one person," she said. "But people are paying attention to the things that they need to change and they do want to improve."

The school will be advertising both professional positions and postgraduate training, with certain courses developed to respond to the needs of modern business.

"In management jobs now, good



Participants of the Kyiv Post Employment Fair talk during the event in the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Sept. 13. (Anastasia Vlasova)

English is the most important thing, but many managers lack this knowledge. That's why we have started an English M.B.A. program because we must prepare people for this kind of employment," she said.

Language skills are also crucial for AIESEC, said Vladlen Dashyvets, Kyiv's vice president of corporate relations and organizational development. However, he stated that it's usually easy to find people with the right level of English for their two internship programs.

Aimed at fostering leadership skills

in under-30s, AIESEC offers a Global Citizens volunteering initiative, as well as professional internships with international companies. Both programs have grown in the past year, he said.

Other companies attending the Employment Fair include French retailer Auchan, Advanced International Translations, Ukrainian cable telecommunications firm Volia, the British Council, employment portal Rabota Plus (rabotaplus.ua), auditing firm KPMG, Mazars consulting company, shipping firm Ukr China and Porsche Finance.

Kyiv Post staff writer Sandra

MacKenzie can be reached at sandra.mackenzie@cantab.net

2015 Kyiv Post Employment Fair

When: May 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: The Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce, 33 Velyka Zhytomyrska st.

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Wage earners, jobless facing tougher times

→6 "About a third of those questioned (in a recent hh.ua survey) said that they are planning to lay off employees this year," Berezovskaya says, estimating that every third employer will have to dismiss 16-30 percent of its staff.

Those most susceptible to layoffs are in the banking, auto dealership, telecommunications and oil-and-gas sectors, according to hh.ua. Employees in the information technology, insurance, consulting and agriculture sectors are on more solid ground.

At the same time, wages will largely remain frozen, Berezovskaya says, with only 6 percent of employers pegging salaries to the dollar. The dollar value of the average monthly wage in Ukraine in 2014 was about \$160, compared to \$330 in 2013, according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine.

Some companies are even getting away with wage cuts on top of the devaluation.

Job candidates are more lenient because it is "difficult to find a job, a preferred position and at a preferred level," she says. "So job seekers are willing to be paid between 5-15 percent less."

For the time being, job seekers and employees should be in survival mode, flexible to changes and not competing for their dream job, Krivokorytov says.

In order to achieve this they should concentrate less on technical skills, and more on how to cope and adapt under difficult and stressful situations, he says.

Marina Makarenko, director of Intercomp Ukraine, an outsourcing and human resources firm that serves international companies in Ukraine, agrees that professionalism, perseverance and flexibility need improvement.

"Quantity doesn't always mean quality," she says. "Theoretically, people should have become more innovative. But in practice, we see the opposite situation. Maybe this is because of a

certain passivity among the candidates, being worn out by everyday problems and a lack of resources for survival."

Yet active job seekers like Andriy are wise to pursue employment with international firms, or those with international investments, which are generally performing better than their Ukrainian counterparts.

About 60 percent of Intercomp Ukraine's 110 clients have not resorted to layoffs, she says. About 20 percent have kept their wages pegged to a hard currency, and about 80 percent of her firms have said they're considering

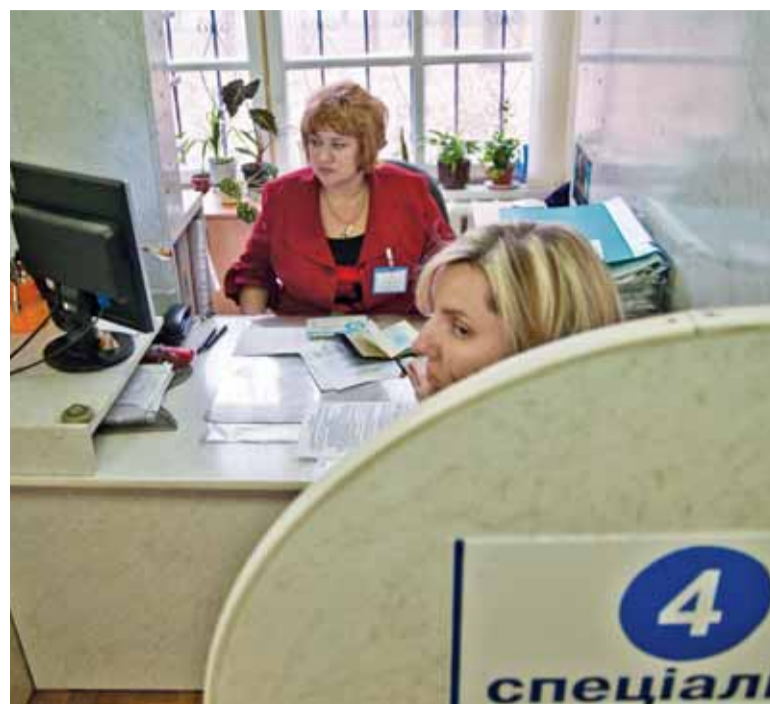
wage hikes.

They are cutting other costs, such as rent, marketing and service prices, rather than cutting wages.

Companies that earn revenue in hard currency for exports and pay employees in hryvnias are doing the best, Brain Search International's Krivokorytov says.

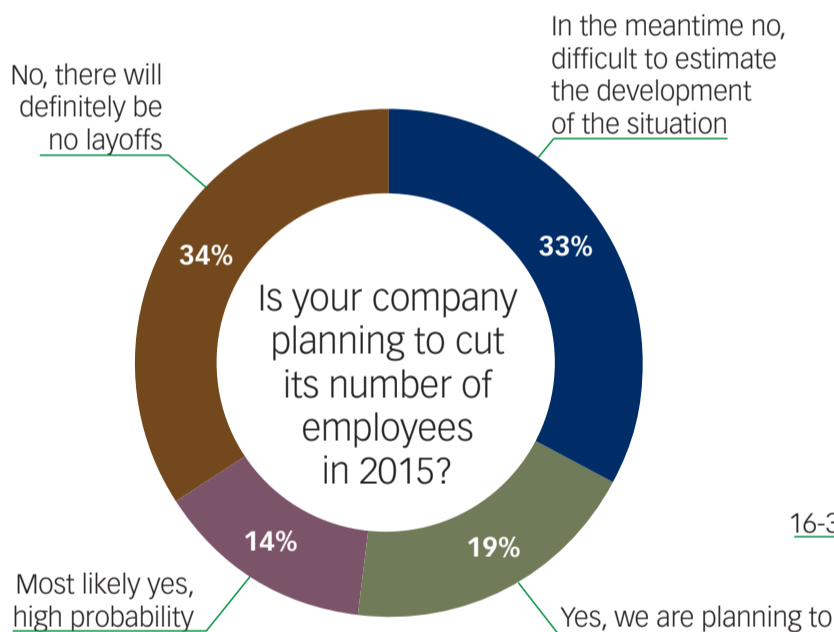
"It's a relief actually from the cost point of view," he says. "In this scenario, it's the employees who lose the most."

Kyiv Post staff writer Ilya Timchenko can be reached at timchenko@kyivpost.com.



A job seeker being interviewed at the State Employment Office of Ukraine in Kyiv on Nov. 23. (Ukrainian photo)

Share of companies planning to lay off staff in 2015

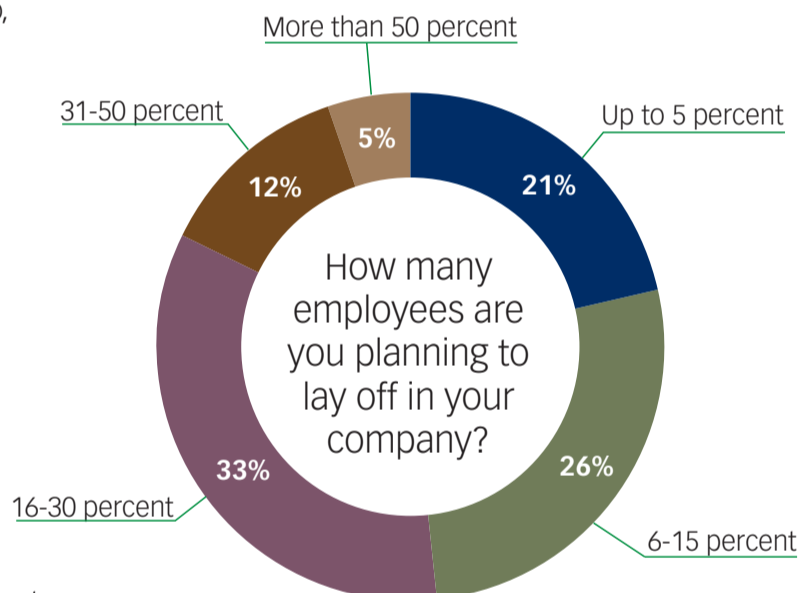


Source: Head Hunter Ukraine

One third of surveyed white-collar employees say that they fear losing their job, according to hh.ua, a Ukrainian human resources firm. One third of employers say that they will need to let go of 16-30 percent of their staff.

*This graph only includes companies that are planning to lay off employees in 2015, which is 33 percent of all companies surveyed.

Share of employees that surveyed companies plan to lay off in 2015*



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INTERCOMP UKRAINE						
17D, Hlybochyt'ska St., TORUS Business Center, floor 3, Kyiv 04050, Ukraine; www.intercompglobal.com , www.intercomp.com.ua						
+38 044 207 43 43	Marina Makarenko, Director, Intercomp Ukraine	2007	Malta	Payroll and HR Administration Services; Tax and Accounting Services; Outstaffing	Intercomp's portfolio currently boasts more than 800 clients, including major international and regional companies representing over 30 different industries.	English, Russian, Ukrainian
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Dnipropetrovsk firm hopes to jumpstart electric cars

BY BOZHENA SHEREMETA
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Electric cars are a rarity on Ukrainian roads, with their prices at least 40 percent higher than standard cars, largely due to high import duties. Another impediment is the lack of developed infrastructure. As a result, as few as 300 are active, according to some estimates.

Dnipropetrovsk producer E-line is trying to remedy that with 100 electric chargers to be installed throughout Ukraine by the end of 2015, said Vladyslav Rodin, its co-founder.

Already, 34 electric chargers have been installed by Austrian producer Keba at OKKO gas stations, while E-line chargers mark the debut of Ukrainian producers.

So far five have been installed, three in Kyiv and one each in Odesa and Lviv. None have been installed in Rodin's native Dnipropetrovsk, where there's still too little demand, he said.

E-line sets a \$2,000 price for the chargers, which is considerably lower than that of its competitors, he said. The U.K.'s POD-Point charges \$4,000, while Ensto of Finland asks about \$3,000.

The price reflects lower production costs in Ukraine, though another competitive advantage is the charger's stainless steel frame, which can be unaffordable for some European rivals.

E-line does not sell abroad, but plans to start in the second half of 2015.



An electric car gets charged at the InnoTech Ukraine exhibition at Olympic Stadium on April 9. (Anastasiya Vlasova)

In the meantime, the company is trying to get popular in Ukraine as fast as possible, offering discounts for promotion's sake.

Restaurants and shopping malls have been its first customers, who don't have to handle installment and equipment issues.

"Since we installed the first E-line

charger in Lviv near the Tesla Motors Club in December, customers started looking for us, not vice versa," Rodin said, referring to its advertising advantage. "The price of one charger is worth one month of advertising budget for a business, but the effect proves to be much bigger."

That's because electric car drivers

are the first to find out about the new chargers and word spreads quickly. As soon as they are installed, they are put on a world map of electric chargers on the Internet immediately.

"Everyone who has an electric car watches closely for new chargers on the map. So when they plan a long trip or just a night out, they will most

probably go to a place where they won't only eat, but also charge their car," Rodin said.

E-line chargers are installed in Kyiv's Art Mall and outside of two restaurants, Praha on Holosiyivskiy Avenue and Revolution Grill in the Podil district. Motorists enter the establishment, request a plastic card, insert and remove it from the reader and plug in their vehicle, all free of charge. The cards are returned when charging is complete.

Each E-line charger has four sockets that can charge four vehicles simultaneously, including bikes. Two bigger sockets work faster, reaching 22 kilowatts.

All electric car models in the world can be charged with E-line, Rodin said. It takes around four hours for a Tesla car that consumes 85 kilowatts per hour. Renault's electric car that needs 22 kilowatts for a full battery can be charged within an hour.

Besides fewer carbon dioxide emissions, electric cars are cheaper to use. A 10-kilometer ride costs about one hryvnia, compared to 18 hryvnias for a gasoline-fueled trip, according to Kostyantyn Yevtushenko, the head of Shooter.ua, a tech startup that promotes electric cars in Ukraine.

Kyiv Post staff writer Bozhena Sheremeta can be reached at sheremeta@kyivpost.com. The Kyiv Post's IT coverage is sponsored by AVentures Capital, Ciklum, FISON and SoftServe.

No longer a donors conference, but rather one to 'support' Ukraine

BY OLENA GONCHAROVA
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The Ukrainian government this week announced that on April 28 it will host a long-delayed event that had been billed as an international donors conference to raise billions of dollars for Ukraine's ailing economy and help rebuild the war-torn eastern Donbas.

However, Russia's war is not over and international donors are hard to find. So the government has jettisoned the term "donor."

The event is now billed as the International Support For Ukraine Conference, to be held in Kyiv one day after the city hosts the European Union-Ukraine summit. It is not expected to lure the \$1.5 billion minimum

that officials say is needed to rebuild the war-torn east.

"The name of the conference and the dates changed several times as we kept negotiating with our international partners," Aivaras Abromavicius, Ukraine's economic minister, told an April 15 press conference. "It's a fragile cease-fire now, so it wasn't possible to estimate how much financial and tech-

nical aid is needed."

Abromavicius said he expects at least 400 guests, including representatives of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund. Other dignitaries include European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

Since last summer, Kyiv has repeatedly called upon countries around the world to join the donor initiative for Ukraine, but Abromavicius could provide no names about which specific country representatives could attend.

He said that Ukraine's government, in place since December, will use the event to showcase its achievements to potential donors.

The ongoing war forced the government to lower its hopes for the event, he said. It has claimed more than 6,000 lives, has made it difficult for Ukraine to estimate its financial needs. Having secured a \$17.5 billion fresh bailout from the International Monetary Fund in February, Ukraine is not in need of emergency financing.

Some are skeptical about the conference's purpose.

Oleh Soskin, director of the Kyiv-based Institute of Society Transformation, describes Kyiv's hopes for winning over donors and investors



Ukrainian Economy Minister Aivaras Abromavicius.

any time soon as "utopian."

As the West and Kyiv struggle to convince Russia and their proxies in eastern Ukraine to call off the war, Soskin said that Kyiv's government will struggle in coming weeks to negotiate with foreign creditors in order to free up \$15 billion in by restructuring sovereign and quasi-sovereign Eurobonds.

"It's like the Minsk agreements ... there are negotiations under way, but no result," he said, referring to the planned conference on April 28.

Kyiv Post staff writer Olena Goncharova can be reached at goncharova@kyivpost.com

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CLARIFICATION

On March 12, the Kyiv Post newspaper published an article headlined "Donbasenergo may join a wave of reprivatization," which included references to KUB-Gas. After publication, the company informed the newspaper that KUB-Gas "neither has, nor has ever had, any stake in Donbasenergo public company, nor has KUB-Gas ever had any association with former Energy Minister Yuriy Boyko or member of parliament Yuhym Zviagilskiy."

Sytnyk appointed Ukraine's first anti-corruption bureau chief

BY ALYONA ZHUK
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Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on April 16 appointed ex-prosecutorial investigator Artem Sytnyk as head of a newly established and much-hyped Anti-Corruption Bureau, established to crack down on the endemic, historic and widespread corruption in the nation.

"The front line of fighting against corruption isn't less important than the front line that Ukrainian heroes are holding in Ukraine's east," Poroshenko said during a ceremony where he introduced the 35-year-old as Ukraine's first chief of the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Little-known by the public, Sytnyk raised eyebrows in 2011 when he resigned from the investigation department of the Kyiv city prosecutor's office, citing disagreement then-President Viktor Yanukovich, ousted by the EuroMaidan Revolution Feb. 22, 2014.

A little more than a year after the revolution, Sytnyk will now hold sweeping powers to investigate alleged wrongdoing by all government officials, from police to prosecutors and judges to lawmakers – all they way up to the president himself.

The salary for this daunting task is set at a monthly rate of Hr 60,900, or \$2,800. That's far above what most government officials officially make legally. Sytnyk says his salary is sufficient for a public service job.

"It is a decent salary," Sytnyk to the Kyiv Post hours before he was chosen by Poroshenko over another leading contender. "An official shouldn't be rich. If you want to be rich, go into business, not government."

But just as Poroshenko appointed Sytnyk, a flurry of rage erupted on social media, with some questioning his declaration of a salary of a mere Hr 23,500 last year (some \$1,000), while working as a partner in a law firm along with former Kyiv prosecutor Yuriy Haysynsky.

Calls to Sytnyk after his appointment for reaction to the criticism were not immediately answered.

But in earlier comments, Sytnyk conceded that much work lies ahead in building up the 700-person agency, Sytnyk said he will combine Ukrainian and foreign anti-corruption experience to build the first brand new law enforcement agency in Ukraine since Soviet days.



Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko (L) shakes hands with the new head of the national Anti-Corruption Bureau Artem Sytnyk minutes after Sytnyk's appointment. (Mykhaylo Palinchak)

In Georgia, for example, if an official faces up to the corruption charges, he pays off (the fine) and doesn't get to hold public office anymore," Sytnyk said in laying out one initiative under consideration.

Sytnyk said he already knows who he will be asked to join his team in what lawmakers hope will be an independent corruption fighter. But he refused to name them.

After introducing Sytnyk, Poroshenko expressed hope that "foreign experts will be invited."

Vitaliy Shabunin of the Anti-Corruption Action Center, a watchdog organization, said that of the 176 candidates that applied for the job, Poroshenko had favored David Sakvarelidze. He is one of a handful

of former Georgian government officials credited with reducing corruption under the presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili, the exiled former president who now serves as reform adviser to Poroshenko.

Sakvarelidze was excluded by a selection commission, which by April 7 had narrowed down the candidates for Poroshenko to choose between two finalists.

The other was 53-year-old Mykola Siryi, a lawyer best as part of a defense team representing ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko during her politically-motivated criminal trial under Yanukovich's rule.

While some analysts praised both Sytnyk and Siryi for being independent of any political camp, critics claimed

stronger candidates existed but were not allowed to apply because of unnecessary limitations.

One example, according to Yuriy Butusov, a journalist who served on the selection committee, is a condition requiring 10 years of law or prosecutorial practice.

"One more ridiculous thing – those with any connections with political parties over the last two years were forbidden," Butusov said. "De facto, lawmakers showed they consider themselves dishonest people."

Overall, Butusov described the process as a first in terms of transparency for Ukraine and concluded that the country's leadership is "still learning." There was, however, no "systemat-

ic pressure on the commission," he stressed.

Anti-corruption watchdog Shabunin urged Sytnyk to swiftly form the anti-corruption bureau and get his hands dirty in work soon.

Referring to Sytnyk's salary, Shabunin said "it is very competitive ... especially if we compare it to salaries in other law enforcement departments." They generally earn several hundred dollars per month. The lowest salary envisioned for the 700-strong staff of the anti-corruption bureau will be just under \$800 per month.

"If we wait for the law enforcement agencies to be reformed, Ukraine will die of corruption," Shabunin warned.

Kyiv Post staff writer Alyona Zhuk can be reached at zhuk@kyivpost.com

Kyiv on edge after three murders

→ 3 of the EuroMaidan, but there never was any evidence of his role in AntiMaidan.

Some speculate that the Kalashnikov murder could have been organized by Kalashnikov's former allies to prevent him from leaking information to the current government authorities.

In the March interview, Kalashnikov claimed that investigators never showed any interest in him. But later in the month, Olga Chervakova, a member of parliament, asked the Prosecutor General's Office to investi-

gate pro-separatist statements made by Kalashnikov.

Lawmaker Borislav Bereza has said, citing his sources in law enforcement agencies, said Kalashnikov expressed readiness to testify against his former Party of Regions allies.

Kalashnikov's murder follows a spate of recent deaths among former Yanukovich allies, some of whom were potentially facing criminal charges.

Authorities believe former lawmaker Mykhailo Chechetov killed himself by jumping from his apartment window

on Feb. 28. Shortly before, he was questioned by prosecutors probing controversial adoption of the so-called "dictatorship laws" on Jan. 16, 2014 by parliament.

Kalashnikov was among the few former Party of Region members who attended Chechetov's funeral.

Five other former officials who were actively linked to Yanukovich's rule have died in recent months. Suicide is suspected in all but one of the deaths.

The dead include former Melitopol

Mayor Serhiy Walter, who was suspected of being active in the drug and weapons trades. The rest of the former officials weren't under investigation.

On March 9, Stanislav Melnyk, a former Party of Regions lawmaker, was found dead in his house. Police said he shot himself with a hunting rifle.

On March 12, Oleksandr Peklushenko, the former governor of Zaporizhzhya under Yanukovich, was found dead, shot in the neck. Police classified the case as a suicide.

This was soon followed by the death of Serhiy Melnychuk, a city district prosecutor from Odesa, who was beaten and thrown out a window of his apartment. The case was first viewed as a suicide and then reclassified as murder after witnesses said they heard fighting.

Also, in January, former first deputy head of the state railway company Ukrzaliznytsya, Mykola Serhiyenko, who left the position shortly following the change in power in 2014, was found hanged.

Poroshenko's financial success comes as Ukraine suffers war, recession

→ **1** cern if all business were growing equally," said Oles Donyi, the director of the Center for Political Values Research in Kyiv.

"But small business is dying. Entrepreneurs are being forced to sell their restaurants and the president's business is growing. These are unequal conditions that speak to social injustice."

Apparent conflicts of interest have also surfaced regarding Poroshenko's holdings, especially his candy factory in the Russian city of Lipetsk, which reportedly controls 7 percent of the Russian market and accounted for as much as 20 percent of Roshen's production in 2014, the company said. Operations there are interrupted by Russian authorities on a regular basis.

The mere existence of a large business in Russia, which is waging war against Ukraine, makes Poroshenko vulnerable, says Petro Oleshchuk, a political science lecturer at Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv.

The Russian Communist Party, for instance, called for an investigation earlier this year into Poroshenko's business structures in Russia. Russian member of parliament Valeriy Rashkin accused Poroshenko of using funds gained from his Russian business to escalate the conflict in the Donbas.

Claims by Russian politicians don't have much credibility with most Ukrainians. But arguments that the president could be using his powers to advance his business interests have gained momentum, observers said.

That was the case when key officials in government – such as energy commission acting head Dmytro Vovk and Information Minister Yuriy Stets – were recruited from his business empire.

In another example, National Bank of Ukraine chief Valeria Gontareva and Energy Minister Volodymyr Demchyshyn are co-founders and former top executives of Investment Capital Ukraine (ICU), the Kyiv-based investment bank now managing Poroshenko's business empire along with Rothschild & Cie.

"Much of society sees this as a double game being played by the president between politics and his personal business interests," Oleshchuk said.

The president's income rose in 2014 to Hr 369 million, or nearly \$15 million, according to his official declaration released on April 7.

That comes after his Kyiv candy factory reported in mid-February a nine-fold boost in net profit to Hr



A customer leaves a recently opened Roshen outlet near the Zhytomyrska metro station in Kyiv on April 14. A key asset in President Petro Poroshenko's business empire, Roshen opened 19 outlets in Kyiv and Kharkiv in the last year, more than double from previous years. Poroshenko's extensive holdings, especially the Roshen factory in Lipetsk, have drawn criticism for conflicting with his responsibilities as president. (Volodymyr Petrov)

34.8 million (\$16.1 million) in 2014. Mizhnarodniy Investytsiyniy Bank, which he co-owns with partners, as reported in January its assets doubled in value to Hr 3.2 billion (\$125 million) in 2014.

On top of this, Roshen opened 14 new candy outlets in the Kyiv area and five in Kharkiv since the beginning of 2014, the company confirmed. By comparison, it opened no more than seven shops annually in previous years.

In response to the skepticism, Roshen spokeswoman Inna Petrenko said no external factors other than customer loyalty and growing demand fueled the growth. The chain's 2014 expansion plans were already approved in late 2013, before there was any indication Poroshenko would become president.

Yet the president doesn't need to engage in business directly to affect the market, Donyi said.

"The mere fact of presidential ownership of assets distorts competition," he said. "Advertisers want to buy time from the presidential channel, and depositors would rather invest in the president's bank because they believe it's more secure."

Another controversy also surrounds Poroshenko's promise on the day after he was elected to sell all his assets, despite Ukrainian law not requiring such a drastic step.

Selling off assets is also not a common practice globally, with elected officials typically opting for blind trusts that are beyond their reach, said Timothy Ash, the head of emerging markets research at Standard Bank.

Poroshenko hired ICU and Rothschild & Cie in August to divest his assets, which hasn't happened yet. The advisers blamed the inaction on Russia's war and Ukraine's poor economy. In addition, large corporations like Roshen usually need at least a year to be sold, assuming favorable conditions, they said.

Such claims are dismissed by critics. Oleshchuk pointed out that less attractive state assets have been sold and are slated for sale. Meanwhile, he has many other large assets.

"Roshen isn't the president's only business," Donyi said, pointing to Poroshenko's Kyiv machine building factory and fitness club chain, as well as banking and insurance assets. "He hasn't sold any of them."

Why Poroshenko made such an audacious promise is a matter of speculation, other than that "Poroshenko has a pathological bent towards saying what people want to hear," says Donyi,

director of the Center for Political Values Research in Kyiv.

"The promise of selling businesses was an essential political thesis, as separation of business from government has been the main demand of the revolutions," said Dmytro Boyarchuk, the executive director of the CASE Ukraine Center for Socio-Economic Research.

Ukrainian law forbids public servants to formally serve as a member of management or on a board of directors, said Dmitriy Nabugornov, a lawyer at Goldblum & Partners.

Though that has been widely manipulated in Ukraine, whether directly or through indirect arrangements, such as relatives occupying positions.

In Poroshenko's case, his son Oleksiy – a member of parliament – has reportedly served as the chair of Prime Assets Capital, the holding company of most of the president's assets.

Such ongoing maneuvers do not quell debate about the conflict in having a president who leads Ukraine's defense against Russia's war while he owns valuable assets in the aggressor nation.

By law, Poroshenko cannot be directly involved in the operations of his businesses, including the resolution of the repeated instances of interference by Russian state officials in the operations of Roshen's Lipetsk factory.

Poroshenko insisted in a March interview with the 1+1 television network that there's no way to pressure him through his assets. He said that his actions as president have proven that he is acting in Ukraine's best interests.

Amid his denials, former Defense Minister Anatoliy Hrytsenko and other critics speculate about the possibility that Poroshenko has cut backroom deals with Russian President Vladimir

Putin. Conversely, others speculate that Putin is using the Lipetsk factory to exert pressure on Poroshenko's political decisions.

"The presence of his business in Russia is weakening the starting positions of Ukrainian diplomacy as a whole," says Anatoliy Oktysiuk, a political expert with the International Center for Policy Studies in Kyiv.

"While condemning the aggressor and calling on the West for a tougher response, he keeps drawing profit and paying taxes to Russia," Oktysiuk says. "This is at odds with the official state policy."

Despite the complications, Poroshenko's fortune also offers political advantages, Oktysiuk said, such as leverage with rival billionaires.

That's being demonstrated in his drive to reassert state control over Ukrnafta, the largest state oil company, and in sacking minority owner Igor Kolomoisky as Dnipropetrovsk governor.

Many also believe that Poroshenko is spearheading the effort to confiscate assets such as Dniproenergo from electricity giant DTEK, controlled by Rinat Akhmetov.

"He possesses both capital and power, which distinguish him from his predecessors, who were planning to acquire wealth through the presidential position," Oktysiuk said. "Poroshenko uses his capital and power to influence his opponents."

Despite the hooplah at home, Poroshenko's business success and web of conflicts aren't much of a concern in the West, said Ash said. He recommends the president consider the trust fund option.

Kyiv Post staff writer Olena Gordienko can be reached at gordienko@kyivpost.com.



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, a billionaire businessman upon his election in May, has boosted his wealth while in office as Ukrainians endure war, layoffs and currency devaluation. (Mykhaylo Palinchak)

Horbatiuk: 'We are doing our best to complete these investigations'

→ 1 of more than 100 EuroMaidan activists.

So far, the only top Yanukovich allies on trial are former Deputy Interior Minister Serhiy Lekar, who is accused of buying Russian riot control weapons to disperse EuroMaidan demonstrators; former Kyiv Mayor Oleksandr Popov, who has been charged with ordering police to assault protesters on Nov. 30, 2013; and Kharkiv Mayor Gennady Kernes, who is accused of kidnapping and torturing EuroMaidan activists.

Apart from these, two ex-Berkut riot police officers and one pro-Yanukovich hooligan, or "titushka," are on trial.

Other cases may be submitted to a court within six months, according to Horbatiuk, head of the special investigations department of the Prosecutor General's Office. "We are doing our best to complete these investigations as soon as possible," he said.

The establishment of Horbatiuk's department on Dec. 18, 2014, was intended to speed up the investigations, which are facing multiple stumbling blocks a year after the EuroMaidan Revolution propelled pro-Western leaders to power. Vitaliy Tytych, a pro bono lawyer for EuroMaidan victims, said the department's creation has been the only achievement of the Prosecutor General's Office in investigating EuroMaidan cases.

Prosecutors insist a major impediment is Interpol's refusal to put suspects in the EuroMaidan murder cases on an international wanted list because the international law enforcement agency believes the investigations to be politically motivated – a claim dismissed by EuroMaidan supporters. Interpol declined to comment.

If a suspect is not on Interpol's wanted list, he cannot be tried in absentia in Ukraine, Horbatiuk said.

In October, the Verkhovna Rada passed a bill authorizing trials in absentia if a suspect cannot be extradited. However, in January parliament adopted an amendment according to which only those who are internationally wanted can be tried in absentia.

Former Prosecutor General Vitaliy Yarema justified the amendments in December by saying that the original version of the law did not allow prosecutors to try Yanukovich allies unless they proved where they were located.

Since Interpol is refusing to issue warrants, consideration of Yanukovich allies' alleged crimes against humanity by the Hague-based International Criminal Court could be a solution, Horbatiuk believes. However, Ukraine

has so far not ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which recognizes the court's jurisdiction in specific countries.

In contrast to the EuroMaidan murder cases, Interpol has agreed to put some suspects in corruption cases against Yanukovich allies on its wanted list.

They are former President Viktor Yanukovich, his son Oleksandr, former Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, former Finance Minister Yury Kolobov, former Health Minister Raisa Bohatryyova, former Deputy Prime Minister Serhiy Arbuzov, former Revenue and Tax Minister Oleksandr Klymenko, former Energy Minister Eduard Stavvytsky and businessman Serhiy Kurchenko, according to Horbatiuk.

Formal extradition requests have been sent to Russia for Yanukovich, Azarov, Kolobov and Bohatryyova and requests to put other suspects on a wanted list in the Russian-led Commonwealth of Independent States have also been sent, Horbatiuk said. Russia has not responded to any of these requests, which also impedes the investigations.

Another obstacle is the difficulty of freezing suspects' assets. It is hard to prove that a specific company is owned by one of the suspects because of extremely complicated ownership structures with the ultimate beneficiaries in offshore jurisdictions, Horbatiuk said. Out of the 22 people subject to EU sanctions, the assets of about 10 have been found.

Moreover, when Ukraine tries to get information on a specific bank where a suspect keeps his assets, the government where the bank is based sometimes says that Ukrainian authorities should first prove the criminal origin of the funds, Horbatiuk said.

"There is no full-fledged cooperation with the law enforcement agencies of some countries," he added.

Yet such claims are contested by activists like Daryna Kalenyuk, executive director of the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

"It's true that assets are transferred to relatives, brothers, in-laws and offshore companies," she said by phone. "But it's not true that these assets can't be frozen either in Ukraine or abroad. For that, they only have to do their work properly – collect evidence, including proof of the criminal origin of these assets."

The investigations have also been thwarted by problems linked to evidence, Horbatiuk alleges.

During the EuroMaidan crackdown in February 2014, "volunteers and other activists were helping the injured to reach places where they could receive medical aid and removed bodies (of the dead)," Horbatiuk said. "Although it is nobody's fault, none of those murdered was inspected at the crime scene."

The Prosecutor General's Office also lacks evidence

to convict Svetlana Volkova, the judge who released Berkut riot police commander Dmytro Sadovnyk in September, Horbatiuk said. However, the "unlawful component is obvious," he added.

Sadovnyk is accused of killing EuroMaidan protesters as head of the so-called Berkut "Black Squadron" that was caught on video shooting down protesters. He was reported by authorities to have fled Ukraine after his release.

Problems with evidence are partially due to the Interior Ministry's failure to report each instance of the use of weapons during the EuroMaidan Revolution. Under Ukrainian law, such cases must be investigated, and each missing cartridge must be accounted for.

"This did not happen, and all documents on Berkut riot police were destroyed (by the previous government)," Horbatiuk said.

Also disappearing were those responsible for registering criminal cases against activists and issuing notices of suspicion. They fled the country to escape punishment on Feb. 21-22, while the new appointments were made only on Feb. 23. Thus, there was virtually no one to carry out the investigations at that time, according to Horbatiuk.

A lack of human resources was also a problem at the beginning.



Orthodox priests conduct a church service at the "Heavenly Hundred" monument during a ceremony on Feb. 20 to mark the anniversary of the murders of demonstrators during the EuroMaidan Revolution. More than 100 people, mostly protesters, were killed in the winter of 2014 before Viktor Yanukovich fled, abandoning his presidency. Yanukovich is suspected of ordering the murders. He and many of his top allies are living in exile in Russia. (Pavlo Podufalov)

"At that moment, the main investigation department of the Prosecutor General's Office comprised two bureaus, each staffed with 12 investigators, a director and two deputy directors," Horbatiuk said. "Obviously, 28 people were not enough to investigate crimes of such an unprecedented scale and to administer daily proceedings."

Horbatiuk had been one of the investigators working on the cases since Feb. 2014 – long before he became head of the department responsible for the investigations in December. Since then, the cases have seen little progress.

He was also responsible for prosecuting a misappropriation of funds case in 2010-2011 opened against Yulia Tymoshenko, a former prime minister and an opposition leader. Tymoshenko was later imprisoned as part of a dif-

ferent case due to what human rights groups believe was a political vendetta organized by Yanukovich.

In 2004 Horbatiuk also investigated an embezzlement case against opposition leader David Zhvania that critics thought to be politically motivated. Horbatiuk denies all accusations of fulfilling political vendettas.

He says that he dropped the Tymoshenko case after seeing that no crime was committed, while the Zhvania case was transferred to another investigator after the 2004 Orange Revolution that propelled Viktor Yushchenko to the presidency.

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Marina Sokolova, MD, Staff Gynecologist

Dr. Sokolova graduated from the Odessa Ukraine Medical University, completing her internship at Kyiv's Regional Health Center for Mother and Child where she trained in Obstetrics, Pathology, Gynecology, and Post-natal departments. Dr. Sokolova has extensive experience in Ultrasonographic diagnostics, Gynecology and Endocrinology, and holds an advanced European Certificate in Intensive Care and Reanimation. Dr. Sokolova is fluent in English, Italian, and her native Russian and Ukrainian languages



Maya Kipiani, MD, Staff Gynecologist

Dr. Kipiani graduated from the Donetsk Medical University and held the position of Chief Gynecologist at the Prenatal Center of Family Planning and Reproductive Health in Donetsk. Dr. Kipiani has more than 15 years of extensive experience in Gynecology and Obstetrics.

Yulia Abakarova, MD, Ultrasound Specialist

Dr. Abakarova graduated from the Lugansk Medical University in 1996 and has over 18 years experience in Radiology and Ultrasound investigations in Internal medicine, Gynecology and Endocrinology. Dr. Julia Abakarova joined AMC in September 2014.



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Serhiy Horbatiuk, head of the special investigations department at the Prosecutor General's Office. (Volodymyr Petrov)





Burns Night on April 18 aims to help hospitals



WITH SANDRA MACKENZIE

Palata No. 6 fires up nightlife

The first rule of living abroad is that whenever anyone invites you to something, you say yes.

Among the many pieces of advice I received before relocating to Ukraine, this one has proved the most useful. When you're new in town, making friends is as essential as finding a home, a job and fresh fruit and vegetables. Possibly more important than that last one, since I met great people within a few days, but the print-your-own-bar-code system in my local shop took me a good two weeks to master.

So far, following that advice has led me to several great museums, introduced me to the brilliant folk-punk stylings of Vopli Vidopiassova (the accordion solos were epic), and to an underground bar named Palata No. 6 (Ward No. 6), where it's apparently normal to shoot a fireball from the top of someone's head. Seriously.

Like many bars in Kyiv, Palata No. 6 is hidden in the kind of badly lit, central courtyard that makes me feel like I'm trespassing on private property. With no sign, the crowd outside is the only indicator that I'm in the right place.

For anyone who didn't spot the Anton Chekhov reference in the bar's name, it's taken from one of his short stories, set inside a mental asylum. As a result, the interior design can best be described as hospital grunge, with whitewashed walls, nurse uniforms and shots served in test tubes. In itself, this just lends novelty value to a bar that could sell itself equally well on excellent drinks, food and prices... but then, there's the fire thing.

Our night began tamely enough with some test tube vodka shots. We started with plain (pleasant), moved on to chili (painful), and were debating what a concoction of Baileys, Kahlua and Absinthe might taste like when a whistle blew. Loudly. Turning around, we saw the bartender indicate in no uncertain terms that we might want to move further away from the bar, before all the lights went out.

What happened next would traumatize a health and safety officer for life. At the bar, a line of thrill-seekers sat dressed in round metal helmets and bulky jackets, knocking back shots.

After matching them drink-for-drink, the bartender placed a cloth on the top of each helmet, casually leaned over, and set each one alight. One more shot and a forceful exhale was all it took for him to send a giant fireball shooting from each helmet across the width of the room.

Once the applause died down, the performance ended with the bartender extinguishing each flame by hitting it (and the person beneath it) repeatedly with a silver keg. Dangerous? Yes. Impressive? Very. Suitably representative of Kyiv's nightlife? Only time will tell.



Osman Omer Bekmezci, better known as Ozzy of Shooters, reads Scottish poet Robert Burns' poem "Address to a Haggis" at Burns Night in Kyiv on March 31, 2012. The Lions Club event has raised more than \$800,000 for charitable causes over the last 20 years. The next event takes place in Kyiv on April 18 and will benefit two children's hospitals in Ukraine. (Courtesy)

BY NATALIYA TRACH
TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM

The Kyiv City Children's Hospital for Infectious Diseases has been struggling to get modern laboratory equipment for five years. And now, thanks to the Kyiv Lions Club, the hospital is likely to receive these potentially lifesaving tools soon.

The Kyiv Lions Club will raise money for the hospital at its upcoming Burns Night charity event on April 18

at 7 p.m. The party extravaganza has been held annually, although missing last year because of the EuroMaidan Revolution and Russia's war against Ukraine.

In addition to the Kyiv City Children's Hospital for Infectious Diseases, another Burns Night recipient this year will be the Kyiv City Center for Pediatric Neurosurgery, which is in desperate need of ultrasound equipment.

All together, the two hospitals need \$57,000 for the new equipment. The

Lions Club expects Burns Night to raise at least this amount.

The first Burns Night took place 20 years ago in Kyiv, organized by a group of expatriates. The almost-annual bash has since become the service organization's biggest annual charity event, followed by its annual President's Gala Dinner and Kozak Night. Burns Night raised nearly \$80,000 for charity in 2013. The event honors Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796).

"This is the way expats could get

together and do something for charities in Ukraine," says Stuart McKenzie, acting president of Kyiv Lions Club and co-organizer of Burns Night. The club aims to collect \$250,000 in donations annually.

Irina Jahn, a medical doctor, has been an active member of the Lions Club since 2008 and currently serves as chairman of the donation committee. "The idea of being part of an organization in which both expats and Ukrainians work together to → 13

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In 2013, the Kyiv Lions Club bought special educational equipment worth Hr 63,156 for Perspektiva 21/3, a project to assist children with Down's syndrome. (Courtesy)

Lions Club seeks to raise \$60,000 for charity with Burns Night on April 18

→ **12** improve the lives of less fortunate people was very appealing to me," she says. Jahn now helps plan fundraising events and looks for sponsors.

This year, the Kyiv City administration offered up City Hall as a free venue for the occasion, saving the Lions Club significant expenses.

"I hope we will get \$50,000 - \$60,000, or maybe more," McKenzie says, adding that this year tickets were sold out a month before the event.

The Lions Club has earned credibility because of strong rules on transparency and spending. "We will not sponsor one person," McKenzie says. "We don't pay salaries and don't give cash."

The Kyiv Lions Club focuses on big projects that improve the lives of many people, especially children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Over the years the club has provided equipment to several medical institutions, including the Butterfly Children

Association, the Child Rescue Center and the Association for Palliative and Hospice Care.

The theme of this year's Burns Night is "We Love Ukraine."

"This year we all agreed that Burns Night will be dedicated to Ukraine and Ukrainians," McKenzie says. "And we will be raising as much money as possible for the people of Ukraine."

Kyiv Post staff writer Nataliya Trach can be reached at trach@kyivpost.com

Questions still hang over Kyiv International Biennale event

BY YULIYA SOSNOVSKA
JUL.SOSNOVSKA@GMAIL.COM

Questions are mounting over the fate of the 2015 Kyiv International Biennale of Contemporary Art, now scheduled to take place this autumn.

The event that is Ukraine's biggest modern art display had been originally scheduled for 2014, but postponed and then cancelled. But the biennale's curators say the event will take place anyway.

The national art and cultural complex Mystetsky Arsenal, the biennale's organizer and main venue, was working with its selected curators, Georg Schöllhammer and Hedwig Saxenhuber, and the event, entitled "The School of Kyiv," was set to take place in the second half of the year.

But on March 20, Mystetsky Arsenal announced that it was cancelling the 2015 Kyiv Biennale, citing Ukraine's continuing crisis.

Then on March 24, Schöllhammer and Saxenhuber posted an announcement on the Visual Culture Research Center site saying that the 2015 version was moving ahead anyway, even without Arsenal, but with the support of other institutions. They are set to announce the new dates and institutions on April 17.

In their statement, they also stressed the need for art in times of war: "The fundamental role of art as a reflexive instrument is to challenge the present political context defined

by the armed conflict in Ukraine."

The curators slammed Arsenal's cancellation as "purely political."

"Our concept was too political for them and they just wanted to host an event," they wrote.

Alisa Lozhkina, the deputy director of Mystetsky Arsenal, denies this, telling the Artinfo website that she and her colleagues knew of the curators' political nature when she helped select them.

Arsenal's director, Natalia Zabolotna, complains that Arsenal paid the curators an advance. She also says that it was not the curators, but the Arsenal crew, that developed the educational component and theme for the 2015 event.

In the summer of 2013, Zabolotna was criticized for allegedly censoring the work of Ukrainian artist Volodymyr Kuznetsov during an exhibition at Mystetsky Arsenal because of its anti-religious motives. A number of Ukrainian artists have since said that they would have boycotted the next biennale if it had taken place at Arsenal because of the incident.

If the 2015 Kyiv International Biennale does in fact take place, it will be the city's second. In 2012, David Elliott, the British art historian and critic, curated the inaugural biennale, giving international exposure to a number of Ukrainian artists.

Kyiv Post staff writer Yulia Sosnovska can be reached at jul.sosnovska@gmail.com.



Visitors of the first Kyiv modern art biennale Arsenal stand next to the art installation "The Shooting At Watou" by Dutch artist Folkert de Jong on July 30, 2012. (UNIAN)

April 26



Tina Karol music show

Pop singer Tina Karol will perform in Kyiv twice on April 26 with her new solo program "Ya vse eshcho lyublyu" ("I'm Still Loving"). The show will be based on her latest album, "Pomnyu" ("I Remember"), dedicated to her husband and producer, who died of cancer in 2013. She will be accompanied by the dance and ballet group Freedom during her performance. Lyrics are in Russian.

Tina Karol music show. Palace Ukraine (103 Velyka Vasylkivska St.). April 26, 4 p.m., 7 p.m. Hr 450-3.250

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Made-in-Ukraine Festival

In 2014, journalist and entrepreneur Yulia Savostina completed a year-long experiment of using only Ukrainian-produced goods. This year she is sharing her experience at the Made-in-Ukraine Festival. This festival showcases a wide range of products made locally by 200 Ukrainian brands, and includes everything from toothbrushes to furniture.

The Made-in-Ukraine Festival. Kontraktova Square. April 18-19, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free



Arsenal Book Festival

The fifth International Arsenal Book Festival will feature Ukrainian and international books from 150 publishing houses. There will be lectures, discussion groups, master classes with authors and illustrators, and musical performances. For non-Ukrainian speakers, the festival will include art and history albums.

Arsenal Book Festival. Mystetskyi Arsenal Museum (10-12 Lavrska St.). April 22-26, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Hr 30-100



Old Car Festival

More than 300 retro cars will be on display at the Old Car Festival. The exhibition will show antique cars from the USSR and Europe, as well as old military vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles, and vehicles used in the cleanup of Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986.

The Old Car Festival. State Aviation Museum (1 Medova St.). April 24-26, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Hr 60

Kyiv International Short Film Festival

The annual Kyiv International Short Film Festival will feature recent films and winners of international festivals and retrospectives. Special focus will be given to modern and classic Ukrainian films. The festival's screening schedule can be found at www.kisff.org/schedule.

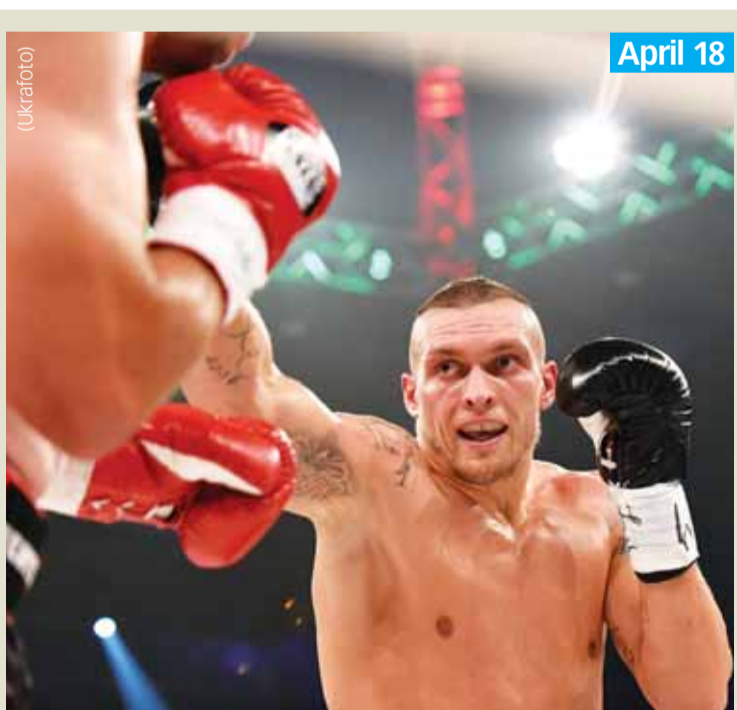
Kyiv International Short Film Festival. Kinopanorama (19 Shota Rustaveli St.). April 22-26. Hr 15-120



Retro Bicycle Cruise

What do the English tradition of five o'clock tea, vintage clothes from early 20th century, bicycles and jazz music all have in common? Find out on the Retro Bicycle Cruise, during which all will be part of the fun. This is a costumed festival of vintage and retro culture and is highlighted by a costumed bicycle parade, known as the Tweed Run.

Retro Cruise Festival. Fomin Botanical Garden (1S Petliury St.). April 26, 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 80-100, free for retirees and children under six



Usyk against Knyazev

Ukrainian professional heavyweight boxer Oleksandr Usyk will go up against Russian Andrey Knyazev in Kyiv on April 18. It will be the seventh professional fight for Usyk, who has trained with brothers Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko.

Usyk against Knyazev. Palace of Sport (1 Sportyvna Sq.). April 18, 7 p.m. Hr 100

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Russia's war path edges closer to Mariupol port

→ **1** can't leave my home. My mother and father are buried in the cemetery here. I won't leave them."

Ivan Kudryavsky, another elderly resident who decided to stay put, said the situation was only peaceful while international monitors were present, a fact confirmed by the deputy chief of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's special monitoring mission in Ukraine.

At least six Ukrainian soldiers were killed in the last week and roughly 100 since the Feb. 15 cease-fire.

Alexander Hug, the OSCE mission's deputy chief, told the Kyiv Post that monitors had begun to conduct daily foot patrols in the area in the hope that their presence would deter further fighting.

Hug noted that on the previous day, fighting resumed less than an hour after monitors drove away.

"We believe it was the Ukrainian side that started it," he said, while noting that both sides are guilty of violating the Feb. 15 cease-fire agreed to by Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France.

On the other side of town, members of the pro-Ukrainian Donbas Battalion painted a grim picture, saying they were shot at on a daily basis by Russian forces and their proxies. They said they were helpless to do anything to defend themselves.

"We're adhering to the cease-fire, but the separatists shoot at us regularly. Every single day. We shoot back only when we're given permission to," said a Donbas commander who goes by the nickname Tikhy, or "Quiet."

"Kyiv's political desire is to resolve the problem peacefully, but we're dealing with illegal armed groups. That's impossible," he said, refusing to give his name.

Sergei Tretiy, another Donbas Battalion commander who'd been in Shyrokyne for the past two months, said the other side "fired on us for 20 straight hours and we were calling in to ask for permission to fire back and couldn't get it. Then, they finally gave us the go-ahead when the separatists had already stopped firing."

Russian-backed insurgents who control part of the town placed the blame



A Ukrainian soldier from the volunteer Donbas Battalion takes a break at the war's frontline and rides a bicycle in the village of Shyrokyne near Mariupol in Donetsk Oblast on April 15. (Anastasia Vlasova)

squarely on the Ukrainian side, showing off what they said were cluster bombs to international observers on April 16.

But fears of a return to full-scaled fighting in the year-long war that has claimed more than 6,000 lives were deepened by words of their Donetsk-based commander, Alexander Zakharchenko.

In the Bloomberg interview published April 16, a Kremlin-backed separatist leader revealed his intentions

were to capture Mariupol in violation of ceasefire agreements, and unite with Russia. He put chances of a return to war at "90 percent." And in claiming that "nobody wants to come back to Ukraine under any pretext," he wrote off the Minsk II agreements that he and the leader of Luhansk-based separatists had signed just two months earlier, according to the Bloomberg interview. Those agreements envisioned Ukraine's gradually re-integrating polit-

ically and economically with Ukraine.

Boasting that he now had some 23,000 regular troops and 30,000 in reserves, Zakharchenko pledged to launch an offensive on Mariupol.

"We will liberate all our compatriots. It's easy to outflank it and they will surrender. Don't forget, our mothers and our sisters live there, so don't make us out to be bloodthirsty beasts," he said.

"We thought, still think and will think of ourselves as a part of the Soviet Union, of Russia," he added.

Those words came as the OSCE managed to broker talks between Ukrainian and Russian generals on April 15 to come up with a disengagement plan. Not surprisingly, none of Shyrokyne's remaining residents seemed to be holding their breath.

"This will continue for at least 10 years!" a resident named Viktor shouted. Like others in the besieged town, he refused to give his full name in fear

of what he described as Russian forces in control of much of the town.

The fighters themselves appeared just as disillusioned with the peace process as the shell-shocked residents of Shyrokyne.

"This isn't going to end anytime soon," said Tretiy. "It will turn into a frozen conflict, just like in Transnistria, the break-away republic of Moldova, "because that's more beneficial to Russia."

Kudryavsky said he had just about given up on expecting outside help.

"I don't even need water, you know? It's raining today. I'll just collect it in a bucket," he said.

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Monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe speak with a local woman named Valentina in Shyrokyne near Mariupol in Donetsk Oblast on April 16. (Anastasia Vlasova)

